

Celebrating Excellence in ADVENTISM



Who was Charles E. Weniger? | BY ERIC ANDERSON

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An Eastern Orthodox funeral service repeatedly invokes a powerful phrase: “Memory Eternal.” It is meant to remind the mourners

that God holds each of us in His memory forever, that our struggles and achievements will not disappear or be forgotten.

Human memory is more fragile, though we strive to sustain it. Despite our best efforts, man’s memory fades. We use ceremonies and memorials to resist gradual amnesia, repeating and highlighting what we fear we might forget.

Charles Weniger graduated from Pacific Union College ninety-nine years ago. It may be necessary, on this day in which men and women are honored in his name, to remind ourselves of who he was, and why so many people work to keep his memory alive fifty-three years after his death. There must have been something remarkable about this teacher.

The outline of his ca-

reer is clear enough. Weniger began teaching at Pacific Union College as soon as he graduated. In the first year after graduation, he took several advanced courses, taught Latin, Eng-

lish, and Greek, and served as temporary dean of men. In the 1919–20 school year, he became a full-time member of the faculty, bearing the title of instructor in English. He taught on Howell Mountain until 1927, when he moved east to become head of the English department at Washington Missionary College. He returned to PUC in 1931, teaching English and speech for the next seventeen years.

Like most Adventist teachers in those days, his graduate education was broken up into short and intense segments. It was not until thirty years after he graduated from college that he completed his PhD in speech and comparative literature at the University of Southern California. In the same year, he was appointed



Charles E. Weniger

In 1974, ten years after the death of Dr. Weniger, three of his friends—Jerry Pettis, Clinton Emmerson, and John Osborn—established the society to honor his memory and the qualities of excellence that were paramount in his life.

Through its award program, the Society seeks to identify and recognize the contributions made to the world by people with similar significant traits of character.

academic dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., a position he held until the Seminary became part of Andrews University and Weniger was appointed Vice President for Graduate Affairs.

This bare outline does not do justice to the full extent of Weniger's achievement as an educator. He inspired passionate loyalty in his students, many of whom insisted that this teacher had changed their lives. They spoke of his powerful and continuing influence long after graduation day. As one former student wrote, years later, "Without exaggeration, I can state that he was the finest teacher I ever had." Describing his mentor as "perceptive, discerning, and kind," he added that Weniger was "that rarity, a teacher who both challenges and teaches."

In short, Charles Weniger is representative of a kind of education that never becomes obsolete, education built on mentors who teach by example. This is the sort of learning and teaching that John Henry Newman defended in his description of the University as a mother who knows her children one by one—"not a foundry or a mint or a treadmill." Today, Newman might say you can't turn the University into a glorified ATM, predictably generating information, if not wisdom.

A man of high culture and perfect manners, Weniger might have seemed, at first glance, a prissy pedant. His diction was precise, his suits perfectly pressed, his expectations high. For a time, he even wore pince-nez spectacles. But his surviving students remember a warm and charming person, with an infectious, booming bass laugh and deep personal humility.

Weniger's last major speech came in 1964 as the commencement speaker for the Loma Linda School of Medicine. He was too ill to attend the ceremony, and Graham Maxwell read the address for him.

He began by remembering his own graduation at PUC. Dr. Percy Magan spoke from the text: "And Peter sat warming himself." Weniger said wryly, "It has been hard for me to sit still ever since."

Warning his audience of various perils, including journalistic hyperbole, academic pride, and mental laziness, Weniger offered a vision of Christian education that is still compelling. The uniqueness of Adventist universities, he said, "lies in the fact that the spirit of Christianity" pervades "all classes and all university activities."

"It is the business of every department, every discipline, to reveal spiritual insights, to recognize spiritual values, so that the student is . . . moved by the 'high purposefulness of intellectual passion' . . . Every investigation in sincere search for truth will end in God."

I close, still thinking of that Orthodox liturgy.

"Memory Eternal for Charles Elliott Weniger!" ■

In December 2016, **Eric Anderson** was elected president of Pacific Union



College. At that time he was the Walter C. Utt Professor of History at PUC. Previously, Anderson had been president of Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, from 2005 to 2014, where he served one of the longer presidential tenures in the university's history. Anderson is the fourth generation of his family to teach at PUC, and has devoted 30 years of his life to teaching at the college on subjects such as Christian history and political studies. In 1912, Anderson's grandmother, Agnes Caviness, was PUC's first baccalaureate graduate.

