

A Lifelong Love of Teaching

Edward Wimberly (STH'68/'71, GRS'76), authority on African American pastoral care / BY FRANCIE KING

Edward Wimberly couldn't read until he was in the eighth grade.

"For me, the fundamentals for reading were there," says Wimberly (STH'68/'71, GRS'76). "My parents were both highly educated and spoke perfect English. But I was rebellious, and they worried about me. Finally, through a lot of tutoring and with the support of my parents and teachers, I did become a proficient reader by the eighth grade."

The experience, he says, made him feisty and determined. Determined enough to know at 16 that he would be a preacher. Determined enough to earn a doctorate at BU. And today, determined to help promote educational and service opportunities for BU students through regular donations to the School of Theology Fund.

His parents, both educators, helped pave his road to BU. "We grew up in the midst of high expectations," says Wimberly. His father brought young nonreader Ed into his study one day, sat him down, and gave him a set of math problems. Wimberly discovered that he could solve them, and a new world of confidence opened up. Reading soon followed.

A few years later, at a Methodist summer camp, the future beckoned. "The kids decided that since I told a lot of jokes and acted the fool, I should preach, and I said that was the dumbest thing I had ever heard in my life." He did it anyway. "I can't even remember now what I said, but I came down from that pulpit in tears, and the audience was in tears. It was providential. That's when I knew I had a calling. I knew I was going to be a minister."

In 1963, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59) spoke at the University of Arizona, where Wimberly was an undergraduate on a four-year football scholarship. "I had always been a fan of his, like my dad. I knew he'd gone to BU, and I said to myself, I've got to go to Boston." He entered BU with two goals: make his parents proud and become educated enough to "fit into the Martin Luther King, Jr., tradition." After earning bachelor's and master's degrees at STH, Wimberly, like King, went on to receive a doctorate at the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Edward Wimberly has had a distinguished career as a professor and college administrator.



A beautiful student he had seen crossing Commonwealth Avenue later became his wife. After BU, they moved to Atlanta, Ga., where Anne Streaty Wimberly (CFA'65) completed two advanced degrees and has since had a satisfying career as a pastor.

Wimberly himself has had a long, distinguished pastoral and academic career, as a professor, and later a college administrator, at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta for 29 years. He has lectured worldwide and has served in the New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church since 1966.

He also is a prolific writer; his 15 books include *Pastoral Care in the Black Church*, one of the first books on African American pastoral care, and *Recalling Our Own Stories*. Today, he and Anne are team teaching a course in Christian education. "We do have a good time," he says. "I love teaching."

Because he's been a college administrator and leader, Wimberly knows about the importance of private support for higher education. The Wimberlys' gifts to the School of Theology Fund are meant for student scholarships.

Ed Wimberly says, simply, "Let our contributions go to the students."