



REPORT from the Capital

Court declares legal right to same-sex marriage, IRS confirms tax status safe

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 26 that the Constitution does not permit the government to deny marriage benefits to same-sex couples that are available to married couples of the opposite sex, and it recognized religious opposition will remain. When questioned about the ruling, the IRS said it does not pose any immediate threat to the tax-exempt status of religious colleges and universities.

Writing for the majority in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, Justice Anthony Kennedy said it is unconstitutional for a state to deny same-sex couples benefits of marital status including taxation, inheritance and property rights, hospital access, the authority to make medical decisions, adoption rights, health insurance and more.

"The limitation of marriage to opposite-sex couples may long have seemed natural and just, but its inconsistency with the central meaning of the fundamental right to marry is now manifest," Kennedy wrote. "With that knowledge must come the recognition that laws excluding same-sex couples from the marriage right impose stigma and injury of the kind prohibited by our basic charter."

In the decision, Kennedy emphasized that groups and individuals who adhere to religious doctrines "may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned."

"The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered," Kennedy opined. "The same is true of those who oppose same-sex marriage for other reasons."

"In turn, those who believe allowing same-sex marriage is proper or indeed essential, whether as a matter of religious conviction or secular belief, may engage those who

disagree with their view in an open and searching debate," Kennedy wrote. "The Constitution, however, does not permit the state to bar same-sex couples from marriage on the same terms as accorded to couples of the opposite sex."

In an initial assessment of the decision, BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman noted the Court's majority "respectfully acknowledges that some deeply held and long-standing religious beliefs oppose same-sex marriage."

"In doing so, I believe Justice Kennedy was trying to quell fears that religious beliefs at odds with the Court's view of same-sex marriage are beyond the pale of civil discourse," Hollman said. "In heated public debates over marriage equality, religious beliefs have not always been treated so respectfully."

Some legal discussions analyzing the decision turn to what impact it could have on the tax-exempt status of religious colleges and universities that oppose same-sex marriage. During oral arguments, Justice Samuel Alito asked if such schools could lose their tax status if the Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage.

At a Congressional hearing in July, the IRS put some fears to rest. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, asked IRS Commissioner John Koskinen if he could pledge that the agency would not "take any action to remove the tax-exempt status from religious colleges and universities" based the schools' belief that marriage is between a man and woman. Koskinen said he can make that commitment as long as he is in office. He did note that changes in public policy could lead to a re-evaluation of the position in the future, but that would involve a long process that includes public notice and comment.

The BJC has resources on the decision, its relationship to religious liberty and its potential impact. A podcast, articles and a 2-page handout (see p. 3-4) are available on our website at BJCOnline.org/marriage-articles.

—BJC Staff Reports and Baptist News Global

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Supreme Court rules for Arizona church in sign ordinance case

A tiny Arizona church that has no permanent home prevailed at the U.S. Supreme Court on June 18 when the justices ruled that the Town of Gilbert must scrap strict rules on temporary signs pointing worshippers to the church's services.

More a free speech case than a religious rights case, Good News Community Church's victory has nevertheless buoyed those who say the town had placed the free speech rights of politicians and others above those of a house of worship.

"Gilbert had taken a page from George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, saying that all citizens were equal, but that politicians were 'more equal' than everyone else," said Eric Rassbach, deputy general counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case.

"The Supreme Court rightly decided that churches and other religious speakers should not be treated like second-class citizens."

But Chief Justice John Roberts, when the Court heard arguments in the case on Jan. 12, confirmed with Good News' attorney that he was not basing his argument on the religious nature of his client, or the fact that the curbside signs in question pointed people toward a church service.



Pastor Clyde Reed of Good News Community Church, center, his wife Ann, and Kevin Theriot of the Alliance Defending Freedom stand on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court after their case was argued. RNS photo by Lauren Markoe.

"That's right," attorney David A. Cortman had answered.

The justices' unanimous ruling in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* — delivered in several concurring opinions — said the town's sign rules did not pass the "strict scrutiny" speech test: If the government can't present a compelling reason as to why different types of speech are regulated differently, the restrictions are unconstitutional.

The opinion throws out a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that favored the town.

The Supreme Court in *Reed v. Gilbert* reaffirmed "a foundational rule in free speech law," said Richard Garnett, a University of Notre Dame law professor who writes about religious freedom and other First Amendment topics.

"The government can generally regulate the size and location of signs, and the volume of loudspeakers, and the time and route of a parade, but it cannot base its regulation on what the speakers are saying," he said.

"This black-letter rule against 'content-based' regulation of speech helps prevent the government from distorting, shrinking or hijacking the marketplace of ideas."

—Lauren Markoe, *Religion News Service*

Colorado Supreme Court voids school voucher plan

The Colorado Supreme Court struck down a school voucher program June 29, saying it violates the state constitution's ban on using public money to fund religious schools.

Overtaking a lower court decision, the Supreme Court said the Douglas County School District — the state's third-largest school district located south of Denver — cannot administer its "Choice Scholarship Pilot Program."

On hold since its launch four years ago, the program provided up to 500 scholarships that qualifying elementary, middle and high school students can use to help pay their tuition at partnering private schools.

At the time a lawsuit challenging the program went to trial, 16 of the 23 schools participating in the program were religious in nature, and about 93 percent of the scholarship recipients had enrolled in religious schools.

The Supreme Court said the program violates "broad, unequivocal language forbidding the state from using public money to fund religious schools."

Defenders of the voucher program argued that the constitution's ban on taxpayer funding of "sectarian" schools is a code word for "Catholic." They describe the section as a "Blaine Amendment" — a term for state laws that allegedly rose out of anti-Catholic bigotry after a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution proposed by Republican Congressman James G. Blaine in 1875 failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority to pass the Senate.

Colorado's justices said whatever the history, they are bound to enforce constitutional provisions as written whenever their language is plain and their meaning is clear. "The term 'sectarian' plainly means 'religious.' Therefore, we will enforce Section 7 as it is written," they ruled.

The Baptist Joint Committee joined other faith groups in a friend-of-the-court brief urging the Colorado high court to rule the voucher plan unconstitutional.

"Programs like the Choice Scholarship Program encroach on religious liberty by making religion dependent on government, by encouraging sectarian division and strife, and by interfering with free, individual choice in matters of conscience," the brief argued. "Accordingly, the voucher program should be struck down as inconsistent with the plain language and spirit of the No-Aid Clause."

Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado all applauded the decision.

"It is unconstitutional to bankroll religious schools with public funds," said Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United. "But that is precisely what would have happened in Douglas County had the Colorado Supreme Court ruled otherwise."

Douglas County school officials will likely appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, according to the *Denver Post*.

—Bob Allen, *Baptist News Global*

The Supreme Court's same-sex marriage ruling: What you need to know now

In Obergefell v. Hodges, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that same-sex couples have the legal right to marry nationwide. Religious arguments are made on both sides of the same-sex marriage debate, and conversations are now turning to the decision's effect on religious liberty. Here are important things to keep in mind about the landmark ruling and what it means for you and your church.

The word “marriage” can refer to two distinct concepts: civil marriage and religious marriage. Marriage is a religious act that occurs in the context of a religious community consistent with religious texts, traditions and understandings. Marriage is also a civil institution that affords certain legal privileges and protections. The law treats these concepts differently.

***Obergefell v. Hodges* is about civil marriage.**

The ruling will have religious liberty implications, but it is not a First Amendment case and is not based on religious liberty. It is grounded in due process and equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court held that civil marriage is a fundamental right demonstrated through principles about individual autonomy, the singular importance of the marriage union, protection of children and families, and the preservation of social order. The Court held that exclusion of same-sex couples from civil marriage could not be supported in light of these principles.

The way your church does marriage does not need to change.

The Court's decision does not remove the separation of church and state. Churches will continue to make their own decisions about the marriage ceremonies they conduct. This was true before the decision and continues to be true. The Court's ruling can be an occasion for houses of worship and ministers to reflect on and educate members about the relationship between the civil and religious aspects of marriage.

The ruling does not decide religious questions about marriage.

While religious liberty rights were not at issue in the case, the Court's decision in *Obergefell* respectfully acknowledged that some deeply held and long-standing religious beliefs oppose same-sex marriage. This kind of respectful treatment of dissenting views is important in continuing to protect religious liberty without harming the rights the Court affirmed. The conversations will continue, and legal conflicts will not be worked out overnight. Harder questions, particularly about religiously affiliated institutions and religious objectors in the marketplace, will depend on the circumstances of each situation and the interplay of a variety of laws.

Threats of losing 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status have been highly exaggerated.

After *Obergefell*, some have asserted that churches and other religious organizations will lose their tax-exempt status if they oppose same-sex marriage. Churches have long followed their own rules for performing marriages without such threat. *Obergefell* does not change this. Any threat to the tax-exempt status of religious entities would require an

-over-

expansion of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Bob Jones University v. United States* (1983). That case — which upheld the revocation of tax-exempt status based on the university's racially discriminatory admission policies — by its own terms does not apply to churches and has not been applied beyond racial discrimination in education. It is unlikely that the Court's decision in favor of same-sex marriage will have any effect on the 501(c)(3) status of religious organizations that oppose same-sex marriage. During a Congressional hearing in July 2015, the IRS confirmed there is no immediate threat to the tax-exempt status of religious colleges and universities who oppose same-sex marriage.

***Obergefell* does not create automatic access to facilities owned by religious entities.**

Laws that prohibit discrimination in public accommodations, housing and employment vary widely. Where such laws exist and prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, many have exemptions for religious organizations. Whether buildings — including sanctuaries — owned by churches or other religious organizations are affected by the Court's ruling in *Obergefell* depends on how such buildings are used and marketed as well as the specific nondiscrimination laws of the jurisdiction. Churches may limit the use of their sanctuaries to weddings consistent with their religious teachings.

Religious liberty is a foundational concept that requires more than sound bite attention.

America protects religious freedom in a distinct way — a way that allows people with vastly different beliefs to live peaceably with each other. We start with the first 16 words in the Bill of Rights: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” These words make clear that the role of government in religious matters is limited. Additional protections exist in various federal, state and local laws. While religious liberty is not absolute, robust religious liberty protects the freedom to believe and the right to exercise or act upon one's religious convictions. People with very little in common often want the same things when it comes to religion, such as the ability to believe and act in accordance with their conscience, equal rights under the law, and a government that does not take sides in religious disputes. Courts, legislatures, churches and informed citizens all share the responsibility to uphold America's legacy of religious freedom.

For more information from the Baptist Joint Committee on this topic, visit
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K. Hollyn Hollman
General Counsel

Contraceptive mandate accommodation: a substantial burden on religion?

From its beginning, the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate received strong support from women's health care advocates and strong opposition from some religious groups. The mandate requires most health care plans to provide women access to all FDA-approved birth control without any out-of-pocket costs. The purpose, of course, is to advance the ACA's emphasis on no-cost preventative health care services. The implementation of the mandate recognizes that birth control is an issue that often involves strong religious opinions, especially regarding contraceptives that some believe act as abortifacients.

In fact, religious employers (houses of worship and denominational associations) are exempt from the mandate, though certainly many would choose to provide the services. In addition, religiously affiliated nonprofit organizations (such as some colleges, hospitals and charities) that oppose contraceptives may opt out of providing them through an accommodation. The accommodation, which involves giving notice of the religious objection, shifts the burden and cost of contraceptives from the organization to the insurance provider, with costs in some situations recoverable from the government. The employee would still receive the health care benefit, and the religious objection would be respected.

Despite the government's efforts to advance the health care needs of women and protect religious liberty interests, challenges to the mandate have been vigorously pursued in a variety of contexts by for-profit and nonprofit employers. Prior to *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014), for-profit businesses were not eligible for the religious nonprofit accommodation but were required to provide contraceptive coverage. After the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Hobby Lobby's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) claim that compliance with the contraceptive mandate would be a substantial burden on the owners' religious beliefs, HHS amended the rules to allow closely held businesses to utilize this accommodation. Meanwhile, some religiously affiliated employers challenged the accommodation as inadequate.

While many religious nonprofits do not oppose the accommodation, about 50 cases of objectors have been steadily working their way through the federal court system. They challenge the accommodation by arguing that submitting a written objection — a two-page form to the insurance provider or a letter to HHS — is a sub-

stantial burden on their religious beliefs because this objection makes them complicit in facilitating access by their employees or students to the objectionable contraceptives. While many of the cases had initial success in the district courts, they have not fared well on appeal.

