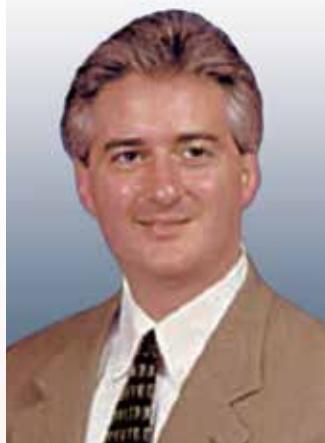




## THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

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# Old-fashioned ministry: Investing in others



Daniel Hall  
Director • MBF

*Prelude* Having recently reached the milestone of 50 years of age (I'm actually 51 but decided to stop counting at 50), I suppose that I officially have reached middle age, right? No, I'm not really anticipating living until 100, but I'm told that 50 is the new 30 (or something similar). Some people I know think that I am a product of the Middle Ages rather than middle-aged. I was out of town on my 50th birthday, so my wife sent me a text message that indicated that my AARP registration information had arrived in the mail. I reminded her that I had received an AARP packet when I

turned 40 just a short time ago. (I probably need a new promo picture since the one displayed in this article was taken closer to my 40th birthday than my 50th.)

I suppose that many benefits come from getting older. One specific benefit may be that being referred to as "old fashioned" or "old school" can be received as a compliment regardless of how the comment was intended. Besides, having "old fashioned" or "old school" values can be a badge of honor. Why? Because an "old fashioned" approach to life typically is accompanied by wisdom that comes slowly through the years rather than developing instantly at the speed of a

microwave oven or a drive-through window.

Vocational ministry is an area where I believe that being somewhat "old-fashioned" is to be preferred.

While the leadership paradigm seems to have shifted away from an "old school" model in many churches and other ministry areas, I would maintain that the example of a servant should be the preferred and expected practice still today. This edition of Foundation News is presented with the goal of highlighting three servant leaders whose legacy of old-fashioned ministry through music continues to influence current and future generations of ministers.

## W.C. Morgan — Mississippi's Music Man

William Claude (W.C.) Morgan was born on August 29, 1902 as the seventh of eight children to a lumberman in Perry County, Mississippi. W.C.'s mother encouraged all of her children to pursue all learning opportunities. Her special emphasis, however, was on learning experiences related to music. Using an old pump organ, W.C.'s older sister Maude provided her brother with his early keyboard training. His formal piano study began during his freshman year of high school.

W.C.'s interests during high school included math, science, sports, music, and the Baptist Young People's Union (B.Y.P.U.). His interest in church ministry was fostered as a teenager.

As a student at Mississippi College, W.C. met his future wife Kate Polk, whose father was a Louisiana pastor. While leading the music for a revival at

the church where Kate's father served as pastor, W.C. asked Kate to marry him. She agreed, and the couple wed in July 1926. The next year, both W.C. and Kate taught school in Carthage. W.C. served as the football coach, math and science teacher, and band director at Carthage High School. Together, this young couple helped strengthen their church in Carthage by emphasizing ministry to young people.

Pursuing his life-long dream of studying music in seminary, both W.C. and Kate enrolled as students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. They followed a three-day journey on gravel roads in the rain, driving a stripped-down Model T, without a top, from Mississippi to Fort Worth, Texas. While at seminary, W.C. studied religious education and music as he majored in pipe organ and voice.

With the Great Depression in full swing at the time of his graduation from SWBTS in 1931, few churches had the financial capacity to enlist any ministerial staff beyond the pastor. Therefore, W.C. accepted various public school teaching positions throughout Mississippi. The scope of his subject knowledge, his interest in young people, and his desire to share his love for music with others were apparent as W.C. taught math, science, band, and directed the orchestra. In addition, he taught individual piano and other instrument lessons.

The Morgans continued to minister through Mississippi public schools and churches for the next several years. Whether serving as the band director at Copiah-Lincoln Jr. College or Bay St. Louis High School, W.C. continued to pursue excellence in music.

Based on his proficiency in playing twenty-seven different instruments, W.C. was awarded a bachelor's degree in music from the prestigious Vandercook School of Music in Chicago. Thereafter, he was granted a lifetime certificate to teach band, orchestra, and choir in public schools.

