

## **James L. Holly, M.D.**

### **Three Celebrations and Three Endowments Your Life Your Health**

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This spring and summer mark significant milestones for SETMA and for Carolyn Holly and me. On May 8, 2015, Carolyn and I celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our graduation from college. On August 1, 2015, SETMA celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its founding. And, on August 7, 2015, my wife and I celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

The following will be announced at the May 8<sup>th</sup> luncheon at Northwestern State University (NSU) celebrating the 1965 Class' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It presently is a "secret" and has been in the planning for four years. In honor of Carolyn's and my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of graduation and of our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, I have established three endowments:

1. The Carolyn Bellue Holly Distinguished Professorship For Teaching and Learning
2. The Marie Cobb Bellue Scholarship for Teaching and Learning
3. The Irene Woodruff Holly Scholarship for Health Professions Education

Carolyn's mother will join us for this celebration but my mother passed away in October, 2014 at 97 and a half years of age. In that my mother always gave financial support to the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home in Monroe Louisiana, both scholarships designate that residents of the Children's Home will be given preference in the annual awarding of either or both scholarships.

In that I did not enter NSU until the summer after my freshman year in college, Carolyn and I did not meet until September, 1962. I have often lamented that we did not know each other as children but upon reflection always remembered that she was 19 when we met and I was 18. Yes, she is older than me but only for four months and four days. In my reflection, I realized that we were actually children when we met.

In the fall-1962 semester, before we had ever met, we both took the same speech class. In October, our teacher, Mr. Graham, assigned a project where each student was to give a speech using a visual aide. For one class, because I knew there were eight students ahead of me in the alphabet and I knew eight students could not give speeches in the same day, I attended class in a not unusual condition of not being prepared.

Sadly, I made a tragic mistake. I failed to take note that the nature of a visual aide was something you could see. Thus, when I sat in my chair with nothing in my possession, Mr. Graham was alerted to the fact that I did not have a visual (i.e., visible) aide. Because he and I had a "love/hate relationship," (I loved him and he hated me – not really true, but it makes the story more interesting), he correctly assumed that I was not prepared and called on me to give my speech.

Well, my goose was cooked! But, judging that something – no matter how meager – was better than nothing, I stood up. Mr. Graham, straightened up with a surprised look on his face and awaited my disaster. As I stepped to the front of the class, I was not really concerned with a speech; I desperately needed a visual aide and the rule was that you could not use the blackboard.

As I looked for something which I could lift and move, I saw the chalk in the tray at the blackboard, which blackboard, remember, I could not use; but, nothing had been said about chalk. When I picked up the chalk and turned to the class, Mr. Graham raised his hand to remind me that I couldn't use the blackboard. Before he could speak, I took three steps – bold, aggressive steps – toward the class and tossed the chalk into the air. Ah, I had a visual aide, now all I needed was a speech!

I began my speech by asking a question which qualified the chalk as a visual aide; I asked, “What made that chalk fall to the floor? You think it was gravity but it really was the little green people who live in the air and who regularly clean their homes.” I then gave a fifteen-minute speech about the little green people, noting that the class could not see them, because they didn't believe in them, but I had one in my pocket. After the class, we were given our grade. Mr.

Graham told me I made an “A- (?)”. I asked him what the question mark was about and he said, “The speech was excellent, I just want to know when you prepared it?” I shrugged my shoulders and walked out.

That's when I met my wife. She remembers the story word for word as I told it above. I have repeated that story hundreds of times over the past 53 years. Carolyn's opinion of me was confirmed three weeks later when we had to give an extemporaneous speech. We stood at the front of the room and Mr. Graham gave us a subject and we had to give a speech off the top of our heads. Well, the reality was that I had already done that. Mr. Graham gave me the subject of “alarm clock.” Before “—ock” was out of his mouth, I said, “In 1784, John Smith in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania first conceived of the idea of combining an alarming device with a timing device...” At this point, Mr. Graham interrupted me and said, “Stop, stop, stop; you know too much about alarm clocks.” I laughed out loud and he said, “You made that up?” I nodded my head, “Yes,” and his face turned bright red with fury.

Carolyn and I spent many happy hours together at NSU over the next several years, but only as friends, often discussing girl friend and boy friend complications. Carolyn's father and I had become good friends on his visits to campus. In 1963, he opined, “Some day, Larry is going to wake up and realize who he loves.” Mostly, Carolyn and I shared our Christian faith. In June of 1964, I went to Africa for ten weeks. Carolyn's father sent me \$20 with which I bought a mother-of-pearl New Testament in the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. I inscribed it, “Dear

Sis...”. When I gave it to her, she said, “I'll carry this in my wedding.” 11 months later she did.

Following the summer in Kenya and Tanganyika, in October, 1964, I spoke to the Louisiana

Baptist Student Union State convention in Monroe, Louisiana. I gave a fifteen-minute speech on civil rights and brotherly love. I was never asked to speak in the state again until October, 1994.

Carolyn was a Purple Jacket and an honor student; I was not. We were the closest of friends. In December, 1964, I had to attend a meeting and I asked Carolyn to attend with me. It really wasn't a date, but it was cold. I did not have a coat but Carolyn did. When we were walking back to campus – no one had cars – Carolyn invited me to put my hand into her coat pocket for warmth, during which I fell in love. At the dormitory, Carolyn told her roommate, Joanne Salter Frank, who will be with us on May 8<sup>th</sup>, "I don't want to fall in love with him." I did and she did.

Two years and two months after we met, on December 7, 1964, we had our first date; on February 7, 1965, I asked Carolyn to marry me and she said yes. On August 7, 1965, we both said, "I do." We did and we continue to do so.

The summer after our graduation, I worked in the oil field in Many, Louisiana. Not owning a car and not having access to my parents' car and wanting to visit Carolyn but with only 24 hours in which to do so, I hitchhiked from Natchitoches to Baton Rouge on Sunday, my only day off.

The real question was how to do that in daylight hours. Early Sunday morning, I put on my best (spell that "only") suit with a tie. I took an umbrella and a book. Before dawn, I walked the mile from our house to the highway. As dawn broke, I opened the umbrella in the bright sunny day and began to read my book. When the first car sped by, I ignored it. Suddenly, I heard screeching tires and then a powerful engine roaring as the car backed up. The driver shouted, "What in the world are you?" I told him where I was going and why. He said, "Get in; I have to be in New Orleans in 2 and a half hours." As his car accelerated to 100 miles an hour, I suspected he would make his 200 mile trip and this was before the building of the interstate. I got to Baton Rouge before Carolyn's family was up. That evening, when Carolyn and her father let me out on the highway after dark, I knew I had a long way to go. Ah, but my mission had been accomplished, I had seen Carolyn.

Our fifty years have been as interesting, challenging and adventuresome as those courtship days. Our experiences and memories at NSU are rich and they laid the ground work for graduate school, professional school, children, grandchildren and professional life. During the past fifty years, upon occasion, Carolyn would comment, "Sometimes, it's not easy being your wife; to which I would rejoin, sometimes it's not easy being me."