Now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court are six petitions seeking review of decisions in appellate cases which rejected the religious nonprofits' RFRA claims that officially registering an objection is a substantial burden on their religious beliefs. The petitioners object to the ACA's contraceptive mandate and reject the accommodation created for them.

Under RFRA, once the Court found that the mandate was a substantial burden on Hobby Lobby, the company could have won in one of two ways: a finding that the government did not have a compelling interest in improving women's access to contraceptives or that the government had not employed the least restrictive means to achieve its goal. The Court chose the second path: "HHS itself has demonstrated that it has at its disposal an approach that is less restrictive than requiring employers to fund contraceptive methods that violate their religious beliefs." This other approach is the accommodation for religious nonprofits. The question now is whether *that accommodation* can be successfully challenged under RFRA.

The 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th and D.C. Circuit Courts have all rejected this argument, finding that federal law requires coverage of contraceptives, not the religious group's written objection. In short, these courts have found that the accommodation does not require the plaintiffs to provide or facilitate access to contraceptives. Instead, the accommodation relieves the plaintiffs of the obligation to provide, pay for or facilitate contraceptive coverage. The plaintiffs have no right under RFRA to challenge the independent conduct of third-party insurance providers, according to the court decisions.

The consistency of results in these cases weighs against the U.S. Supreme Court granting review. In general, the Court is more likely to grant petitions when the circuit courts have reached different conclusions on the same issue. The opportunity, however, for defining the boundaries of RFRA to resolve these and other cases may convince the Court to grant one or more of these petitions.

Oklahoma Supreme Court orders removal of Ten Commandments from Capitol lawn

The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled June 30 that a Ten Commandments monument on the state Capitol grounds must come down in a lawsuit brought by the ACLU on behalf of an ordained Baptist minister and other citizens.

Bruce Prescott, the lead plaintiff in *Prescott et al. v. Oklahoma Capitol Preservation Commission*, filed a lawsuit in 2013 claiming the privately funded monument erected in 2012 violated a provision in the state constitution prohibiting the use of state property to support particular religions or sects.

Oklahoma's high court agreed in a 7-2 decision overruling a district judge who said in 2014 the display is constitutional because of the historical, rather than religious, importance of the Ten Commandments. Contrary to the lower court, the Supreme Court majority found, "The Ten Commandments are obviously religious in nature and are an integral part of the Jewish and Christian faiths."

Prescott, former executive director of Mainstream Oklahoma Baptists who now leads the Oklahoma Faith Network, welcomed the decision in a statement on Facebook.

"Religious people should rejoice that despite the state's argument to the contrary, the court made clear that the Ten Commandments monument is obviously religious in nature, and not merely a secular historical artifact," Prescott said.

In the lawsuit, Prescott and fellow plaintiff Jim Huff, a member at First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and executive secretary of the Oklahoma chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, objected to "co-option of their religious traditions, resulting in a cheapening and

degradation of their shared faith."

Paid for with \$10,000 donated and raised privately by state Rep. Mike Ritze, House sponsor of legislation authorizing its placement in 2009, the monument used the same text placed on a monument on the Capitol grounds in Texas that the U.S. Supreme Court determined did not violate the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Oklahoma's Supreme Court said that precedent had no bearing on the case before them. "The issue in the case at hand is whether the Oklahoma Ten Commandments monument violates the Oklahoma Constitution, not whether it violates the Establishment Clause," the justices ruled. "Our opinion rests solely on the Oklahoma Constitution with no regard for federal jurisprudence."

Ritze, a Southern Baptist deacon and Sunday school teacher at Arrow Heights Baptist Church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, released a statement saying he was "deeply disappointed" by the Supreme Court's decision. "This 'opinion' reads more like a shot from the hip than a real opinion," Ritze said. "When the court rules against legislative action that is in compliance with its own precedent it should at least explain itself to the legislature and the people. What will now become of the Native American religious symbols at the Capitol?"

Attorney General Scott Pruitt said, "Quite simply, the Oklahoma Supreme Court got it wrong." Pruitt's office asked the court for a rehearing, but the court denied the request July 27.

—Bob Allen, *Baptist News Global*, with BJC Staff Reports

Court upholds Sikh's right to facial hair, turban in ROTC

A federal court has ruled that a Sikh college student must be allowed to join his school's Army ROTC with his long hair, beard and turban intact.

In her decision, Judge Amy Berman Jackson of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., said June 12 that the Army has made so many exceptions for secular grooming issues — more than 197,000, including a "vampire Mickey Mouse" tattoo — that it had to make an exception here to comply with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

"All this Sikh student wants to do is to serve his country," said Eric Baxter, senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which supported the student. "The military cannot issue uniform exemptions for secular reasons but then refuse to issue them for religious reasons. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act was written and passed nearly unanimously by Congress precisely to protect the rights of individuals such as Mr. Singh."

The student, Iknor Singh, a junior at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., was told in 2014 that his hair and turban did not conform to the Army's grooming and uniform standards and therefore he could not join the school's ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program.

Sikhs are forbidden to cut their hair and beard as symbols of their obedience to their faith. Singh told the court

that cutting his hair and beard would mean "dishonoring or offending God."

U.S. Army regulations require that a soldier's hair be "tapered" in appearance and that his or her religious headgear bear no symbols and fit under other uniform headgear. Facial hair is generally not allowed. The Pentagon updated its rules in 2014 to say that exemptions for religious reasons would be granted as long as they do not have "an adverse impact on readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety or discipline."

Sikhs have served in the U.S. military since at least World War I and have long sought exemptions for their beards, long hair and turbans. In April 2009, Army Capt. Kamaljeet S. Kalsi, a doctor, was told he would have to shave, cut his hair and remove his turban before serving in Afghanistan. In 2014, he testified before Congress that these were part of his "religious uniform." He received an exemption — one of only three granted to Sikhs wishing to serve in the U.S. military, according to the Sikh Coalition, an advocacy group.

"No one should have to choose between their faith and service to their country," said Gurjot Kaur, the Sikh Coalition's senior staff attorney.

