

The Clarence Dickinson Festival

William Carey University, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Gene Winters



Patrick Scott, Kathy Vail, Christopher Ray

In the early 1970s, William Carey College became the new home of the books, manuscript papers, artwork, antique piano, and hymn memorabilia of renowned organist Clarence Dickinson after the death of his second wife, Lois Stice Dickinson. A recent renovation of the room that houses the historic items in the Clarence Dickinson Special Collection has created renewed interest in the collection, in the life of Clarence Dickinson, which it illustrates, and in the art of organ performance. The first Clarence Dickinson Memorial Organ Festival, which was held in January 2007, featured a lecture about the life and work of Clarence Dickinson and his first wife, Helen Adell Dickinson. Stephen Garner, an alumnus of William Carey College and assistant professor of music at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, was the featured scholar. Dr. Garner is writing a biography of Dr. Dickinson, and he is utilizing materials from the collection and numerous recordings of personal interviews taken with former students, colleagues, and friends of Dickinson in New York City and elsewhere. In conjunction with that first event, the Dumas L. Smith/I. E. Rouse Library on the William Cary University campus (which houses the collection) hosted an open house to showcase the collection.

The second annual Clarence Dickinson Memorial Organ Festival was held on January 17–19, 2008, at the Winters School of Music on the Hattiesburg campus. The event featured an organ recital and masterclass by Dr. Jeff R. McLelland, organist/choirmaster at Independent Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, as well as the event's first organ competition, with divisions for beginners and for advanced players. The beginners were required to play a Bach prelude and fugue or a contrasting piece and a hymn; the advanced players were required to play a Bach prelude and fugue, a contrasting piece, and a hymn/hymn arrangement. Representatives from both divisions participated in the masterclass. Judges for the competition were Jane Butler, organist of Trinity Episcopal Church, Hattiesburg, and Lorenz Maycher, organist/choirmaster at First Trinity Presbyterian Church, Laurel, Mississippi.

Six entrants participated in this initial competition. Playing in the beginner division were Pearl Choi, sophomore music therapy major at WCU from South Korea; David Harrison, high school junior from Ocean Springs, MS; Marissa Hipp, high school junior from Grenada, MS; and Carlena Speed, senior piano performance major at WCU from Seminary, MS. David Harrison was the winner of the beginner's division and received the cash prize and a certificate, and will be



Jeff R. McLelland

presented a Clarence Dickinson medallion for his performance in May.

Playing in the advanced division were Christopher Ray, a freshman music major at Mississippi College, Clinton, MS, and Patrick Scott, a senior organ major at Birmingham Southern College, Birmingham, AL. Scott and Ray, both judged as outstanding entrants, tied for first place in the advanced division, and each received an equal share of the cash prize and a certificate. They, too, will each receive a Clarence Dickinson medallion.

The medallions, which feature Dr. Dickinson's image on one side and the seal of the university on the other, will be presented to the winning competitors in May by one of Dickinson's students and current AGO president, Frederick Swann. Swann will present a lecture/recital on May 2 at 7:30 pm. (Full details are listed in the "Here & There" column of this issue.) All of the winners have been invited to play next season in a joint organ recital as part of the Laurel, MS First Trinity Presbyterian Church's Concert Series.

Coordinating the festival and this event are Kathy Vail, assistant professor of Music, WCU; Patricia Furr, director of libraries, WCU; and Gene Winters, professor of church music and voice, WCU. For further information about future festivals, competitions, and events please contact the Winters School of Music, William Carey University, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Campus Box 14, Hattiesburg, MS 39401. Those interested in next year's competition should write or call (601/318-6175) the Winters School of Music and ask to be added to the competition's mailing list; or e-mail: <gene.winters@wmcarey.edu> or <kathy.vail@wmcarey.edu>. For information about visiting the newly reopened Clarence Dickinson Special Collection at Carey University Libraries, contact director of



