

A black and white photograph of a young man with a beard and curly hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt, standing in a library aisle. He is looking down at an open book he is holding. The shelves are filled with books.

GREATER



A New Era: Building on the Foundation of SAGU



NELSON UNIVERSITY

President's Report



Homecoming 2024

In 1931, Shield of Faith Bible School and Southern Bible Institute were founded. These two schools combined in 1940 to become South Central Bible Institute (SCBI). In 1940, the Enid school merged with SCBI to become Southwestern Bible Institute (SBI).

In the early nineties, SAGU continued to grow and allow for more theological and professional studies that are anchored in Holy Scripture. The Board of Regents approved a name change in 1994 to Southwestern Assemblies of God.

In 2015 SAGU was approved by regional accreditation as a level V institution with authorization to offer doctoral programs. The first earned doctorate was awarded in 2019.



In 2024 the leaders of SAGU saw another opportunity for advancing our core values through honoring our founder P.C. Nelson. SAGU went through

SCHEDULE

Thursday, Oct. 31

6 PM Texas Snowstorm Basketball Game

Friday, Nov 1

8 AM Memories Breakfast

10:15 AM Homecoming Chapel

Alumni Award Winners

11:30 AM Ribbon Cutting- Lions Complex

11:30 AM Alumni & Students Luncheon

2 PM Softball Alumni Game

6-8 PM Nelson U BBQ

7 PM Volleyball Game

7-10 PM Collinstock

Saturday, Nov 2

9 AM Women's Alliance (SWA) Breakfast

9 AM -12 PM Clinical Psychology

Continuing Education Seminar

11 AM - 1 PM Tailgate Carnival

12 PM Press Box Event

2 PM Homecoming Football Game

PRICING

Early Bird pricing through Sept. 30, 2024.

To Register go to,

www.sagu.edu/homecoming



Sport Activities

Alumni Connections



Tailgate Traditions

Summer 2024

Nelson Today and the President's Report are publications of Nelson University, a Christian, non-profit institution of higher learning.

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Nelson University is to prepare undergraduate and graduate students spiritually, academically, professionally and cross-culturally so as to successfully fill evangelistic, missionary and church ministry roles and to provide quality educational and professional Christian service wherever needed throughout the world.

Nelson University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Contact the SACSCOC at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Nelson University.

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For more info contact: alumni@nelson.edu / 972-825-4639

A New Chapter Unfolds

From the Office of the President

I've had the privilege of having a front-row view of the life of this great institution founded by P.C. Nelson for most of my life. In the late '60s and '70s, it was through my father's service in the administration and later my time as a student. In the late '80s and the early '90s, it was through Dad's leadership on the Board of Regents and my service on the Alumni Council. In 1994, I had the great honor of serving in the administration of Dr. Delmer Guynes, and since 2000, I've had the privilege of a lifetime serving as president.

This institution has been known by many names through the decades, but whatever the name, this dear place has shaped the lives of tens of thousands of students. I've seen momentous accomplishments and challenging circumstances. But always, there has been the steadfast faithfulness of God, whatever the season.

It was in 2020 that the administration and Board embarked on a pivotal

conversation, culminating in April 2023 with a resounding positive vote to change the name of our beloved institution to Nelson University in honor of P.C. Nelson. Reverend Nelson founded Southwestern Bible School, the oldest and most well known of the three Bible Institutes that would ultimately merge and move to our current location in Waxahachie, Texas.

I AM DEEPLY CONVINCED THAT GOD HAS BEEN OUR GUIDE AS WE HAVE TRUSTED HIM AND ACKNOWLEDGED HIS PROVIDENCE. THE PROCESS DURING THIS SEASON HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, AND PRAYER.

Our consultancy partners, the Board of Regents, faculty, staff, students, Alumni Association Council, and many more alumni and donors contributed to this monumental decision.

Throughout this process, there was a constant awareness of the coming centennial celebration in 2027. The firm conviction of every category of university stakeholder was that this institution would remain a beacon of Spirit-filled education as it steps into its second century of Kingdom service.

About 80% of our university stakeholders believe name change will contribute to enhancements in missionary access, graduate employability, improved fundraising, regional recognition, and recruitment.

By aligning with Nelson in this manner, we not only follow the common model in higher education of naming an institution in honor of its founder, but this choice also declares to alumni and supporting churches that we remain committed to our historic mission.

The guiding principles of Nelson's life and ministry have characterized this institution in its first century of

existence – visionary leadership, Spirit-empowered ministry, and academic excellence. As we begin our second century, the choice to identify with this remarkable leader reflects our ongoing commitment to the values he modeled.

May the example of Nelson stir within us a new era of growth, innovation, and academic excellence as we

commit anew to our mission of empowering students to become impactful leaders for Christ, both today and in the vibrant years ahead. I am most confident that, should the Lord tarry, those associated with Nelson University will reflect on this decision as one of the pivotal moves that positioned the institution for continued growth and Kingdom impact.

WE ARE ROOTED IN A DEEP UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS INSTITUTION, ESTABLISHED A CENTURY AGO BY VISIONARY LEADERS LIKE P.C. NELSON, HAS STEADFASTLY SERVED ITS KINGDOM MISSION THROUGH THE DECADES AND CORRESPONDING NAME CHANGES.



