

On September 24, 1909 a group of Christian businessmen met at the home of Mr. John F. Green in St. Louis to organize a school devoted to teaching the Bible. Dr. Merle H. Anderson, Dr. J. F. Cannon, Dr. Harris H. Gregg, Dr. J. L. Mauze, Rev. Southall, and Messer's G. T. Coxhead, B. F. Edwards, J. F. Green, Charles Nicholls, Robert Rankin, Robert Rutledge, L.F. Smith, and Albert Wenzlick were present.

Mr. Coxhead was elected President, Mr. Rutledge, Secretary, and Mr. Edwards, Treasurer of this group.

On October 23, 1909 the Articles of Incorporation of "The St. Louis Bible Training School for Lay Workers", as the school was to be known, were recorded in the State of Missouri. Through the prayers and gifts of the Christian people in St. Louis, the Articles of Incorporation could now be used to bring into being the school authorized by the State of Missouri.

The Articles of Incorporation provided for a body of praying givers who with the incorporators were to comprise the Society of the Institute. From this body was elected the first Board of Trustees. The members of the first Board were J. F. Cannon, T. H. Cobb, G. T. Coxhead, B. F. Edwards, H. H. Gregg, J. F. Green, J. L. Mauze, C. C. Nicholls, Ernest H. Orr, J. J. Parks, F. W. Russell, Robert Rutledge, L. F. Smith, and Albert Wenzlick. This Board of Trustees, as all subsequent boards, was charged with "the management and control of the property and affairs of the Society". During the close to 100 years of Brookes Bible Institute, over 125 people have served as members of the Board of Trustees.

All the originators were, in God's Grace, most fixedly Biblical in Doctrine, desiring competent scholarship in the teachers, but holding loyalty to the plain, unmistakable truths of the Bible, as the Infallible Word of God, as the most essential, and prayerfully reliant upon the Spirit of God as likewise supreme over all else. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Acts 15:28.

Three years passed before the school was actually opened. In 1912, Dr. J. H. Gauss, who had been the pastor of the Carondelet Presbyterian Church in St. Louis for 23 years, resigned to take up home missionary work in the mountains of Kentucky. His departure was delayed and the Trustees of the waiting school called him to be superintendent of the classes that were to begin in September of that year. Dr. Gauss accepted this call and Training School began its work.

On October 1, 1912 the first classes were held in two rooms granted for this use in the Washington and Compton Avenues Presbyterian Church. The rent for this space was nominal as the church was in great sympathy with this undertaking.

In 1916, the name “The St. Louis Bible Training School for Lay Workers” was thought to be too lengthy and lacking in definite declaration for an Institute that stood for the Bible as it is, and not for any mere system of doctrine taken from the Bible, however correct such system might be.

St. Louis had been blessed of God in having a man who through a ministry of nearly forty years had stood firmly for such a belief. That man was James Hall Brookes, founder and pastor of the Walnut Street Presbyterian Church, later know as the Washington and Compton Avenues Presbyterian Church, and currently the Memorial Presbyterian Church. Dr. Brookes was known throughout the city, state, and nation as well as in Europe as a contender for the “Faith”, proclaiming the Bible as the Word of God, His Inspired Revelation from God Himself to man, which “alone is able to make one wise unto salvation.” Dr. Brookes had proclaimed this belief from his pulpit, from the platform, through his writings, and as editor of numerous periodicals, and through many books and booklets that he wrote. It was voted upon to adopt Dr. Brookes’ name for the School, changing the name from “The St. Louis Bible Training School for Lay Workers,” to “The Brookes Bible Institute of St. Louis.”



From 1912 to 1916 the classes of “The Brookes Bible Institute” met in the Washington and Compton Avenues Presbyterian Church (at the site of the current Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church). In 1916, God laid it on the heart of Mrs. Mary Culver, who had learned of His Word at Brookes, to give six thousand dollars toward the purchase of a building for the Institute. An adequate building was found at 2051 Park Avenue. The structure was the former Orthwein residence, which had been remodeled and occupied by the Walther College of the Lutheran Church. The building was sold by Walther

College to the Brookes Bible Institute for eight thousand dollars. The full amount was paid shortly after the Institute moved into the building.

There the school remained until 1946 when it became necessary, because of the shift in population in the city, to leave this location and secure another place to continue the work. Again the Institute was befriended by a church, Second United Presbyterian Church, located at Grand and Forest Park Boulevards, until a new building for the school could be secured. Classes continued in this place until 1949 when the Board of Trustees was led by God to secure new quarters in a residential building at 3465-67 South Grand Boulevard. After remodeling and renovating these premises, classes were begun in the present building in October 1949.

