



PROVIDENCE HOME

Helping Men Celebrate Victory in Christ

From Death Row to Providence Home

But health concerns now lead Chaplain Ron Smart to resign



Ron Smart

Ron Smart spent 45 years in juvenile and adult prisons, part of that time on death row for two murders in 1978. If that were not enough, while in prison, he became further hardened in his sinful ways, as he consumed and sold drugs at South Carolina's Central Correctional Institution (CCI).

With that kind of background, it's hard to imagine that for the past nine years, Smart has been a volunteer chaplain at Providence Home. His story is a testimony to God's grace, providence, and redemption in part because of the faithful witness of former Providence Home Executive Director Ken Ritchie and his late wife Cathy, who ministered to him during his incarceration.

Smart says that he became "a committed Christian" on March 11, 1981 after coming to realize "that he should not continue to run from God as Lord."

As appeals in his murder case churned in the legal system over the years, in God's providence, he would eventually be a free man.

"The State Supreme Court overturned my death sentences because of something said by the prosecutor," Smart recalled. "However, I had to go back for a resentencing trial for my murder convictions. The best I could hope for was two life sentences, or I could receive another death penalty."

In March 1984, Smart had a resentencing trial. He says he claimed Philippians 4:6-7 to be delivered from death row.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB)
6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The trial concluded on the afternoon of March 27, 1984, with sentencing scheduled for the next day. Before

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Providence Home

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From Death Row to Providence Home

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being taken from the courtroom, Smart says “the judge looked down at me and asked me if I had anything to say. I quoted Romans 14:8 to him.”

*Romans 14:8 (NASB)
for if we live, we live for the Lord,
or if we die, we die for the Lord;
therefore whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's.*

The judge immediately ruled that Smart should serve two life sentences.

“That sure was much better than the two death sentences,” Smart said. “On Sept. 16, 2005, I was released on parole at my seventh appearance before the parole board.”

Soon after, Smart was invited to minister as chaplain at Providence Home, and since then, he has faithfully served in numerous ways. Smart has counseled with the residents, run countless errands, and driven the residents to appointments.

On Feb. 10, 2008, Smart was ordained at First Baptist Church in Columbia to preach the gospel.

However, Smart had a major setback with his health in June of this year, contracting a bad case of pneumonia and septic blood issues. During his stay in the hospital, it was also discovered that his heart suffered some damage from this ordeal. All of this resulted in Smart explaining to Executive Director Rob Settle that he was going to

have to step down from his role as Providence Home chaplain.

Settle says that Smart has exemplified a servant's attitude over the years.

“Ron never asked for any compensation, but has always been more than willing to sacrificially give of himself to help our men,” Settle said. “Ron was regularly on the lookout for opportunities to counsel with God's Word, especially sharing the great news of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

“For many years Ron memorized large portions of God's Word,” Settle continued. “As a result of this commitment, Ron probably knows more Scripture from memory than most seminary professors.”

He will be missed.

Providence Home Residents Subject of Magazine Article

The work of Providence Home has caught the attention of local media. “Reach Out Columbia” magazine is publishing an article this fall featuring Providence Home residents George Richardson and Chuck Long. The article is written by the Rev. David Gentino, pastor of Columbia Presbyterian Church, a regular contributor to the Christian periodical who preaches weekly at Providence Home.

“I was just trying to find a refuge,” Richardson told Gentino in his Gullah accent. “My life was shattered. I was merely existing and I was homicidal and suicidal. I just didn't care.”

However, shortly after arriving at Providence Home, Richardson says he immediately felt at ease among the men. He radiates as he explains he now has a focus on helping others. Richardson is also a popular chapel speaker among



George Richardson (left) and Chuck Long pose outside Providence Home.

his peers, teaching from God's Word as one previously wayward and defeated, to now a man experiencing victorious hope in Jesus Christ.

Chuck Long shared with Gentino that after a year on the Providence Home campus, he graduated from being a Providence Home client to a member of the staff, serving as director of facilities.