Pearl Choi, David Harrison, Carlena Speed, Jane Butler (judge), and Marissa Hipp

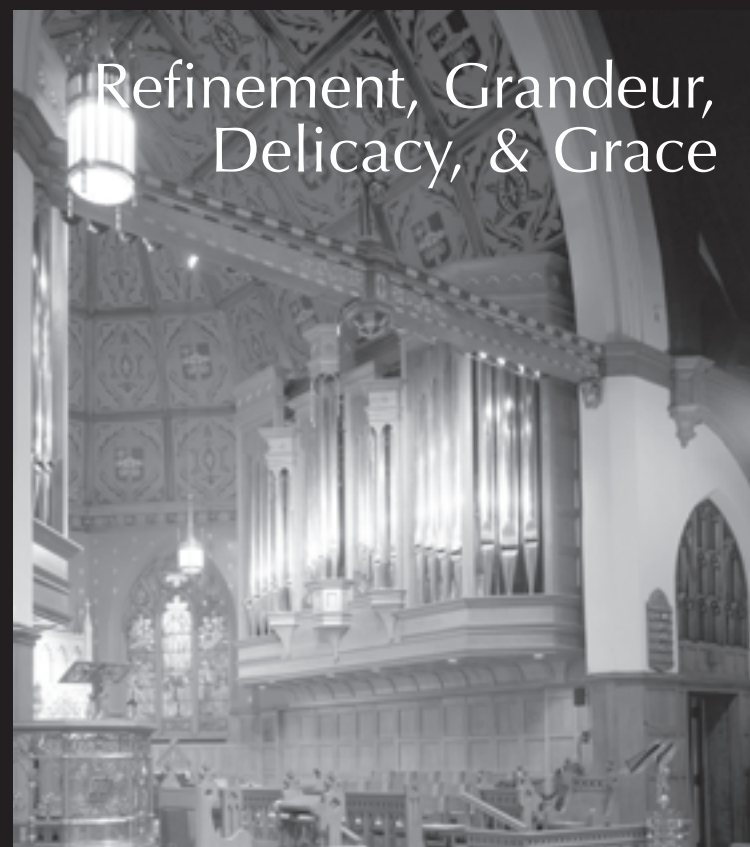
libraries, Patricia Furr at <pfurr@wmcarey.edu>.

Donald E. (Gene) Winters is in his 29th year of teaching at William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS. He holds the B.M., B.A., and M.M. in church music and music education from William Carey (College) and the Ph.D. in music education from Florida State University. He serves as professor of church music and voice at the university, and his particular association with the Clarence Dickinson Collection stems from the fact that his father and mother, Donald and Frances Winters (founders of the Winters School of Music at WCU), were responsible for the collection being housed at William Carey. Their inquiry to Dr. Dickinson's second wife, Lois Stice Dickinson, after Clarence's death (concerning the possibility of WCU purchasing some of Dickinson's books) met with favorable response from Lois

and long-time family friend, George Litch Knight, a former student of Dickinson. Dr. Knight and Mrs. Dickinson had hoped that the entire collection could be kept intact and serve as a memorial to the Dickinsons' life and work. After Dr. and Mrs. Winters visited Mrs. Dickinson and Dr. Knight in New York, the determination was made that William Carey (College) should house the entire collection.

Dr. Gene Winters has worked behind the scenes to raise monies for the preservation and electronic cataloging of the collection (work recently completed by Dr. Paul Powell, library archivist and preservationist) and for the showcasing of the collection. In addition, he coordinated the fund-raising campaign to purchase an Allen organ for Smith Auditorium, Thomas Fine Arts Center, on the Carey campus.

All of the photos (except that of Dr. McLelland) were taken by Gene Winters.



All Saints Episcopal Church, Atlanta, GA
Raymond & Elizabeth Chenault, Music Directors



Member, Associated Pipe Organ
Builders of America
112 West Hill Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

800.397.3103 • www.Buzardorgans.com