

Alumnus Leroy Williams Leads Massive Renovation Effort on Campus

trans•for•ma•tion•al leader: n. - a person with vision and passion, who inspires others to achieve great things; one who injects enthusiasm and energy into something they care about or something they want to see succeed

Bluefield College prides itself on preparing innovative learners and transformational leaders to impact the world. The best measure of that vision and mission is the outcome of the school's alumni.

Alumnus Leroy Williams certainly fits the bill. This transformational leader from the class of 1957 had a vision to restore married-student housing facilities on the Bluefield College campus, and with his own passion and energy, he inspired a hundred more supporters to care about and join in the massive renovation project.

Williams, a native of Tunstall, Virginia, earned an associate's degree in liberal arts from Bluefield College in 1957 while serving as a leader with the Baptist Student Union. After BC, he attended Baylor University in Texas and studied finance at the University of Richmond in Virginia.

He had a long, successful career in accounting, serving as a special projects administrator and manager with Philip Morris, before retiring in 1992. That's when he began to demonstrate his leadership skills even more through his passion for carpentry and construction.

"I've been doing this for 17 years," said Williams about his work in construction and renovation as part of missions. "It's something I can do. The Lord has prepared me for this all my life."

A member of New Bethesda Baptist Church in Mechanicsville, Virginia and the Dover Baptist Association headquartered in Ashland, Virginia, Williams used those two organizations to feed his passion, not only serving but leading dozens of construction mission projects in Virginia, across the region, Canada, Europe, South America, and India.

"Leroy has mentored a lot of people in missions, getting them to have a heart for mission work," said Wayne Smith, missions and adult minister at Cool Spring Baptist Church in Mechanicsville. "Lots of men and women have become involved in missions, in their community and around

Alumnus Leroy Williams (right) with alumnus and trustee Tem Marshall, who both helped renovate BC's four cottages.

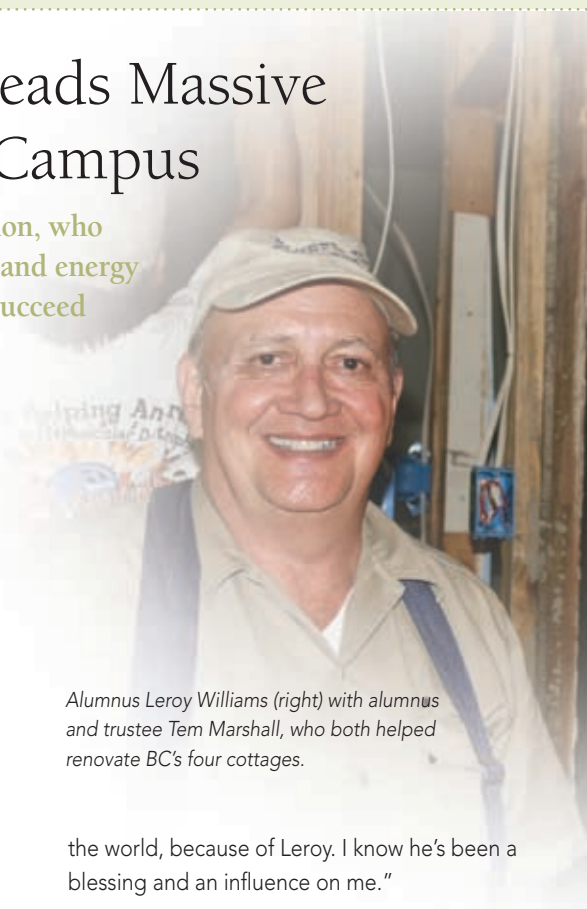
the world, because of Leroy. I know he's been a blessing and an influence on me."

His most recent project: the renovation of four cottages on the Bluefield College campus to create valuable married-student housing. And Williams not only participated in the restoration work, but organized more than 100 volunteers from 15 different churches to join in the effort.

"He's the brains behind this whole operation," said Smith. "This was a lot of hard work. He organized it all and certainly deserves to be recognized."

For five weeks, the missionaries, under Williams' leadership, installed new windows, doors, and vinyl siding to the exteriors of the four cottages. They laid new flooring, mounted new walls, and installed new plumbing, wiring, appliances, and cabinets inside the structures.

In addition to the sweat equity, Williams solicited thousands of dollars in financial contributions and numerous gifts-in-kind to support the renovation effort.



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Alumnus Leroy Williams joins in the cottage renovation work he orchestrated on campus.

