

SPRING 2021

# UNION NITE



THE UNION UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



## Beth Madison

RELIANCE ON GOD  
WHILE DEALING WITH  
CHRONIC ILLNESSES

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***United in Spirit.  
Grounded in Truth.  
Success Stories***

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**Collaborating to  
Show Care**

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**Meet our Alumni  
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Photo by Kristi Woody ('10)

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#### DEPARTMENTS

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FSC FPO



# From the President

I remember waking up March 16, 2020, and being frustrated. Not the best way to start your day. I was in the middle of grief — grief over the fact that we had to make the difficult decision to suspend our face-to-face instruction in the midst of a confusing and chaotic beginning to what we now know well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The campus began to empty of people. We had also started cancelling events that we had looked forward to with much anticipation, including one where we hoped to make a major announcement about a lead gift for the first new academic building in our campus master plan.

So, my frustration and fussing in the midst of all that was not unusual or even unwarranted. It's not the way I want to lead, but, I confess, I was in a tough spot, asking the Lord, "Why?" "Why now?" "Why this?" "What are we going to do?" "Why?"

I want to steward well what the Lord has entrusted me to steward. I care deeply about Union as an institution, and I care deeply about all of the individuals and families that make up this institution.

In the midst of all this swirling in my spirit, I punched the garage door opener to get into my car and drive to work. All I can say is that when the door lifted, it seemed as though the birds' singing that morning had been amplified in some way. Very loudly and clearly, I could hear the birds singing their song. Immediately, my mind went to Matthew 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Immediately, my countenance changed. The Lord was reminding me that he is taking care of the birds of the air, and he is taking care of Union and all of us associated with Union. It was such a moment of grace.

Almost every single day since then I have heard the birds singing and chirping. Sometimes at home, sometimes on campus, sometimes on videos or the radio, sometimes songbirds with sweet melodies, sometimes geese honking as they flew, all evidence of God's care, provision and love.

Despite the challenges we have faced during the pandemic (including the decision not to publish the *Unionite* last year), the Lord has remained faithful. Our students returned to campus in the fall semester for face-to-face classes, and for the entire 2020-2021 academic year, Union delivered the excellent, Christ-centered instruction that the Lord has used to transform so many lives. And that lead gift has been announced (see page 60).

God is faithful! The Lord is gracious, slow to anger, rich in love. He is good to all.

Gratefully,

Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver, Ph.D.



## Department of Music offers new commercial music program

The Union University Department of Music is offering a new commercial music program that began in the fall 2020 semester.



The Bachelor of Music in commercial music offers four emphases: performance; composition and arranging; recording, engineering and production; and songwriting. The purpose of this new program is to prepare commercial musicians for career opportunities in the music industry with a Christian perspective.

"We see this degree as an opportunity for our students to take Jesus into the uttermost parts of the world and into all areas of the music business," said Kelly Garner, associate professor and coordinator of commercial music. "We want our students to be excellent at what they do and be that 'city on a hill' representing Christ as a 'light in the darkness.'"

## Union students' public transportation proposal results in major grant for city of Jackson

A concept developed by a team of Union University students at the 2020 Hub City Innovation Cup resulted in a sizeable grant from the AARP to the city of Jackson to improve its bus transportation system.

Carly Bryant, Grace Ingram, Lauren Kinzinger, Callie Wright and Sydney Zemke proposed an idea for a mobile app for the Jackson Transit Authority that would track the location of buses in real time so passengers would know when the vehicles would arrive at their scheduled stops.

The Hub City Innovation Cup is an annual competition hosted by Union's McAfee School of Business in which teams of university students must take the competition theme and create a concept that improves life in Jackson. Teams from Union, Lane and the University of Memphis-Lambuth were among the 40 students who participated in 2020, with the team of Bryant, Ingram, Kinzinger, Wright and Zemke winning the first-place prize of \$3,000, provided by Jackson Energy Authority, for their idea.

"My team and I, we rode the buses just to see what it was like," Kinzinger said. "You had to have exact cash, and the machine where you paid was really out of date and had no directions. So, we had to get directions from a fellow bus rider. It was a whole mess."

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# Student retention climbs amid challenges of COVID-19

Union University's student retention rates are higher than previous years amid the challenges of a global pandemic, including a shift to online learning in the spring 2020 semester.

Ninety-three percent of students from the spring 2020 semester who were eligible to re-enroll in the fall of 2020 did so. This is two points higher than last year, one point higher than in 2018 and consistent with 2017 numbers.

"Quite frankly, in the midst of the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, we didn't know what to expect," said Bryan Carrier, vice president for student life and dean of students. "Based on national reports, as well as informal data we were receiving from other colleges and universities, university administration ran scenarios based on enrollment declines at 10, 20 and 30 percent."

In actuality, Union's retention was slightly higher than the previous year and statistically consistent with the five-year average, Carrier said. Union University's retention rate for full-time, first-time freshmen for the cohort year of 2019-2020 was 87 percent.

Carrier said most colleges and universities measure student retention based on their freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate. However, Union focuses on both the retention and graduation rates for all students rather than just first-year students. Union tracks every student who is eligible to re-enroll from semester to semester. 📖

## Union's class of 2020 placement rate at 98 percent despite difficult year

**N**inety-eight percent of Union University's class of 2020 were employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months of receiving their degree, according to an "Undergraduate First-Destination Survey" conducted by the Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career.

The placement rate for Union's class of 2019 was also 98 percent. For the classes of 2018 and 2017, placement rates were 95 percent, and in 2016 it was 91 percent. These studies were conducted in compliance with standards of the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Union's 98 percent placement rate is about 12 points above NACE's national placement rate average of 85.7 percent in 2018 (the most recent available data).

Of the class of 2020's placements, 66 percent are employed, and the majority of those are full-time jobs. Nearly 16 percent are in graduate school, 14 percent are both employed and in graduate school, and 2 percent are in volunteer work. About 2 percent are still seeking employment or further education. 📖





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Lauren Kirk, director of performance management for the city of Jackson, was one of the judges for the Hub City Innovation Cup and was impressed with the concept for the mobile app. She acknowledged that the JTA system was outdated. That's why she was grateful for the work of the Union students in bringing the issue to light.

"We felt like they had done a lot of market research as well as hands-on research – riding the bus system themselves, interacting with people on the buses and giving it that client perspective," Kirk said. "And, we felt like what they proposed was pretty doable for the city."

Kirk discovered a grant from the AARP and applied. The city's application was accepted, and the grant of \$35,500 for Jackson is the largest grant the organization has ever given to a city in Tennessee through its Community Challenge program, Kirk said.

The grant will fund hardware installation on 12 city buses, Wi-Fi connectivity on the buses and will provide for software development for the app.

Kirk said she was grateful for the Union students who developed the idea and inspired the process that has led to the concept being implemented.

"They definitely helped us draw attention to the issue," Kirk said. "They helped us see this as a priority issue and also see it as a feasible project that we could present to a grant funder."



Jason Garrett, dean of the McAfee School of Business at Union, said the team's work proved that university students are able to develop and present workable ideas under deadline pressure.

"They can do things that are not only worthy to be seen in front of the community — they can actually help improve the community as well," Garrett said.

### **Union names Dockery as recipient of 2020 Dodd Award**

Union University has presented longtime university president David S. Dockery with its M.E. Dodd Denominational Service Award.

The Dodd Award is the highest denominational service award Union gives. It is named for the man who was a 1904 Union graduate, served as president of the SBC and who was the father of today's Cooperative Program, the method by which Southern Baptists pool their resources to fund their mission and ministry efforts.

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The award, voted on by Union trustees, is given to a leader within the SBC who displays excellence and leadership in Southern Baptist life, as well as friendship and commitment to Union University. Past recipients include such leaders as Jimmy Draper, Adrian Rogers, R. Albert Mohler Jr., Steve Gaines, Paul Chitwood and others.

Dockery was Union's president from 1996-2014 and now serves as distinguished professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he also edits the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* and is theologian-in-residence at the B.H. Carroll Center for Baptist Heritage and Mission.

Dockery said it was a special honor to be recognized by Union with the Dodd Award, and he thanked Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver, Vice President for University Ministries Todd E. Brady and trustees such as Chad Wilson and Danny Sinquefeld who were involved in the selection.

"For many years I have admired M.E. Dodd and his vast influence in Baptist life during the first half of the 20th century," Dockery said. "When this is combined with my heartfelt appreciation

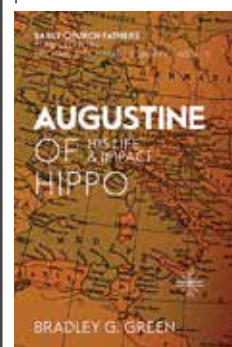
for the Union University community, it makes this recognition all the more meaningful."

"Dr. Dockery has been a giant in the field of Christian higher education for more than 30 years, and he's a faithful servant leader in the Southern Baptist Convention in a variety of ways," Brady said. "We are immensely grateful for his legacy here at Union University. It's a great privilege for us to recognize him for his many contributions."

## New book by Green addresses Augustine's life and thought

A new book on Augustine of Hippo by Brad Green provides readers with an overview of the thought and influence of one of the Christian church's most influential philosophers and theologians.

*Augustine of Hippo: His Life and Impact* was published in late 2020 by Christian Focus



as part of a series on the church fathers. Green is professor of theological studies at Union University.

Green said the series in general provides a "meaty but not overly technical introduction to the church fathers from a Protestant evangelical perspective."

Augustine was born in 354 A.D. and served as bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He wrote such books as *Confessions* and *The City of God* that are Christian classics, and his theology has helped shape the western church for centuries.

"Particularly if you're in the western half of the church, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, Augustine really is one of the two or three architects of our theological edifice," Green said. "He's kind of set the stage for how much of western theology developed."

## New bachelor's degree in Christian leadership designed to equip bivocational pastors, church leaders

Union University is offering a new Bachelor of Science in Christian Leadership program through its School of Theology and Missions and School of Adult and Professional Studies.



# Union, Southern Seminary launch partnership for MBA, M.Div. degrees

Union University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have signed an articulation agreement in which certain credits earned by students in Union's Master of Business Administration program will also count toward a Master of Divinity degree at SBTS.

