

## **Logsdon School of Theology Building and Chapel History/Elements**

*Compiled by James Stone, February 2008*

The Logsdon School of Theology building was constructed on the campus of Hardin-Simmons University in 1988 after a generous gift by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Logsdon of Abilene. The 27,200-square foot building includes classrooms, a distance learning facility, preaching lab, reading room, faculty and staff offices, faculty lounge, reception room and chapel. The facility was designed by the architectural firm of Tittle, Luther and Loving, and built at a total cost of \$3.7 million.

Of the many distinctive features of the Logsdon School of Theology building, Logsdon Chapel is perhaps most obvious to passers-by. The 350-seat Logsdon Chapel is used for special events such as Logsdon Seminary chapel services, state and regional conferences for pastors and churches, guest speakers on the Hardin-Simmons University campus, various community events, university concerts and organ recitals, and weddings. The chapel space is defined by a stained-glass window at its front and a Vissar-Rowland Opus 93 pipe organ at its back.

The window, a special gift from Mrs. Charles Logsdon, was designed and constructed by Byrd Glass Company of Lubbock, Texas after consultation with Logsdon's first dean, Dr. H.K. Neeley. Though designed as a single element, the window was constructed in 60 individual panels on metal framework. During the day, the sunlight creates a magnificent kaleidoscope of light on the 30-by-41 foot wall for those within the building; at night, the Logsdon window is lit from the inside and serves as a wonderful piece of Christian art for the Abilene community to enjoy. The building, and specifically the window, has been featured in numerous local and national publications, and is regularly a highlight for campus visitors and tours.

The window in Logsdon chapel is, however, more than just an architectural element or tour stop. The window design includes three pertinent elements that exemplify the purpose, mission and vision of Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University: a cross, an open Bible, and a dove. The cross occupies the center of the window, pointing to the centrality and Lordship of Christ in the life of each believer and in theological education at Logsdon. The open Bible represents the commitment of Logsdon School of Theology to provide theological education guided by the authority of scripture. The dove represents the Holy Spirit and the global mission of the church for which Logsdon prepares servant leaders. Each of these elements is placed upon a field of color and concentric circles representing the world into which students are called to serve.

The chapel organ, constructed in 1992, is likewise designed to inspire a sense of grandeur. Officially known as the Grace Katherine White Organ, it was provided as a gift from Mrs. Katherine Logsdon White, sister of Mr. Charles Logsdon and built at a cost of \$300,000. It is based on a traditional North German-Dutch design, but possesses a distinctively French character specially customized for this installation. This three manual tracker organ consists of 45 ranks spread over 36 stops, with a total of 2,627 pipes ranging in size from the copper pipes of the 16-foot Montre in the pedal to pipes much smaller than a pencil in diameter and size. The casework of the organ is made of Appalachian Red Oak with the keys being made of ebony and maple. The instrument and pipes occupy the majority of the chapel's balcony, and offer a visually stunning sight as one exits the chapel.

The Logsdon building complex, including the Logsdon Chapel, with its unique architecture and distinctive elements, anchors the southeast corner of the Hardin-Simmons University campus. The entire building is a concrete example of the historic mission of this Baptist-affiliated university to provide an education enlightened by faith.