Virginia Baptists Serve on Mission at Bluefield College



"We are extremely appreciative of Leroy's time and energy," said BC president Dr. David Olive. "He not only provided a significant financial gift for this project, but also volunteered to coordinate the entire effort. He single-handedly prepared the scope of the project, organized all the volunteers who participated, and spent the entire month of June working alongside those who came to serve."

While admittedly an exhausting task, Williams said the orchestration and implementation of the renovation work has been rewarding. "It's the Lord's work," he said, "and anytime you're doing the Lord's work, it's fun."

When asked why he chose the Bluefield College job as his next transformational leadership project, Williams stated matter-of-factly, "Because I went to school here, and that's what you do. This school did a lot for me, so this is my way of giving back."

More than 100 members of Baptist churches from across Virginia and Tennessee spent part of their summer on the campus of Bluefield College. The congregants were not in Bluefield for a camp, conference or retreat, but instead to serve on mission to support their Virginia Baptist partner.

The Baptist missionaries, from eastern Tennessee to southwest Virginia to the Eastern Shore, with skills from carpentry to cooking, worked five consecutive weeks in May and June to renovate four cottages on the Bluefield College campus to create valuable married-student housing.

The cottages — former military houses transferred by train to the BC campus in 1945 as government surplus after World War II — were to be temporary facilities for guests and married students. But, since they have provided essential residential space for student couples for more than 60 years, the college decided to keep the buildings on campus. To do that, the school knew it needed to significantly restore the structures.

"After 60 years of usage," said BC president Dr. David Olive, "plus knowing our need for the cottages to meet the demand for married-student housing for the foreseeable future, we began over a year ago envisioning how we could partner with Virginia Baptists to assist us in getting these much-needed improvements done."

BC's own students and staff began the work, installing new windows and doors in preparation for the first mission team's arrival. That first group, from Monte Vista Baptist Church in Maryville, Tennessee, the church

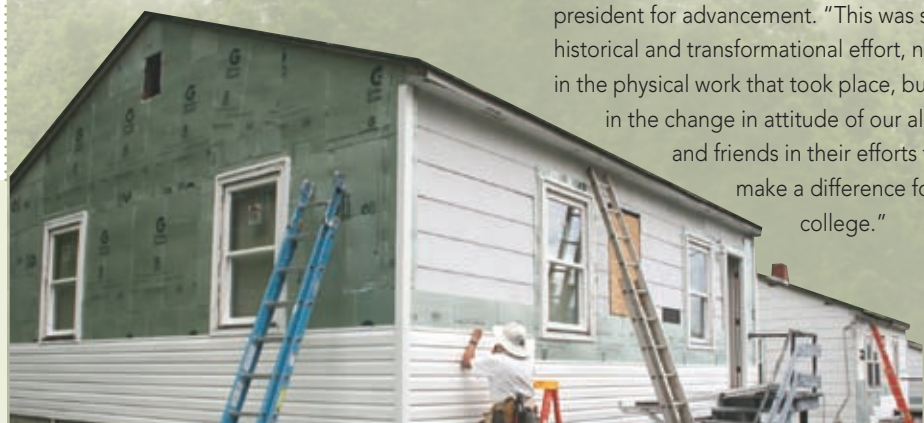
where Dr. Olive grew up, continued the work on the cottage exteriors, installing new vinyl siding.

The latter mission groups, from 15 Baptist churches across Virginia, restored the interiors of the cottages, including flooring, plumbing and electrical. The more than 100 volunteers who committed their time and energy to the project from Virginia Baptist churches came from New Bethesda, Hillcrest, Cool Spring, Atlee Community, Sharon, Black Creek, Hardy Central (Richmond), Honaker, Port Norfolk, Portsmouth, Pleasant View, Patrick County, Black Creek, Mechanicsville, and Ridge (Richmond).

"This project is another example of Bluefield College's desire to build stronger partnerships with churches from the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV)," said Dr. Olive, "and it's just one of the many ways Virginia Baptist churches are active partners with one another in the BGAV's Kingdom Advance."

Prior to and during the renovation project, a number of additional Bluefield College supporters stepped forward to offer financial contributions to go along with the "sweat equity." Among those who purchased or provided significant funds or gifts for construction materials, appliances, meals, and other necessary items for the renovations were the Cruise Foundation, the First Baptist Church of Richmond Foundation, the Dover Baptist Association, and alumnus Leroy Williams of Mechanicsville, Virginia.

"We have never had such a volunteer and alumni-driven effort in the history of the college," said BC's Ruth Blankenship, vice president for advancement. "This was such an historical and transformational effort, not only in the physical work that took place, but also in the change in attitude of our alumni and friends in their efforts to make a difference for the college."



More than 100 missionaries from churches across Virginia and Tennessee work to restore BC's campus cottages.