Save the date: Tony Blair visits Union October 3

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ormal British Prime Minister Tony Blair will be the keynote speaker for Union University’s 14th annual Scholarship Banquet Oct. 3 at Jackson’s Carl Perkins Civic Center. Blair served as prime minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1997-2007. He was also the leader of Great Britain’s Labour Party from 1994-2007 and the Member of Parliament for Sedgefield, England, from 1983-2007. “In recent years Mr. Blair has become one of the most admired men in the world with his many efforts to promote good will through numerous means such as his faith foundation, his sports foundation, his charitable work and many other laudable efforts,” Union University President David S. Dockery said. “The Union community will be pleased once again to bring a major world leader to West Tennessee.” Blair’s memoir, A Journey: My Political Life, was released in September 2010 and made The New York Times Best Seller list within a week of its release. The annual Scholarship Banquet has become one of the premier events in West Tennessee each year, and is Union’s primary fund raising event for its student scholarship fund. All told, Union’s Scholarship Banquets have generated more than $5 million for student scholarships.

More national honors for community service efforts

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or the fifth straight year, Union University has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to America’s communities. “It is one thing to be recognized once among this prestigious group of institutions, but to be recognized for five straight years speaks volumes about the quality of Union students, staff and faculty,” Union President David S. Dockery said. “We’re honored to receive this significant award for the fifth straight year.” Union is one of only about 100 institutions in the nation that have been named to the honor roll every year since its inception. Launched in 2006, the Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its commitment to service-learning and civic engagement. This year, 511 institutions were named to the honor roll. The award is given by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Honorees for the award were chosen based on a series of selection factors including scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses. Union University serves the community in many ways throughout the year. Its largest event is the annual Campus and Community Day. October 3 at Jackson’s Carl Perkins Civic Center. Blair served as prime minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1997-2007. He was also the leader of Great Britain’s Labour Party from 1994-2007 and the Member of Parliament for Sedgefield, England, from 1983-2007. “In recent years Mr. Blair has become one of the most admired men in the world with his many efforts to promote good will through numerous means such as his faith foundation, his sports foundation, his charitable work and many other laudable efforts,” Union University President David S. Dockery said. “The Union community will be pleased once again to bring a major world leader to West Tennessee.” Blair’s memoir, A Journey: My Political Life, was released in September 2010 and made The New York Times Best Seller list within a week of its release. The annual Scholarship Banquet has become one of the premier events in West Tennessee each year, and is Union’s primary fund raising event for its student scholarship fund. All told, Union’s Scholarship Banquets have generated more than $5 million for student scholarships.

Union to begin new academic journal

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ion University will initiate a publishing project that begins next year with a semi-annual academic journal. The journal has the working title Religion et Érudit, which is the university motto. As the name implies, the journal will address issues of faith and learning from an evangelical perspective. Each edition would include four to six articles, a running column by the editor and reviews. The journal will be led by an editorial board consisting of Union University faculty members as well as others from outside the university community. Hunter Baker, associate dean of arts and sciences, and C. Ben Mitchell, Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy, will serve as the journal’s senior editors.
Dockery books focus on denomination and leadership

Two new books from Union President David S. Dockery explore the essentials of Christian leadership and the role of Christian denominations. Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and the Future of Denominationalism, published by B&H Academic, includes chapters from a variety of Southern Baptist and evangelical leaders, based upon their presentations at a 2009 conference at Union.

Ray Van Neste, associate professor of biblical studies at Union, and Jerry Tedwell, Union’s senior vice president for university relations, served as the conference coordinators and assisted with the book.

In the preface, Dockery writes that the world has seen significant changes over the past 50 years, and Christian denominations that reached their peak 50 years ago are now struggling to discover their place in a new age. “The contributors to this volume are not pessimistic about the future; we are hopeful, largely because of Christ’s promise to His church,” Dockery writes.

Yet, we recognize that we find ourselves at a propitious moment when important questions about change, continuity, unity, and diversity need to be raised in light of the challenges around us. We... not only want to raise the questions but look for answers that are faithful to our confession and our heritage.”

