



SMU. PERKINS

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2008

For more information contact: Todd Rasberry, 214-768-2026, trasberr@smu.edu

Barbara Whitehead, 214-768-1393, barbaraw@smu.edu

SMU Perkins School of Theology receives \$1 million gift for a new Endowed Professorship

Dallas, Texas – Perkins School of Theology at SMU received a \$1 million gift from Barbara Cook Wendland and Erroll Wendland to establish the Wendland-Cook Professorship in Constructive Theology. The Wendlands, both graduates of SMU, are active in many community and humanitarian affairs. Having earned a masters degree in Theological Studies as well as serving on the Executive Board for the theological school, Barbara Cook Wendland, the 2007 Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award recipient, knows the value of the theological education she received at Perkins. As long-time supporters of Perkins and SMU, the Wendlands agreed to establish a fund to support a professorship knowing their gift will touch many lives.

“We at Perkins School of Theology are extremely grateful to Barbara and Erroll Wendland for their Christian generosity, but we are even more grateful for their dedication to the most serious and comprehensive levels of theological inquiry in preparing leaders for the Church. Their commitment to endow a professorship of constructive theology at Perkins means that our school will be blessed with a renewed focus upon the principle embodied in Charles Wesley’s prayer that knowledge and vital piety will be reunited in the community of faith,” says William B. Lawrence, dean of Perkins School of Theology.

The Wendland-Cook Professor of Constructive Theology will make substantial contributions to the academic study of systematic and constructive theology that address current church and social issues, inequality of power, and a commitment to the liberation of all

people, the promotion of justice, and the encouragement of nonviolence. The selected professor will communicate widely in the academic world and will work to inspire laity and clergy at the local church level to expand their theological perspectives.

Faculty is key for establishing outstanding academic programs, and Perkins has a long tradition of excellence. This generous gift will propel the program to a new level of distinction by recruiting the very best faculty in the country. “The community at Perkins School of Theology is fortunate to count Erroll Wendland and Barbara Cook Wendland as friends. They are very generous in their support of initiatives, both on and off campus,” says Todd Rasberry, director of Development.

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.

- # -

- # -

- # -