Long testifies that although drugs once enslaved him, he has been drug and alcohol free since his arrival at Providence Home.

“My heart is soft now,” Long says.

“I'm always hungry to learn more about God.”

Find out how you can get a copy of the article about George Richardson and Chuck Long at the “Reach Out Columbia” website: www.reachoutcolumbia.com.

Providence Home Director of Operations Jimmy Braddock and Executive Director Rob Settle are available for tours of the facilities where you can meet other men like George and Chuck.

Housewarming Celebrated

Over 100 people, including five relatives of the late Johnny Zenoni, the founding executive director of Providence Home, attended the June 14 dedication of the newest Providence Home facility.



Board Chairman Bill Cogdill (left) and Executive Director Rob Settle addressing the crowd.

The house on Elmhurst Road, located behind Providence Home's Main Street campus, is now home to three men who previously struggled with substance abuse. They have "graduated" from the Providence Home program, and



The guests mingle in the yard

living in the house moves them one step closer to living on their own again, and becoming godly citizens.

A number of people worked hard to make it a special day, including board member Beverly Chrisman, Program Director Jimmy Braddock, Facilities Director Chuck Long, Providence Home residents Willie Stevenson, Kevin Greene, Jim Furr, and Rod Boyher, and ladies



Food and friends at the dedication

from Riverland Hills Baptist Church who supplied delicious desserts.

Providence Home Resident Exemplifies Service

Honored with Farra Award

Providence Home resident Floyd Brown is an example of humility, displayed in his simple commitment to not only keep the grounds of Providence Home litter free, but also the entire block! Because of his example, Brown has been named the inaugural recipient of the Bob Farra Service Award. Bob Farra was a Providence Home resident who went to be with the Lord Jesus Christ last year.

Farra became a Providence Home resident after suffering from an extended period of severe depression. While at Providence Home, he entered into a dynamic relationship with



Floyd Brown holds a Providence Home newsletter featuring Bob Farra. Pictured with him (from left to right) are James Farra (Bob's nephew), Steve Farra (Bob's brother), Sharon Farra (Steve's wife), and Laura (Bob's niece).

the Lord, growing into a loving servant to the other residents, sometimes demonstrating his

love by buying them small gifts of candy or chips. Additionally, he regularly visited those in hospitals and jails.

Following his death, Farra's family established the annual monetary award in his name, given to a deserving resident.

The staff and board of directors of Providence Home desire to have more of our residents become dedicated

followers of Christ just like Bob Farra. Floyd Brown is growing into such a man!



PROVIDENCE HOME

Helping Men Celebrate Victory in Christ

3421 N. Main Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29203

providencehomecolumbia.org

From the Chairman: **Witnessing Changed Lives**

What a blessing to be a part of all that our loving Jehovah God is doing through the ministry at Providence Home. So many times it is hard to see the measure of the fruit of the Spirit as Christ works in the hearts and minds of His people. But that is not the case with Providence Home residents as they discover daily insights from the Holy Scripture and experience God's loving companionship in their lives.

The members of the Providence Home Board of Directors are so proud of the residents and are



Bill Cogdill

encouraged as we witness the love and compassion that come from their real and personal relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ. Not only are our men learning to overcome their personal problems, they are becoming advocates of Christ to others who search for the peace and understanding that transcends all barriers. That is a true reflection of the power of unselfish love.

On behalf of our entire organization, I thank you for your continued support of those who have gone astray, but find

solace and healing in your trust and willingness to support our mission.

Please consider your gift to Providence Home today at providencehomecolumbia.org.

Sincerely,

Bill Cogdill
Chairman of the Board of Directors

MISSION STATEMENT
PROVIDENCE HOME STABILIZES
THE LIVING CONDITIONS
OF DISLOCATED MEN AND
ENCOURAGES THE REALIZATION
OF THEIR FULL POTENTIAL
THROUGH THE POWER OF
JESUS CHRIST.