

Pathways to Success

The History of the School of Education
1954-2003



Melvin Welch, PhD

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DEDICATION

In memory of my loving and caring, supportive Christian parents, the late Rev. and Mrs. W. B. Welch, who daily prayed for me, and whose souls have gone to be with the Lord, and of my in-laws, the late Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Woodard, whose love, guidance, and support in so many ways influenced my life.

For my family—my wife, Joyce; son, Todd; and daughter-in-law, Rebecca—for their love, faith, and support and deeply devoted care for me.

In honor and tribute to Dr. and Mrs. Homer (Beatrice) Adams, whose inspiration, guidance, impeccable Christian lifestyle, unselfish support, prayers, advice, and encouragement were demonstrated and expressed to me through years of working together and in this process.

To the late Dr. Millard Reed and Mrs. Barbara Reed, for the privilege of serving as assistant to the president, dean of education, and being a member of the administrative team. The confidence, trust, and respect they placed in my leadership and ability to serve was appreciated. He was my always-optimistic motivator and confidant for this project until his passing.

For all my SOE team members, including staff, faculty, and administrators, who made my Trevecca journey a lasting experience and memory; they have provided me a lifetime of treasured memories. All of them supported what they help create!

Finally, for the hundreds of students, primarily adults, I taught – together we engaged in learning – and who visited our home, they made an indelible imprint on my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	vii
Message from Dr. Dan Boone	ix
Preface.....	xi
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Psychology and Education (1954-1965).....	11
Dr. G. L. Pennington (1965-1987).....	16
Dr. Ed Whittington Heads Post Baccalaureate (1988-1991).....	28
Joe Moses Leads Post Baccalaureate (1991-2001).....	30
3. Dr. Tom Rosebrough, Director of Teacher Education (1977-1989).....	35
Kinderhaus Founded in July 1981.....	37
Dr. Wanda Staley, Director of Teacher Education (1989-1991).....	41
Adams Building, Tidwell Hall, McClurkan Hall, Bud Robinson Hall.....	41
4. Dr. Ed Whittington, Director of Teacher Education (1992-2000).....	45
Mackey Building Becomes New Home for the School of Education.....	68
5. Dr. Ruth Cox, Director of Teacher Education (2000-2003).....	76
6. Master's in Education Programs (1983-2003).....	106
Dr. Melvin Welch Heads School of Education (1983-2003).....	107
Trevecca Approved Level III Announcements.....	128
Dr. LaRue Moss, Coordinator of Off-Campus Programs (1985).....	131
Dr. William E. Griffin, Director of Graduate Studies (1987-1989).....	143
Dr. R.T. Williams, Special Counsel to the President (1989-1991).....	151
In Memory of the Late President Millard Reed.....	153
Presidential Transitional Era of Dr. Adams and Dr. Reed.....	157
7. Dr. Melvin Welch, Dean of Education – Ed.D Program.....	190
Press Release of Doctorate In Education.....	214
8. MLIS (Master's of Library and Information Science) – Dr. Esther Swink.....	287
9. The Ed.D. Research Endowment.....	299
Sustaining Level V.....	302
I Shall Remember.....	321
Acknowledgments.....	327

FOREWORD

This story could have had a much different ending, and a not-so-happy one. If not for the actions of two great men, this story would not have been written at all. From the moment I met Dr. Millard Reed, president, and Dr. Melvin Welch, dean of education, the connection of passion, leadership, and achievement prevailed. As we engaged in conversation, I was convinced the team these two leaders would put together could be a winner.

Trevecca Nazarene University has experienced many successes, but, during the late 1980s, its now great reputation was consistently being tarnished and the Teacher Education Program was poised to be denied the right to operate by the State Board of Education (SBOE). Program approval reviews held on campus and conducted by the Tennessee Department of Education were dismal in their results, and communication with leaders at the College at that time was nonexistent. I know this because I was in charge of Teacher Education College/University approval for the State of Tennessee as State Director of Teacher Education.

At that time, Tennessee, as usual, was in a state of flux and change in the preparation of teachers. The State Board of Education had approved a new teacher education policy that had wide-sweeping reforms and changes for all 41 Teacher Education colleges and universities. At that time Trevecca was a college. Tennessee became an NCATE state, which meant the SBOE had a new set of standards, policies, and procedures for how we would prepare teachers. The major moved to the Division of Education, and a keen focus on quality and excellence came into play.

Trevecca, at that point, did not measure up and was destined to be put out of the teacher preparation business. In fact, I had put this on the agenda for the next meeting of the SBOE and was positioned to move this recommendation forward.

Some would say destiny stepped in as Dr. Millard Reed, the incoming president of Trevecca, appeared at my office unannounced. He was introduced by a longtime friend and colleague of mine, Joe Adkisson. I was skeptical, but did not want to be rude to, in his words, “a simple preacher.” He asked if I would give him a chance to “clean up the mess,” and, of course, I said yes. I did catch a lot of flak from the State Board staff as they were ready to put the college out of business.

The rest is history: President Reed hired Dr. Welch to do the job, and within weeks I was meeting with the entire faculty and joining the president and Dr. Welch as they owned the problem and set the agenda for change. Dr. Welch brought experience, passion, understanding, and insightfulness to an obvious disarray of past disconnections of the preceding administration to meet state-required standards. From that point on, I became a close confidant and fan of both men and was included in all conversations and plans.

Needless to say, from that point on, the College became a University, became or participated in the State of Tennessee Option NCATE standards, developed and was approved for a new doctoral program, and became quite the preparer of future educators who excel in positions today across Tennessee.

I believe in divine intervention, as I have seen it in action, specifically in the case of Trevecca Nazarene University. I have been delighted to have been involved in a very small way in this evolution of moving from disconnected to engaged and chaos to excellence.

Connie J. Smith, PhD, State Director, AdvancED Tennessee

MESSAGE FROM DR. BOONE

Every institution has a wide variety of programs - and every program has a story. One of our former presidents, Dr. Homer Adams, has been a tireless collector and creator of the Trevecca story. As a trained historian and proficient author, he is dedicated to capturing the story. His leadership has enabled us to document the history of several significant academic endeavors of Trevecca. Long after he and I are gone, historians will stumble over a collection of books like this one in the Trevecca Archives, and they will be thankful for this careful work.

When it comes to writing the story of the Trevecca School of Education, no one has had a closer seat at the table than Dr. Melvin Welch. His proximity is not merely through jobs held in the program. He has lived one block away for almost the entire existence of the program. Never more than a two-minute walk from the decisions being made, Dr. Welch has kept an interested eye on the program across decades. He writes from two perspectives – outside looking in and inside looking out. His collection of memos, emails, letters, photos, reports, and reflections makes this volume of the Trevecca story a multi-dimensional recounting. As with any author, the story is told through the only perspective that an author can fully own, his own. We get not only the outcomes but also the tension, the conflict, and the agonizing over hard decisions. Academic programs are interesting animals with odd chapters. This story is no exception to the rule. And the impact of the program is quite remarkable. For this, we give thanks to God.

Trevecca is grateful to Dr. Welch for his enormous time investment in this project. We also express appreciation to a wide circle of friends for their contributions in the enclosed reflections. This is the story of many who have loved the art of teaching, the college on the hill, and the students we have been privileged to serve.