CELEBRATING THREE DECADES OF LEADERSHIP: PRESIDENT KERMIT S. BRIDGES' LEGACY

For over thirty years, Dr. Kermit S. Bridges has dedicated his life to the advancement and success of the University. His journey with the institution has been marked by transformative growth, visionary leadership, and a steadfast commitment to the values and mission of Nelson University.

EARLY YEARS AND ACADEMIC FOUNDATION

A native Texan and a third-generation Assemblies of God minister, Dr. Bridges laid a strong educational foundation early in his life. After graduating from Waxahachie High School in 1977, he pursued a Bachelor of Science degree at Southwestern Assemblies of God College, graduating in 1982. His thirst for knowledge and spiritual growth led him to obtain two master's degrees: one from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, TX, in 1987 and another from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, MO, in 1988. He later earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, in 2005.



Dr. Kermit Bridges' professional journey is a testament to his dedication and diverse experience in ministry and education. His early career involved ministerial

staff roles in Dallas at Oak Cliff Assembly of God (now Oaks Church), Springfield, MO at Park Crest Assembly of God (now Life 360 Church), and Garland, TX at Garland First Assembly of God (now First at Firewheel), where he honed his skills in teaching, preaching, and pastoral care. From 1992 to 1994, he served as Lead Pastor of First Assembly of God in Grand Prairie, TX, before returning to Waxahachie to serve his alma mater.

CONTINUING A LEGACY



In 1994, Dr. Bridges accepted the invitation of President Delmer Guynes to join his administrative team at SAGU as the Vice President for University Advancement. In so doing, he followed the example of service modeled by his father, James K. Bridges, who was a Vice President in the administration of President Blake Farmer and later a member of the Board of Regents including the role of Chair. The tenure of Dr. Kermit Bridges in this new assignment was marked by his ability to build strong relationships and financial support. Bridges treasured his years of service with President Guynes and viewed this season of personal growth and development as critical in setting the stage for his eventual appointment as President in 2000 at the time of Guynes' retirement.

A PRESIDENCY MARKED BY GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Since taking the helm as President, Dr. Bridges has overseen a period of remarkable transformation at Nelson University. Under his leadership, the University has experienced substantial enrollment growth, diversified its academic offerings, and expanded its physical campus. Notably, over half of the University's current square footage has been constructed during his tenure, reflecting his commitment to creating a conducive learning environment for students.

President Bridges' strategic vision has not only focused on physical expansion but also on academic excellence. He has been instrumental in introducing new programs and



initiatives that align with the evolving educational landscape, ensuring that Nelson University remains competitive and relevant.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dr. Bridges' personal life reflects his deep-rooted commitment to faith and family. In 1985, he married Jan Quinstad Bridges, a native of Minnesota and an accomplished educator who served many years as a member of the faculty and continues to be actively engaged in university life through committee assignments, volunteer service, and student engagement. Together, they have nurtured a family that shares their dedication to service and education. Their two sons, James and Forrest, are both graduates of SAGU.



IMPACT AND RECOGNITION

Dr. Bridges' contributions extend beyond the confines of Nelson. His ordination with the Assemblies of God and membership in the General Presbytery of the General Council of the Assemblies of God highlight his broader influence within the Assemblies of God community. His scholarly work, including the publication "The Discovery and Articulation of Core Values for Southwestern Assemblies of God University," underscores his commitment to academic and spiritual growth.

As Nelson University continues to thrive under his guidance, Dr. Kermit S. Bridges' legacy is firmly etched in the history of the University. His three decades of service are historic as he is the longest-serving president in the history of the Institution. The impact of his leadership will be felt for generations to come, inspiring future leaders and students to carry forward the mission of the university with the same passion and commitment that he has demonstrated throughout his career.



THE FUTURE IS HERE.

SAGU IS NOW NELSON UNIVERSITY

During the 2023 spring meeting of SAGU's Board of Regents, members enthusiastically voted to change the name of the university from Southwestern Assemblies of God University to Nelson University.

This change represented a pivotal moment the university chose to boldly identify with visionary founder, P.C. Nelson, and prepare to embark on the second 100 years of Kingdom impact. Nelson's vision and values have inspired and guided this institution for nearly a century. The choice of Nelson University represents our unwavering commitment to this rich heritage, characterized by an innovative, Spirit-empowered learning environment.

This momentous decision was the culmination of a rigorous process that began in 2020, soliciting input from a wide variety of stakeholders. A professional firm specializing in naming and verbal identity was hired to assist the University in discovering a name worthy of the heritage and history built over the last hundred years.

The outcomes of these discussions, along with the data, surveys, and focus groups, yielded many possibilities, all thoughtfully considered. Extensive input was received on the leading names emerging from the process from the following constituent groups – members of the Board, those serving in the alumni association and women's auxiliary, the faculty and staff, the student body, and a number of supporting alumni and donors.

While those surveyed had various opinions on particular names, a substantial majority was confident that the University would benefit from a name change as it approaches its centennial celebration in 2027 and prepares to step into the next hundred years.

Along with the significant support for change among all stakeholder groups, the overwhelming position of those surveyed was that the institution must remain devoted to its parent church and its doctrinal tenets, which, not surprisingly, had been established as a non-negotiable condition by the Board of Regents, given a majority

of members are District officials making up eight owning Districts and nine affiliated Districts of the Assemblies of God.