In 1950, Dr. J. H. Gauss, Dean of Brookes since 1929, retired from active direction of the school and became Dean Emeritus. Dr. Gauss then in his ninety-fifth year had served the Lord at Brookes for thirty-eight years. Many persons in the St. Louis area were greatly blessed by his ministry and the Christians of this community affectionately remember



him. On June 20, 1956 Dr. Gauss was called home by his Lord whom he loved and served so faithfully for more than three-quarters of a century.

The work of the Lord Jesus Christ continues at Brookes under the same doctrinal statement that was written into the Articles of Incorporation in 1909. God has graciously provided teachers who have proclaimed “the unsearchable riches of Christ” in this community for close to a century.

Faithful pastors of the city have given one, two, or more hours a week to teaching at Brookes while Dr. Gauss devoted his entire time to the work until his retirement. Among the early teachers were Revs. R. L. Evans, H. H. Gregg, W. F. McMillin, N. O. Bartholomew, C. A. Cole and others.

In 1923, for one year, Dr. J. J. Ehrstein became a full time teacher at Brookes. In 1924, Dr. K. S. Wuest came to the staff serving in full time capacity until 1929. During these years, Mrs. Wuest gave freely of her time and talent in teaching vocal music and directing as well as with general help with music at the Institute. In 1929, Dr. Wuest left Brookes to assume a teaching career at Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois. He became well known for his work in Greek word studies and commentaries, through the more than twenty books he authored.

In August 1929, Dr. J. J. Ehrstein returned to Brookes and became Superintendent of the Institute relieving Dr. Gauss of many administrative duties. Dr. Gauss then became Dean. During the school year, 1929-30, Dr. C. H. Morton, Dr. Dwight C. Chapin, and Rev. H. F. Bohn taught part-time at the Institute, while serving their own churches in the area. In 1931 because of the national financial depression it was necessary to curtail expenditures and Dr. Gauss and Dr. Ehrstein assumed full teaching loads.

When the school year 1933-34 began, Dr. Chapin accepted the position left by Dr. Ehrstein, due to his death, and became a full-time member of the faculty until his resignation in 1941. Beginning in 1941, Dr. Henry R. Todd, Rev. Leo Lapp, and Dr. Elmer W. Fiedler served on the teaching staff in addition to their regular employment.

In 1942, Dr. Walter F. McMillin returned to the faculty and continued with the school until his home going on April 2, 1952. Dr. Gauss and Dr. McMillin then carried the burden of full-time teaching along with the capable part-time aid of Dr. Fiedler.

In 1948, it was felt that because of the aging of Dr. Gauss and Dr. McMillin it would be advisable to have another full time teacher. Rev. Arthur F. Wells was called and he took up his teaching again in September 1948. In 1950 Dr. Gauss, because of his advanced age, felt it necessary to resign. Rev. Wells was made Dean and Dr. Gauss, Dean Emeritus.

During these years, the work was carried on by those faithful ones, who, in addition to Rev. Wells devoted part-time to the teaching of the Word. Rev. Earl Pounds, Dr. McMillin and Mrs. Lois Friess gave unstintingly of their time. Rev. Wells resigned from the faculty in 1950 making it necessary to secure someone who could devote full time to teaching at Brookes.

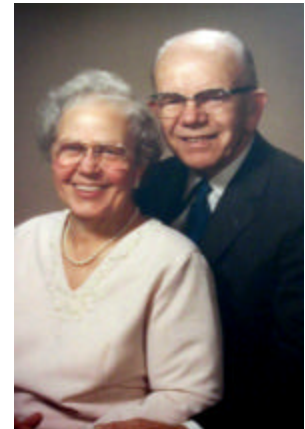


In 1952, Dr. Elias D. White came to the Institute as full-time teacher and then became Dean. Through the efforts of Dr. White the curriculum was greatly expanded and a more unified system of the student accreditation was adapted. Instead of granting certificates for three years of Bible Doctrine and Personal Work, three courses were offered a one-year, a two-year, and a full three-year course. Dr. White resigned in 1954 and returned to California.

From 1955-1973, the work of the Institute continued to grow under the leadership of the dedicated staff led by Mr. Lois Friess and the Board of Trustees. Enrollment increased and by 1975 the student enrollment was over 350.

In 1973, Mr. Leroy Fahnestock became a full-time teacher and administrator in order to relieve the staff of some administrative responsibilities. He remained in that capacity until his resignation in 1976.