Dan Boone, President
March 2016

PREFACE

This book is the product of my effort to describe how important connectors, networking, collaboration, and exchangers are to the Trevecca Nazarene College/University story. Past Presidents Dr. Homer Adams and the late Dr. Millard Reed strengthened my passion for leadership and the achievement of excellence. Their influence helped create the bridge that connected teacher workshops to teacher education, to a master's degree, and eventually to a doctoral-level program. It was Trevecca's administration, faculty, staff, and students who truly did the work of building the bridge that they proceeded to walk across in order to reach success. The administrative leadership team represented the girders. The highly credentialed faculty brought synergy with their skills and resources to act as the welded joints of the structure. These leaders combined efforts and, as connectors, achieved far more together than they could have alone. The staff was the glue who kept the connections together for a day-to-day smooth operational unit. It was Trevecca's long-standing professional connection and my personal friend Dr. Connie Smith who stayed the course with us through state visitations for program approvals. More importantly, Dr. Smith was found to be a professional, highly skilled, tough-minded, bold, and intellectually stimulating administrator. As you will read, together we connected to make the appropriate climate needed to serve our traditional and non-traditional students in order to make the pathway to success exciting, enjoyable, student-friendly, and rewarding.

It is my hope this book will reaffirm the central role that connectors, collaborators, and exchangers (students, staff, faculty, administrators) had in moving Trevecca Nazarene College/University from Level II to Level III and on to Level V in the pursuit of truth and strong academic excellence. I am convinced that all students and graduates can be connectors from their field of knowledge linking with the highly-credentialed, visible, diversified faculty.

I am convinced our administrators, faculty, and staff can act as connectors, collaborators, and exchangers for the pressing issues facing our world: pedagogy, the state education mandates, standards, and requirements elaborated by Southern Association of Colleges and School Accrediting Association and National College Association for Teacher Education Standards. I am equally convinced these connectors can integrate faith and learning so as to model our individual Christian faiths but within the consistency of who we are at Trevecca. I am convinced we can each and all be connectors, collaborators, and exchangers, changing and influencing the lives of teachers, educators, and other academic disciplines and professional fields.

To be a passionate leader, one has to be appreciative of strong leaders, and educators, in love with their field of knowledge, stirred by issues, ideas, and challenges and deeply rooted professional. In my leadership experiences, I have exchanged ideas with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and emerging leaders regarding the importance of connecting, collaborating, and networking. A friend

of mine, Dr. Ed Piatt, referred me to a book that was pivotal in coalescing my firm notions of the importance of this paradigm: *Networking is Dead: Making Connections that Matter* by authors Melissa Wilson and Larry Mohl. Wilson and Mohl (2012) emphasized,

It is not how many people you meet, but the quality of the individuals with whom you establish a connection that compliments the relationship. This is based on the tenet of leaders connecting and networking are Givers (those who give themselves freely and are often taken for granted); and Exchangers (those who value others and themselves and bring value to those with whom they work and communicate within the networking and connecting process.) The key is to be an exchanger.

How connecting influences change and decision-making results in achieving goals seemed unimaginable to me and difficult to describe. However, I share on these pages a few of the many exciting, surprising, and sometimes difficult choices made as the result of those who led the way, mentored, and worked with me. They were responsible for connecting all the dots of the pathway to success. They served as my heroes during the incredible journey I had as dean of the School of Education and sometimes never recognized their profound input until after the fact. Bringing together the many threads of stories of numerous people and the many descriptions of various programs to be woven into a historic document was not easy. In addition, I anticipate that you will discover, visualize, and relive the passion I hope to convey in each section of this book while showing the wisdom, experience, and insights of my heroes, the most wonderful connectors or exchangers (the incredible group of men and women without whom these achievements would not have happened).