—Kimberly Winston, *Religion News Service*

Remembering James M. Dunn



James M. Dunn, the firebrand Baptist who led the Baptist Joint Committee for nearly two decades, died on July 4 at the age of 83. Known for his stalwart defense of religious liberty, colorful turns of phrase and ubiquitous bow tie, Dunn will be remembered for his contributions throughout Baptist life, including his leadership of the BJC from 1981-1999. He fought for a strong Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause while simultaneously shepherding the organization through a tumultuous time in Baptist denominational history.

“The 20th century had no greater champion of religious freedom – of conscience – than James Dunn,” said Oliver “Buzz” Thomas, who served as BJC general counsel from 1985-1993. “Like Roger Williams, John Leland, George W. Truett and the other great Baptist leaders before him, James understood the dangers of civil religion.”

In his first column for *Report from the Capital*, Dunn wrote, “To translate the revealed message of God’s love into public policy is a massive and sometimes tricky undertaking but our generation is not the first to try. God’s children have been bringing morality to public life for centuries.”

Believing government intrusion was a violation of soul freedom, Dunn consistently led the BJC in its commitment to the Baptist tradition of religious liberty. Some of the organization’s greatest legislative accomplishments — including the Equal Access Act and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act — were during Dunn’s tenure.

“Comfortable in his own skin and serenely secure of who he was at his core, James surrounded himself with talented people who brought their best energies to the task of protecting and enhancing religious liberty in the most religiously diverse nation on Earth,” said Stan Hastey, who worked with Dunn at the BJC for almost a decade.

After retiring as executive director in 1999, Dunn served as the president of the BJC’s endowment and taught at the School of Divinity at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. His legacy continues on campus with the James and Marilyn Dunn Chair of Baptist Studies, which provides an ongoing Baptist studies faculty presence at the school.

Despite his many accomplishments, Dunn is maybe best remembered for his personal touch and willingness to elevate the needs of others above his own, as well as his commitment to the next generation.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn.

James Dunn: Leader, mentor and friend



J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

I had the honor of presenting a short eulogy for my mentor and friend James Dunn at his memorial service at Knollwood Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C. The service was streamed live online and later posted on the BJC website and Facebook page. Several days later, I recorded a podcast interview with the BJC's communications associate, Jordan Edwards, sharing additional recollections about my relationship and work with James. I decided to devote my column this month to

a somewhat edited transcript of that podcast interview. I hope you enjoy these personal reflections of someone who meant so much to me and so many of you.

JORDAN EDWARDS: We are recording this a few days after Dr. James Dunn's memorial service. Brent, I know it was a somber occasion, but what did you enjoy about the service?

BRENT WALKER: Just remembering the good things about James' life, talking about them with friends. There were people who I hadn't seen in many years, some who go way back. And we just had a good time remembering and celebrating James' life, even as we regretted his passing.

JE: Before we get into Dr. Dunn's legacy as executive director of the BJC, how would you describe James Dunn as a person?

BW: Well, he was a wonderful person, a good and dear friend. What comes to mind when I think of James is that he really did care about people. He loved people. He reached out and was involved in their lives and had an incredible extended family of good friends. He and Marilyn didn't have any children, but he affected so many young people's lives, his many adopted "young 'uns," as he would call them. He was a caring person, a loving person.

As is the case with many great men and women, he was something of a contradiction in many ways. He could be tough and tender at the same time. He could be prophetic and pastoral. He could be mean and charitable. He believed deeply in freedom, but also responsibility at the same time. He spoke with that down-home Texas twang, sort of a high-pitched tone when he got excited. But he could turn around and pray in King James English. Wonderful guy, and we're gonna miss him.

JE: Though his list of accomplishments is long, Dr. Dunn might best be remembered for his concept of "soul freedom." Brent, why was soul freedom so important to Dr. Dunn?

BW: Dr. Dunn regarded soul freedom as the theological taproot of everything else. It goes to the very essence of our relationship with God — that God-infused liberty of

conscience we all enjoy, not because we're Baptist or Christian, but because we're human beings created in God's image. And for that relationship to be true and genuine, it has to be based on love and voluntarily entered into. It all starts with soul freedom, and from that everything else goes out. Religious liberty is the ethical imperative that follows from the theological principle of soul freedom. It means that the soul freedom that I enjoy should be extended to everyone else in the country and in the world. Everybody!

JE: What was it like at the BJC in the early 1990s when you, Dr. Dunn and [former BJC General Counsel] Buzz Thomas worked in coalition to create the Religious Freedom Restoration Act [RFRA]?

BW: It was an interesting time. All three of us were involved, although Buzz pretty much led the effort from the BJC's point of view and led the coalition that lobbied for the passage of RFRA. It was a heady time. We were all reeling from the Supreme Court's unfortunate decision that essentially gutted the Free Exercise Clause in the First Amendment in the Native American peyote case. We were, of course, pursuing a legislative fix to provide additional protection for the exercise of religion statutorily, if not constitutionally. We knew we were doing something important that, if successful, would have ramifications throughout our country in protecting religious liberty. It was a fun time.

JE: I feel like that was when Dr. Dunn was in his element, making phone calls and connections and doing what Dr. Dunn did best, you know?

BW: Right, no absolutely. He was involved. And, golly, I'll never forget the day he said, "What we need is a little legislative Viagra!" Actually, that was several years later when we were working on a follow-on piece of legislation after part of RFRA was struck down as unconstitutional. But, yeah, that was James all right, "legislative Viagra." He hit the nail on the head.

JE: Let's talk about the Equal Access Act. Why was this piece of legislation so important and what part did Dr. Dunn and the BJC play in its passing?

BW: We were very much involved. This was several years before I came to the BJC. Essentially, it ensured that religious clubs in public secondary schools could meet on the same footing as other non-curriculum related groups. It was a very important piece of legislation that James was very much involved with and, as with the case with RFRA, the Equal Access Act had bipartisan support.

He worked with both the Republicans, like Mark Hatfield, and Democrats to form a coalition to pass this very important piece of legislation to ensure the rights of students to meet on campus before and after school. It was indicative of James' desire not just to criticize bad ideas, but to pursue good ideas. It really got started with James' and others' opposition to President Ronald Reagan's call

for a constitutional amendment on school prayer. He opposed it, but said let's do something positive. He believed students should be able to worship voluntarily before and after school as long as the government — as long as the school was not involved in it other than to monitor the meeting. As long as it is student-initiated and student-led, it is perfectly permissible. He not only criticized a bad idea, but he turned around and pursued a good idea that would reach positive results.