Likewise, students in the Master of Divinity program at SBTS can earn credits toward their MBA degree at Union. The partnership essentially reduces the time it takes for students to complete both degrees.

Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver and SBTS President R. Albert Mohler Jr. officially signed the agreement on the Union campus March 16.

"The partnership between Southern Seminary and the oldest Southern Baptist-affiliated university is a commitment on the part of both institutions to sharing the gospel," said Jason Garrett, dean of Union's McAfee School of Business. "Leaders from Tim



Keller, Rick Warren, Henry Blackaby and the late Billy Graham have all stated that the next big wave of missions will come through business. This partnership gives a clear way for students to be prepared to catch this wave."

Students who will benefit from this partnership must be admitted to each school. Under the agreement's terms, the Master of Divinity program at SBTS will accept up to 12 hours earned from Union's MBA program. Union's MBA program will accept up to six hours from the Master of Divinity program at SBTS. [u](#)

# Art professor's sculpture dedicated at local Jackson park

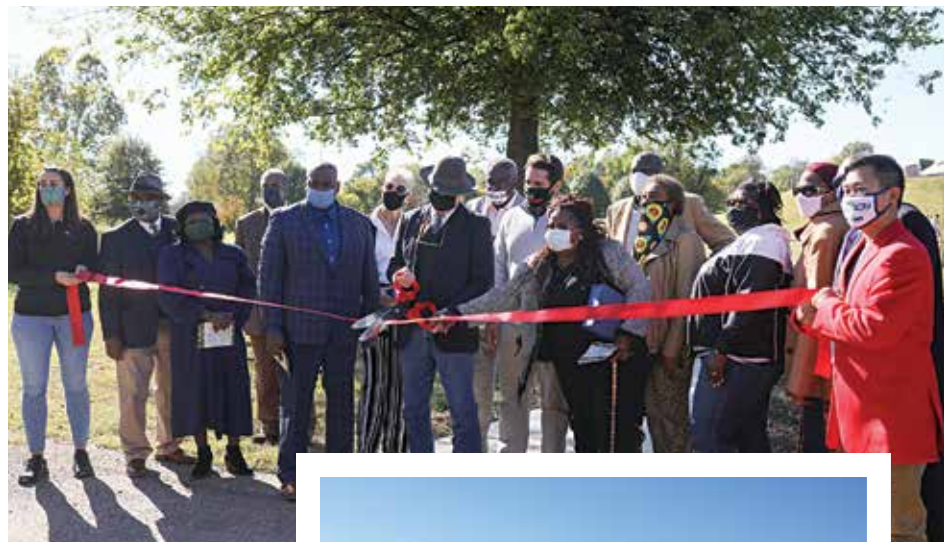
For 12 years, Lee Benson worked to complete his “Seven Pillars” sculpture, and the monument was dedicated in a ceremony by the city of Jackson in October.

The sculpture installation began in early June at Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park in Jackson. Benson, university professor of art and department chair, created the “Seven Pillars” to celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the success of Jackson and Madison County. Its name comes from Proverbs 9:1, which says, “Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out her seven pillars.”

Twelve years ago, Benson was building another sculpture and was short of funding. He talked with a local dentist, Melvin Wright, to ask for help, and in that conversation, Wright told Benson: “The black man was left out of the last 100 years of Jackson’s history. I’ll be darned if we’ll be left out of the next 100 years.”

That comment gave Benson the idea for a sculpture that celebrated African Americans’ contributions to Jackson and Madison County. Benson gained support to build this sculpture from Jackson’s mayor at the time, Jerry Gist. They decided to place the sculpture in what is now Shirlene Mercer Park. At the same time, the economy took a downturn, and the city did not have the money to fund the project, Benson said.

Once or twice every year after that, Benson would speak with Gist and ask if they could go forward with the project. Finally, during Gist’s last year in office, he gave Benson approval to begin. Since then, Benson has been working on securing funding, meeting with city officials and city council members and working with Jackson’s new mayor, Scott Conger, to



finish the project.

The sculpture consists of seven large Tennessee marble boulders — each representing African American historical figures — sitting on top of a hill. Around the hill will be three rings of trees, which represent the youth of Jackson. Seven plaques with details of the honorees surround the hill.



The black man was left out of the last 100 years of Jackson’s history. I’ll be darned if we’ll be left out of the next 100 years.

Six pillars are named after the prominent historical figures Bishop Isaac Lane, founder of Lane College; Austin Raymond Merry, the Jackson school system’s first black educator and principal; Miles Vandahurst Lynk, physician and founder of the University of West Tennessee College of Medicine and Surgery; Beebe Steven Lynk, one of the first African American women chemists; Samuel McElwee, the first African American elected to a third term in the Tennessee legislature; and Milmon Mitchell, a founding member and president of Jackson’s NAACP branch. The seventh pillar is dedicated to numerous others who have made notable contributions. <#>

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The new program is intended to equip bivocational pastors, church leaders and laypersons who have not finished their bachelor's degree to lead their churches theologically and administratively. The degree is designed specifically for adult students, providing them with robust theological training and enriching their ministries.

The School of Theology and Missions and the School of Adult and Professional Studies have partnered together and united their resources to offer this fully online program.

The program will begin in the fall of 2021 and is pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Learn more at [uu.edu/BSCL](http://uu.edu/BSCL).

### Agee picked for inaugural class of TICUA Hall of Fame

Union University alumnus and former administrator Bob Agee is one of 25 people chosen for the inaugural class of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and University Association Hall of Fame.



TICUA created the Hall of Fame to honor the distinguished alumni of its 35 member institutions while highlighting their contributions to the state, nation and world.

"We offer our heartiest congratulations to Dr. Agee on this outstanding honor," said Catherine Kwasigroh, Union's vice president for institutional advancement. "Dr. Agee is a legend at Union whose achievements have made a significant impact in the world of Christian higher education. We are grateful for his legacy and for his friendship to Union."

Agee has served in higher education for more than five decades. After graduating from Union in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in history and religion, Agee earned his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Philosophy in education from Vanderbilt.

He returned to Union to work in a variety of roles, including vice president for religious affairs, professor of practical studies and special assistant to the president for institutional planning. In 1982, Agee became the 13th president of Oklahoma Baptist University, where he served until his retirement in 1998.





# Union men's soccer wins spring title

The Union University men's soccer team claimed the Gulf South Conference Spring Championship Series Title on April 3 with a 1-0 victory over Christian Brothers University in Huntsville, Alabama. This is the first conference title of any kind in the history of Union men's soccer dating back to the inaugural season of 1998.

Union finished the year 6-1 overall.

"I am proud of what this group has accomplished over the past four years," Union Head Coach Steven Cox said. "Our guys have worked incredibly hard and deserved to get a result today. Our staff has worked very hard to develop a unique culture here at Union. We are going to enjoy this championship and also look forward to the future of soccer at Union."

Union made its first GSC Tournament appearance last season, falling in the first round. This 2021 Spring Championship Series Tournament marked the deepest postseason run for Union men's soccer since joining the GSC/NCAA in 2012. Overall, Union had four TranSouth Conference Tournament title game appearances, finishing runner-up all four times.

Union put four players on the SCS All-Tournament team: Gavin Scott, Mats Fredriksen, Botond Nemeth and William Valencia.

The Spring Championship Series was played during the spring of 2021 because the normal fall season was canceled by the NCAA due to COVID. This championship will be recorded in the history of the league and school but will not be considered as a GSC Championship. 🏆

# Malone addresses 'The Gospel and Discomfort' during Black Heritage Month Celebration

**D**iAnne Malone answered the questions, "What does the gospel have to do with Black History Month, and what does all that have to do with discomfort?" during the Black Heritage Month Celebration March 2 in the Carl Grant Events Center.

The event was sponsored by the Office of the President and the Great Commandment Collaborative, an advisory committee with collaborative leadership to further racial reconciliation and diversity initiatives across campus and community.

Malone, associate dean for student and faculty services for Union's Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies and associate professor of English for MCUTS adult programs, spoke on the topic of "The Gospel and Discomfort."

Malone also teaches African American studies at the University of Memphis. Malone's research and publication interests are her family history, specifically her ancestors and their lives as enslaved people.

When looking at the history of black people in America, one must talk about discomfort, Malone said. She drew connections to the discomfort of gaining a degree — the studying, exams and stress — and the eventual "gospel," the good news, of receiving that degree. She also pointed to the truest and most beautiful gospel: Jesus knew there would be suffering and discomfort in coming to earth, including death on the cross, but also that there was good news at the end of his suffering. Believers can use Jesus' journey toward the good news as a



pattern to follow, she said.

Malone said Americans struggle with letting race into a place of discomfort; they are hesitant to reconcile with their history of slavery and racism and are uncomfortable looking back at the recent past such as George Floyd's death.

"The immediate past is the hardest to look upon, but we must, because what I just talked about is not just black history, it is American history," Malone said. "A history of celebration and sin, of triumph and tragedy, a history of festivities and fatalities, sometimes happening at the same time." 📖



## Warren named finalist in prestigious American Prize music competition

Sabrina Warren, assistant professor of vocal studies at Union University, was a finalist for the 2020 American Prize, one of the biggest professional music competitions in the nation.

Though Warren and her ensemble didn't win

the award, she said even being named a finalist was a great honor.

"It's a lot of recognition," Warren said. "It's confirmation at the professional level that what you are doing is quality work. Every musician in our field kind of recognizes the American Prize as one of the highest standards of excellence."

## Mohler speaks on Baptist thought and religious liberty at annual Dockery Lecture Series

The right to religious liberty is central to Baptist identity and conflicts with the modern view of rights without basis in truth, R. Albert Mohler Jr. said at the annual David and Lanese Dockery Lectures on Baptist Thought and Heritage March 16 at Union.

Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Theological Society, delivered two lectures on

the topic "Religious Liberty and Contemporary Baptist Thought" in the Grant Events Center.