Over the last century, the University has been known by several different names. It became "Southwestern Bible Institute" in 1927, following the merger of Southwestern Bible School, Shield of Faith Bible School, and Southern Bible Institute. In 1963, it became "Southwestern Assemblies of God College" and was regionally accredited shortly thereafter. In 1994, it became "Southwestern Assemblies of God University." Interestingly, most of these changes preceded seasons of growth and advancement. There is an excitement among faculty and staff about what God intends to accomplish through Nelson University in this coming season.

"No one has any greater affection for 'Dear Ole Southwestern' than I do," says President Bridges, "yet it has become increasingly clear that my personal sentimentality is not the most important factor in this decision. What is most important is that we position the University to achieve a greater Kingdom impact in its second century than it has experienced in its first century. I am confident that our greatest days are ahead, and this coming change marks the beginning of a new era in the University's history."

The University's vision of being a distinguished Christian university that equips Spirit-empowered leaders with career and ministry skills by providing affordable education, hands-on training opportunities, and innovative academic programs remains unchanged. The University's lifestyle standards for employees and students remain unchanged as it prepares to step forward into the next hundred years with a renewed sense of purpose and expectation for all that is to come.

This exciting announcement comes with a call to prayer for God's continued guidance and favor as the University approaches its momentous and long-awaited transition this fall, officially moving into its next era of Kingdom work.

AFFIRMING VOICES:



"There were moments when I, like some others, pondered the purpose and timing of making such a bold move. But when I read the story of our founder, Rev. P.C. Nelson, there came a great peace that we had made the correct decision. His vision for Christian Higher Education in 1927 is still relevant, and continues to drive our purpose. With what is happening in our world today, we are excited to have Nelson University as a viable training ground for Christians to be bold in their faith no matter what career field they choose."
-Rick Bowles, Vice President for Advancement



"Our RA's and Dorm Pastors have been very excited about the opportunities that the name change will present. One of the ideas for this next year is to theme the campus-wide Dorm Devotional program to 'New Beginnings,' which will be based out of themes from the book of Genesis."
-Dr. Lance Meche, Vice President of Student Development



"It was right here in Oklahoma that Southwestern was founded by Rev. P.C. Nelson - a great man of God, a theologian, and a man of impeccable integrity. This name change honors our past but embraces the future. The University will continue to welcome students of diverse backgrounds while still staying true to our core Assemblies of God values and Pentecostal heritage."
-Dr. Darryl Wootton, OKAG Superintendent



"I want to express my resounding affirmation for President Bridges and the pivotal decision to embark on this name-change journey. The timing couldn't be more fitting, given President Bridges' nearly 30 year tenure in his current role."
-Mike Dickenson, Chair of the Board of Regents



I believe the name Nelson University will honor our strong heritage and serve as a beacon, attracting students who resonate with its values and mission. I stand in support of the name change because I know that the heart of this University is unchanging, and I am proud to be a part of its enduring legacy.
-Dr. Gaylan Claunch, NTAG Superintendent

THE DECISION:

The decision to transition our beloved institution's name to Nelson University stands as a testament to our commitment to the values and principles embedded in our foundation. Our deep-rooted commitment to our fellowship with the Assemblies of God and our shared convictions remain unchanged. This shift does not alter our core identity but rather positions us strategically for the future. It honors the visionary contributions of P.C. Nelson, aligning with the historic tradition of naming educational institutions after prominent figures. Together, we eagerly anticipate the unfolding of this new chapter and the remarkable days that await us as Nelson University.

-Dr. Kermit Bridges, Nelson University President

THE LIFE OF P.C. NELSON

THE EARLY YEARS

With the difficulties he endured as a child, no one could have predicted that Peter Christopher (“P.C.”) Nelson (1868–1942) would grow up to become one of the most influential theologians of his generation and beyond.

Born in Denmark, he immigrated to the U.S. at the age of four with his parents after his father suffered religious persecution. He grew up in poverty – living in a cave at one point – and the family struggled to survive.

At 11 years old, after his father’s untimely death, he surrendered his heart to God. He struggled through his teens but answered the call to preach at the age of 20, although he received no encouragement from his friends. He agreed that his first preaching efforts were unsuccessful, but he later realized that this was the very thing that forced him to seek further study and paved the way for his future work in ministry.

EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

He attended Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago but dropped out to pastor a church in Iowa after marrying his wife, Myrtle, in 1893. Feeling the need to continue his education, he and his wife and three children later moved to New York so that he could attend Rochester Theological Seminary. Here, he would begin studying languages, 25 in which he would eventually become proficient. He was a true scholar, mastering Greek and Hebrew so that he could easily read the original Bible texts.



After graduating from seminary, he became a well-known Baptist evangelist. He formed the Nelson Evangelistic Party, traveling nationwide and holding revival services. These were highly successful

campaigns reaching many souls for Christ. World War I brought a new opportunity that allowed him to serve as a YMCA camp pastor on an army base in Battle Creek, Michigan. After the War ended, he briefly returned to the evangelistic field before accepting another pastorate in Detroit.

