

Eulogy for Samuel D. Weakley  
Crescent Hill Baptist Church  
(2800 Frankfort Ave.)  
Sunday, October 17, 2010, 300 p.m.

Have you heard the one about a green, inexperienced interim president of a local university who received a phone call from two of his most illustrious graduates, saying they wanted to have lunch. The inexperienced interim president was delighted that these distinguished alums were seeking him out for a meeting.

A luncheon was quickly arranged and the conversation went, unexpectedly, toward things that were not going well in the School of Medicine's development efforts.

You can probably fill in the blanks. This is how I met Dr. Sam and Dr. Lita Weakley.

While I at first was taken aback a little, I later discovered that Lita was absolutely right. But more importantly, that luncheon led to a friendship and a deep respect for two individuals who have been such an integral part of the great history and tradition of the University of Louisville.

In fact, it was that luncheon that established Dr. Sam Weakley as my buddy. After Lita explained her concerns, Sam was there to shield me by saying, "Now, Lita. Jim's new; he will always do what's in the best interest of the university."

After our luncheon meeting I was fascinated with Sam and Lita and wanted to spend more time with them. There were always campus receptions, Board of Overseers meetings, and other such opportunities but Jane and I cherished the time away from the crowds when we could really talk – such as at dinner and then the performance of the Lion King.

Everyone here knows what Jane and I learned in our all too short relationship with Sam and Lita – special people, wonderful people, caring people, people committed to this university and this community.

As I said at that first luncheon, Sam became my buddy. I saw in Sam the traits and attributes I hope to emulate in my life: humility, passion, humor, and the very best at what he did.

Sam was a giver. A giver of time and money. A giver of his talent. Sam treated all people equally. Whether they were the most influential or his poorest of patients, all were treated with compassion and respect.

Sam loved and adored his children and grandchildren, and his patients were his extended family. And Sam was always there for us at the University of Louisville. He was there for me to offer advice, counsel, friendship and support.

You know his contributions to the university are lengthy.

He served on our Board of Trustees, on the Board of Directors of the University of Louisville Foundation, on our Board of

Overseers, on our James Graham Brown Cancer Center Board of Directors, and on our Alumni Association.

Sam was there at basketball games to support the Cardinals, sometimes traveling with his family and sometimes with just Sam III but always rooting for the Cardinals.

And, of course, we know Sam took great pride in watching Barbara play for the lady Cards when she was an undergrad at the University of Louisville.

Sam received UofL's Alumni Fellow Award in Medicine, the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Samuel D. Gross Career of Service Award, and together Sam and Lita received the School of Medicine's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sam and Lita endowed chairs at the University of Louisville so their legacy will always live on. They created the Sam and Lolita Weakley Endowed Professor of Surgical Oncology so we could recruit the very best surgeon dedicated to cancer care and of course we have done that with Dr. Kelly McMasters filling that chair today.

On Wednesday night of this week the University honored Dr. Mark Boswell who now fills the Lolita S. and Samuel D. Weakley Endowed Research Chair in Anesthesiology.

And it was a proud moment for me when we all stood on stage at the Commencement ceremony in the spring of 2003 and

honored Sam and Lita with Honorary Degrees from the University of Louisville.

Sam and Lita were always there with their time, their money, and their love for the university. Always committed to the University of Louisville and hence our community and our state.

As I said, Sam was a family man, proud of his children and grandchildren. Sam always enjoyed telling the story of how he met Lita while registering for Medical School and how Lita became his life-partner, raising their four children, two of whom followed their path into medicine.

We at the University of Louisville deeply appreciate the lives of both Sam and Lita and wish we could have said “thank you, faithful servants, for all you have done,” more often than we did.

My final memory is that cold, windy winter day, December 17, 2008, when we celebrated the completion of the infrastructure for our soon-to-be-developed Shelby Campus, naming one of the two major roadways the “Sam and Lita Weakley Boulevard.” It was freezing, but Sam was there. He wasn’t going to miss that moment! He looked great in his University of Louisville jacket with the big “L” on it wrapped around his body.

We at the University of Louisville are thankful for the life of Sam Weakley. I am thankful for that luncheon and the opportunity to meet two people I knew of, but didn’t know.

Guided by the prophet Micah, acting justly, loving tenderly, and walking humbly with God were Sam's legacies. For that we all raise our voices in deep appreciation to our Father who art in heaven for providing us with his good and faithful servant, Dr. Sam Weakley.

Sam, you will always be missed but always remembered by all of us at the University of Louisville.