It has been my distinct privilege to have crossed the path of Dr. and Mrs. A.B. Mackey, Dr. and Mrs. Homer Adams, Dr. and Mrs. L.P. Gresham, Dr. Mildred Wyncoop, Dr. and Mrs. William Greathouse, Dr. and Mrs. Mark R. Moore, Dr. and Mrs. Millard Reed, and Dr. and Mrs. Dan Boone, as well as all the major participants in the academic arena. Keep in mind this list is certainly not complete, and many more names could be added. In the ensuing years, it was my privilege to work directly with Presidents Homer Adams and the late Millard Reed, and academic deans Dr. William Strickland, Dr. Robert Griffin (interim), and Dr. Stephen Pusey (presently, provost). The almost daily contact and professional association of departmental directors included Dr. Ruth Cox, Mr. Joe Moses, Dr. LaRue Moss, Dr. Alice Patterson, Dr. Rondy Smith, Dr. Esther Swink, Dr. Ed Whittington, and outside Trevecca professional colleague Dr. Connie Smith, whose wisdom and guidance was making it working together. The many outstanding faculty and staff will be mentioned in association with their contribution, connectorship, and exchanges. Having the privilege and opportunity to engage with traditional and non-traditional students and faculty in all of these programs was the optimum experience. I searched in my thinking how I could best share faculty and student stories with you. As you read the different chapters, it is my hope the story will come alive, especially when you read “Looking back. . .,” “As I see it. . .,” and “As I look back. . .,” capturing in their words how their

connection and engagement added to the pathway to success in the School of Education during these different periods of history.

To think I personally met, engaged in conversations with, and was influenced in some way by each person was amazing as I compose this historic review. Never could I have imagined this story would be an anthology of a large part of my life when I was a Trevecca College teenager, then married, raising a family, and developing my professional career. I have always been told to surround myself with great people, and I did, both by accident and by intention. Throughout my writings, I have sought to demonstrate the effectiveness of the lessons I have learned. Sometimes these lessons were strange, sometimes harsh and hard, but all were also evidence of the value of the great people who were connectors, collaborators, and exchangers. Even with the best connectors, I learned I cannot let myself be paralyzed by any situation, even though there were times I came close. It was always about finding the right balance in any given situation. Do you get the connection already?

As I engaged in the research to develop a review and description of how the teacher education, workshop programs, and graduate programs were established and the many professionals who put in endless hours to make it happen, I could not trace or find a storyline telling exactly how it all began. More importantly, the missing links or real substance of how it all evolved seemed like a major missing thread. Trevecca writers of the past have published well written books on Trevecca's history, the primary purpose to highlight rather than clearly expound on the journey of a particular story. In my review of documents, records, and facts, I found that many of the subtle influences and internal mentorships about the academic pursuits for these programs had never been heard of or put into writing. This intrigued me to the point I decided this writing must be for archival and history purposes and include the connective leadership that fostered events that will be in the story of the TNU School of Education. I recognized, upon starting the journey, it would not be a best seller or even hold interest for many except the ones who had given their professional careers to a pathway of successful events to make it happen. So this book reflects the real story of this academic area in Trevecca's history.

Dr. Homer Adams clearly recognized this gap between the existing histories and the “rest of the story” and the “yet to be story” in the historical writings about Trevecca. I was honored by Dr. Adams' recommendation to President Boone that the assignment be given to me. So, away we go with my attempt to relate accurately and fully the evolution and successes of teacher workshops, teacher education, and adult graduate education programs from 1954 through 2003.

As a young adult graduating from Trevecca College in 1961, I entered a classroom at Donelson High School with 44 seventh graders. My passion was quickly tested to determine just how engaged I could be in teaching, leading, and working through my career. For more than a half century, I have worked in public schools, adult education, and college/university graduate programs in higher education. I have had ample opportunity to internalize John Dewey's argument that nothing much of lasting value happens with young students and adults unless the minds are engaged in ways that connect with their experiences and relate to their futures.

You may ask, “what took you so long to research and write the book?” I could be labeled a late bloomer or a Johnny-come-lately in the field of education and leadership; however, I have steadily learned and accumulated experiences through connections and collaboration. Upon my retirement in 2003 from Trevecca’s School of Education, Dr. Esther Swink extended to me the opportunity to continue for several years as the professor to 250 students enrolled in the Administrative Portfolio Course. I quickly found myself immersed and engaged in an exciting opportunity as a consultant for St. Mary’s College, Omaha, Nebraska, reviewing an Ed.D. in Nursing Education Program prospectus. During this time, I was highly honored to be asked by Dr. Gary Streit, then provost of Olivet Nazarene University (ONU), to serve as the consultant for designing and implementing an Ed.D. in Ethical Leadership along with a fine host of ONU administrators and faculty. Much to my surprise, I was offered and accepted the appointment as director of the ONU program, keeping me traveling once a month or as often as needed through the next several years. These experiences were highlights and hallmark experiences of my professional career, and I am extremely indebted to all who made it easy and legitimate to write this book.