Another recent release is Christian Leadership Essentials: A Handbook for Managing Christian Organizations, also published by B&H Academic. Dockery edited this book with the intent of exploring the essential qualities necessary for leading Christian organizations and institutions.

“Faithfulness to the gospel and to institutional or organizational mission will not happen apart from the renewing power of God’s Spirit and the development of godly and well-equipped leaders,” Dockery writes in the book’s introduction. “From a human perspective the need of the hour is leadership, Spirit-enabled leadership.”

Both books are available at LifeWay Christian Stores and online retailers such as Amazon.com.

Scholarship Symposium showcases student research

Academic research, usually reserved for graduate study, is increasingly common for Union undergraduates. Just look at the growth in Union’s annual Scholarship Symposium, an event which showcases student research.

In 2004, the first-year abstract for the event included students from 10 disciplines. Now in its eighth year, the 2011 abstract includes 17 disciplines, 100 faculty advisors and research work from 209 students.

Among the work represented: a working wind tunnel from engineering students; completion of an unfinished Dickens novel by English students; and organic means to discourage endoparasites from biology students.

Randall Phillips, associate professor of family studies and director of research at Union, said practice in communicating ideas and processes is one of the most beneficial aspects of the symposium for students.

“Being able to communicate is a distinctive of the liberal arts,” Phillips said. “Give these students a chance, and they can show you what they can do.”

More information about this year’s event can be found at www.uu.edu.research.

Netland wins top academic award

An article about 20th century Japanese novelist Shin’oka Endo by John Netland, professor of English and chairman of Union’s English department, was awarded best article in the Christianity and Literature journal at a 2011 national conference of academics.

At the meeting of the Modern Language Association in Los Angeles, Netland received his 2010 Lionel Barney Award for Best Referenced Article from the Conference on Christianity and Literature.

Netland’s article, “From Cultural Alterity to the Habitations of Grace: The Evolving Moral Topography of Endo’s Mudswamp Trope,” was published in the journal Christianity and Literature in 2009.

From the award citation: “(Netland’s article) speaks both to those already familiar with the Japanese Catholic novelist and to those who have yet to encounter him; the former will be enlightened and the latter intrigued.”
**School of Pharmacy serves in Belize**

When Houston Wyatt arrived in Belize in January as part of a mission trip, it was the first time he had ever left the United States. “We want to help those people in any way we could,” said Wyatt, a third-year pharmacy student at Union University. “We were helped just as much as they were, as far as seeing how they live and how grateful and humble they were about the situation they were in.”

Wyatt was one of 35 people from the Union School of Pharmacy who traveled to Hattieville, Belize, in Central America to do a variety of ministry and health care work among the impoverished there. The group included 25 students and 10 faculty, staff and community partners.

After working among residents and at schools during the day, the team served at a local church in the evening. Josh Clarke, admissions coordinator for the School of Pharmacy, and Doug Duncan, a pharmacist from Dyer, Tenn., shared the preaching duties and pharmacy students gave testimonies and led in worship.

**GO Teams span the globe**

Two Union University students stepped out of the glaring sun into a cool, dim coffee shop in Tampa, Fla., to see if they could get a picture with Alex Rodriguez. The New York Yankees third baseman had just walked in and said no to the picture, but then Rodriguez’s girlfriend, actress Cameron Diaz, walked through the door. While she was waiting for her drink, the two students introduced themselves and explained to her that they were walking in that area of Tampa, praying. They asked if they could pray for her as they walked, and explained that it was the love of Jesus that compelled them to love others.

Diaz asked them to pray for the people who did not have as much as her and commended them for what they were doing. The Tampa group was one of 12 Global Opportunities Teams from Union that used Spring Break to minister in six stateside and six international locations. About 130 students were involved, visiting such places as Central America, Central Asia and Eastern Europe as well as Nashville, Memphis and Boston, among other locations.

In addition to the spring break teams, Union sent out teams in January to Botswana, East Asia, Germany and Israel. This summer, GO teams visit the Philippines, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Donors who wish to partner with GO Teams can make contributions online at www. uu.edu/giving or contact Campus Ministries at 731-661-5626.