2017 Award Winners

CHARLES ELLIOTT WENIGER SOCIETY FOR EXCELLENCE MEDALLION RECIPIENTS



Brian Bull



Alvin Kwiram



Verla Kwiram



Sigve Tonstad

Adventist Hall of Fame

CHARLES ELLIOTT WENIGER SOCIETY FOR EXCELLENCE MEDALLION RECIPIENTS

2017

Brian Bull, Alvin L. Kwiram,
Verla Rae (Michel) Kwiram,
Sigve K. Tonstad

2016

Roy Branson,
Robert E. Lemon,
Sandra E. Roberts

2015

Bert B. Beach,
Bert B. Haloviak,
William G. Johnsson

2014

*(Medallions originally awarded the
year after selection)*

2013

William Emmerson,
Elissa Kido, Arthur N. Patrick

2012

Bonnie Dwyer,
V. Bailey Gillespie,
Shelton E. Kilby, III

2011

Herbert Blomstedt,
Alcyon Fleck,
Howard V. Gimbel,
Oliver Jacques

2010

Niels-Erik Andreasen,
George T. Harding,
Loree Sutton,
Bernard A. Taylor

2009

Barry Black, George Knight,
Richard Osborn

2008

Charles V. Bell,
Charles E. Bradford, Fritz Guy

2007

Lowell L. Bock,
Wayne Hooper,
Lawrence O. Longo,
Milton Murray, Vernon P. Nye

2006

Wilbur Alexander,
Dorothy Minchin-Comm,
Kermit Netteburg,
Louis W. Normington

2005

Ray Hefferlin,
Robert M. Johnston,
Donald W. Rigby,
Donnie G. Rigby,
Randal Lee Roberts

2004

John W. Cassell,
Loren C. Dickinson,
Peter E. Hare, Alice Holst,
A. Vernon Winn

2003

Leonard L. Bailey,
Shirley N. Pettis-Robertson,
Ariel A. Roth, Charles R. Taylor

2002

Herbert P. Ford,
Edward Paul Johnston,
Merlene A. Odgen,
Helen T. Zolber

2001

Clinton and Patricia
Giddings Emmerson,
Lawrence Thomas Geraty,
Florence Longway Fisher
Howlett, Helen V. Warren Lee,
Rolland Harold and
Florence Nagel,
Sherman Albertus and Edith
Louise Nagel

2000

William Loveless,
Milton and Murial McHenry,
Jan Paulsen

1999

Elmer Digneo,
Daniel Matthews,
Louis Venden

1998

Charles and
Elizabeth Anderson,
George Lewis Caviness,
Leon Harold Caviness

1997

Sakae Kubo

1996

Donald Malcolm Maxwell

1995

Hulda Crooks, Del Delker,
Granville Gene Wilson

1994

Raymond F. Cottrell,
Donald Vincent Hemphill,
Douglas Carlyle Marchus

1993

J. Wayne McFarland,
Alice Alberta Neilsen,
Ivan Robert Neilsen

1992

Paul C. Heubach,
Gordon and Betty Jenson,
Charles Warren Teel, Sr.

1991

Wilfred J. Airey,
Ronald and Grace Drayson,
Joseph Greenleaf Fallon,
John T. Hamilton,
Richard Hammill,
Narasimiah and Jasmine Jacob,
Axel Clarence Nelson

1990

Walter Bush Clark,
Maurice and Helen Mathisen

1989

Walter Raymond Beach,
Helen F. Little,
Leona Glidden Running,
Russell L. Staples,
Ruth Wheeler, Lois Christian
Randolph Woods

1988

Charles Edward Dickerson, III;
William Milton Lee

1987

Harrison Silas Evans,
Frank and Alice Marsh,
Dorothy Nelson Moore,
Else Louise Nelson,
George Bahn Nelson,
William Fredrick Norwood

1986

Arthur Lacy White

1985

Mercedes Habenicht Dyer,
Thomas Sinclair Geraty,
Robson and Isabel Newbold,
Elton and Evelyn Wallace,
Evabelle Rosamond Winning

1984

Julius Lafayette Tucker,
Theodore Carcich,
George Tyron Harding, Jr.;
Ruth Rittenhouse Murdoch

1983

Godfrey Tryggie Anderson,
Harry Anderson,
Walter Everett Macpherson,
Mary Colby Monteith,
Margaret Vollmer Richards

1982

Cecil Warren Becker,
Ted Webster Benedict,
Reinhold Reinhardt Bietz,
Edward Heppenstall,
Arthur Graham Maxwell,
Calvin Bozell Rock

1981

Francis Alvin Knittel,
David Louis Lin,
Jack Wendell Provonsha,
Denton Edward Rebok,
James Paul Stauffer

1980

Charles John Nagele,
William A. Fagal,
Hedwig Nagele Jemison,
Richard Burton Lewis,
Neal Clayton Wilson

1979

Kenneth Harvey Emmerson,
Siegfried Herbert Horn,
William Martin Landeen

1978

Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse,
Miriam Gilbert Tymeson,
Marvin Ross Walter,
Ellsworth Edwin Wareham

1977

Frank Wilbur Hale, Jr.;
J Paul Laurence,
John Raymond Wahlen

1976

Winton Henry Beaven,
Joan Charlotte Coggin,
Raymond Archie Mortensen

1975

William Gordon Campbell
Murdoch,
Jerry Lyle Pettis,
Harold Marshall Sylvester
Richards, Kenneth H. Wood

1974

Alonzo Lafayette Baker