Martin Christopher White  
President, Chowan University

Martin Christopher White was named the twenty-second President of Chowan University by the Board of Trustees on July 1, 2003. Dr. White’s selection as president follows a lengthy and distinguished career in Christian higher education in North Carolina. Under his leadership Chowan has experienced its most dramatic growth in history.

A native of Hartwell, Georgia, Dr. White earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics and English from Mercer University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude, third in his class. Continuing his education at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, Dr. White received the Master of Divinity degree, graduating second in his class. He also pursued graduate studies in religion at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia from which he earned the Doctor of Philosophy degree. He was also the first United States citizen to be awarded the honorary Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the prestigious Moscow State Conservatory of Music in Russia for his support of music and the arts in higher education.

His professional career began at Elon University and served there from 1972-1986 as a faculty and staff member. Most of his work was as Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, but earlier he was the Dean of Academic Affairs, professor of Religion, and Chair, Department of Religion. Elon University grew significantly in quantity and quality during Dr. White’s tenure and has since become one of the nation’s distinguished small universities.

Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC elected Dr. White as President in 1986. He served in this capacity until 2002, a tenure of over sixteen years. Under his leadership Gardner-Webb was transformed from a small college into a regional university, more than doubled its enrollment to almost 4,000, increased the endowment 800%, improved student quality significantly, enhanced the campus with numerous capital projects, increased faculty and staff salaries to the upper quartile in North Carolina, added doctoral programs and upgraded the athletic program to NCAA Division I.

In 1993, Dr. White was instrumental in establishing a School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University. The school has prospered and now enrolls over 200 students in Master’s and doctoral programs. In 1998 the trustees honored him by naming the school The M. Christopher White School of Divinity.

Having assumed the presidency in July 2003, Dr. White’s tenure at Chowan University has been marked with significant progress in many ways.
Examples include the following:

- Transformed Chowan into a successful regional university
- Fastest growing private school in North Carolina past eight years
- Setting yearly records in gifts
- Numerous campus renovation projects completed or underway
- Academic Honors Program
- Ministerial Board of Associates organized and functioning
- Chowan Christian Service Association initiated to increase scholarship funding for ministerial students
- Organized and conducted Chowan’s study-abroad experiences in Turkey, Greece, Italy, Israel, Egypt, England, Germany, France, Switzerland and Scotland
- Joined the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA), and had numerous teams in national tournaments
- Led Chowan’s transition from NCAA II and membership in the CIAA and the NCCAA
- Significant building projects completed – five new residence halls (plus three more to be built fall 2015), championship tennis complex, maintenance facility and competition swimming pool
- Doubled the university endowment
- Expanded the campus to more than 400 acres

Dr. White has long been acknowledged as one of the leading Baptist figures in North Carolina. During his tenure at Elon University, he also served as pastor of the Brookwood Baptist Church in Burlington from 1972-1975. During his many years at Gardner-Webb University, Dr. White’s leadership was significant with the work of the Council on Christian Higher Education of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the National Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools. An ordained minister, Dr. White has served pastorates in three states and is a frequent speaker in area churches.

Professionally, Dr. White is active in the Council of Independent Colleges and the North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. He has chaired numerous accreditation teams for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Community involvement always has been important for Dr. White. He is a Rotarian and has worked with the Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Boy Scouts, YMCA, Foundation of the Carolinas, and historical associations. The governor of North Carolina bestowed on him the highest honor – the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

For over twenty-five years Dr. White has organized and conducted study-tours of the Middle East and Europe (with emphasis on Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Greece, and Turkey). His hobbies include music, sports, and reading. He has recorded 12 CDs of piano music. All proceeds are used for scholarships.

Dr. White is married to Linda Fleming White of Hartwell, Georgia. A 1965 graduate of Tift College in Georgia, she had a successful career as a public school teacher. Dr. and Mrs. White have two sons: Martin Lynn White, an attorney in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Andrew Christopher White, a hedge fund manager in West Palm Beach, Florida. Andrew is married to Karen Carley. Martin is married to Heather Robertson, a gynecologist/obstetrician. Dr. and Mrs. White have six grandchildren.