**Former NFL coach keynotes Golf and Gala**

Today’s youth need adults to be actively involved in their lives to encourage them to be “uncommon,” according to former NFL coach Tony Dungy.

“You never know what small step can make a big difference in young people’s lives,” Dungy said.

Dungy was the keynote speaker for Union University’s third annual Roy L. White Legacy Golf and Gala at the Carl Perkins Civic Center and completed a day that began with a golf tournament at the Jackson Country Club.

Dungy’s wife Lauren introduced him and made some opening remarks about the challenges America’s youth are facing today.

“Tony and Lauren spoke from the heart as they addressed serious and very real issues facing young people today,” said Jerry Tibbals, Union’s senior vice president for university relations. “We are grateful to Roy and Martha White and other lead sponsors for helping to make this event possible.”

Dungy became the first black coach to win the Super Bowl when he led the Indianapolis Colts to victory in 2007. He retired from coaching in 2008 and now serves as an analyst for NBC’s “Football Night in America.” He is also the author of The New York Times best-selling books Quiet Strength and Uncommon. He and Lauren have co-authored a book for children that teaches acceptance of others.

The banquet event drew about 1,500 people, raising $375,000 for the university. At the golf tournament earlier in the day, the MG Construction team of Cody Kaill, B.J. Standfield, Clay Mallard and Mills Hamaguchi took first place.

Tony Dungy visits with Union basketball players Antoine Hall, junior DMS major (center) and Skylar Vaden, junior sports management major (right) prior to his address at the Carl Perkins Civic Center.
Leading Pollster: Citizens Feel Ignored

Rasmussen spoke on campus in the Carl Grant Events Center as part of the 12th annual Union Forum luncheon lecture series in March. One of the nation’s premier sources for public opinion information, Rasmussen has been an independent pollster since 1994 and is a frequent guest on FOX News, CNBC, BBC and other major media outlets. Public opinion doesn’t change in response to what politicians say, Rasmussen said, but changes based on what people encounter in everyday life and such a dynamic has been a common theme in U.S. history.

That experience with everyday life is what has prompted Americans overwhelmingly over the past 40-50 years to support cuts in government spending and a reduction in the size of the federal government, Rasmussen said. But despite public support for that policy, the last year when government spending decreased from the previous year was 1953, the year Elvis Presley recorded his first single.

According to Rasmussen, such continued disregard for the will of the American public is why voters are sensing a growing disconnect between themselves and the government. Voters have concluded that “if we have to rely on politicians for change, well, there’s really no hope,” he said. “There is no trust in the process.”

He cited the government bailouts as a catalyst to the most recent examples of political frustration in the United States and is evidence why people don’t think politicians in Washington are talking about the nation’s problems in the country’s direction, he admitted. But despite the pessimism, Rasmussen said he has reason for hope because the American people overwhelmingly believe in the ideals that created the nation in the first place.

Another reason for optimism, Rasmussen explained, is that the American people are well ahead of their political leaders when it comes to embracing changes that are good for the nation. He expressed confidence that their generation made in breaking down racial segregation and increasing opportunities for black Americans. She also acknowledged, though, that her generation, life work for the next.

A majority of Americans are frustrated by a U.S. political system that seems to ignore the voices and opinions of U.S. citizens, according to a prominent pollster.

“People want Republicans to lose, and they want Democrats to lose,” said Scott Rasmussen, founder and president of Rasmussen Reports. “They want them both to lose at the same time, but haven’t figured out a way to make that happen.”

Two key addresses highlight Black History Month observance

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Another reason for optimism, Rasmussen explained, is that the American people are well ahead of their political leaders when it comes to embracing changes that are good for the nation. He expressed confidence that ultimately the voters will get politicians in place who line up with their viewpoints, which will result in a positive outcome. “Ronald Reagan didn’t create the tax revolts,” Rasmussen said. “He simply rode the wave.”

Union Forum programs are conducted in the fall and spring semesters. Sponsors this year included First South Bank, TLM Associates, West Tennessee Healthcare, The Jackson Sun and Trumbull Laboratories LLC.