JE: Brent, what's your favorite James Dunn quote?

BW: Jordan, it's hard to pick one, because there are so many good ones. Most people are familiar with his quote about theocracy. He would often say in opposition to a theocracy, "The problem I have with theocrats is they all want to be Theo." And, every time he would say that in a speech he would get a big laugh.

Actually, one time when I was still in seminary after I had planned to come to the BJC, I thought, "I'm gonna go to the library and check out all the James Dunn tapes I can find." So, I got a whole bunch of them, and I'm listening to James preach, teach and lecture. I heard that "Theo" line. I don't know where it was or where he was speaking, but there was, of course, uproarious laughter. As the laughter died down you could just hear him say — it must have been a panel, because it sounded like he was whispering, "You know, if you ever get one of those, never give it up, just keep using it, keep using it." So, he kept using it. And it was not just that it engendered laughter, it was a good, poignant point that he was trying to make: Whose religion are you going to establish when you talk about privileging Christianity and establishing something akin to a theocracy? It was typical James Dunn.

There's another one that I have often enjoyed, and it has to do with the combination of freedom and responsibility. It was not an either/or thing for James. It was a both/and. The quote is, "Freedom is not absolute, no one is 'free as a bird.' Only a bird is free as a bird." Continuing, he said, "Freedom and responsibility are like two sides of a coin, inseparable. No matter how thin it is sliced, the coin of responsible freedom still has two sides."

JE: How will you remember James as a person? What will stick with you?

BW: Well, his humor, his incredible intelligence, the interest he took in the lives of so many people. As I said before, the fact that he cared about and loved people was always front and center. Visually, I think of his bow tie, I think of him talking with his bony fingers as much as with his voice. His smallish body, but not withstanding that he had such a huge presence in the room.

Buzz Thomas has said, "James is a lion trapped in the body of a housecat." And I think that's apt. I'll give Buzz credit for that. That visual image will always be impressed on my mind. And just the fact that he was just such a giving, caring, intelligent, funny guy.

JE: He taught for years and years at Wake Forest University School of Divinity after he left the BJC. So he never gave up on his principles. He never stopped teaching and

James Dunn in action



Dunn testifies against a tuition tax credit for private colleges before the House Budget Committee task force, 1983.



Dunn addresses the media, backed by coalition partners from the American Jewish Committee and United Church of Christ, 1997.



Dunn talks to Wake Forest University School of Divinity students while visiting the BJC offices on Capitol Hill, 2013.

continuing what he believed in to the next generation.

BW: Not only did he not recede from it, he intensified it. When he left the BJC, he got involved with transferring that passion, that intelligence, that knowledge, those principles to another generation of Baptists. As good a preacher as he was, as good a lobbyist, as good a public policy advocate, he was a consummate teacher and could get the message through to young people. Again, not just brain to brain but heart to heart, and they knew he cared about them as persons as well as what they were supposed to learn in class.

For the complete interview — as well as additional BJC podcasts — visit BJCOnline.org/podcasts or subscribe to our iTunes channel.

Hired hand and full-time minister

For nearly two decades, James M. Dunn served as Baptists' "hired hand" in Washington, working for religious liberty and the separation of church and state. He frequently used that self-description, and it said a lot about how he led the Baptist Joint Committee.

When he arrived in 1981, James brought a full tool chest — a Ph.D. in ethics, experience as a pastor and campus minister, leadership of Texas Baptists' ethics agency and an amazing collection of close ties to Baptist clergy and laity, journalists and politicians. He used all these gifts to advance religious liberty, as well as to bolster the BJC after losing the support of its largest member body.

Almost from the start, James and the agency came under fire from the emerging fundamentalist leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention. James did not back down when it came to the historic Baptist principles of soul freedom and religious liberty and the idea that the separation of church and state is the best way to protect religious liberty.

He was head of the close-knit Washington office for 14 of the 19 years I worked in the communications department. He constantly encouraged us and gave us freedom to do the job. I don't recall him asking to review an article before it was published. Conversely, when we suggested changes in his writings, he took it in stride. Only a time or two did he say, "No, Larry, I said what I meant to say, and that's the way I want to say it."

James' column for *Report from the Capital* always arrived hand-written on anything from a legal pad to a napkin to the backs of scrap paper or envelopes. It was the same handwriting he used to send what had to be thousands of personal notes. As their hired hand, James believed Baptists should hear from him personally, and he spent time every day making that happen.

James lived both ethically and frugally. His lunch frequently consisted of either a bowl of Senate bean soup or a handful of Hubs peanuts that he often shared with the staff.

He loved to mentor young folks. The internship program he developed at the BJC was — and is — wildly successful.

It's not surprising that when he retired as head of the BJC, he moved to Wake Forest University Divinity School where he continued to invest in the future.

James was a staunch defender of religious liberty who knew his way in the political world of Washington. But he also was a compassionate full-time Christian minister. I remember James flying back from Texas after funeral services for his father to keep a commitment to preach a revival at a Northern Virginia Baptist church. It did not get press coverage, but it was just as much a part of James as his Capitol Hill testimony.

Monday morning staff meetings normally dealt with BJC work plans, but they also were a time to focus on personal concerns. I recall the Monday after our 8-year-old daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. James led the staff in prayer, using his customary King James English. "We need Thee every hour, our Father," he began the prayer. I don't recall anything else from that staff meeting, but to this day I can still hear James voice those words.

I witnessed a fuller view of James when he served as interim preacher at Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale, Virginia. Until then, I had mostly heard James speak or preach about religious liberty or soul freedom, but this lengthy interim gave me the chance to hear him deal with a broader range of subjects. One Sunday morning after the service, I ran into the late Col. Robert Alsheimer. We had just listened to James "tell the truth with the bark still on it," as his colleague Foy Valentine once said. After we both complimented the sermon, Bob emphatically said, "I love that guy." It is a sentiment shared by a lot of folks at Ravensworth and elsewhere who are grateful for James' rich contributions to their lives.

Larry Chesser served as the BJC's information associate in the early 1980s and later as the director of communications from 1990-2004. He is retired and living in Arkansas.



