More than 300 alumni and guests turned out for Union University's annual Alumni Awards Luncheon, the largest in the history of the event, according to Gary Williams, associate vice-president for Institutional Advancement - Alumni Services. Students and alumni discovered "There's No Place Like Home" through a number of special events and activities that were scheduled throughout Homecoming 2003 weekend.

The Founder's Day Chapel honored the Class of 1953 with 50-year reunion medallions and featured Fisher Humphreys, professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University. Humphreys outlined the history and development of Christian doctrine and denominations, emphasizing the contributions of Union alumni and faculty who have impacted Baptist life.

Thirty-five participants in Union's football program, which last fielded a team during the 1952-53 academic year, attended the Feb. 15 Alumni Awards Luncheon and Homecoming basketball games where they and coach Robert Jelks were honored. Jelks, a former player himself, was Union's final football coach. On Feb. 12, 2003 Christian recording artist Bebo Norman performed during chapel and at a coffeehouse in Coburn Dining Hall that evening. The show was attended by more than 600 students, faculties, staff and alumni.

A tailgate party sponsored by the Freshman Council preceded the basketball victories on Feb. 13. The Bulldogs defeated Lambuth University 74-59 and the Lady Bulldogs defeated the Lady Eagles 82-66. Following the games, students enjoyed the traditional bonfire complete with hot chocolate and s'mores. All-Sing performances drew a packed house Feb. 14, in the G. M. Savage Memorial Chapel. Zeta Tau Alpha sorority won the large group competition and Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity took first place in the small group category.

At halftime of the Lady Bulldogs 116-54 victory over Blue Mountain College, Reagan Carfield was crowned Homecoming Queen 2003, and the Presidential Cup was awarded to the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority for outstanding performance in the week's activities. Later, the Bulldogs defeated Hannibal-Lagrange College 66-51.

(Editor's Note: With additional reporting by Tracie Holden, '04)
Meet the 2003 Alumni Award Recipients

Russell Wayne M'afyfield, who attended Union during the 1940s, received the Distinguished Service Award. M'afyfield is retired from a 51-year family medicine practice and resides in Ballard with his wife Carrie. The award is based on a lifetime of service to mankind and/or to Union University by an alumnus of the university.

Jane Betts, a 1974 graduate and registrar for the university, received the Distinguished Faculty/Staff Award. Betts has served as records clerk and assistant registrar at Union. The award is given to long and meritorious service to Union University by an employee.

Teresa Luna, a 1979 graduate of Union, received the Distinguished Alumni Award. A high school teacher, Luna resides in Jackson, Tenn. The award is based on distinction in one's profession and for bringing honor and recognition to Union University through that profession.

Kevin Troy Shelley, a 1994 graduate of Union, received the Outstanding Young Achiever Award. Shelley, the executive director of “Team Taylor County” lives in Campbellsville, Ky., with his wife Lisa and their two sons. The award is presented to an individual, age 35 or younger, who shows a record of significant accomplishment in professional life and for service to Union University or the world.

Wayne and Greta Pearson from Powell, Tennessee received the Honorary Alumnus/Alumna Award and our members of the “Twenty-First Century Society.” The award is presented for outstanding service to the university by one who had not attended Union. The Pearsons began supporting Union 25 years ago.

Who would you like to see profiled in the next issue of “The Link”? Call us now!