A MIRACLE AND A NEW CALLING

Nelson’s time in Detroit would prove to be life-changing. He had a conversation with an old friend, who was also a Baptist minister, who told Nelson he had



received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. He was introduced to another couple who had this experience,

and Nelson was intrigued. Although he knew what the Bible says on the subject, he had always believed it was no longer in operation. His heart was stirred to learn more about this as well as other miraculous phenomena such as divine healing.

In October of 1920, Nelson was struck by an automobile and nearly died. He saw the Scriptures in a new light and repented of his former lack of faith, crying out to God for healing. encountering the Lord in prayer, he was able to rise up from his sick bed and walk. Overjoyed, he made a vow to God that he would no longer preach a partial gospel. It was a year before he would receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but this, as well as the healing miracle he experienced, profoundly affected his life and ministry.

Although he was immensely grateful for the biblical foundation he received from his Baptist brethren, he realized his message was more in line with the Assemblies of God (AG). In 1925, he was ordained as an Assemblies of God minister.

SOUTHWESTERN BIBLE SCHOOL

Two years later, Nelson opened Southwestern Bible School in Enid, Oklahoma, feeling strongly that the Lord was leading him to establish a school with solid, biblical training for ministerial work. However, he expressed a vision that went beyond the walls of the church:



The purpose of the school is to give men and women a better knowledge of the Word of God, and to bring them into closer fellowship with Christ, and into harmony with His will for themselves, whether that be to serve Him in their own homes, on the farm, in shop or store or office, to minister in the pulpit a pastors or evangelists, or to carry the glad tidings across the seas.

In the face of intense financial struggles, Nelson and his team relied on the Lord to provide for the new school. Everyone sacrificed and did their part to support the effort, including Nelson, whose positive outlook and peaceful demeanor inspired faith in others.

The school would undergo several mergers and take on the name of Southwestern Bible Institute, moving to Fort Worth, Texas in 1941. The following year, realizing the need for more space, Nelson and other officials visited the campus of Trinity University in Waxahachie, Texas, as a possible location for SBI.

Unfortunately, Nelson would pass away in the fall of 1942 before the move happened in 1943. This would become the school’s permanent home, which would later be named Southwestern Assemblies of God College in 1963, Southwestern Assemblies of God University in 1994, and most recently, Nelson University in 2024.

IMPACT

The impact of P.C. Nelson cannot be fully measured. Without a doubt, thousands of people found salvation through Christ and were healed in his evangelistic crusades. This does not take into account the many students he inspired as an educator who would go on to work in missions and other areas of ministry touching countless people throughout the world.

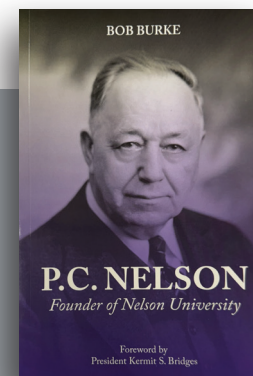
In addition to preaching and teaching, Nelson was a prolific writer. His influence continues today through works such as Bible Doctrines (1934), which, as a theological textbook covering the AG Statement of Fundamental Truths, has remained in print longer than any title in Gospel Publishing House history.

Today, the newly named Nelson University exists as the enduring legacy of a man who was unwavering in his faith and in his passion for leading others to Christ through his commitment to proclaiming **“THE WHOLE GOSPEL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.”**

Reference: Burke, Bob and Viola Holder, *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World: The Life of P.C. Nelson*, Oklahoma City, OK: Commonwealth Press, 2008

IF I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RECLAIM ERRING ONES AND HELP THEM TURN FROM THEIR WANDERING AND FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS, AND TO INSPIRE GOD’S CHILDREN WHO ARE SORELY TRIED AND DISCOURAGED WITH THE HOPES OF REACHING THE GLORIOUS GOAL, I HAVE NOT LABORED IN VAIN.

-REV. P.C. NELSON



P.C. Nelson, Founder of Nelson University

The abbreviated biography by Bob Burke is available as an E-Book for a short time for FREE on Apple Books. Search *P.C. Nelson*. To purchase the physical book for \$10 go to www.sagu.edu/give - Add BOOK to Comments.

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED.

WHY DID SAGU CHANGE ITS NAME?

The decision stemmed from a four-year conversation initiated in 2020. Survey results indicated strong support for a name change, emphasizing improving employment opportunities, missionary access, fundraising, regional visibility, and recruitment without compromising the institution's core values, including its affiliation with the Assemblies of God and its spiritual distinctiveness.

The change aims to reach more students in a Spirit-filled environment and make a more significant impact on the world. The University's commitment to equipping students spiritually, academically, and professionally remains unwavering.

We have explored the possibility of changing our name many times during our nearly 100-year history. In fact, since its founding, the University has been known by several different names:

- In 1927, P.C. Nelson founded Southwestern Bible School in Enid, OK.
- In 1931, Shield of Faith Bible School was founded in Amarillo, TX, and Southern Bible Institute was founded in Houston, TX. The Amarillo and Houston schools merged in 1940 to become South Central Bible Institute (SCBI).
- In 1941, the Enid School merged with SCBI to become Southwestern Bible Institute (SBI).
- In 1963, SBI became Southwestern Assemblies of God College (SAGC).
- In 1976, an alternate name to Southwestern was initially approved by the Board, but later tabled.
- In 1996, as the institution set out to declare university status, a new direction was considered again for a name change before simply changing from SAGC to Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU).