Up until 1986, the school operated in the building at 3465-67 S. Grand Blvd. God lead a former Trustee of Brookes Bible Institute, Russell A. Friess, to purchase the building at 3463 S. Grand Blvd for \$45,000. Together, Russell Friess and his wife, Lois Friess, contributed a full century of work for the Lord at Brookes Bible Institute. In fact, in 1982 there was an anniversary commemoration of Mrs. Friess' fifty years of teaching at Brookes and dedication of the Lois Friess Reference Library. In 1952, Mrs. Friess contributed approximately 1,000 volumes from her personal library to the newly established Lois Friess Library. On her death in 1984, an additional 2,000 volumes became the property of the libraries at Brookes Bible Institute. Mr. and Mrs. Friess were tireless supporters of Brookes Bible Institute.



From 1976-1985, the work of the Institute continued under the leadership of the faculty and the Board of Trustees. Since 1985 until 2007, when he retired due to his health and became President Emeritus, Dr. Robert Rill oversaw the most recent chapter in Brookes' rich history. Dr. Rill tirelessly dedicated 43 years to Brookes Bible Institute—21 as teacher and 22 as President. In 1985, the school was averaging 20 students per semester, had one full time teacher as the others were volunteers. During the past 22 years, the school has been turned into a two-year Bible College and licensed by the State of Missouri to give an Associates degree. Enrollment has increased to its' present 55-60 students with two full-time professors.

Brookes is continuing to provide quality training under the leadership of the faculty and the Board of Trustees. Brookes is pledged to continue to perform its services as long as God wills. At Brookes, we strive to ***Train Christians Today for Serving the Lord Tomorrow.***

## YOUTH PROGRAM

### Saturday Classes

Almost from the very beginning, a Saturday morning period of instruction for boys and girls was started. Parents who were students in the Institute of Extension Classes felt the importance and need of sound Bible study, and desired this same teaching for their children. Dr. Gauss and Miss Lois Page worked out a course of study. Miss Olive Green, a public school teacher, put the courses on a graded basis. This was the beginning of the school's departments for young people.

These classes for elementary and high school classes were offered from 1924 until 1976 when it became evident through the lack of interest on the part of the students and their parents that this operation be terminated. We look forward to returning to this phase of the work if the Lord so leads.

### Released Time Classes

From 1943 to 1948, the St. Louis Public School system had a Released Time Religious Education Program. On written request a parent could have his/her child released from school for one hour of "Religious Instruction" each week.

Brookes was one of the first to have a part in this program. Classes began at the Institute, with children coming from three different public schools, Peabody, Sigel, and Hodgen. Classes that were conducted by Brookes were not merely "Religious Instruction, but intensive Bible Teaching of fundamental Bible Truths. However, it was necessary that they in part were evangelistic, for the children came from all sorts of homes, many non-Christian, some had never been inside a church or religious building before in their lives.

The beginning was small for only a few children came. A few weeks after the beginning of the classes at the Institute, Curby Memorial Presbyterian Church, which is located in the same block with the Garfield School, contacted Dr. Gauss and requested someone to undertake the same kind of classes in their church, as were being held at the Institute. These Classes became a part of the Institute extension department, for the Institute furnished the teachers.



Dr. Gauss assigned Mrs. Lois Friess, who had been teaching these classes at the Institute to begin classes at Curby Church in the same way that they were begun at Brookes. They were to have the same lessons.

Soon children wanted to come in order to "get out of school" so the classes grew by leaps and bounds. Children came to Curby Church not only from the Garfield School, but also from Shepard, Monroe, and Grant as well. Each week the enrollment increased, and so did the working force and teachers.

A Nazarene Church, which was near the Hodgen School, opened its doors for more classes. Children then came not only from Hodgen, but Chouteau and Wyman Schools as well. This made three centers in which the children were taught: the Institute, Curby Church and the Nazarene Church.

From the small beginning of about 25 children in all the classes, including those at the Institute the enrollment were well over 1,000 weekly in 1948 when the classes were discontinued. There was a dedicated group of workers, secretaries, those who accompanied the children to and from classes, and teachers.

Only after the Supreme Court ruling against Released Time Classes did the St. Louis schools discontinue the program, thus ending this phase of the work of Brookes. But the ministry of this period was tremendous and we believe only eternity will prove its effectiveness, and make the fruit of this labor apparent.

### Our Emblem

The Institute's emblem was made possible through the devoted zeal of Mr. John A. Porter, a Trustee from 1922-1928, when he was suddenly called to be with that Lord, to whom he was inseparably anchored to in life and in death. It symbolizes the love-sworn allegiance to Him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life", for all them who hold to His Word and are kept by Him, according to His Word. "We have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast". Heb. 6:19-20.

Dr. Rill as an identifier with St. Louis, Missouri added the arch.