His first lecture was entitled "Religious Liberty and the Imago Dei: Why Recognize Any Liberty?" and his second was entitled "Religious Liberty and the Looming Crisis: So, Which 'Liberty' Shall Prevail?" Both are available for viewing in their entirety at [uu.edu/events/dockerylectures](http://uu.edu/events/dockerylectures).



## Union pharmacy graduates score Tennessee's highest NAPLEX pass rate

Ninety-eight percent of graduates from Union University's College of Pharmacy in 2020 passed the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination, the top performance in Tennessee and the eighth highest in the nation.

The average pass rate for the test is 88 percent nationally.

"Excellence in education outcomes continues to prevail at the Union University College of Pharmacy, even in the midst of a pandemic," said Sheila Mitchell, dean of the Union College of Pharmacy. "We are certainly grateful for the performance of our class of 2020 graduates on their licensing board exams as they completed their studies during a year interrupted by the onslaught of COVID-19. We congratulate them on this outstanding achievement."

The NAPLEX is designed to evaluate general practice knowledge and is taken by pharmacy students shortly after graduating. It is one component of the licensure process, and boards of pharmacy use the exam to assess a candidate's competence to practice as a pharmacist.

## Union debate team wins top IPDA national championships



Union University's debate team was named the season-long and national tournament champions of the 2020-2021 International Public Debate Association national tournament. The entirely virtual tournament was split over two weekends, March 27-28 for the Team IPDA tournament and April 9-11 for individual debaters.

Rebekah Whitaker, assistant professor of communication arts and director for debate, said this year's season and tournaments were larger and more competitive because each tournament was held virtually, so more teams were able to participate. This was Whitaker's first time coaching at nationals because the tournament was canceled last year due to COVID-19. The tournament included 62 schools and more than 300 competitors.

"Winning is an outcome of being excellence-driven," Whitaker said. "(These students) are very talented, they're very smart, they've been lavished with gifts from God. Part of being excellence-driven is stewardship of those gifts." ■

# Local donor establishes scholarship fund for Union EDGE students



**B**obby and Shirley Cogdell of Lexington, Tennessee, donated \$50,000 to create a scholarship fund for students in Union University's EDGE program.

The Cogdells' granddaughter, Olivia Gaston, presented the check for the scholarship fund to Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver on March 15.

The Union EDGE program provides a holistic, post-secondary education for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, encouraging increased independent skills that lead to a better quality of life and aligning with Union's mission of providing Christ-centered education. EDGE is an acronym for employment training, daily living skills, godly focus and educational enrichment.

"It is our desire to help children, such as our very special granddaughter, Olivia Gaston," Bobby Cogdell said. "This will assist these students to continue their education at one of our nation's finest Christian universities."

The new fund is called "The Lee, Chris and Becky Cogdell Honorary Scholarship Fund for Down Syndrome and Intelligent Disability Students." Cogdell said he established the fund in appreciation of the Christian lives of his three children and in consideration of their mother, Fay Cogdell, who was a graduate of Union and a longtime special education teacher. Scholarships will be awarded each year to students enrolled in the EDGE program, and priority will be given to students with Down syndrome. ■

# White speaks on her mother's legacy at Faith in the Marketplace luncheon

**T**rudy Cathy White spoke on the character and legacy of her late mother, Jeannette Cathy, during Union University's Faith in the Marketplace lecture March 18 in the Carl Grant Events Center.

This year's Faith in the Marketplace luncheon celebrated the 25th anniversary of the naming of Union's McAfee School of Business, which sponsored the event. The anniversary was set to be celebrated last year but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Carolyn McAfee Bruner ('61), widow of the late James T. McAfee, Jr. ('61), and her husband Jim Bruner attended the luncheon, along with Tom McAfee ('94), son of James and Carolyn.

White is an author, international business leader and daughter of Chick-fil-A founders Truett and Jeannette Cathy. She began working for the family business when she was 19 and became the



operator of a new Chick-fil-A restaurant in Birmingham, Alabama, making her the youngest operator at that time.

White and her husband, John, served for 20 years with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 10 of those years as missionaries in Brazil. They also founded Impact 360 Institute, which helps Christian students live out their faith with confidence. She recently wrote a book, "A Quiet Strength: The Life and Legacy of Jeannette M. Cathy." To know White is to know something of her family, she said.

White told the story of how her father invented the chicken sandwich and began Chick-fil-A. She said she remembers in the early 1980s when the Chick-fil-A Support Center was being built on the south side of Atlanta and thinking how massive the

foundation was — and if the foundation is that important for constructing a building, how much more important is the foundation of building one's life?

Although she goes into the Support Center often, White said she never thinks about or sees the foundation. But for everything that is seen, it is the result of the unseen, she said.

"When I think about our family and when I think about our family business, I realize that our strength in part is the result of someone who has mostly been unseen, and that is my mother, Jeannette Cathy," White said. "She was a quiet strength, and she wasn't strong because she drew a lot of attention from a lot of people. No, she was strong because she knew she needed to focus on what really mattered in life." 📖

I realize that our strength in part is the result of someone who has mostly been unseen, and that is my mother.

# DO YOU KNOW A FUTURE BULLDOG?



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*music education major  
Knoxville, Tenn.*

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# BETH MADISON

## RELIANCE ON GOD

WHILE DEALING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESSES

BY SARAH GOFF ('11)

Beth Madison is a collector of sayings and Bible verses. In conversation, she is quick to bring up a favorite quote that relates to the discussion. In her home, quotes and verses are scattered everywhere — in frames on the walls, around her workspace, in her purse and stuck on the refrigerator. Madison seems to have a gift for sharing encouraging words that apply to just about any situation.

However, if offered any praise for her resilience and wisdom, she will deflect the compliment and simply state: “If you see anything good, it’s Jesus.”

After spending any amount of time with Madison, the presence of Jesus in her life is apparent. She deals with several chronic, life-altering illnesses but points to the constancy of Christ that sustains her and gives her strength.

### THE CHALLENGE OF CHRONIC ILLNESSES

Originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, Madison currently serves as associate professor of science in Union’s School of Adult and Professional Studies, and she also teaches undergraduate physical science and Honors Community courses.

WHAT SUNK IN  
FROM THE VERY  
BEGINNING, I HAD  
A DEEP SENSE OF  
KNOWING THAT GOD  
HAD SOMETHING  
FOR ME TO LEARN  
IN IT.

Beth is married to Andy Madison, Union professor of biology, and they have two sons. The eldest, Will, is a Union graduate who works as a police officer and was recently married, and the youngest, Nate, is a freshman mechanical engineering major at Union.

The Madisons came to Union in 2002 for Andy to work in the Department of Biology. The next year, Beth began teaching one or two adjunct classes for adult learners at Union. In 2008, she began teaching at Union full-time, despite the challenges she has met along the way.

She knew that with good treatment and medication, she could manage it.

"What sunk in from the very beginning, I had a deep sense of knowing that God had something for me to learn in it, but I had to be very careful in how I responded to these lessons because others were going to learn from that," she said. "That's still something that is deep in, that I just know."

A few years later, Madison was also diagnosed with lupus. The daily impact of these diseases is that Madison deals with pain; swelling; stiffness; fatigue; fevers; skin, eye and digestive issues; and having a hard time coming up with words.

"It's in my DNA, so biologically nothing is exempt," she said. "That's what is happening with RA and lupus, is my body is attacking itself. These genes see my joints, my tissues, my skin, my organs as foreign invaders."

Her chronic illnesses affect her in the classroom, of course, such as struggling to think of words. Sometimes, she will write a problem or process on the board — something that she has been teaching for more than 20 years — and in that moment, have no idea how to solve it or where to go with it. Although this is a challenge, she said this has been a "gift of grace" as God is teaching her humility.

In those moments, Madison said she prays for direction. Sometimes, she will tell the class it is a rough day and that they are going to solve it together. Other times, she will call for a volunteer. She said her vulnerability is helpful for the students to see.

"Everybody has something going on," Madison said. "We all have that common need for grace, for help, for something to assuage the hurt, whether you can see it or not. I think that's a gift — God has used this to show me that there's so much need and hurt out there, [and] that he will provide in whatever capacity is needed. The problem always gets done and the process always gets solved."



ABOVE: The Madison family at the wedding of their son, Will, to Union graduate Lydia Davidson ('19).

Nine years ago, Madison's life was changed forever. She had dealt with periodic flu-like symptoms since graduate school, she said, but symptoms would appear and then leave. Doctors told her it was just stress. In 2012, the symptoms appeared and did not go away, but instead got progressively worse.

Her diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis did not come as a surprise — her mother and both grandmothers also had the disorder, as well as others further back in her family tree. Although one of her grandmothers had died from complications of the disease, Madison said her diagnosis did not scare her.



Dependency is a beautiful gift, Madison said. She has seen time and time again where she has called out to the Lord, and he has always provided what she needed.

"I don't wish this on anybody else ever, but I wouldn't trade it for anything because I've learned so much more about God and his presence," she said.

#### **STAYING ENCOURAGED, ENCOURAGING OTHERS**

Her chronic illnesses bring constant challenges and pain, but Madison is encouraged by God's word and presence. Madison admits that at times over the last few years she has felt like giving up on teaching because it would be the "easy choice," but God has not let her do that. She recently came across an Elisabeth Elliot quote that resonated with her: "A whole lot of what we call 'struggling' is simply delayed obedience."