By Larry Chesser

Memorial Service for James M. Dunn



Friends, colleagues, musicians and ministers paid tribute to James Dunn at Knollwood Baptist Church on July 19. Pictured are (clockwise) the Rev. Dr. Bill Leonard, James and Marilyn Dunn Chair of Baptist Studies at Wake Forest University School of Divinity; Melissa Rogers, executive director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (who read letters from President Barack Obama and former President Jimmy Carter); BJC Executive Director Brent Walker; Knollwood Pastor Bob Setzer; the Chancel Choir; and the Rev. Oliver Thomas and the Rev. Molly Brummett Wudel, both WFU Divinity School graduates. Video of the service is available at BJCOnline.org/JamesDunn.

Photos by Rev. Stephen Ball

Our big, bright Baptist light

“Hey Berrr!”

When James approached and threw his arm around you to huddle for discussion and uttered that, it was special. You instantly became a friend, confidant, conspirator, a crony with James to fight the next battle for social justice — or maybe he just had a new barbecue joint in mind.

In the early 1990s, a self-appointed cabal of the Southern Baptist Convention had fired my mother, Joyce Byrd, and Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder for essentially not reading the Bible the way the fundamentalists demanded it. In addition, Elder had been a vote with James in the SBC battles. Thus, in 1995, as I graduated college, I wanted nothing to do with the Southern Baptist hierarchy or any Baptist anything for that matter. However, I was ambitious and wanted to land in D.C. My parents said I should go work for Baptist legend James Dunn — “he stood up to the same guys that fired your mom. He’s not like any Baptist you’ve ever met.” They were right.

It only took one day of working for James to want to follow him anywhere. Funny, illuminating, unfiltered, and led by example. In the same breath in which he commiserated against the failures of the church and government, he also instilled an inspirational hope and belief that religion and government could solve the injustices of the day. It was James’ purifying inhale and exhale

throughout the time I knew him.

After my internship, he hired me full-time, but clarified he couldn’t pay me much. “Don’t worry,” he said, “stick with me and I’ll teach you how to live on that thing we laugh is your salary.” From there, James took me to the U.S. Senate cafeteria for Senate bean soup — they don’t charge extra for onions and jalapeños on top from the salad bar. He was more than just a good steward of the BJC’s budget. Larry Chesser and I laughed (and metaphorically cried) on more than one occasion when we heard James in his office telling an elderly donor by phone, “No, no — don’t give us that much money. We just need \$100 this time.” He never asked for more than absolutely needed.

Among our duties, Chesser and I edited James’ “Reflections” column in *Report from the Capital* — a little like putting a Band-Aid on a fire hydrant. Also during those years, I attended and covered as a journalist five State of the Union addresses, the impeachment hearings, the *Bush v. Gore* Supreme Court arguments and an array of famous newsmakers and events. But still, the most historic event I ever witnessed was James trying to figure out “this new e-damn-mail!”

When he took staff to events and introduced us, he bragged on us so much that we didn’t even know who he was talking about. He ran into the director of the CIA one day in a hallway with me and pointedly stated to John

Deutch, “Here’s Kenny — he wrote the story that exposed your group wrongfully using missionaries in foreign countries.” I wasn’t the first, but it didn’t matter. He was a boss in name, but a friend and mentor first to all who worked with him.

After I left the BJC to attend law school, James and I stayed in touch. A few years ago, I met him for lunch near Wake Forest and explained I was suing Big Tobacco on behalf of injured smokers who began smoking as teenagers in the 1940s and 50s. He was more than proud and knew the daunting nature of the task and quipped, “That could lead a man to drink, ...[he paused] and CUSS!” From time to time, an envelope would appear at my office with news clippings exposing various lies from Big Tobacco. In his well-known handwriting, he would write big notes such as “Even Ralph Reed didn’t think of this one!” I loved him. And then the letters slowly stopped. And on July 4, our big, bright Baptist light went out. He’s Dunn, as he said, but let us all make sure his legacy continues.

Kenny Byrd is a former BJC intern, BJC associate director of communications, and Washington bureau chief for Associated Baptist Press.

He is an attorney in Nashville, Tennessee.



By Kenny Byrd



Many former and current BJC staff members, board members and interns gathered in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to pay tribute to James Dunn. All were not able to gather for this photo, but pictured above are (L to R): Patsy Ayres, Oliver “Buzz” Thomas, Melissa Rogers, John Carter, Brent Walker, Holly Hollman, Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, Rosemary Brevard, Andrew Daugherty, Jeff Huett, Kenny Byrd, Pam Durso, Don Byrd, Anthony Petty, Cherilyn Crowe, Brandon Jones, John Lawrence, Stan Hastey, and Pat Anderson.

The Legacy of James Dunn

James Dunn created resources during his tenure at the BJC that are still relevant today. Use, share and enjoy these as another way to celebrate his life and work.

The Intersection:

Where Religious Liberty and Power Meet

In this 1996 video, Dunn talks with renowned journalist Bill Moyers about the importance of religious liberty in the United States and how it relates to Baptist heritage.



Visit BJCOnline.org/TheIntersection to view or download the video and a discussion guide if you would like to use it in your church or Bible study. The page also includes a behind-the-scenes story of the making of the video. It was a joint production with the BJC and American Baptist Home Mission Societies and filmed at The Riverside Church in New York City.

How to recognize a 'real' Baptist

By James M. Dunn

1. If soul liberty is important.
2. If the priesthood of all believers is more than a slogan.
3. If one insists on interpreting the Scriptures for themselves.
4. If one defends the right of each person to come to the Bible and, led by the spirit, seek its truth.
5. If one believes that one must accept Jesus Christ personally.
6. If the church functions as a democracy.
7. If in the fellowship of churches each one is autonomous.
8. If there is no pope or presbyter, president or pastor who rules over you.
9. If religious liberty is the password to public witness and the separation of church and state is its essential corollary.
10. If no mortal has the power to suppress, curtail, rule out, or reign over the will of the local congregation.

Visit our James Dunn website page: BJCOnline.org/JamesDunn

- Career highlights and accomplishments
- Videos, including Dunn's 1999 retirement speech and 2011 RLC Luncheon address
- Memorable quotations and sayings
- Slideshow of James Dunn's life and work



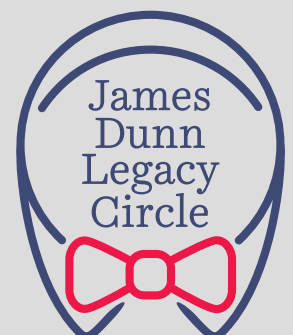
James Dunn Legacy Circle Members

Those who create an estate gift to the BJC automatically become members of the James Dunn Legacy Circle. Last year, we named our planned giving program after Dunn to recognize his important role in our history. To learn more, visit BJCOnline.org/planned-giving.

