



OF PEOPLE, PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Alumni Profile: David Goodall

Man With a New-Found Mission

Back in 1979, if anyone had asked Middlesex student David Goodall what he might be doing in 25 or 30 years, it never would have crossed his mind to answer, “serving as a chaplain in an Arizona homeless shelter.” Nor could he have predicted he would be featured in a full-page ad in *TIME* magazine, or serve six years on the MCC Board of Trustees.

All of these things have, indeed, transpired over the years since Goodall, 63, was awarded his Middlesex degree in 1981. And, even though he studied business – Goodall, went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Suffolk University – he is now Ecumenical Chaplain for the Homeless in Phoenix.

“When I hear from people I went to high school with, or served with in the Navy, they say, ‘You’re doing what? With whom?’” said Goodall, laughing. “They can’t believe it! Even my children are a little surprised.”

Goodall works at Lodestar Day Resource Center, an innovative new Phoenix facility that houses a dozen social-service agencies and programs for the homeless, all on one campus. “We have a 400-bed shelter, a dining room that serves 1,000 lunches a day, a health clinic, a dental clinic, as well as government agencies, private charities and faith-based agencies all under one roof,” he said.

“It used to be that homeless people had to travel all over the Phoenix area to get help,” said Goodall. “Now, all those agencies are right here in one place.”

Known as “Chaplain Dave,” Goodall helps the homeless get identification papers. “The Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless was founded by a retired Presbyterian minister who lived on the street for a month to find out how to get off the street,” Goodall said. “He realized that the key was getting identification.”

A homeless person is “helpless, hopeless and invisible,” said Goodall. In Arizona – as in many states – a person can be arrested for not having identification. “You can’t work without an ID,” he said, simply. “The Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless has specialized in getting IDs for the homeless for 20 years.”

Goodall appeared in a *TIME* magazine ad through his friendship with a loyal Lodestar volunteer, Brian McCafferty, who is also the owner of a successful Phoenix Toyota car dealership. McCafferty began volunteering at the shelter, then became corporate sponsor of the Chaplaincy’s annual benefit dinner and golf tournament. He also encouraged his employees to volunteer with the homeless. As a result of being such a good community partner, McCafferty’s Avondale Toyota dealership has won the company’s President’s Award two years in a row – one of the benefits of which was having his favorite charity featured in a full-page ad in *TIME*.

Goodall’s journey from attending Middlesex to ministering to the homeless has involved a number of unexpected twists and turns. But, Goodall says, he got off to a fresh start at MCC, where he began putting his life back together after a debilitating accident.

“I came to the college to find some way to live again, and they brought me back to life,” he said. “The folks at Middlesex showed me that just because you’re injured, your life isn’t over.”

Goodall enrolled at MCC after he retired from the Navy. Following the accident, he was walking with the help of crutches. “I figured I wasn’t going to be able to get anywhere with what I already knew, so I’d better go to college,” he said.

When he got to Middlesex in 1979, the campus consisted of two buildings on the grounds of Bedford’s Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veteran’s Hospital. The whole idea of going back to school seemed daunting at first, Goodall recalled. “Here I am, a Vietnam veteran, on crutches and there was no handicapped access on campus,” he said.

“Of course, I was much older than most of the other students, but it was a really wonderful experience,” he said. Goodall volunteered in the VA Office, becoming the MCC liaison, and worked with other Vietnam vets returning to school. After one year, he transferred to Suffolk University.

While attending Suffolk, Goodall learned that Middlesex was about to form a board of trustees and needed two alumni members. He and others formed the MCC Alumni Association, and Goodall was elected its first representative to MCC’s new Board of Trustees. Over the next six years, he served as a trustee, helping to lobby the state legislature for funding to build MCC’s 200-acre Bedford campus.

After running a successful insurance agency, Goodall relocated to Arizona in 1991. For months after the move, he had trouble finding work in Phoenix. Then one day he volunteered to help a boy on the Fort McDowell Yvapai Indian Reservation get to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, and Goodall’s career in human services began.

“I was taking this boy to AA meetings regularly, and the director of social services on the reservation asked me if I’d start a substance-abuse program for the reservation,” Goodall said. “I had absolutely no previous experience in the field, but she hired me. And, probably because of my lack of previous experience, we came up with some innovative programs.” He worked there for the next 6.5 years.

During a short-lived move back to the Boston area (at the request of his children), while attending church in Easton, Goodall began getting the feeling he was being called to the ministry. “But I kept telling myself, ‘Forget it, you’re too old,’” he said.

Several months later, his doctor told him he’d better return to the desert for health reasons. Once back in Phoenix, Goodall started to think seriously about heeding “the call” and began studying to be a Presbyterian lay minister.

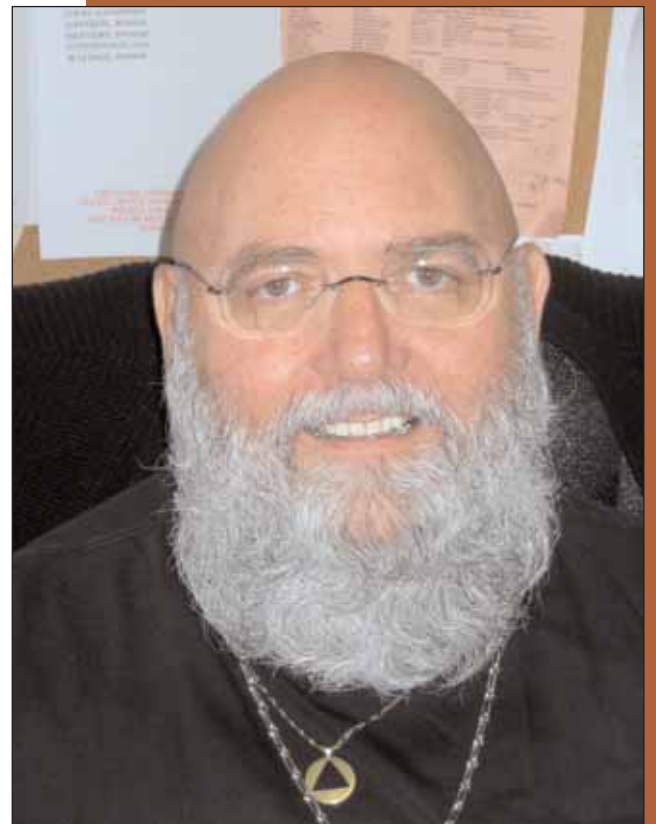
“I’m an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church, because the Presbyterians believe in priesthood of the laity,” said Goodall. “I like to say I took a shortcut to the ministry,” he said, laughing. He was appointed Ecumenical Chaplain for the Homeless in 2002.

Goodall always had a soft spot in his heart for Middlesex. He wanted a degree from MCC so badly that he transferred back credits from Suffolk to Middlesex, he explained. He was awarded his MCC degree the same year he graduated from Suffolk. His son, David Goodall III, also graduated from Middlesex, in 1990.

How did MCC prepare him for his present job, advocating for the homeless? “I learned about compassion at Middlesex,” Goodall said.

“There I was, a veteran and I’m at a VA hospital and I’d see all these other vets as they came through the halls and into the cafeteria, and I’d think, ‘There, but for the grace of God, go I,’” he said. “So, I turned my life around. Middlesex gave me the incentive to go on, and I just kept going on.”

- Kathy Register



David Goodall, Ecumenical Chaplain for the Homeless in Phoenix, and 1981 MCC Graduate.

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MCC Graduate ‘81

Ecumenical Chaplain for the Homeless in Phoenix, Arizona