Madison said, "There wasn't anything

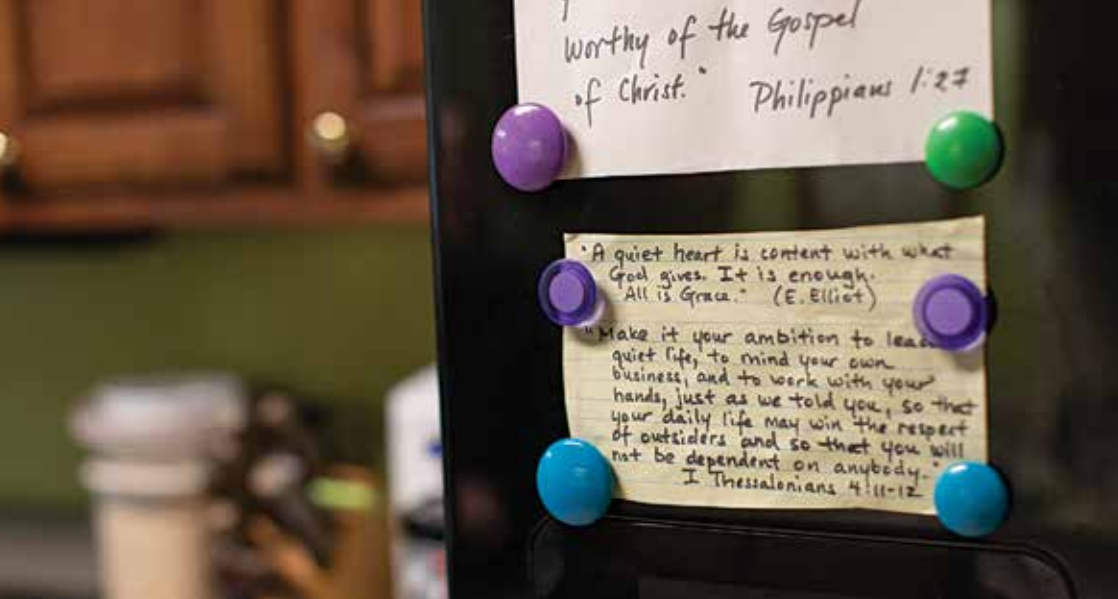
I had ever encountered that I couldn't do before this, and I encountered some hard things, but always just pushed through and got through. I can waste a lot of precious energy and time and resources on struggling, or I can step back and say, 'OK, Lord. This is what you have for me. Please give me strength and the courage to get through it.'"

Madison writes Scripture on index cards and keeps them in her purse so that she can have physical reminders of what is true. How one feels is temporary and not that important, she said, but God's word is truth.

"I keep reminding myself of that, and just reliance — that this is what God has called me to, and he will bring

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**OK, LORD.  
THIS IS WHAT YOU  
HAVE FOR ME.  
PLEASE GIVE ME  
STRENGTH AND  
THE COURAGE TO  
GET THROUGH IT.**



LEFT: Beth and Andy Madison host students for dinner during the annual Be Our Guest event, Sept. 2017.

to completion that good work he has started," she said.

She finds encouragement to keep teaching from the delight of showing students how to see science in the Scripture and the Scripture in science. Madison also sees her task as a teacher is to care for the student as a whole person.

"I'm not just there to give them this amount of content to where they can pass a certain test to get a degree and go on out and get a job, but to care for them and their needs — more importantly their eternal need for Christ and for growth in Christ," Madison said.

Early morning prayer times are important to Madison. She likes to get up early and depending on the day, she either has prayer time in her house or outside while taking a walk. For her, she said, prayer time is best in the woods. From

there she goes on to teach her classes, have meetings or meet with students.

"That time in the woods, that just shapes my whole day, just helps realign that perspective again, refocus on what's really important," she said.

A way that Madison uses her love of quotes and Scripture to minister to others is by sending out a daily text of a "verse of the day," whatever God puts on her heart. She currently has a list of about 160 people (she has lost count) to whom she texts a daily Bible verse. She started doing this about six years ago.

Some of the recipients are former students. Some are colleagues. Some are people she has never even met. Some days, she thinks that the verse seems "crazy," but she follows the Lord's leading and sends it anyway. Most of the time, she will get a response from someone that it

is exactly what they needed to hear.

"It's just been incredible to see that promise fulfilled that Scripture does not go out empty," Madison said. "It does not return void. It does accomplish the purpose for which it was sent."

#### REMAINING IN CHRIST

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult, Madison has found disguised blessings in the midst of it. Though she has had to stay home more in order to protect her health, working from home has been a blessing for her, as has been the advent of telehealth options and virtual church services.

In February 2021, Madison began a new way of encouraging others by writing on her own blog called "Soul Scientist." She writes about scientific principles in soils or plant science and their linkage with



Scripture — something she was already doing in her classes. She has also sent out a book proposal to publishers. In the meantime, she is publishing excerpts of the book on her blog.

Through God's leading Madison started choosing a verse and word for the year in 2020. This year, her guiding verse is Psalm 131:2, "But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me." Her word is "remain" — to stay, trust and watch.

"That's what I'm praying about with this book in the aspect that if God has for it to be published, it'll just be put right there in front of me," she said. "He's given me the writing, which was an adventure in and of itself. ... So, to remain. Just to watch and to wait and not worry in the process."

In the last year, three more diagnoses

have been added to Madison's list of illnesses: dysautonomia, atherosclerosis and atrial fibrillation. These conditions are cardiovascular issues resulting from the RA. Even though she has been sick for nine years, she is still surprised to go through the grieving cycle when a new diagnosis is added. For her, it is a loss of more control — or what she thinks she has control over, although she never really was in control.

"This is nothing new to God," she said. "It may be new to you, and some of these diagnoses were surprising this year. But there is no end to strength ... well, there is an end to what you think you can do, or can do, but there's not an end to what [God] can do for you and through you."

You can read Madison's blog at [soulscientistblog.com](https://soulscientistblog.com). 📖

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**SUCCESS STORIES**

*from UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.*



**UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.**

# SUCCESS STORIES

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UNION'S MISSION  
IS TO PROVIDE  
CHRIST-CENTERED  
EDUCATION  
THAT PROMOTES  
EXCELLENCE  
AND CHARACTER  
DEVELOPMENT IN  
SERVICE TO CHURCH  
AND SOCIETY.

In late 2015, Union University adopted its strategic plan, **UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** to guide the university's work over a five-year period. Due to the challenges imposed by COVID-19, university trustees extended the plan through 2022 to give university leaders more time to accomplish objectives and consider strategies for the future. Even still, we celebrate all that God has done, and we commit to pressing on as we continue to pursue these themes in the years ahead.

**UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** emphasizes seven strategic themes: bearing witness to the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, expanding enrollment across the university, enhancing operational effectiveness and efficiency to advance the mission, revising the liberal arts core curriculum, supporting meaningful research among faculty and students, developing leaders for the future, and bolstering student life and building community.

This publication tells some of the success stories from the seven themes the university has been pursuing since 2016. Building on the university's strengths and its core values of being excellence-driven, Christ-centered, people-focused and future-directed, the plan's strategies and accompanying goals have enabled Union to pursue ongoing distinctiveness in its academic programs, constantly seeking after the ultimate embodiment of truth: Jesus Christ. ☩



# 1. BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

As debate about the nature of religious liberty continues to rage in American society, Union University has taken a leading position in defending Americans' rights to freely exercise their religious convictions.

These public stands taken by the university are a testimony to the institution's convictions. As a Christ-centered school, Union remains fully committed to the first theme from its **UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** strategic plan: "Bearing Witness to the Transforming Power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"Union has been faithful in its mission," President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said. "It hasn't drifted in its mission. Standing for religious liberty is one of the ways that we can demonstrate that. We have convictions, but we also have the courage of our convictions."

The first case in which was Union involved stemmed from Obamacare, when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services required that employers provide abortifacients in their prescription drug coverage plans. Union filed a lawsuit in 2014 challenging that mandate.

In 2017, after being dealt a defeat by the Supreme Court in a case involving the Little Sisters of the Poor, the government agreed to settle the lawsuit with Union and other institutions that had filed similar suits. The government paid Union's legal expenses and agreed never to attempt enforcing such a mandate on Union again.

"When we brought that suit, it felt in many ways like a 'David vs. Goliath'-

type suit," Oliver said. "We were doing it not to score political points, but to defend religious liberty, not just for us, but for everyone. That's why it's important for us, both as Southern Baptists and as Christians, to stand up for religious liberty in our country."

Since that case, Union has not been involved directly as a litigant, but has participated in several amicus briefs in other cases pertaining to religious liberty, such as *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Agnes-Morrissey-Berru*, *Sharonell Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* and *Bostick v. Clayton County, Georgia*. Those cases, some of which are still pending, address such issues as the freedom of institutions to hire employees who share their religious beliefs and

whether religious institutions have the same access to federal grants as every other organization.

For Hunter Baker, dean of Union's College of Arts and Sciences, Union's stance on these issues is crucial to preserving constitutionally-protected freedoms.

"One of the most important Baptist contributions to American society has been their insistence of the importance of religious liberty," Baker said. "More than almost anyone, Baptists believed that conscience should remain uncoerced to the greatest extent possible. Union's involvement in these landmark cases testifies to the consistency of Baptist conviction in this regard and to the continuing

validity of preserving religious liberty.

"In an era when government grows to touch virtually every area of life, religious liberty has become more rather than less compelling as a priority for Christians."

Oliver said while many Christian institutions have shied away from such controversies over fear of potential repercussions, Union has done the exact opposite and been clear about what it believes.

"What we've said at Union is that we want to be distinctive," Oliver said. "We want to be faithful. We want to be people who aren't ashamed of the gospel." ■

## ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **The Office of University Ministries shifted Life Groups**, Union's upperclassmen-led small group ministry for new students, to more of a discipleship-focused ministry. The priorities of the ministry are to help new students understand the gospel, connect to a local church and take the next step in their walk with Christ.
- Journey Groups were implemented in the spring of 2019. **Journey Groups are student-led discipleship groups** that meet together to read through Scripture and live out the Christian life together. The 12 groups and 145 participants in 2019 studied the Gospel of John together. The groups were suspended for 2020-21 due to COVID-19.
- **A new Christian leadership program for male students** began in 2018. Called Men's Leadership Training: Developing Disciples, Building Men, Training Leaders, the yearlong program is based on curriculum written by University Ministries and is open to all male students.

## STRATEGIC THEME TWO

# 2. EXPANDING ENROLLMENT ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

Since the Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies became part of Union University in 2019, MCUTS student Lee Smith says he has seen the impact in his own life psychologically, intellectually and theologically.

When Smith heard about the merger, he did his own research into Union University. He looked into the quality of Union alumni and liked what he found. From a psychological standpoint, Smith said, the merger was a boost to his studies.

“These people are people of integrity, and they are looking over my shoulder,” Smith said. “And it encourages me to keep on pushing forward.”