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 Rosemary Brevard
 Kent and Ann Brown
 C. S. Burgess Jr.* and Wilma B. Burgess*
 Rev. Steven C. Case and Mrs. Diane Case
 Hardy Clemons
 Reba S. Cobb
 Grady C. Cothen
 Anita Snell Daniels
 Kenneth V. and Sally Lewis Dodgson
 Dr. James M.* and Mrs. Marilyn Dunn
 Rev. J. Wesley* and Mrs. Gwen Forsline
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 J. George and Susan Evans Reed
 Pauletta R. Reeves
 Brent and Nancy Walker

*Deceased



BJC announces essay scholarship contest winners

The Baptist Joint Committee is pleased to announce the winners of the 2015 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest, sponsored by the Religious Liberty Council. The topic asked students to discuss if an employer should be able to dictate an employee's attire, including whether an employee can wear religious garb. As an example, students could use the situation in the *EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch* case, in which a Muslim woman was not hired because of her headscarf.

This year, the BJC received almost 500 submissions from 44 states and the District of Columbia, as well as Puerto Rico and Italy.

The winner of the \$2,000 grand prize is Zoe Almeida of San Antonio, Texas, for her essay titled "Balancing Act: On Compromise Between Businesses and Workers." In her essay, Almeida argued that the burden of Abercrombie to accommodate the wearing of a headscarf was not "undue hardship." She also acknowledged the vagueness of the accommodation law and wrote, "Balance is key to keeping our country a free society: between private practices and public interaction, between private business and individual rights."

The daughter of Michael and Yvette Almeida, she will also receive a trip to Washington, D.C., in conjunction with the BJC board meeting in October. Almeida attends Blessed Sacrament Church in San Antonio and will enter her senior year at Antonian College Preparatory High School this fall.

The second place winner is Cassie Froese of Savage, Minnesota. She will receive \$1,000 for her essay "To Wear Or Not to Wear: Forging a Mutually Beneficial Approach to Religious Freedom in the Workplace." She supported company dress codes as long as they did not discriminate against any institute of religion and cited the best approach as negotiation between employer and employee. The daughter of Karl and Ruth Froese, Cassie is a home-schooled senior who will take PSEO courses at Normandale Community College this fall.

The winner of the \$250 third place prize is Meghan Cahill of Louisville, Ohio, for her essay, "Employers Must Honor Religious Attire." She argued that restrictions against religious garb, unless for reasons of safety or company integrity, were discriminatory practices and hindered diversity. She is the daughter of Kristin and Joe Cahill. Meghan is a graduate of Louisville High School and plans to attend Ohio State University and major in International Studies with a minor in Arabic.

Now entering its tenth year, the Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest is open to all high school juniors and seniors. The topic for the 2016 contest is scheduled to be announced later this year. For more information, visit BJCOnline.org/contest.

—Miriam Cho, BJC intern

Federal prisons agree inmates can be 'humanists'

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has agreed to recognize humanism as a religion after settling a lawsuit brought by an Oregon inmate.

The move comes a year after the U.S. Army agreed to recognize humanism as a religious choice for service members and may signal a broader government willingness to recognize humanism, a system of beliefs that recognizes no deity and emphasizes rational thinking.

"This settlement is a victory for all humanists in the federal prison system, who will no longer be denied the rights that religious individuals are accorded," said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association.

The AHA sued the prison in 2014 on behalf of Jason Michael Holden, an inmate at the Federal Detention Center in Sheridan, Oregon, who is serving a sentence for armed robbery. Holden was seeking the right to form a humanist study group — a right afforded prisoners of other faiths.

Under the settlement, the Federal Bureau of Prisons agreed to acknowledge humanism as a "worldview" and allow its adherents the same rights and recognition enjoyed by inmates of other faiths. Those rights include requesting time and space for activities, visits by pastors or other humanist chaplains and access to literature and study materials.

Humanist inmates will also be able to celebrate "holy days," including Darwin Day, the annual observance of naturalist Charles Darwin's birthday on Feb. 12 that is now widely marked by humanist groups around the world.

The prison bureau also agreed to add a section on humanism to its handbook on inmate beliefs and practices.

No one knows how many of the 1.6 million U.S. inmates identify as humanist or any other faith, as the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics rarely surveys inmates on their faith. The Pew Research Center surveyed prison chaplains in 2012 and they reported that efforts by inmates to proselytize or convert other inmates was common and often successful — three-fourths of the surveyed chaplains said there is a considerable amount of "religious switching" occurring in their prisons, especially among Muslims and Protestants.

Holden said in a radio interview that humanism is different from atheism and deserved recognition as a set of beliefs.

"As humanists, we believe in the ability of mankind to transcend their differences and find some common ground," he said. "You know, make the world a better place."

—Kimberly Winston, Religion News Service

Editor's note: The next edition of *Report from the Capital* will be a combined September/October edition. Look for it in your mailbox near the end of October.

Luncheon celebrates Juneteenth, connection between religious liberty and human freedom

DALLAS – What will you say when faced with injustice and inequality? On Juneteenth, the Rev. Dr. Marvin A. McMickle’s rousing address at the Religious Liberty Council Luncheon asked attendees to break the sound of silence and explained the complicated relationship between African-Americans and church-state issues.

McMickle serves as the president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and is a prolific author, with his most recent book titled *Pulpit & Politics: Separation of Church & State in the Black Church*. Speaking to more than 600 people gathered for the 2015 Religious Liberty Council Luncheon in Dallas on June 19, he noted the significance of the date. Commonly referred to as “Juneteenth,” June 19 is one of the most popular celebrations of the abolition of slavery in the United States. On that date in 1865, news about the Emancipation Proclamation finally made its way to the state of Texas in an order from the Union army.

This year was the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth, which continues to serve as a somber reminder that slavery continued for more than two years in the United States after its legal abolition. The order did not make things easier for many of the enslaved, and state-sanctioned discrimination continued long after the first Juneteenth.