With each change through the decades, our institution has expanded its influence while retaining its core identity. The board, alumni council, and the majority of our faculty and staff believe the University will again benefit from a name change as it approaches the centennial celebration in 2027 and prepares to step into the next 100 years.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING A NEW NAME?

The process we used was deliberate, prayerful, and thorough:

- Four-Year Journey: We spent nearly four years gathering insights and opinions from our university community.
- Expert Guidance: A professional naming firm joined us to ensure the new name reflects our rich heritage and history.
- Community Involvement: Board members, alumni associations, faculty, staff, students, and donors all contributed their thoughts through surveys and focus groups.
- Decision and Approval: In April 2023, the Board of Regents unanimously voted to adopt a new name. The United States Patent and Trademark Office gave its approval in October 2023.

This process has been a testament to our community's dedication to preserving our past while steering toward a promising future.

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCED THE NAME CHANGE?

The following factors served as an impetus for the name change:

- Including "Assemblies of God" in the name poses potential barriers to prospective students who would be a great fit for the University but are unfamiliar with the AG denomination and never pause to explore who we are.
- Including "Assemblies of God" in the name poses potential barriers for missionaries wishing to enter closed countries or job-seekers wanting to obtain secular careers.
- The name, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, is quite lengthy at 37 characters. This can be tedious to write out on job applications or limited-space forms.
- The different pronunciations and letter inflection placement in "SAGU" yield several iterations, causing discrepancies and confusion.

HOW WILL THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DECISION BE ADDRESSED?

The university's leadership stands firmly confident that this change will strategically position our institution for a successful future, offering benefits that far outweigh any associated costs. The costs associated with this strategic action will be spread over many years. Several key leaders have donated large gifts to initiate and underwrite this process, demonstrating their dedication to this pivotal transition.

We continue to work to add to these initial commitments, and ongoing fundraising initiatives are underway. Visionary leaders recognize this investment opportunity and are eager to contribute.

No Tuition, fees, or charges in the 24-25 Fiscal Year are being directed toward the name change. All costs related to the name change will be funded by donations.

This financial strategy has been designed to carefully steward the investment. Make no mistake — these are pivotal investments into the long-term success of this University, and we are confident they will pay God-designed dividends.

WHAT IMPACT WILL THE NAME CHANGE HAVE ON THE UNIVERSITY'S BRAND, LOGO, MASCOT, OR COLORS?

We are working hand-in-hand with our branding partners to ensure that our new university brand stays true to who we are at the core. Purple will remain our primary school color, and our beloved Lion mascot, Judah, symbolizing strength and resilience, will remain unchanged.

As we craft and refine each aspect of the Nelson University brand, we look forward to introducing a visual representation reflecting our commitment to excellence. As we begin to unveil our new identity, we're taking the opportunity to introduce our centennial vision to a broader audience.

Our primary focus is ensuring a steady influx of new students in the coming years while retaining our existing student body, so that our University can continue to grow and shape the future.

HOW WILL THE NAME CHANGE AFFECT DIPLOMAS AND OTHER OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY RELATED DOCUMENTS?

Your academic achievements will hold their value, whether under our old name, "Southwestern Assemblies of God University" (SAGU), or our new name. All existing diplomas remain valid official documents. If you'd like a diploma that displays "Nelson University," we're happy to reissue it upon request. Starting with the class of 2025, all graduating students will receive diplomas bearing the name "Nelson University."



STUDENT THOUGHTS

"I really like the heart behind this name change and how it can bring honor to our roots...it creates a direct connection to our school's rich history and serves as a fitting tribute to P.C. Nelson. I think changing the name to Nelson University provides a great opportunity to connect us to who we are all while leaving the opportunity for all of the new things God has in store for us."

-ALISON JONES, STUDENT CONGRESS PRESIDENT

"I firmly believe that God has guided the institution throughout this transition and will continue to do so. When considering this change, one can either view it as potential danger, or opportunity for growth"

-COLIN BLOCK, GRADUATE STUDENT

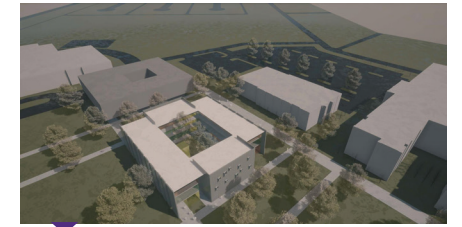
"PC Nelson's legacy is a testament to the profound impact one person can have. The name change not only pays homage to him but also serves a practical purpose in the global mission field. Additionally, I believe this new name will attract a more diverse student body, welcoming individuals from various backgrounds and denominations."

-TEGAN RANSOM, STUDENT

"Nelson University is and will always be home just with a new name! I am excited to see what doors God will be opening for us when trying to enter into Creative Access countries with this name change. I am thankful that Nelson University is caring for its students and alumni no matter how many miles away we are! Nelson University once again shows us that's Once a Lion always a Lion are not just empty words said but truth by taking action in taking care of their Lions on the Field!"

