

## Regent University Student Highlights Spring 2017

Reverend Lois Nicholson  
Associate Minister,  
Macedonia Baptist Church



### *A musical savant ...*

Reverend Lois Nicholson taught music to junior high school students for 33 years in the DC Public School system (retiring in 1999), and served as the Minister of Music from 1997-2011 at her home church – Macedonia Baptist Church in Arlington, VA. Music education and teaching are a strong chord that has run throughout the course of her life. Additionally, in 2005 she officially began serving in ministry and a shift was occurring within her. Even though she had received a master's degree in music from Catholic University and a Master of Divinity from Howard University, her late husband encouraged her to continue on to get her doctorate. It took some time, some research, and some prayer before she decided to move forward in 2014. Nicholson said that Regent University's philosophy, which is based on Ephesians 4 and focuses on equipping the saints, spoke to her because "teaching was still in [her] blood."

### *Support and growth ...*

As an Associate Minister, Nicholson wanted to be strengthened in ministry and pass on her knowledge to the next generation of preachers. She finally entered the Doctor of Ministry program, and unfortunately, last Fall tragedy struck when her husband passed. The dean and faculty of Regent University offered great support to her and worked with her during that sad time to keep her on track. Now, she is preparing her dissertation and hopes to defend it sometime between Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. Ultimately, Nicholson wants to utilize what she is learning at Regent with the ministers in training at her church. She plans to develop a curriculum that helps these young men and women transition from the call of God to actual ministry.

Minister Sean Varnado  
First Baptist Church of  
District Heights



### *Reputation and flexibility count*

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Minister Sean Varnado is working on his Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in church and ministry. By God's grace, he anticipates graduating in May 2020. Varnado says that he was simply walking by faith and following the unction of the Holy Spirit in his decision to go back to school. Because he works full time, Varnado wanted to find a good Christian school that would work with his schedule. At Regent, he was impressed with the university's reputation and liked the flexibility that was available. All of the classes have an online option and students can interact with their classmates and their professors through video conferencing. "I'm such a traditional student, I didn't think online classes would work for me, but I was wrong," he said. Varnado does a hybrid-model for classes and that works well for him.

### *Faith challenge ...*

When Varnado started the program, he was not a minister, but recently he was elevated to that position at the First Baptist Church of District Heights. His faith walk is paying off as God is positioning him to do more through his church and in ministry. Varnado says that being at Regent has made him stronger in his Christian walk and challenged him to grow spiritually. In addition, Varnado mentions that you get to interact with people from different countries who do not have the same influences as you, yet they have the same faith. "That's very encouraging," he added. These interactions and having his faith challenged has helped him develop his own unique way of sharing the gospel.