I was my own worst enemy as I procrastinated, trying desperately hard to find my way once I began the research for this book. To be honest and candid, I was overwhelmed, but blessed by the continued support given by Dr. Dan Boone, currently serving as president, who allowed me the space and extra time needed to bring order to my schedule. Dr. Homer Adams continued throughout the years to encourage me and offer support through many handwritten notes, reading of sections, and personal conversations. Dr. Millard Reed brought balance to my administrative career by choosing to have me serve as dean of education and administrative assistant to the president. With his insightfulness, encouragement, and always optimistic outlook, I was able to confide in him, discuss with him, and use his advice as Trevecca moved from Level III to Level V. He was my friend and mentor in guiding my thoughts in the early stages of his presidency and during the eventful changes from a college to a university with doctoral-level programs. Dr. Ruth Kinnersley, director of library services, has been so patient, pushing, encouraging, and providing me adequate space and extended time in a private, lovely setting in Waggoner Library to bring this writing to fruition. I honestly found every excuse one might think of to delay my writings. Trying to be true to myself and my wonderful wife, Joyce, and being close to the actual setting of my writing, I owe so much to Joyce for allowing me the time away from her as she has been a real trooper during this time.

As you read, you deserve the right to examine, review, and seek to determine if you share the value of “connectors” as described. Finally, I worked earnestly and diligently to provide a storyline connecting how Trevecca Nazarene College and University held true to her mission and purpose of servant leadership both then and now. I believe that my research – hundreds of archival documents, many interviews and telephone conversations, and my own personal reflections – validates these writings. There may be some who do not take the viewpoints I have expressed or share my interpretations of

certain situations; however, I am most comfortable and have no reason to mislead, misguide, or offend anyone. All former living directors of programs were contacted with only one not responding. I believe the record clearly shows and speaks in a justifiable manner in these writings.

If you want to know the true, dedicated, committed connectors deserving full recognition for our pathway to success, you will want to continue reading to answer the following questions:

- 1954 – How did Vanderbilt play a role in Trevecca’s accrediting approval?
- 1966 – What was the first summer teacher workshop course developed, and who was the director and secretary making a lasting investment in Trevecca’s future?
- 1982 – Who served as the prospectus writer for Trevecca’s first-ever master’s degree under whose presidency?
- 1984 – Who was the first president of Trevecca to move Trevecca from a Level II to a Level III institution?
- 1985 – Who was the first woman administrator to initiate and play a pivotal role in an off-campus master’s program?
- 1991 – Who was ushered in as president, changing Trevecca from a college to a university?
- 1993 – Who was the first-ever division director and dean of the School of Education?
- 1998 – Who led Trevecca from a Level III to a Level V first-ever Ed.D. Program in all the eight United States Nazarene colleges and universities?
- 1999 – Who was the first Trevecca alumna to direct, implement, and lead Trevecca’s MLIS Program?
- 2003 – What doctoral students recommended the naming of the Ed.D. Research Endowment and led the way in raising funds to support Level V achievement?

During the several years I have spent writing and researching documents for this book, my optimism about the future of the School of Education at Trevecca continues, spurred on by good news and questionable changes. Change, which we as educators teach, is not always easy to accept, and, even though I have endured personally and professionally immense joy and pain, my love, commitment, engagement, and support for these educational programs remain strong for a Trevecca I love and owe so much to for a journey of a lifetime.