-JENNIFER HUERTA, ALUMNI CURRENTLY SERVING IN THAILAND

GREATER WITH FAITH



College of Business and Education, Architectural renderings



New Dormitory, Architectural renderings

As we embark on this exciting new chapter with our recent name change, we firmly believe that God will bring an influx of like-minded students, each eager to be equipped spiritually, academically, professionally, and cross-culturally for their God-given careers and callings. This period of transformation is not just about a name but about a renewed dedication to our vision and mission.

first \$1 million commitment has been given with an additional \$3 million pledge gives us a starting point. As new donations come in, we will share the timetable for this exciting project.

In addition to our academic expansion, we are also enhancing our athletic facilities to promote physical well-being and team spirit. The upgrades to our Lions Athletic Complex will offer our students top-notch resources for training and competition. The turf field for soccer, football, and track & field with lights is already completed. We have just completed The Plaza which is the entrance to the Complex and includes a permanent location for the bronze Lion of Judah statue. Currently we are raising money for new bleachers for softball and baseball and future plans include bleachers for soccer, football, track & field, restrooms, digital scoreboard, and a press box to play home football games.

Our campus expansion plans reflect our commitment to this vision. We are thrilled to announce the proposed new College of Business and Education Building to support our growing community and enhance our educational offerings. This state-of-the-art facility will provide our students with the resources and environment needed to excel in their studies and future careers, fostering innovation and leadership grounded in Spirit-filled Christian values. The

Land and architectural design are already available for a new dormitory that we believe will be needed soon as our student residential community expands.

With these exciting developments, we are confident that our campus will become a vibrant hub for a spirit-led, faith-driven education and community. Together, we are greater with faith, ready to embrace the future. For more information contact Rick Bowles at rbowles@nelson.edu

Lions Athletic Complex, Plaza Entrance. Architectural renderings.



QUICK ANSWERS

DO I NEED TO CHANGE THE NAME OF MY ALMA MATER ON MY CV/RESUME?

Optional. Feel free to list both names to help clarify, *Nelson University (formerly Southwestern Assemblies of God University)*

WILL THE UNIVERSITY GET A NEW WEB ADDRESS/WEBSITE?

Yes. The new address will be www.nelson.edu. The transition to a new web address involves technical changes to the domain name, and the university's IT and marketing departments are handling this process.

WILL THE NAME CHANGE AFFECT ACCREDITATION?

No. The University's status of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) will remain unchanged.

WILL THE NAME CHANGE AFFECT ATHLETICS?

No. The name change will not affect athletics. In fact, they are also getting their own rebrand!

WILL THE HARRISON GRADUATE SCHOOL BE CHANGING ITS NAME?

Yes. Harrison Graduate School will become Nelson Graduate School.

(FOR MORE IN DEPTH ANSWERS, VISIT NELSON.EDU)

YOU'RE INVITED

Join us for an unforgettable evening at the Shaping the Future Gala! Your support directly impacts our students, who are our mission and the heartbeat of this event.

Our university is dedicated to equipping students with a solid education – preparing them to deliver the whole gospel to the whole world. Whether our students enter the marketplace, the classroom, the pulpit, or the mission field, we aim to provide them with a firm foundation that will enable them to make a lasting impact for Christ. We are committed to helping students graduate by ensuring attending is as affordable as possible.

While this gala will honor our SAGU (Nelson University) traditions and roots, it will also be very unique... unlike any the university has ever had before. This upscale and formal event promises to immerse guests in a world of inspiration, setting a new standard for our university's gatherings.

"Shaping the Future Gala marks a significant milestone in the history of our institution as SAGU transitions to Nelson University," Gary Sutton, Chairman of Shaping the Future Gala & Commission on Advancement, said. "It's not just a celebration of change, but a recognition of our roots and commitment to excellence in Christian higher education.

This will, no doubt, be a wonderful evening that provides a platform to forge new relationships and strengthen existing ones as we look towards the future. It's a chance to network with like-minded individuals who share a passion for higher education and a vision for the future of Nelson University."

Our featured guest will be Mike Huckabee. Mike is the host of the TV show "Huckabee" on TBN each weekend and appears frequently on Fox News and Newsmax, is the NY Times best-selling author of 14 books and a frequent speaker for corporate, civic, and non-profit groups all over the world. He was the 44th Governor of Arkansas from 1996 until 2007, becoming one of the longest-serving Governors in his state's history. He left a legacy of tax cuts, job creation, the reconstruction of his state's road system, K-16 education reform, and a nationally heralded and duplicated health initiative that focused on prevention.

We will host an exclusive Meet & Greet prior to the Gala, where sponsors can have the opportunity to meet Mike and have a picture made with

him. Additionally, a book signing will be available following the event. Sponsorships are available now! **Email Robyn Lopez, Director of Development, at rlopez@nelson.edu or visit nelson.edu/gala/ for more information.**



SHAPING THE FUTURE

Gala

NEW ERA.
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GREATER IMPACT.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, 2024,
AT 6 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING
THE WESTIN DALLAS DOWNTOWN

