



SMU | PERKINS

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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\$6 MILLION GIFT TO SMU FROM PERKINS-PROTHRO FAMILY TO LAUNCH PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY BUILDING PROGRAM

DALLAS (SMU) — A gift of \$6 million to Southern Methodist University from the Perkins-Prothro family of Wichita Falls will launch a building program for Perkins School of Theology. This is a combined gift from the Perkins-Prothro Foundation and Elizabeth Perkins Prothro, daughter of the late Joe J. and Lois Perkins, who endowed the SMU Theology School in the early 1940s. The school was named in their honor in 1945.

"Joe and Lois Perkins were founding contributors to SMU, and the Perkins-Prothro family has played a longstanding role in the University's development," said SMU President R. Gerald Turner, "As we approach the centennial of SMU's founding in 2011 and opening in 2015, we are especially grateful for this family's vision and generosity through the years, which have helped to make Perkins School of Theology one of the nation's leaders in theological education."

As the lead gift, the new \$6 million Perkins-Prothro commitment will provide approximately half of the funds to be sought in the building program. Plans include extensive renovation of two classroom and office buildings, Kirby and Selecman Halls, built in the early 1950s, and construction of a new building. The new 28,000-square-foot facility will be named in honor of Elizabeth Perkins Prothro.

"The continuing generosity of the Prothro family and the Perkins-Prothro Foundation is a vibrant testimony to the Christian faith that, in the words of Charles Wesley, unites 'knowledge and vital piety,'" said William B. Lawrence, dean of Perkins School of Theology. "These leadership gifts and the new building named for Mrs. Prothro reaffirm that Perkins School of Theology remains committed to higher learning and real experience as essential elements in the preparation of leaders for Christian ministry. Their

outstanding support will help Perkins School of Theology and SMU provide the finest facilities possible for preparing women and men with the learning and experience that they need to serve faithfully in the 21st century.”

The new building will be constructed at the southern end of the Theology School quadrangle, just north of Highland Park United Methodist Church. It will house facilities for education and community uses, including a 3,200-square-foot auditorium for public events, plus spaces for dining services, student computer lab, a dedicated student commons, preaching lab, classrooms, seminar rooms and lecture halls. The redesigned building complex will include two cloistered spaces for outdoor activities. Groundbreaking is anticipated in September 2007.

The latest gift from the Perkins-Prothro family to the SMU Theology School continues a family tradition of support spanning three generations — from Joe and Lois Perkins to the late Vin Prothro, Dallas business leader and son of Elizabeth and Charles Prothro, and Vin's wife, Caren Prothro. Vin Prothro played a major role in extensive renovation of Perkins Chapel, which was completed in 1999, the year before his death. Caren Prothro, a Dallas civic leader, has been a member of the SMU Board of Trustees since 1992.

Including the new \$6 million gift, the Perkins and Prothro families and their foundations have given more than \$36.3 million to SMU since the first gift from Joe and Lois Perkins in 1913, two years before the University opened. Most of the family's SMU support has been designated for Perkins School of Theology, including its Bridwell Library.

Elizabeth Prothro and her late husband, Charles, provided gifts totaling \$7 million to Perkins School of Theology in 1997 as part of The Campaign for SMU. These gifts included funds for endowed scholarships, renovation of Perkins Chapel, and a permanent collection of rare Bibles and related works spanning eight centuries. The collection was exhibited in the Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Galleries of Bridwell Library in the fall of 2006. Charles Prothro provided the Galleries previously in honor of his wife on their 50th wedding anniversary.

A member of SMU's class of 1939, Mrs. Prothro earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in government and political science. She was a member of the SMU Board of

Trustees from 1972-87 and was named a trustee *emeritus* in 1991. She was a founding member of the boards of Perkins School of Theology and Colophon/Friends of the SMU Libraries and later served on the Texas Committee of The Campaign for SMU, which surpassed its goal by raising \$542 million from 1997 to 2002.

Mrs. Prothro has been honored by her alma mater with the SMU Distinguished Alumni Award in 1978 and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1996. Also in 1996, Elizabeth and Charles Prothro received SMU's Mustang Award, which recognizes longtime service and philanthropy to the University. Mr. Prothro died in 2001.

The Perkins-Prothro family was honored in 2004 with the Medallion of Merit from the Texas Methodist Foundation for their contributions and service to the Foundation and The United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Prothro is vice president and a trustee of the Perkins-Prothro Foundation and the owner of the Perkins-Prothro Company, which was founded in Wichita Falls just before World War II by her father and husband to manage their oil, natural gas and cattle ranching interests.

Perkins School of Theology was one of SMU's three original schools that opened in 1915. One of five university-related theological institutions of The United Methodist Church, it offers Master's degrees in several fields and doctoral degrees in ministry and religious studies. Today, Perkins enrolls students from several denominations, and has alumni serving in all 50 states and more than 30 countries.

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.