“I begin with a reference to Juneteenth because there is an important connection between religious liberty and human freedom that has brought me before you today,” McMickle said. “The power of the state should never be used to prefer one religious tradition

above any and all others, and I’m only too aware historically of the centuries-long struggle of religious intolerance and the quest for religious liberty.”

McMickle discussed the history of religious intolerance in Europe, and noted that the Thirty Years’ War was essentially between nations and their state-sanctioned religions. The idea of a state-supported – and sometimes state-mandated – church came to America with its European settlers. McMickle reminded the crowd of the path (including the



McMickle

persecution of Baptists) that led to the protection of religious freedom and separation of church and state enshrined in the First Amendment.

Turning to the historical significance of speaking on Juneteenth, McMickle pointed out that, while Holland, Spain, England and its colonies were seeking religious liberty for themselves, they were also “actively involved with the trans-Atlantic slave trade that denied physical liberty to tens of millions of people.”

McMickle discussed the history of slavery, including how the church and the state often worked together to “build their economies on the backs of slavery.” He explained that “because of

the historic collaboration between the white church and white governments, the perpetuation of the suffering and exploitation – the state by its actions, and sadly the church by its silence,” many African-Americans have a “jaundiced view” regarding the issue of separation of church and state.

Commenting on Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous letter from the Birmingham jail, McMickle noted that King did not write it simply to protest segregation statutes; it was also in response to clergy who told King he should not be so active in protests and the fight for civil rights.

McMickle said many African-American ministers found they could alter the course of history if they “put their hands on the levers of political power.” They got involved in politics, he said, not because they wanted to use the government to advance religion, but they wanted to make a difference and create change, such as shaping policies to help the underprivileged.

Speaking days after the deadly shooting at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., McMickle noted that the pastor – who was among those who lost their lives – was also a state senator.

McMickle challenged the crowd to think about what they will say when it comes to inequality. “While you are speaking on the separation of church and state and your interests in the matter of religious liberty, I invite you, I implore you, I encourage you to not continue the sound of silence on the issues of injustice and inequality that go on in this country almost undisturbed.

“Today is Juneteenth. One hundred



More than 600 people gathered for this year’s Religious Liberty Council Luncheon in Texas, including three of the BJC’s youngest supporters wearing “Religious Liberty for All” onesies. For more photos, visit BJCOnline.org/Luncheon.

fifty years ago, slavery was finally ended in this country, not by any moral persuasion, but by the Union army. But the pain goes on, as does the struggle.

“Religious liberty is good, but so is physical freedom. Keep the faith by breaking the silence,” he proclaimed.

The luncheon included updates from BJC Executive Director Brent Walker and General Counsel Holly Hollman on the latest from Washington. BJC supporters Woody and Penny Jenkins also shared why they decided to include the Baptist Joint Committee in their estate plans, becoming part of the James Dunn Legacy Circle. When planning for retirement, they said they wanted to make sure that things they cared about were taken care of, and that included religious liberty and the BJC. “We know of no other organization that promotes religious liberty at the level and to the extent that the BJC does anywhere in our country,” Woody said.



Woody and Penny Jenkins

As the individual donor organization of the Baptist Joint Committee, the Religious Liberty Council (RLC) cultivates an understanding of religious freedom among Baptists and the larger public. It is one of the 15 supporting bodies of the BJC, with 13 RLC members serving three-year terms on the BJC Board of Directors.

During the luncheon, those in attendance elected new RLC officers and board representatives. Rebecca Mathis of North Carolina and Mitch Randall of Oklahoma were elected co-chairs of the RLC, and Alyssa Aldape of Georgia was elected secretary. The new class of RLC representatives elected to the BJC board were Andrew Daugherty of Colorado, Aubrey Ducker of Florida, Courtney Krueger of South Carolina, and Tambi Swiney of Tennessee.

For more information about this year’s event – including links to photos and a video of the entire luncheon – visit BJCOnline.org/Luncheon.

—Cherilyn Crowe

Honorary and memorial gifts to the Baptist Joint Committee

In honor of the Rev. Dr. Marvin A. McMickle at the RLC Luncheon

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Memorial gifts for James Dunn will be printed in an upcoming edition.



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- Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

REPORT from the Capital

J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

Cherilyn Crowe
Editor

Jordan Edwards
Associate Editor

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WHY WE GIVE

By S. Carter McNeese
Williamsburg, Virginia

I first learned about the Baptist Joint Committee when I took a class with James Dunn and Melissa Rogers at Wake Forest University. As part of the class, we made the trip to Washington, D.C., and visited the BJC offices.

The BJC is unique in that it advocates for religious liberty for all — not just from the standpoint that it is good public policy or that it is constitutional, but that it is also, and foremost, good theology! That conviction of spirit and heart combined with some of the best minds in D.C. means that the BJC is a shining light on the Hill when it comes to faith-based advocacy. It is also a great way for us to carry our Baptist message and faith out into the world to show that the Baptist way of being Christian is unique and special.

For quite a while I have wanted to do something to honor Dr. Dunn. When I arrived at Wake Forest, I was very much a seeker. I was without a denominational home and identity. Dr. Dunn could see that. He brought me in, showed me what it meant to be a Baptist — stressing, of course, the importance of soul freedom and religious liberty to the Baptist way of being a follower of Jesus.

I had always thought that supporting the BJC to honor Dr. Dunn would have to

come in the future. However, this year at the Religious Liberty Council Luncheon in Dallas, Texas, I heard Woody and Penny Jenkins talk about how they had included the BJC in their estate plans. When I found out that I could support the BJC's mission by making it a beneficiary of my life insurance, I realized that was something that I could do now.



I may be 31 and a poor seminary student, but I have life insurance and I can ensure that the BJC gets a portion of that upon my death. When I came home from Dallas, my fiancée and I had a long conversation about making this long-term promise to the BJC. We were still discussing it when I received word on July 4 that Dr. Dunn had passed away. With the news, we knew right away that joining the James Dunn Legacy Circle by including the BJC in our long-term plans was the right thing to do.

If you have included the BJC in your estate plans or would like more information about naming us as beneficiary of a will or retirement plan, visit BJConline.org/planned-giving and fill out the simple form. You may also contact Development Director Taryn Deaton at 202-544-4226 or by emailing LegacyCircle@BJConline.org.