When the school in Bay St. Louis was unable to pay his meager salary, W.C. took a job in a shipyard in Mobile, Ala. Although the wages were better, the living conditions were not suitable for a young family that now included W.C. and Kate's daughter, Joy. Besides having to live in a tent, Joy's school was overcrowded. Believing that God had called him into church music ministry, W.C. moved his family from Mobile and the more secure financial situation

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to serve as the Minister of Education and Music at a church in Crystal Springs in 1942. Soon thereafter, the First Baptist Church of Vicksburg called W.C. to their ministerial staff where he served for five years.

In 1948, W.C. accepted the invitation to become an associate in the Training Union Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Following the sudden death of Luther Harrison (first Director of the MBCB Music Department) in 1948, W.C. had double duty as he began promoting music programming across the state with the Music Department while also continuing his responsibilities in the Training Union Department.

In January 1951, W.C. Morgan began his service as the Director of the Church Music Department. He would serve in this capacity for the next thirteen and one-half years. All of W.C.'s past experiences in band and orchestra, education, athletics, coaching, and his service in public schools and churches around the

**“My people are in the churches of Mississippi. My heart is there.”**

— W.C. Morgan

state afforded him a unique perspective on ministry. His winsome personality, strong work ethic, and his unending desire to honor his Lord in every aspect of his life, served W.C. well for this special ministry assignment.

During his tenure with the Music Department, W.C. emphasized music festivals and music as-

semblies. He helped launch the Mississippi Baptist Keyboard Festival which had 48 participants in 1949. Because of W.C.'s vision back in the 1940s, several hundred young pianists currently participate in this annual ministry event at multiple locations across the state. Furthermore, he worked extensively with leadership from every Baptist association across the state to develop opportunities to train and encourage church musicians.



W.C. Morgan

When Mississippi Baptists acquired the property that would become known as the Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, W.C. took full advantage of the opportunity to hold music festivals and conferences for all ages. W.C.'s dream of having large music gatherings in Mississippi came to fruition through Gulfshore Baptist Assembly and other locations across the state. The number of festival participants increased each year. According to most observers, Mississippi's music assembly program was the largest in the entire Southern Baptist Convention under Morgan's leadership.

Referring to her father as “Mississippi's Music Man,” Joy Morgan Davis said, “Those who knew him will remember that he devoted his life to the ministry of Sacred Music in Mississippi. He was fervent about it. Several times he was approached about joining the SBC Music Department in Nashville, Tenn. B.B. McKinney, who headed that department for so many years, had taught my father at Southwestern, and was

his mentor and then his close friend. But my father always declined the invitation without hesitation. ‘My people are in the churches of Mississippi,’ he would say. ‘My heart is there.’”

From all accounts, Claude Morgan ministered tirelessly at a pace that few could match. While at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly in April 1961, W.C. suffered the first of his three heart attacks. Following both the first and the second (1963 at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly in Ashville, N.C.), W.C. kept pressing on in his ministry through the Church Music Department. He experienced a final heart attack on March 12, 1964.

On March 13, 1964, William Claude Morgan completed his earthly sojourn and entered into his heavenly home. On the occasion of his funeral, Hines Sims (then Director of the Music Department at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.) declared, “When we in Nashville got to the place [where] we needed something new to give us a boost, we always looked to see what Claude Morgan was doing in Mississippi. He was a highly respected and progressive leader in Mississippi and the Southern Baptist Convention in the development of music in our churches – music that is God-honoring, Christ-centered, and meaningful in Christian worship.”

Throughout his life, William Claude Morgan served his Lord faithfully and completely. As an expression of appreciation for this highly regarded musician and minister, the Mississippi Church Music Conference established the “W.C. Morgan Memorial Scholarship” through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation as a memorial to his life and legacy. The scholarship provides merit-based awards to students majoring in music at a Mississippi Baptist college with intent to serve in church music ministry.

balance on and roll a log floating in the creek. (Unfortunately, I am not aware of any witnesses who can attest to that claim.) When Dan was fifteen, his older brother Dave died at the age of seventeen in a school bus accident while driving home following play practice at school. At age eighteen, further anguish invaded Dan's young life when his mother died.

Dan entered Perkinston Junior College with designs on becoming an engineer. Following his first year, he determined that he should study music and teach in the public school.

The first two years of Dan's teaching career were spent leading the elementary and high school music program at the Home Vocational School in the Big Level community where Dan had graduated. Some fifty years later, one of his former students stated, “Dan was the only person who could have gotten all of us boys to come sing in a choir.” Dan's influence on people and the high regard others had for him are part of the continued legacy of his life and ministry.