JOIN US FOR DINNER & ENJOY
GOV. MIKE HUCKABEE
AS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER



YEAR 2 GIVING BY PROJECT

ONE 9/27: SAGU GIVING DAY



TOTAL RAISED: \$82,671

FIRST GIFTS



TOTAL RAISED: \$7,701

CENTURY SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$32,962

REGENTS SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$7,183

GOLF CLASSIC



TOTAL RAISED: \$39,495

PAVE THE WAY



TOTAL RAISED: \$24,896

SIGLO SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$6,425

CHURCH PILLARS



TOTAL RAISED: \$6,325

CHURCH LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS



TOTAL RAISED: \$492,794

ECHO SOCIETY



TOTAL RAISED: \$814,947

SPORTS VENUE



TOTAL RAISED: \$407,337

SHAPING THE FUTURE GALA



TOTAL RAISED: \$170,000

TOTAL OF FUNDS RAISED SO FAR IN Y2:
\$2,092,736

OUR 5 YEAR GOAL: \$5 MILLION

Will you join us? www.sagu.edu/2027

GRAND TOTAL OF FUNDS RAISED TO DATE: \$3,393,745

For more information on the 2027 Project, visit www.sagu.edu/2027 or contact advancementoffice@nelson.edu and (972) 825-4880.

Nelson University began in 1927 as P.C. Nelson founded Southwestern Bible School in Enid, Oklahoma.



In 1963 the owning districts decided a name change: Southwestern Assemblies of God College (SAGC). During the SAGC years, the school became accredited and added the School of Distance Education for remote learning.



In 2015 SAGU was approved by regional accreditation as a level V institution with authorization to offer doctoral programs. The first earned doctorate was awarded in 2019.



In 1931, Shield Bible School and Southern Bible Institute were founded. These two schools combined in 1940 to become South Central Bible Institute (SCBI). In 1940, the Enid school merged with SCBI to become Southwestern Bible Institute (SBI).



In the early nineties, SAGU experienced enrollment increases for 52% in the fall of 1991, to 1,492 students in 1997! To continue growth and allow for more theological and professional studies that are anchored in Holy Scripture, the Board of Regents approved a name change in 1994 to Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU). With this change, Harrison Graduate School became operational in 1996.



In 2024 the leaders of SAGU saw another opportunity for advancing our core values through honoring our founder P.C. Nelson. SAGU went through another name change and is now Nelson University.



This year's Homecoming promises to be an exciting pivotal point of celebrating old traditions while creating new ones. With a new, more relaxed style, we're aiming to create an atmosphere that fosters connection and celebration.

One of the highlights of this year's Homecoming will be the addition of a BBQ Affinity Groups Gathering. The BBQ will add a deliciously casual element to the festivities, while the affinity groups will offer alumni the opportunity to gather with others who share common interests, activities, majors, or dorms. Maybe you lived in Collins, or sang with The Harvesters, or majored in social work- maybe you even did all three! The BBQ Affinity Groups Gathering will allow you to connect with people from multiple

groups at one event, all while breaking bread together layered in brisket and BBQ sauce.

Additionally, the psychology dept. will be doing a continuing education seminar. This will allow alumni in that field to receive hours to go toward the required hours of continuing education each year while hearing from professors you might have had in class and sitting next to previous classmates. This Homecoming marks a significant milestone as it will be the first Homecoming celebrated under the name Nelson University. It's a momentous occasion that calls for an equally memorable celebration. With the introduction of these new elements, we're aiming to make this homecoming a truly special event for all students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

So get ready to fire up the grill and join your fellow alumni for a Homecoming celebration unlike any other. It's sure to be an unforgettable experience filled with laughter, friendship, and the spirit of Southwestern all still very alive in Nelson University.



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER
SAGU.EDU/HOMECOMING

HONORING A LEGACY

AN INTERVIEW WITH JERRY HOBBS

Alumni Jerry Hobbs, a renowned pianist and preacher within the Assemblies of God, weaves together personal history, spiritual legacy, and a profound connection to early Pentecostal pioneers. Jerry and his late wife, Lucretia, attended Southwestern from 1958-1959. In a recent interview, Hobbs shared his reflections on the spiritual lineage that shaped his life and ministry, highlighting a special connection to P.C. Nelson.

A HERITAGE ROOTED IN REVIVAL

The Hobbs' family connection to Pentecostalism stretches back to the early 1900s. His family were fervent participants of the Pentecostal movement from its inception. "My grandmother was filled with the Holy Spirit around 1900 with Charles Parham," Hobbs recounts. This early encounter with the Holy Spirit set the stage for a legacy of revival and spiritual fervor that would span generations.

The Hobbs family became synonymous with the revival in the Hill Country, an area known for its rich Pentecostal heritage. The dedication of Hobbs and his siblings by E.T. Davis, a contemporary of P.C. Nelson, underscores the deep roots of his spiritual upbringing. "E.T. Davis was a significant figure," Hobbs notes, "and his influence, along with others like E.B. Crump and Albert Ott - who dedicated my mother in 1916 - were pivotal in shaping the spiritual landscape of our family."

THE ESSENCE OF P.C. NELSON

Although P.C. Nelson passed away three years after Hobbs was born,

his influence was pervasive during Hobbs' formative years. "The essence of Nelson was predominant in the 50s," Hobbs explains. "That was when I went into the ministry. I am of that generation closest to him, that did not know him but was born in his time."



SBI Students in chapel

Nelson's teachings and his famous mantra, "Time and tide wait for no man," left a lasting impression on Hobbs. These words became a guiding principle in his life, inspiring him to embrace his calling and pursue his ministry with unwavering dedication.

