

The First One Hundred Years

South Mississippi College/Mississippi Woman's College/William Carey College 1906 - 2006

- 1906** Hattiesburg's first institution of higher learning, South Mississippi College, opens its doors on November 8, 1906. Professor William I. Thames serves as president with an enrollment of 380 students.
- 1910** An immense fire destroys so much of South Mississippi College that the private institution cannot reopen.
- 1911** The property of South Mississippi College is acquired by Hattiesburg businessman W. S. F. Tatum and offered to Mississippi Baptists for the building of a college for women. Dr. John Lipscomb Johnson serves as president.
- 1926** Mississippi Woman's College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- 1933** After the death of President Johnson, the vice president of the college, Dr. William E. Holcomb, is selected as president.
- 1940** The Depression leads to a reduced enrollment and reduced funding, and in 1940 the Mississippi Baptist Convention votes to close Mississippi Woman's College. From 1940 through 1946, the property is used to house military officers stationed at Camp Shelby.
- 1946** Mississippi Baptists reopen Mississippi Woman's College and select as its president Dr. Irving E. Rouse, then pastor of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in Hattiesburg.
- 1953** The Mississippi Baptist Convention votes to reorganize Mississippi Woman's College as a co-educational institution.
- 1954** President Rouse offers the name William Carey College to the board of trustees. The Mississippi Baptist Convention affirms the name William Carey College, after an Englishman cobbler/minister who came to be known as the "Father of Modern Missions." Coach Les De Vall is employed to begin an athletic program in football, basketball, baseball, track, and golf.
- 1956** President Rouse resigns and Dr. J. Ralph Noonkester, academic dean, is chosen to serve as the new president of William Carey College. He is the youngest college president in the nation.
- 1958** The college is reaccredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- 1964** William Carey College is the first private college in Mississippi to sign the Civil Rights Compliance act. Two African American students enroll at Carey the following year.
- 1968** William Carey College takes over the Mather School of Nursing located in New Orleans.
- 1969** The Crusader baseball team brings home the NAIA National Baseball Championship.
- 1976** A branch campus, Carey on the Coast, is established in Gulfport.
- 1989** After the resignation of President Noonkester, Dr. James Edwards is chosen to lead the institution.
- 1998** Dr. Larry W. Kennedy is chosen as president.
- 2002** The Fail-Asbury School of Nursing building is opened, the first new building in 25 years.
- 2004** The Lorena Roseberry Smith Education building is opened; Donnell Hall is under construction, and a new baseball/softball complex is underway.
- 2005** Enrollment reaches 3,000.
- 2006** William Carey College is debt free.