While teaching at Home Vocational School, Dan also led music at Big Level Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Wiggins. During this time, Dan not only felt that God was calling him to pursue vocational ministry, but he also believed that he

needed to finish college. So, with \$14 in his pocket, borrowing his father's car, Dan struck out for Mississippi College in Clinton. At one point during his educational experience, Dan became so frustrated that he went back to his dormitory room intent on returning to Stone County to work with his dad on the family farm. As he reached for his suitcase on the shelf of his closet, something stopped him. In relating that experience he indicated that he knew he had to stay in school and complete his music training because,

**“The call of God was so strong in my life that I would have served him for free.”**

— Dan C. Hall

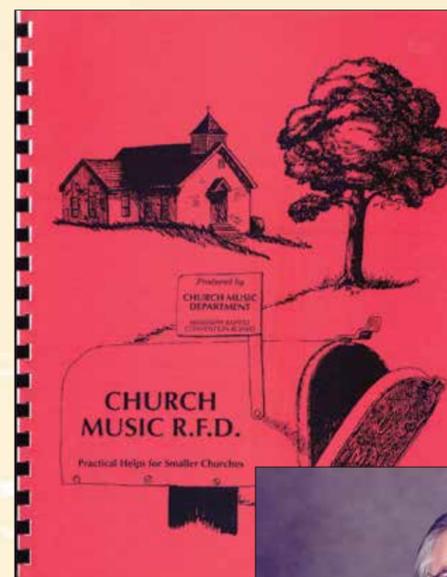
accomplishment was raising five children — all of whom are currently involved in some aspect of ministry and leadership on a vocational or lay basis. Following the death of W.C. Morgan, Dan returned to his home state in 1964 to become the Director of the Church Music De-

partment of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He served Mississippi Baptists for twenty-three and one half years. Throughout those years, Dan ministered to, encouraged, and influenced untold numbers of church musicians as he traversed the state from north to south and east to west (often in the same day) to welcome a new music minister to a church or to attend a music festival or other events to encourage and minister to others.

Although Dan joyfully ministered to churches of every size and in every locale, he was a particular champion for small churches as he encouraged part-time, bi-vocational, and volunteer church musicians to offer their best to the Lord. Along with

After graduating from NOBTS in 1956, Dan accepted a position in the Church Music Department at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. He served at the BSSB for eight years, during which time Dan met and married Mera Cannon, who was an associate editor in the Church Training Department at the Sunday School Board. She served alongside Dan in many ways, but perhaps her most notable

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The Church Music R.F.D.



Dan and Mera Hall

Jimmy McCaleb and a host of other contributors across the state, Dan helped develop a resource for smaller churches. Describing this resource as a “cornbread and peas” approach to church music, *Church Music RFD* provides a practical approach to the ministry of music. Having received several updates through the years, this publication continues to have an influence on church music in Mississippi and on mission fields throughout the world.

Another significant contribution to ministry through music that was born under Dan's leadership came in 1965 with the formation of the Mississippi Singing Churchmen. Nearly 50 years later, the ministry and mission involvement of this outstanding group of music ministers from across our state continues as a source of inspiration, encouragement, and blessing throughout Mississippi and around the globe.

Hanging on Dan's wall in his Baptist Building office was a cross-stitched gift from his daughter-in-law which declared, “Working for the Lord doesn't pay much, but the retirement

plan is out of this world.” On October 17, 1987, Dan began receiving the blessings of God's eternal retirement plan. Shortly thereafter, Mera Hall established the “Dan C. Hall Memorial Scholarship” through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, to provide financial assistance to students pursuing music ministry at Dan's alma maters, Mississippi College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Through this memorial, future servant leaders can be trained to minister faithfully, tirelessly, and hopefully with the same humility that was on display through Dan.

## Dan C. Hall — A ‘cornbread and peas’ approach

Daniel Carter Hall was born February 13, 1928 in the Big Level community located in Stone County, Mississippi near Wiggins. Dan's mother Gertrude was a school teacher and a musician and the family enjoyed singing around the piano. Dan's father, Randall, led the singing at Big Level Baptist Church while Gertrude was the church pianist.