"NELSON'S INFLUENCE WAS EVERYWHERE, EVEN THOUGH I NEVER MET HIM, HIS PRESENCE WAS FELT IN THE TEACHINGS, THE REVIVALS, AND THE VERY FABRIC OF OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY."

A MUSICAL JOURNEY

Music played a significant role in Hobbs' early life. He began taking piano lessons at a young age, studying with one of the best piano teachers in the area. By age twelve, the Hammond organ became a central feature in church services, and Hobbs soon found himself serving as the church organist.

His musical talents opened doors to significant opportunities. During his teen years, well-known revivalists such as Jack Coe, A.A. Allen, and Katherine Kuhlman requested Hobbs to play at their revival campaigns and healing crusades.

A DIVINE CALLING

During one of these services, Hobbs found himself in a life-changing encounter. "At 15 years old, during an all-night prayer meeting, the



SBI IN 1950s



SBI Students in devotional

power of God came upon me," he shares. "I felt a divine call to preach the gospel."

This calling was a defining moment in Hobbs' life. "We all have a certain place where we've met God. For me, it was at the altar, an unlikely place that became a memorial of my calling."

A LIFETIME OF MINISTRY

Hobbs' ministry journey is marked by collaboration with influential figures like John Hagee. "John and I prayed that God would use us," Hobbs says. This time at Southwestern led to a preaching career that has spanned many years and touched countless lives.

In reflecting on his journey, life, and ministry, Hobbs honors the memory of those who came before him, notably P.C. Nelson. Hobbs continues to inspire and influence within the Assemblies of God and beyond through his dedication to music, his embrace of a divine calling, and his unwavering commitment to the gospel.



Jerry Hobbs, Present

As we look back on the history of our movement, the narrative of individuals like Jerry Hobbs reminds us of the power of legacy, the importance of spiritual heritage, and the profound ways in which God calls and uses His people. Through these personal stories and shared histories, we understand the full tapestry of our faith and continue to build upon the foundations laid by those who came before us. Hobbs' journey is a personal testament and a reflection of a broader, enduring legacy within the Pentecostal tradition.

A YEAR IN REVIEW FOR SAGU ATHLETICS 2023-2024

MEN'S SOCCER

The Lions men's soccer team launched their season with a historic home game on August 25 against Wiley College, marking their first competition on the newly built Lions Athletic Complex field. Their strong performance throughout the season culminated in an appearance at the DI NCCAA National Championship Tournament. Key players Ethan Stewart and David Calvete Beltran earned Sooner Athletic Conference (SAC) postseason awards and NCCAA All-Regional honors.



WOMEN'S SOCCER

The team's stellar season saw multiple players receiving SAC accolades, including Coach of the Year Paul Hason and Freshman of the Year Anna Bewley. Goalkeeper Zoe Boldt was recognized as the top goaltender, and several players made the 1st and 2nd Team All-SAC. The Lady Lions secured a spot in the 2023 NCCAA DI Women's Soccer National Championship, boasting one of the conference's most dynamic high-scoring offenses.



FOOTBALL

The Lions football team had a standout player in Dylan Alford, named NAIA Special Teams Player of the Week in November. Alford's spectacular kick returns highlighted his season, earning him national recognition. The team ended their season with a victorious 29-12 Homecoming game against Texas College. 12 players received SAC awards, with Paul Odidi, Noah Gipson, and Alford making the 1st Team. Five athletes also secured spots on the NCCAA Awards Listings, showcasing the team's depth.

VOLLEYBALL

The Lady Lions volleyball team had an exceptional season, ending on the NAIA Women's Volleyball Championship Tournament stage with a 24-7 record. They clinched the SAC Regular Season Championship and made their third consecutive NAIA Tournament appearance. Head Coach Hank Moore was named NCCAA All-Central Region Coach of the Year and surpassed the 500 win threshold, highlighting the team's impressive achievements.



TRACK & FIELD

The Lions excelled in track and field with several standout performances. Montrell Blacknall became an indoor All-American, outdoor national qualifier, and Pole Vault Conference Champion. Shawntay Owens and Isaiah Perez-Major also earned high honors, with numerous athletes placing in top conference positions across various events.



ESPORTS

SAGU's esports team had a stellar year, winning multiple tournaments including the Be Legend Gaming Anniversary events for Halo Infinite and Call of Duty. They placed 4th at the Dallas DreamHack Battle for Texas and raised \$2300 for the Alzheimer's Association through the SAGU Alzheimer's Open. Their success was further marked by their 1st place finish in the ECAC SSBU West Division.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Lions basketball team celebrated their 10th consecutive NAIA National tournament appearance. Seniors Noah Boling and Cortland Blake each scored 1000 career points, while CJ Hall led the SAC in scoring and was named a NAIA All-American. One of the team's highlights was a historic victory over the previously undefeated NAIA No.2 Langston.

For a full update on every sport visit, nelsonlions.com



REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF CHANGE

Athletics Director Dr. Jesse Godding remarked on the year of transition as SAGU prepares to become Nelson University. He praised the student-athletes and coaches for their dedication and success, noting that the true impact of their achievements will be seen in the future.

This past year's athletic season at SAGU was marked by historic achievements, individual accolades, and a collective spirit of excellence that sets the stage for continued success in the years to come.





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For more information, contact Dr. Joseph Reed at jreed@nelson.edu.



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