Heather (Wall) Gilion

Dancing on My Ashes:

Joy added to blessing

BY JESSICA OLIVER '09

Heather (Wall) Gilion '99 and sister Holly (Wall) Snell lost their husbands and father in the same year — their husbands together in a boating accident in Vermont in 2000, not long after Heather had married James Brill '00.

Five years after the tragic accident and the loss of their father, the sisters started on a journey to write the story of their grieving and about the God who turned their mourning into dancing.

"The book goes through our journey, our tragedy, and how through that God showed up," Gilion said. "The first half is our story, we tried to be painfully honest. The second half deals with the lessons we learned."

Throughout the book, the sisters take turns writing about the fear they felt when they discovered their husbands were missing and the journey with God they each took as they dealt with the men's deaths.

"The hope is people will find themselves in the pages, whether they've gone through the same tragedies or can relate to aspects of the book," Gilion said.

Writing the book, titled "Dancing on My Ashes — Learning to Love the One who Gives and Takes Away," was not something the sisters intended to do.

"My sister (Holly) called me (five years ago) and said she felt like we needed to share the story," Gilion said. "We had been going to events and found ourselves sharing our story. I laughed at her. I never thought about that."

Gilion said she could not sleep because the thought of writing their story was on her mind.

"One night I just got up and started writing," she said. "As I started, I knew it was what I was supposed to do. I didn't know what it would be for, if it would be for me or other people."

The three-year writing process, including the time it took to publish, was not an easy one.

"It was heart-wrenching," Gilion said. "During some of the painful moments, I couldn't write anymore. When I was writing the story, I was mentally going back and seeing it all again. It was excruciating at times, but I know I had to be honest."

Gilion said there has been some response to the book that she did not expect.

"It's been amazing, the feedback," she said. "It's joy added to the blessing of writing the book — joy knowing that God is using it. I didn't expect the heaviness I would feel, because I hear so many sad stories of people that are embarking on their dark times. That's one thing I didn't think about when I started writing."

Gilion, a 1999 SBU graduate, lives in Ozark with husband Dallas and their two sons. Dallas, she said, is her greatest cheerleader when it comes to this book.

"God knew what he was doing," she said.

Also supportive, Gilion said, is James' family.

"They're excited to share a little part of their son with the world," she said. "They are still my family. I wouldn't have felt comfortable sharing what I shared if they weren't behind me.

"This life I'm living now — even though it's painful at times, there's joy. Not that I'm not sad (James and Scott Nesbitt, Holly's husband) they're gone, but the Lord has done such a work in me."

"Dancing on My Ashes is published by Tate Publishing and is available at CPO and Barnes and Noble. For more information, search the book title on Facebook or visit www.tatepublishing.com.

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Dancing on My Ashes

Heather (Wall) Gillion '99
Holly (Wall) Snell

It was only supposed to take a few hours to scout out a good canoe route. But when James Brill '00 and Scott Nesbitt weren't back in time for dinner, their wives, sisters Heather and Holly Wall, started to pray. They didn't stop—even when the bodies of their beloved husbands turned up a day later in the rushing river.

Their new book, *Dancing On My Ashes*, is a true story that details the painful passage of two young widows out of the ashes and into their dance with the Almighty God.

When tragedy strikes, we often discover that we have been living with a false sense of who God is. *Dancing On My Ashes* is a call to stop living wounded and accept the presence of God's hand in our lives.

Heather Gilion is passionate about women finding the love of their life—Jesus. She is a speaker, worship leader, and author. She lives in Ozark, Missouri, with her husband, Dallas, and their precious son, Noah.

Holly Snell and her husband, Aaron, are the worship pastors at Abundant Life Community Church in Arvada, Colorado. They have three children: Emma, Malachi, and Ava. She is a speaker, writer, and singer.

Reflections on Wisdom and Folly

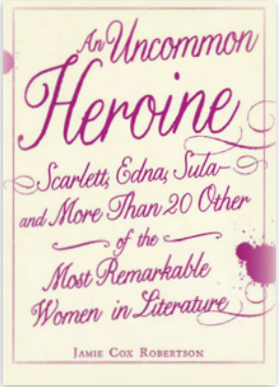
Fred Winters '85

In March 2009, Pastor Fred Winters was shot and killed while leading a Sunday morning service at First Baptist Church in Maryville, Illinois, a tragedy that made headlines across the country. He will long be remembered as someone whose life ended too soon at the hands of a gunman. But Winters will also be remembered as the man who, at the age of twenty-three, became pastor to a withering church of thirty worshippers and help it grow into a vibrant congregation of fifteen hundred by the time of his death.