Founded in 2000 through a cooperative effort from several Memphis nonprofit organizations and churches, the former Memphis Center for Urban and Theological Studies existed to provide affordable, accessible and accredited theological education and career-oriented degrees for those serving in an urban context to transform Memphis and the Mid-South for the kingdom of Christ.

Upon its merger with Union, MCUTS became the Memphis College for Urban and Theological Studies, an academic unit of the university, with its students becoming Union University students. That helped Union fulfill the second goal from its **UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** strategic plan – expanding enrollment across the university.

Smith, who serves as pastor of Greater Experience Community Church, a church plant in Horn Lake, Mississippi, will graduate from Union in May 2021 with his degree from MCUTS. He has made the president’s list and the dean’s list during his time as a Union student, accomplishments that were thrilling to him.

Upon his graduation, Smith plans to enter Union’s Master of Christian Studies program to continue his academic training.

Academically and intellectually, Smith said MCUTS has taken a step forward since becoming part of Union. An “A” in a class now is much

more challenging than it was previously. And theologically, Smith has benefited immensely from such instructors as Mark Catlin, assistant professor of biblical studies, and Eric Smith, a Union alumnus and West Tennessee pastor who is an adjunct professor.

“They have caused me to really dig deep into the Scriptures, which is what I am looking for,” Smith said.

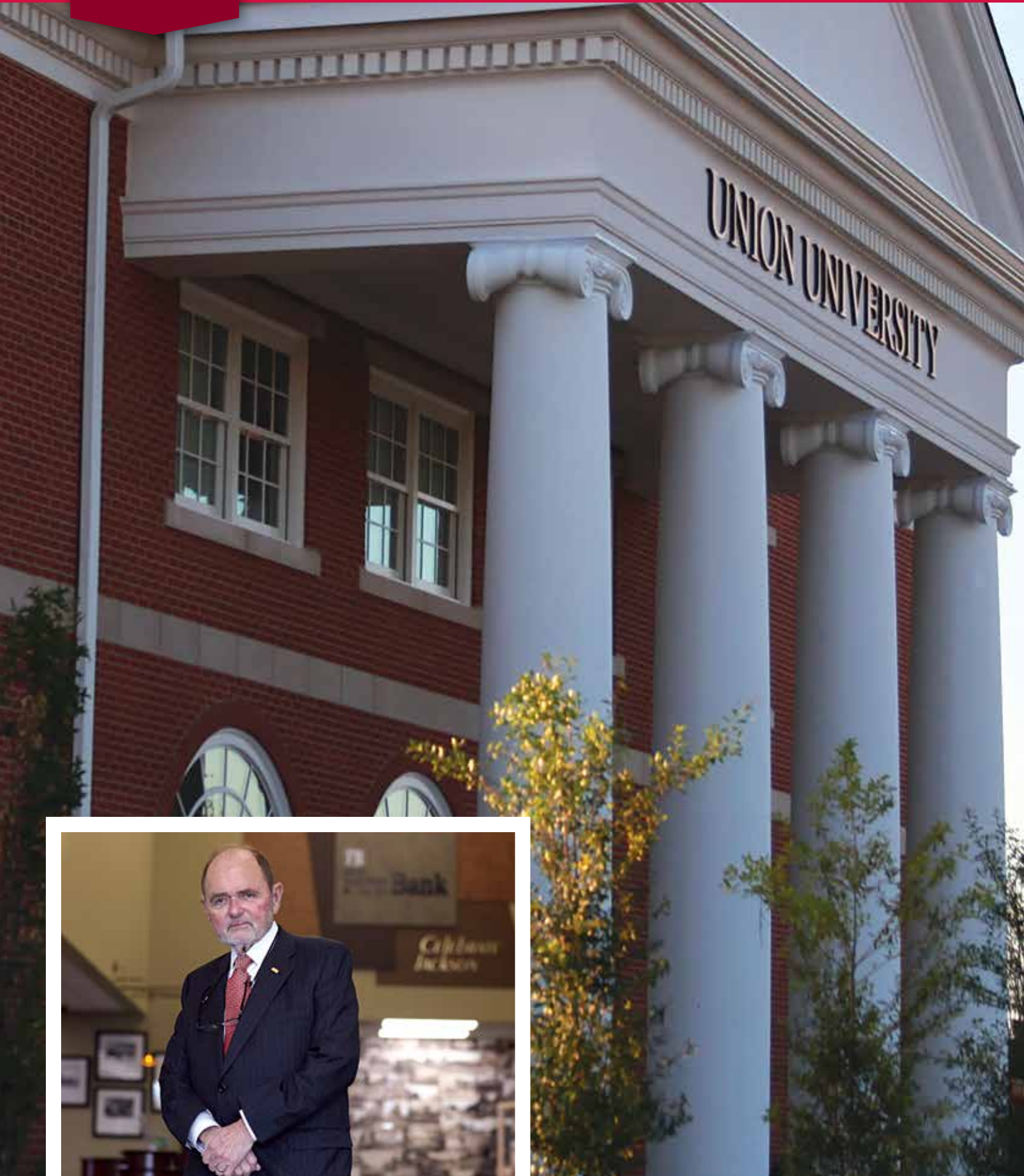
Smith has been able to “meet” a host of thinkers from Christian history – such as Polycarp, Tertullian, Martin Luther and John Calvin – through the teaching of these Union professors.

“They have allowed me to grow by introducing me to people that I know that I wouldn’t have met, if it wasn’t for Union,” Smith said. “The people that I’m talking about, these are dead people, but yet their blood still speaks.”

## ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ☛ The Office of Undergraduate Admissions conducted a thorough review of its campus visit program, which helped lead to an **increase of prospective student visitors by 52%.**
- ☛ Several **new academic programs across the university** were designed to attract more students. These programs include such majors as cybersecurity, commercial music, forensic science and criminal justice. Also, the university launched a new degree program for adult students, the Bachelor of Science in Christian Leadership.
- ☛ Through a partnership between several offices on campus, the **relationships with alumni and local churches have improved.** University ministries, advancement and undergraduate admissions worked with the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board to access the TBMB database of churches, which has been a valuable resource to promote various events on campus.





## 3.

# ENHANCING OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY TO ADVANCE THE MISSION

Though Union University has operated a campus in Hendersonville since 2008, it never truly had its own building — until a major donation from Jim Ayers in 2019. Now, the building that has housed Union’s campus since 2012 is owned completely by the university.

“I’ve always been interested in formal education,” Ayers said. “I truly believe the pathway to a better standard of living is through more formal education.”

When Union University Hendersonville began in 2008, its campus was housed at First Baptist Church in Hendersonville. That campus moved to its current location on Indian Lake Boulevard in 2012, when construction was completed on a 24,000-square-foot building that was owned and developed by Ayers Asset Management.

Ayers, a native of Parsons, Tennessee, and founder of FirstBank, has been a longtime Union supporter and benefactor. His mother attended Union for a while, and her two sisters are Union graduates. He was one of the main engines that fueled the development of the university’s Great Lawn in the early 2000s. Jennings Hall is named after Ayers’ grandparents, William and Laura Jennings.

He also has given generously to scholarships for Union students over the years. When the 2008 tornado hit the Union campus, Ayers helped purchase replacement items for students and made a major contribution to the rebuilding effort. The Ayers Quad bears his name.

Union had been leasing its Hendersonville building from Ayers since

its construction, until Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver visited Ayers in 2019 and made a large request.

“Jim, we’d like for you to consider gifting that building to Union,” Oliver told Ayers.

Oliver didn’t have to spend a lot of time cajoling and convincing Ayers.

“Well, Dub,” Ayers replied. “I have always had that in the back of my mind.”

Ayers said he originally planned to leave Union the building in his will, and he knew the university could use the money it was paying him for other things. The request from Oliver just sped up the timetable. 🏠

## ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

🏠 Over the past five years, the university **increased total net assets by 26%**, from \$132.3 million to \$166.2 million. This included reducing the university’s debt and capital lease obligations by 56%, from \$44 million to \$19.5 million.

🏠 During the years of the strategic plan, **Union’s endowment has grown by 35%**, to \$48.9 million on Dec. 31, 2020. The endowment consists of individual scholarship funds, endowed chairs and lectureships and an undesignated endowment account.

🏠 Union trustees in 2019 adopted a **campus master plan** that provides an aspirational vision of what the campus can look like over the next 20 years. The plan proposes an extension of the Great Lawn from Pleasant Plains to Highway 45 Bypass, with a new chapel anchoring the eastern end of the Great Lawn.

## STRATEGIC THEME FOUR

# 4. REVISING THE LIBERAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM

Based on their work in the last six months, the core revision task team members fully expect to have the **UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** Strategic Plan's fourth theme, "Revising the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum," completed on time.

The core revision task team, composed of faculty from disciplines across the university, was formed in 2017. Jacob Shatzer, associate dean for the School of Theology and Missions and assistant provost, joined the team as the STM representative in September 2020 after Ben Mitchell, former Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy, retired from Union. Shatzer serves as chair of the committee.

The team had focused on gathering research and wisdom from numerous sources, such as looking at peer institutions, the significance of the liberal arts and interviewing different departments at Union. Before the team members took a brief hiatus when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, they had come to a consensus on the mission and vision for why Union has a core, what a core should be and what it should address, Shatzer said. Since the late summer of 2020, they have been working from that document.

"A lot of people, when they hear 'core revision,' they think you need a new list of classes that are in the core," Shatzer

said. "To do that, there's a ton of work that has to be done, so I had the benefit of coming in to begin leading the group after they had spent three years doing a lot of that good work."

Shatzer said his role has primarily been facilitating and setting goals, getting the team to the point where it was able to put a proposal before the faculty on March 1.

Part of the team's work is helping students realize that the core is not just a checklist of classes, but something that makes sense together, and helping them understand why they need to go through the core. In addition, the team wants to help professors think differently about the courses they teach in the core as not just contributing to their discipline, but to teach them in a way that serves the broader purpose of the core.

As a Christian liberal arts institution, Shatzer said, Union believes there is substance to what it means to be human — it is not something that individuals invent, but that God has created.