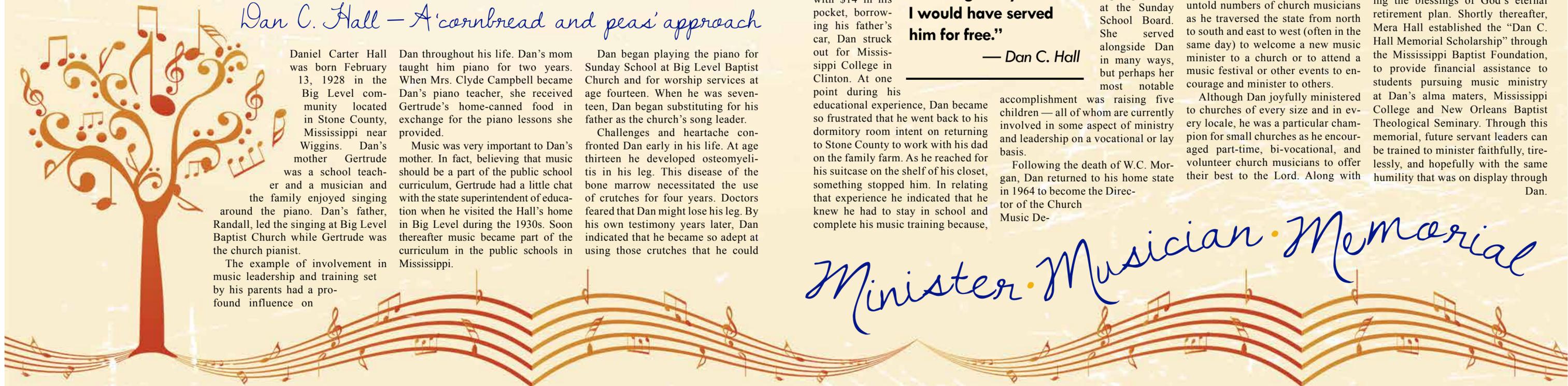
The example of involvement in music leadership and training set by his parents had a profound influence on

Dan throughout his life. Dan's mom taught him piano for two years. When Mrs. Clyde Campbell became Dan's piano teacher, she received Gertrude's home-canned food in exchange for the piano lessons she provided.

Music was very important to Dan's mother. In fact, believing that music should be a part of the public school curriculum, Gertrude had a little chat with the state superintendent of education when he visited the Hall's home in Big Level during the 1930s. Soon thereafter music became part of the curriculum in the public schools in Mississippi.

Dan began playing the piano for Sunday School at Big Level Baptist Church and for worship services at age fourteen. When he was seventeen, Dan began substituting for his father as the church's song leader.

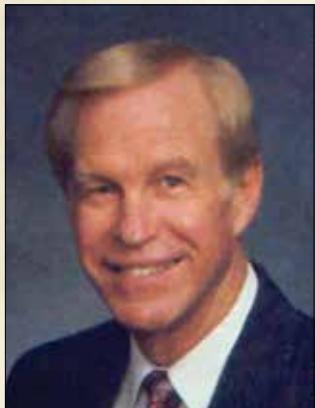
Challenges and heartache confronted Dan early in his life. At age thirteen he developed osteomyelitis in his leg. This disease of the bone marrow necessitated the use of crutches for four years. Doctors feared that Dan might lose his leg. By his own testimony years later, Dan indicated that he became so adept at using those crutches that he could



Minister • Musician • Memorial

# J.M. Wood — Training members to be worship leaders

For nearly three decades J.M. Wood served the Lord in Mississippi. During the majority of those years,



J.M. Wood

the congregation of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Jackson experienced the wonderful privilege and blessing of J.M.'s ministry through music. When J.M. accepted the invitation in January of 1973 to become the Minister of Music at Broadmoor, the church had the largest music ministry in the state. J.M. had been told by a college undergraduate professor

that his musical background was insufficient for someone seeking to major in music. J.M. offered a self-assessment by describing himself as "basically a person with no talent whatsoever, with no

background for any of what I am doing." Nonetheless, J.M. held fast to the promises of Proverbs 3:5-6 as his favorite and the guiding scripture for his life. The Lord honored J.M.'s perseverance and his availability for ministry by directing his path and equipping him for each ministry assignment.