A skilled and inspiring leader, "Pastor Fred," as he was affectionately known, also took the time to write, producing this collection of thirty-one days of devotions from the book of Proverbs while on sabbatical in 2007. Each devotion consists of the day's verse, a "mini-sermon" illustrated with anecdotes from Winter's personal life, questions for individual reflection, and a prayer. You'll learn something from each mini-sermon and deepen your understanding of what the verse means for your own walk with God as you meditate on the thought-provoking questions.

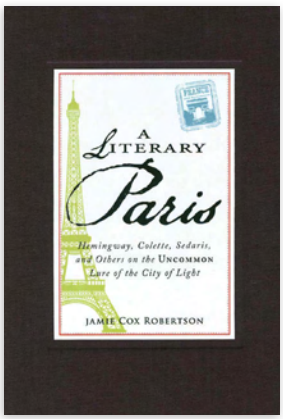
Author Robert Cunningham has added a brief biography of Fred Winters that illuminates the devotions further, showing how God can do great things with one person who surrenders his life to Him despite a troubled childhood and difficult challenges. From how to deal with fear and anger to the importance of completing things we've started, Winters found guidance in Proverbs and was moved to share these devotions. His story and his writings will strengthen and inspire you, too.

Missouri native Fred Winters was pastor of First Baptist Church in Maryville, Illinois, from 1987 until his death in 2009. He earned his doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2002. Winters is survived by his wife Cindy and two daughters. Robert Cunningham worked with Winters for seventeen years as Sunday school director and minister of administration.



An Uncommon Heroine
Jamie Cox Robertson '91

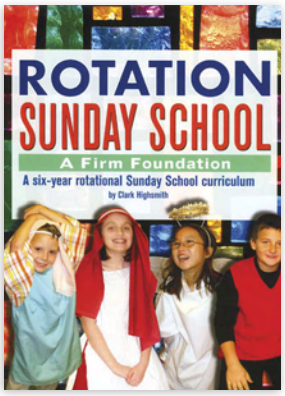
Literature has provided us with some of the most unforgettable women in history. Wives and mothers, daughters and lovers, these women all have one thing in common – they're *uncommon* heroines. With more than twenty excerpts from great classic novels such as *Gone with the Wind*, *Bel Canto*, *The Bean Trees*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, this captivating collection celebrates the women we admire, envy – and are inspired by.



A Literary Paris
Jamie Cox Robertson '91

You don't have to live in Paris to experience her unique beauty, allure, and enchantment. With this dazzling literary celebration of the City of Light, you can stroll along the Seine with David Sedaris in *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, sample croissants in a patisserie with M.F.K. Fisher in *As They Were*, and savor Mona Lisa's smile at the Louvre with Mark Twain in *The Innocents Abroad*.

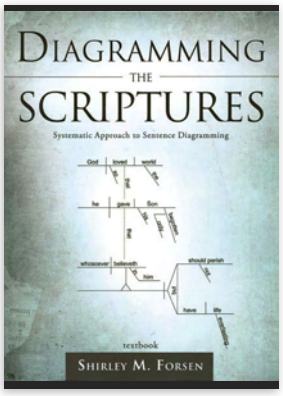
With fascinating annotations on the works, the writers, and the wonders of one of the world's most beautiful places, *A Literary Paris* takes you on a *bon voyage* through this incomparable city – one *mot juste* at a time!



Rotation Sunday School: A Firm Foundation: A six-year rotational Sunday School curriculum
Clark Highsmith '92

Originally written for Oak Crest Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Midlothian, Texas, *Rotation Sunday School: A Firm Foundation* is the starting point for a six-year Sunday School curriculum. In this book you will find a comprehensive scope and sequence on which to build a rotation Sunday School.

Inside this book you will find seventy-two monthly lessons for teachers. Each lesson includes lesson objectives, Bible background, memory verse, suggested hymns and songs, and student age considerations. Also included is a sample six-year lesson cycle calendar that can be used as a starting point in planning your Sunday School.



Diagramming the Scriptures
Shirley M. Forsen '52

Diagramming the Scriptures is a workbook of the diagramming of over 300 sentences taken verbatim from the King James Version of the Bible. Starting with the subject-verb pattern, it progresses to the compound-complex sentence. Examples, practice sentences, and review sentences are given for each sentence pattern, part of speech, clause or type of sentence. At the end of each unit is a test of the preceding lessons. A final test over all the sentences completes the book. Upon completing *Diagramming the Scriptures* the student will not only have a better understanding of the Scriptures but also a tool for understanding any literary work as well as a firm foundation for speaking and writing.

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