"What we want to do with the core is provide that baseline sense of what it means to be a human in the eyes of God and in relationship with God, not just in a sense of every class being a Bible class, but the Bible being part of that," he said. "We think that being human actually means something, and the students need discipleship in what it means."

Shatzer said it is meaningful for him as a 2007 Union alumnus to have the responsibility of helping lead this team and do something that is important for the mission of the university. God used Union significantly in his life, he said, so it is a joy to be used by God at Union in the lives of others.

The biggest takeaway Shatzer has gained from the process is that Union is blessed with great faculty.

"I've just grown to love and respect even more the faculty who are on the core revision task team," he said. "It's not because we agree all the time — it's a hard thing to revise a core curriculum. At every moment, I'm glad I'm in the boat with these people. I'm hopeful that will be the same feeling that we have as the process moves to the greater faculty."

## ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The core revision task team developed a **revised timeline** that should allow the greater faculty to approve a new core before the conclusion of the strategic plan at the end of 2022.
- The task team **provisionally approved a complete prototype of the general core** and assigned smaller working groups to flesh out the course descriptions and objectives for courses within this core. This rough draft includes two new multi-disciplinary courses and several existing courses with redefined course content, pedagogy or learning outcomes.





## ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▣ The number of faculty members receiving **professional development grants has increased 46.5%**, from 71 in 2015 to 104 in 2020.
- ▣ The university has appointed a task team of faculty, staff and students to develop award criteria and selection processes that will **recognize outstanding research by a faculty member and a student**. The awards were debuted to the campus community at a town hall meeting in September 2020 and will be presented during Awards Day in May 2021.
- ▣ The **annual Scholarship Symposium continues to be a significant event that highlights** and celebrates student scholarship. Though the 17th annual event had to change significantly in the spring of 2020 because of COVID-19, a review of the research presented demonstrated significant and meaningful research across Union's academic units.

# 5. SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL RESEARCH AMONG FACULTY AND STUDENTS

He may be a chemist working in a high-tech lab, but for Blake Watkins in Union University's College of Pharmacy, his research can be described in a simple way.

His lab is a kitchen, and he's a chef. He just doesn't eat what he makes.

"You watch people who are passionate about food, and it's all about creating something new using the same old ingredients," says Watkins, Professor and Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences. "And that's really what we do. We're not in the business of inventing ingredients. We just use the same ingredients that have been available for a long time.

"But when you use them in different amounts, under different conditions, you get a different outcome," he explains. "That's what we're excited about, because that's where the potential is."

Since joining the Union faculty in 2008, Watkins has conducted cutting-edge drug discovery research in Providence Hall that has led to three patents — one already secured, and two others that are still undergoing review. His goal is to discover new or repurposed molecules to treat diseases that currently don't have adequate cures or treatments. This is exactly the university's goal in supporting meaningful research among faculty and students.

His first patent, awarded in 2017, was for potential uses of molecules that are similar to a molecule produced by the fire ant. Watkins collaborated on this research with faculty members from the Emory College of Medicine and the Mercer College of Pharmacy, both in Atlanta.

Watkins and his colleagues discovered that these molecules, produced by the fire ant, prevent tumors from developing their own blood supply — which can greatly limit tumor growth. Watkins and his team synthesized compounds that are analogs of the fire ant molecule to see if they could increase the molecule's benefits.

The second patent, filed in the spring of 2020, was done in collaboration with personnel from Emory and Mercer as well as Howard University. Watkins and his colleagues synthesized compounds based on computer-generated models that the Mercer scientists developed. The molecules proved to be effective against an enzyme that the body produces naturally — but one that is produced at higher levels during certain types of chronic illnesses, such as diabetes or other cardiovascular diseases. This heightened activity hastens damage to vessel walls.

Regulating the behavior of that enzyme, Watkins said, would be a pharmacological route to minimizing long-term damages to the cardiovascular system and the kidneys from some chronic diseases.

The third patent, filed in the fall of 2019, is the one Watkins is most excited about, because it involves research done entirely at Union. This project involves completely new chemistry that produces drug-like compounds faster and much less expensively by taking readily available materials and converting them into different classes of molecules with drug-like properties to target a variety of diseases, in a single chemical step. When granted,

this will be Union's first patent.

Watkins grew up in West Tennessee and attended Union as an undergraduate student. He originally planned to study medicine and become a surgeon. But Charles Baldwin, who was the longtime chairman of Union's chemistry department, recognized Watkins' potential for research and steered him in that direction.

"I think that's one of the beauties of Union," Watkins says. "We were small enough that even as chair of the department, he knew me well enough to recognize talents that I had not developed an appreciation for nor knowledge of at the time. I am grateful that I followed his advice and his guidance."

After completing his graduate study at the University of Georgia and postdoctoral work at the University of Mississippi, Watkins returned to his alma mater. He is grateful for the opportunity to pursue research that interests him and that has the potential to benefit others, and he enjoys investing in and mentoring students.

"I want my students to understand the value of chemistry, because if you look at it, God has really given us a very unique way of looking at his creation," he says. "I mean, we're really looking inside his creation if you will, at the very inner workings of what he has placed on this earth for us to explore. We have the ability, because of the understanding he's given us, to tell two atoms to bond to one another or not to bond to one another and in the process develop something that can alleviate suffering. That's pretty powerful." ■

## STRATEGIC THEME SIX

# 6. DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE

The Leadership Union program is developing current and emerging leaders in faculty and staff across the university in support of the **UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** Strategic Plan's sixth theme, "developing leaders for the future."

Leadership Union is in its fifth year. Approximately 40 faculty and staff have "graduated" from the program, and 13 people are in the current cohort.

Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver, president of Union University, started the initiative and asked the human resources department to take the lead. John Carbonell, associate vice president for human resources, was on the original task force to create the program. He is also chair (along with co-chair Michele Atkins, professor of education and assistant provost for accreditation and research) of the current committee of faculty and staff who run the program, which is made up of graduates from each cohort.

Although many business leadership programs already exist, Carbonell said they wanted Union's program to be different because of its Christian perspective. The mission of Leadership Union is to develop current and potential university leaders for a lifestyle of leadership based on biblical principles and practices that inspire others for effective and efficient work in support of Union's overall mission.

Nan Thomas, former associate director of faculty development who retired in 2020, was on the original task force and helped oversee the program for four years. Carbonell said she

was influential in forming the program and its direction.

Thomas said they see leadership development as a discipleship issue: "For Union, the reason we created the vision statement is that's really what we wanted to see happen in people's lives — that as they went through this program, they would become the kind of people who would lead, and in their leading, love God more and love others more."

The program is for both faculty and staff members who are selected by Union's Executive Council. Leadership Union spans a full academic year and consists of monthly professional training sessions, a mentor program and a team project.

The training sessions cover topics such as communication, diversity, handling conflict and decision-making. The team projects over the years have included painting and updating the fountain area outside of the Penick Academic Complex, offering a no-phone day on campus and installing a large concrete cross outside of the chapel. The purpose of the projects is to build leadership skills, Thomas said: "It's much more about 'How is leadership evolving in the project efforts?' as opposed to 'What did they complete?' or 'What did they contribute?'"

The committee has also built in participant feedback for each session as well as at the end of the program. This allows the committee to continually

Union University **rewards faculty and staff in recognition of outstanding performance** or service through annual faculty and staff awards, as well as funding for professional development.

One of the many ways that Union achieves the goal to expand opportunities for students to develop leadership skills is through **Leadership Union Student Edition**, which was launched in the fall of 2020 with 11 students. Other various leadership programs, panels and discussions are offered yearly through the Office of Student Life and the Office of University Ministries.

Union's commitment to providing leadership development opportunities for students has been validated for the last five years by The National Survey of Student Engagement Frequencies and Statistical Comparison Report. According to the biennial reports, **more than 60% of Union seniors acknowledge that they have held a formal leadership position** in a student group or organization during their time in college, which is 30% higher than other participating universities and 20% higher than Union's peer institutions.

adjust the program to better suit the participants' needs.

Carbonell said Oliver's promotion of the program and recognition of graduates, as well as the projects cohorts have completed, have helped create an awareness that Union cares about growing leaders.

"People have seen their peers and seen people from all different levels, faculty and staff, in the program," Carbonell said. "I'm hoping that it sends the message that we care about building leaders and that we're intentional about it."

Many graduates of the program have advanced in their careers at Union, and several have gone on to leadership positions at other organizations, he said. The program has also received positive feedback from participants on their personal leadership growth, Thomas added. ■





# 7. BOLSTERING STUDENT LIFE AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

Union's new Faculty-in-Residence program is carrying out the **UNITED IN SPIRIT. GROUNDED IN TRUTH.** strategic plan's seventh theme, "Bolstering Student Life and Building Community."

The Faculty-in-Residence program started in the fall of 2019 with two faculty members and their families: Frank Anderson, the Stephen Olford Chair of Expository Preaching, and his wife, Vernetta, coordinator for the Center for Academic Success; and Jason Crawford, associate professor of English, and his wife, Chelsy, and their two (now three) children. In the spring of 2021, Phil Davignon, chair and associate professor of sociology, and his family moved onto campus and became the third family in the cohort.

The program is a three-year commitment for faculty to live on Union's campus with the vision of bridging the gap between residence life and academic life.

"Residence life is great at building community, and academic life is really good at academics, but our mission is really to bring community and

academics together so that the things we're talking about in class actually play out in the place where students live, and the conversations we're having in class spill over into the place where students live," Crawford said.

To achieve that goal, the Anderson and Crawford families connect with students in numerous structured and unstructured ways. They host several formal events such as the Fireside Forum series, where they invite students to listen to a topical conversation with a faculty guest, and Common Table, where they have recruited a group of 16 students who meet weekly with the Faculty-in-Residence families, either in a large group or in smaller groups, for a meal and discussion about community.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges, Anderson and Crawford have thought of creative ways to connect with students. For instance, Crawford added a fire pit and picnic table outside his residence so his family can spend time with students outside safely.

"Practices really matter for us," Crawford said. "The practice of gathering and eating together, the practice of having conversation together, bringing students into our homes, letting them see how we live with our families. Those kinds of things are really important to what we're doing."

