

# Statue of Billy Graham unveiled at convention

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GREENSBORO, N.C.—Evangelist Billy Graham is larger than life for many Southern Baptists. Messengers and guests present at the closing session of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting learned that firsthand as they witnessed the unveiling of the 7-foot-tall statue of Graham.

Mounted in front of a 17-foot-tall cross, the statue of Graham will stand in downtown Nashville, Tenn., near the SBC executive offices and LifeWay Christian Resources' corporate headquarters. At the foot of the cross are three nails and a stone inscribed with John 3:16.

"This sculpture will stand not only as a timeless reminder of the glory of God but also as an evangelistic invitation declaring 'There is always room at the cross for you,'" said SBC President Bobby Welch, who worked out the details for pastor and sculptor Terrell O'Brien of Wyoming to design the statue.

Chris Fryer and Matt Samuelson — owners of CCL, a Christian construction management team in Atlanta — financed the project.

"I tried to ... in this sculpture ... bring the gospel to the forefront and to the man who has given his life to spread it across the world," O'Brien said.

Cliff Barrows, music and program director for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and William Franklin Graham IV, grandson of Billy Graham and son of Franklin represented Graham at the unveiling.

Barrows said the statue is a perfect representation of Graham's five passions—God's word; his passion to proclaim it; the passage he preached, "God loves you;" his passion for the lost; and his passion to glory in the cross of Christ as the Apostle Paul did.

Graham "is greatly humbled and honored by this gesture but so proud of the fact that the convention has again renewed its commitment to evangelism," Barrows said.

Welch said, "Every expression of this unveiling and this (statue) committee is going toward praising the Lord for what he has done through this godly person."

Also on hand for the unveiling was Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources.