

HISTORY OF TRUETT SEMINARY

“There is one thing I know about George Truett, wherever he speaks, the people do what he asks.”

The words of Rev. R.F. Jenkins, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Whitewright, Texas, accurately characterized the lifestyle of a young man who would eventually serve as pastor of the largest Baptist church in the world and whose name would become a household name among Christians who believed in and espoused personal religious liberty and the separation of church and state.

Shortly after enrolling at Baylor in 1893, Truett was called to become the pastor of the East Waco Baptist Church. The church was the answer to the financial assistance that Truett sought, and he remained with the church during his four years at Baylor. East Waco was the first of only two congregations which Truett would lead, for shortly after graduating from Baylor in 1897, he was called as minister of the First Baptist Church of Dallas. It was from this pulpit that he fulfilled God’s plan for his life until his death nearly five decades later.

The words of Rev. Jenkins about the young George Washington Truett were truly prophetic, for throughout his 50-year ministry, people clamored to hear him preach and did their best to follow his suggestions and emulate his example of Christian living. Though rewarded during his lifetime with many accolades and named to numerous responsible positions, including the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist World Alliance, George Truett never sought to be anything other than God’s messenger doing God’s will, as God directed.

The words “thou good and faithful servant” surely rang in Truett’s ears as he fell on that last sleep on July 7, 1944.

On July 24, 1990, the Board of Trustees officially reserved with the Secretary of State of Texas the name “George W. Truett Theological Seminary,” in the event the Board decided sometime in the future to create a seminary. On March 25, 1991, the George W. Truett Theological Seminary was chartered and a fifteen-member Board of Trustees was named by the University’s Board of Regents to investigate the feasibility of operating a seminary. (On September 21, 1990, the University Trustees had changed Baylor’s charter in order to have greater freedom in the selection of the University’s governing board. By this action the University Trustees became Regents.)

An organizational meeting of the Seminary Trustees was held on July 18, 1991, at which time officers were elected and a statement of purpose was developed. A joint meeting of the Seminary Trustees and the Board of Regents was held on January 17, 1992, and further investigation and discussion was authorized. On May 21, 1993, the Board of Regents approved the opening of the George W. Truett Theological Seminary with the beginning of the 1994-95 academic year.

At the same meeting the Regents voted to accept the gracious offer of First Baptist Church, Waco, to house the Seminary on the second floor of the church’s B.H. Carroll Education Building for the first years of its operation. Space was designated for the exclusive use of Truett Seminary for administrative and faculty offices. Classrooms and other areas were specified for the joint use of the Seminary and First Baptist Church. Reminiscent of earlier years of theological education at Baylor, when classes for ministers were held by Rev. B.H. Carroll, then pastor of First Baptist Church, in his study, Truett Seminary opened offices in the Carroll

Education Building on August 1, 1993. Faculty offices were added in July 1994.

The opening convocation service was held on August 28, 1994, with 51 students registered. The Truett Seminary inaugural class graduated from Baylor University in May 1997.