Anderson said he appreciates praying together with students and the "give-and-take" discipleship relationship between himself and the students.

"We think in terms of discipling others and walking with them as they are growing in their relationship with

## ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The sub-points and associated benchmarks of Strategic Theme Seven have largely been achieved. However, the work of Bolstering Student Life and Building Community is not simply an item to be checked off a list, but rather something to be **built upon on and enhanced each academic year.**
- Over the course of the strategic plan, programs have been evaluated and honed, **new programs and spaces have been added**, and cross-departmental/institutional relationships have been strengthened. These improvements have benefited the student experience and continue to heighten the university's ability to accomplish its mission.
- The extension of the strategic plan through 2022 provides the opportunity for further adaptation and enrichment. Over the next two years, the division of Student Life will **intentionally focus on evaluating and improving campus facilities to promote, cultivate and build community**; and encouraging and equipping faculty and staff to build healthy relationships with students and colleagues.

Christ," he said. "Interestingly, the more we do that and the better we do it, the more we find them able to disciple us, maybe in a greater way than we've even been able to do so with them."

Interacting with students in his home has also presented opportunities for himself and students to engage in the work of racial reconciliation, Anderson added.

By living in such close contact with students, seeing the rhythm of their daily lives and having the students see his family's life, Crawford said he has a heart connection with the students that he did not have before.

"We really hope that it'll just become part of the campus culture that faculty members are here, and that what we're doing is not just a job or a class, but it's a way of life," Crawford said. "We can invite them into a life spent pursuing wisdom and trying to live wisely and not just think wisely, and it's that living aspect that's really the magic of this program." ■





# COLLABORATING TO SHOW CARE

## IPE SIMULATIONS DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK

BY SARAH GOFF ('11)

Six people stand in a small room around a “patient” — a lifelike, high-tech simulator — laying in a hospital bed.

The tension in the air is palpable as so many people are working to care for the patient: a Union nursing student is checking vitals. A pharmacy student is asking the patient’s upset “caregivers” (portrayed by Union faculty and staff) questions about medication, and a social work master’s student is trying to assess the patient’s and the family’s needs. A medical resident from the University of Tennessee Family Medicine Center enters as a doctor to check on the patient and give out instructions. Instructors watch their students and take notes as the situation unfolds.

The scenario may be fake, but the stress in the room is real as the Union students and the medical residents and medical students from UT work together to try care for the ill patient during this interprofessional experience simulation in Providence Hall’s Simulation Labs.

Interprofessional experience (IPE) simulations like this one from November 2019 demonstrate the value of collaboration to the participating students, and they show the value of different academic disciplines across the university cooperating to provide a rich learning experience. Although the COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability to pull all of these departments together for a similar “mega” simulation in the fall of 2020, they plan to restart the large IPE sims in the fall of 2021.

## HOW IT STARTED

In the fall of 2016, senior nursing students began having interprofessional experiences with other disciplines in simulation labs, said Renee Anderson, director for simulation and interprofessional development. Anderson has been at Union for nearly 13 years, has taught in simulation for nine years and was made director of simulation in August 2018.

The College of Nursing partnered with the School of Social Work, namely Theresa Blakley, professor of social work, and Nita Mehr, associate dean for the School of Social Work. Each fall, senior nursing students and MSW students participate in a simulation experience that focuses on the community aspect of nursing.

simulation, it is interprofessional — no one department can do it alone,” Anderson said. “Back in 2016, when we decided we needed to do this, it was realizing that if we’re not careful, the student who is going to someday be the professional will see themselves as a silo, and that’s not how we are. So, we wanted to have practice-ready professionals that knew how to communicate and collaborate with other disciplines to meet the needs of the patient.”

In the fall of 2018, an IPE sim began with junior nursing students and second-year pharmacy students. That same fall, the College of Nursing partnered with the School of Theology and Missions to offer an IPE simulation twice a year for junior nursing students and Christian studies students that focuses on ethical situations.

as many opportunities as we can work in to give them those opportunities to work with others. And, if they do it on a simulated basis, then hopefully they’re going to be more comfortable when they get out in practice doing their rotations, and then ultimately when they’re licensed pharmacists working with other licensed practitioners.”

Although junior and senior nursing students participate in regular nursing simulation labs — a total of 17 over their time as traditional undergraduate students — they are different than the interprofessional experiences. For their day-to-day sims, Anderson said, they only include nursing students, and they know what the “patient’s” diagnosis will be. For the IPEs, however, the students are not aware of the scenario beforehand.



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IT'S AN  
OPPORTUNITY FOR  
THEM TO LEARN  
HOW TO WORK  
WITH OTHERS AND  
EVEN WORK WITH  
THE SIMULATED  
PATIENTS, TOO...

Beginning in 2017, the College of Nursing and the College of Pharmacy partnered to offer a large IPE simulation in the fall and the spring. This included third-year pharmacy students, senior nursing students and Master of Social Work students. In 2018, to meet pharmacy accreditation requirements, they began to include medical students and medical residents from the University of Tennessee Family Medicine Center in Jackson. This is the largest IPE simulation that nursing, pharmacy, social work and the UT Family Medicine Center offer.

“The thing with the interprofessional

Kim Lindsey-Goodrich, director for interprofessional education and professor of pharmacy practice, said the IPE sims are not only a way for pharmacy students to use their clinical knowledge and skills, but also to recognize the roles and responsibilities of everyone on the health care team to optimize patient care.

“From that interprofessional standpoint, it’s an opportunity for them to learn how to work with others and even work with the simulated patients, too, because the patient is part of the health care team, as well,” Lindsey-Goodrich said. “We just try to provide

Traditional students will participate in four IPEs during their time as students.

“I see [students] from their very first one to their very last one, and I’m able to see that fantastic growth that occurs in their ability to provide that patient-centered care,” Anderson said.

Anderson said she does not know of any other university in the area that does as many interprofessional experiences as Union. According to Anderson’s research, Union offers more and longer simulation experiences in comparison with other schools. Union University is ranked the No. 1 best college for nursing in Tennessee for



2021 by Niche.com. Union's 2020 College of Pharmacy graduates scored a pass rate of 98 percent on the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination, the top performance in Tennessee and the eighth highest in the nation.

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OUR  
INSTRUCTORS  
PUT AN  
EMPHASIS  
ON MAKING  
SURE YOU'RE  
PROVIDING  
HOLISTIC CARE.

#### TEAMWORK MAKES IT HAPPEN

To plan a large IPE sim like the one that took place in November 2019 and included nursing, pharmacy, social work and the UT Family Practice Center, the different disciplines meet together multiple times beforehand to develop the scenario "in such a way that it provides that communication collaboration between all the disciplines," Anderson said.

The professors involved also find actors to participate in the simulation, which often includes Union faculty and staff such as Jay Bernheisel, professor of engineering, and Greg Bohner, director of disability services. Sherrie Turner, simulation specialist, is also a vital part of simulation labs, Anderson said. Turner sets up the rooms, gets paperwork ready and prepares the simulated "patients" with clothing and moulage (makeup) for the scenario.

During the simulation, each discipline's professors observe how their students provide patient care, communicate and collaborate. After the sim is over, students and professors participate in a debriefing session where they have an opportunity to discuss the experience, verbalize challenges and review how they were able to demonstrate Christ's love in the scenario. The sims are built to be a safe environment for students to learn, Anderson said.

Mehr, who also serves as director for MSW programs and as professor of social work, said the IPE sims push social work students out of their comfort zones within the safety of a classroom setting with their peers.

"The shift into the sim lab offered a setting like internships in which students move from passive to active learning," Mehr said. "It also required that social



work students learn the delicate balance of interacting with other professionals in multidisciplinary practice. Students learned to work in parallel lanes as they singularly focused on patient care.”

At the end of every simulation experience, students in every participating discipline also fill out an evaluation form to provide feedback about the learning experience.

Alli Herring was a Union nursing student who graduated in the spring of 2020 and now works as a nurse on the acute care floor at Vanderbilt’s Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. Herring participated in the November 2019 “mega sim” experience and said her simulation lab experiences at Union helped her learn how to collaborate well with others and handle stress in preparation for her career.

“We’re all learning together,” Herring

said. “There’s less pressure and more being able to be willing to work together and figure out what each other is thinking, and working and building off each other’s ideas.”

#### **CHRIST-CENTERED SIMULATIONS**

Another unique aspect of Union’s simulation lab experiences is that professors and students can talk about the Lord in everything they do, Anderson said. In every simulation, the professors put an emphasis on Christian worldview — it is always Anderson’s intention and the students’ goal to demonstrate their love of Christ as they care for the simulated patient. Anderson hopes that in their years at Union, the students will develop in their own faith.

“We are blessed at Union University to be able to integrate faith in our classes with students,” Mehr said.

Demonstrating Christ’s love to patients is immersed through every course they teach, Anderson said. Professors are able to share about their own life experiences and how they have integrated faith in the hospital and clinical setting. Students are taught to listen to key cues from the patient.

“Our instructors put an emphasis on making sure you’re providing holistic care,” Herring said of her time as a student. “While that doesn’t always necessarily mean the patient is going to be spiritually involved or want that in their care, you’re always available to give it and you want to support the patient emotionally and spiritually, no matter what their religion may be. I think that does prepare us for the real world, as well, because our instructors are always encouraging that and reminding us of the importance of the spiritual side of care, as well as the obvious patient care.” ■



# MERITORIOUS 20 21 SERVICE AWARDS

Union University has a long history of producing graduates who excel in their careers, in ministry, in service and in life. Each year at Homecoming, the university presents a number of Meritorious Service Awards to select graduates who have distinguished themselves in a number of ways.

Awards include the Alumni of the Year Award, the Distinguished Service Award, the Outstanding Young Alumni Award, the Lest We Forget Award, the G.M. Savage Legacy Award and several Distinguished Achievement Awards.