Broadmoor's music ministry continued to grow under J.M.'s leadership. Scarcely six months after his arrival at Broadmoor, over twenty choral groups and ensembles were ministering both within the church and throughout the community under J.M.'s direction. One of J.M.'s goals for the music ministry was that anyone and everyone could have the opportunity to participate. Thus, J.M. not only encouraged church members to utilize their talents in service to the Lord, but he also provided training experiences for all ages. J.M.'s commitment

to ministry and missions eventually resulted in choir tours becoming an ongoing component of the church's mission outreach.

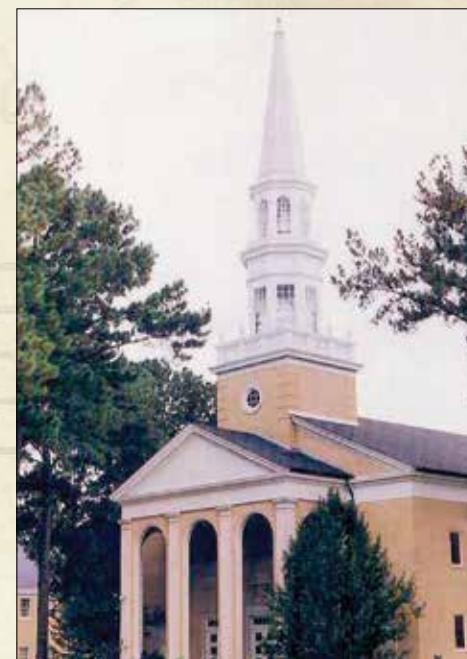
Despite all of J.M.'s involvement with the various choral

groups, Sunday worship planning, preparation, and presentation was of utmost importance to him. The priority and passion with which he approached Sunday worship and the unique role of the music ministry within this context can be summarized in J.M.'s own words, "On Sunday morning, I want the church choir to be worship leaders. I want them to understand if worship takes place, it has to begin with the music ministry through the choir."

J.M. was a humble man who desired to lift up the name of the Lord rather than focus on himself. A wise man (my dad) described J.M. as "a genuine guy," speaking to J.M.'s character and integrity.

Following J.M.'s retirement from Broadmoor at the end of 1994, he served for another five years as the Minister of Music at First Baptist Church of Brandon before retiring again in 1999. First Baptist Church honored J.M.'s life and ministry with a memorial scholarship through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. The proceeds from this memorial provide financial assistance to church music majors attending one of the three Baptist colleges in Mississippi or one of the Southern Baptist seminaries.

In November of 2001, J.M. retired to his heavenly mansion when the Lord called him into "higher service." The memorial serves as a perpetual reminder of a genuine minister, a sincere musician, and a true



Broadmoor Baptist Church, at West Northside Drive in Jackson

friend who, as the Lord's servant, offered himself completely to God and through whom the Lord blessed multitudes. In a letter to one of the early recipients of the "J.M. Wood Memorial Fund," Gail Wood wrote, "The depth of J.M.'s love for church music was certainly non-ending. He believed that church music was a direct communication to the Lord. He also believed that such music should always be presented with excellence and no other way was acceptable. He believed that each choir member should sing not only with their voice but with their heart."

**"He believed that each choir member should sing not only with their voice but with their heart."**

— Gail Wood

## Endnotes—

I had the privilege of knowing two of these ministers of music very well. Although I did not have the opportunity to know W.C. Morgan, I did know his lovely wife during my growing up years. All of these men anchored their lives in a relationship with the Lord, they answered His call to Christian ministry, and they availed them-

selves to His service with an old-fashioned approach of servant leadership, investing themselves in the lives of others. The memorial endowments that bear their names are testimonies of this investment that yields eternal dividends.

Many of the funds administered by the Mississippi Baptist Foundation are established as memorial endowments. Please contact the Foundation at (601) 292-

3210 or [foundation@mbcb.org](mailto:foundation@mbcb.org) for more information about establishing a memorial fund to honor the life and legacy of loved ones who invested in others as faithful and obedient servants of our Lord.

— Daniel C. Hall

*With grateful appreciation, the author acknowledges incorporated information and insight for this article from We Shall Come Rejoicing: A History of Baptist Church Music in Mississippi (1985, Gwen Keys Hitt) and Sharing the Song of Jesus: A Celebration of 60 Years of The Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (2005, L. Lavon Gray, PhD) and Broadmoor Baptist Church: The First 50 Years... A Past to Honor; A Future to Claim (2006, Kirk Ford, PhD).*