In the pages that follow, we highlight the winners of the 2020 Meritorious Service Awards. We congratulate them on all they have accomplished, and we are thankful for the ways their lives have helped to extend the mission of Union University to serve the church and society. 🏡



# Alumnus *of the* Year

## Carla Sanderson ('81)

Presented to a Union University graduate for distinction in his/her profession, service to mankind and/or contribution to Union University.

Carla Sanderson has 40 years of leadership experience with global reach and impact in higher education and health care through academic leadership and boardsmanship with expertise in regulation, ethics, and the development of people and academic programs. Recognized as a mission-driven leader, Sanderson is an ambassador for Christian higher education and Christian worldview development in health care.

Sanderson is provost of Chamberlain University, which grants nursing, public health and social work degrees. She has responsibility for academic programs and leads an institutional effectiveness and research team that has implemented highly effective predictive modeling in support of student success.

She is provost emerita at Union University, where she led new program development and multi-campus expansion with an emphasis on faith integration in the classroom. She has served on 10 non-profit higher education, health care and faith-based boards and launched educational readiness programs and volunteer community health clinics for the underserved in domestic and international settings. She is a member of the inaugural Sterling Awards class recognizing the most influential women in West Tennessee.

Sanderson's Ph.D. in nursing science is from the University of Florida (Nursing Science). She earned her Master of Science in Nursing from



*Carla Sanderson speaks in chapel, March 2014.*

the University of Tennessee Center for Health Sciences and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Union University.

Sanderson resides in Jackson, Tennessee, with her husband. They have three adult sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren. The Sandersons collectively hold six Union University degrees. 🏠

# Outstanding Young Alumnus

Presented to up to three Union University graduates who are age 40 or younger with a record of significant accomplishment in professional life and service to Union University or the world.

**P**aul Akin serves as dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Prior to serving at Southern, Akin served as a team leader at the International Mission Board. He possesses a rare combination of missionary field experience, elder and pastoral experience, and missions recruiting and training in both the local church and seminary context.

Akin has lived and worked among Muslims in Africa and the Middle East, trained missionaries and served alongside missionary teams in more than 40 countries around the world. Over the last decade, he has helped mobilize and send scores of people to serve Christ among the nations and has been actively engaged with the persecuted church around the world.

## Paul Akin ('06)

He earned a Ph.D. in applied theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, writing on missionary teams in global cities. Akin and his wife, Kari, have four children and live in Louisville. 🏡



## Allen M. Smith ('04)

**A**llen M. Smith has worked in the software industry, specializing in Apple platforms, since graduating from Union in 2004 with majors in computer science and mathematics.

For the last nine years, he has worked at eBay as a software engineer on one of the world's leading e-commerce apps. He is now the lead developer for the Item screen on the iOS app, where buyers view details about eBay listings and make purchases. This code not only enables millions of views and transactions every day, but also supports the livelihood of the thousands of small businesses that make up eBay's seller community. Prior to his employment

with eBay, Smith built the Mac software to run new generations of Wacom's industry-leading pen tablets, the dominant input device for artists in professional fields such as movie production.

Smith is also active in the adult Lego fan community and regularly displays his Lego art at large public exhibitions. His largest work was a sweeping 48-square-foot outdoor scene of a campground nestled in forested hills.

He and his wife, Ruth, have three children and live in Camas, Washington. 🏡



# *Distinguished* Service Award

## **Elsie Smith ('60)**

Presented to a member of the Union community for distinction in his/her profession, service to mankind and/or contribution to Union University.

**E**lsie Y. Smith, professor emeritus, served as a biology professor at Union for 54 years before her retirement in 2016.

She earned her bachelor's degree in biology at Union in 1960 and her master's degree in microbiology from the University of Illinois. She then returned to her alma mater, joining the Union faculty in 1962. She taught such courses as Principles of Biology, Botany, Microbiology, Immunology, Genetics and many others.

Smith served multiple stints as chair of the biology department, and she served the Union community in a variety of other ways — the Health Professions Advisory Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Admissions/Re-admissions Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, sponsor of Sigma Zeta Honorary Science Society, president of UU Faculty Forum and president of the UU Alumni Association, just to name a few.

She was recognized with the Distinguished Faculty/Staff Award in 1982 and the Union

Faculty of the Year Award in 1987. The Elsie Y. Smith Microbiology Lab in White Hall is named in her honor.

Outside of Union, Smith has served on the Board of Directors for Youth Town of Tennessee and as a member of the Salvation Army Advisory Board. She led biology workshops for Jackson Central-Merry students to help them prepare for the Academic Decathlon, and she developed a summer enrichment program for local high school students.

A member of the Gideons International Auxiliary and the Tennessee Academy of Science, Smith also served as a Sunday school teacher and Bible study leader at Antioch Baptist Church. She was married to William O. "Bill" Smith from 1965 until his death in 2016. 🏠

# Union Family *Legacy* Award



Presented to one family that has a strong tradition of attending Union University, with a minimum of three generations of graduates, and that has been consistently involved with and committed to the university.

## Polk Glover Family

**T**he Glovers' connection to Union has covered five generations, beginning with Dr. Ilar Glover, who was a Union trustee, and two of his six children (Dale and Louise) who attended Union. Dale, who played football for Union, graduated in 1928 with a Bachelor of Science degree and married Elizabeth Beaird in 1934.

Dale was elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives and Senate and was chairman of the Commercial Bank of Obion. He and Elizabeth had four sons and were active at First Baptist Church in Obion.

Their oldest son, Polk Glover, attended Union where he met his wife, Sarah Pauline "Polly" Stone. He graduated with a degree in business administration, while her degree was in English. They married in August of 1961, the summer after graduating from Union, and had three children – Brooke, Beaird and Josh. Polly went on to get her master's degree in teaching and doctorate in higher education administration from Vanderbilt

University. She was an English professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin for more than 35 years and died of bile duct cancer in 2000.

Polk succeeded his father in managing Glover Farming Co. and was involved in with the Masons, Obion County 911, Red Cross, United Way of Obion County and many other

organizations. He was elected as an Obion County commissioner and alderman for the town of Obion, serving some terms simultaneously. He was an active member of First Baptist Church in Obion, where he was treasurer and a deacon. He has served several terms on Union's Board of Trustees and is a trustee emeritus. Polk has been inducted into Union's 21st Century Society, and in 1999, the Glovers received the Distinguished Service Award from the university.

Their daughter, Brooke Emery, is assistant professor of marketing at Union. She graduated from Rhodes College and completed her Master of Business Administration degree from Union in 2009.

After working as a property manager for 23 years, Brooke joined the Union faculty in 2010 and has served on various committees, including the Union University Foundation, and as Faculty Forum president. Her husband, Joe, graduated from Union in 1992 with a degree in business administration and is finishing his MBA. He is the manager of business analytics at ERMCO in Dyersburg and has many years of experience in banking and manufacturing.

The Emerys have three daughters – Sarah, a May 2021 Union graduate, and twins Mary and Rachel, who are 2021 graduates of Dyersburg High School. 🏡





# Robert E. Craig *Service Award*

## Gil and Judy Fletcher ('75)

Named after Union's 13th president and presented to an individual who has made significant contributions to the university.

**G**il and Judy Fletcher are longtime Union University friends. Judy graduated from Union with a bachelor's degree in accounting and worked as a CPA for many years before retiring from Alexander Thompson Arnold in 2015.

She received the Sterling Award for Outstanding Women in 2011 and was a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow. A member of the Tennessee Society of CPAs and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, she also served on the West Tennessee Healthcare Finance Committee and is a past president of the Union University National Alumni Association.

A native of Haywood County, Gil Fletcher graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1970 with a degree in agriculture and also attended the Graduate School of Banking of the South at Louisiana State University. His career in finance and lending began in 1974. He served with Federal Land Bank for 11 years and retired from BancorpSouth after 21 years of service.

He has served on the Union University Board of Trustees and is a past chairman of the Union University Foundation. Gil is a past president of the Humboldt Chamber of Commerce, the Humboldt Rotary Club and the Old Hickory Rotary Club of Jackson, and a past chairman of the Humboldt General Hospital Board of Directors and the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation.

The Fletchers are members of The Church at Sugar Creek in Humboldt. They have two children and four grandchildren. 🏡

# Lest We Forget Award

Presented in recognition of longtime service and contributions to the Union University community.



## Dr. Hyran Barefoot

**H**yran E. Barefoot served as Union University's 14th president from 1987-1996 leading the institution during a period of record enrollments, new construction, innovating programming and renewed alumni commitment.

A graduate of Mississippi College in 1949, Barefoot completed his seminary education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, earning his doctorate in theology in 1955. He joined the Union faculty in 1957, serving for three years as associate professor before moving to the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1960-1962. He returned to Union in 1962 as professor of New Testament, a role he held for 25 years until his election as president.

"I thought going to the seminary would be a step up in my career, but I never enjoyed it as much as my three years at Union," Barefoot recalled. "There has always been something

about Union's atmosphere and students that does not exist anywhere else."

Barefoot was recognized as Union's Teacher of the Year in 1967 and as the Chi Omega Man of the Year in 1967 and 1972. He received the university's Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award in 1973 and was named the Jackson, Tennessee, Man of the Year in 1993.

Under his leadership as president, Union enlarged the Penick Academic Complex several times, built additional housing units and constructed the Blasingame Academic Complex and the Hyran E. Barefoot Student Union Building named in his honor. 🏠

# Lest We Forget Award

Presented in recognition of longtime  
service and contributions to the  
Union University community.

## Bill Adcock



**B**ill Adcock graduated from Russell High School, Russell, Iowa, in 1952, and studied at Iowa State University. He served in the army during the Korean conflict and received the “Minute Man” award for his service.

In 1961, Adcock moved to Tennessee to start a pilot apparel operation with only 13 employees. He owned All-Wear Manufacturing and Lonoke Manufacturing, companies that eventually employed more than 900 people and manufactured blue jeans.

For Adcock, his involvement in his community was just as important as involvement in his industry. He served as president of the Newbern Rotary Club and the Newbern Lions Club and was a member of the Dyersburg Jaycees, the Masonic Lodge, the American Heart Association Board and the Security Bank Board of Directors. He chaired the Newbern Library Board and served on the executive board of the West Tennessee Boy Scouts.

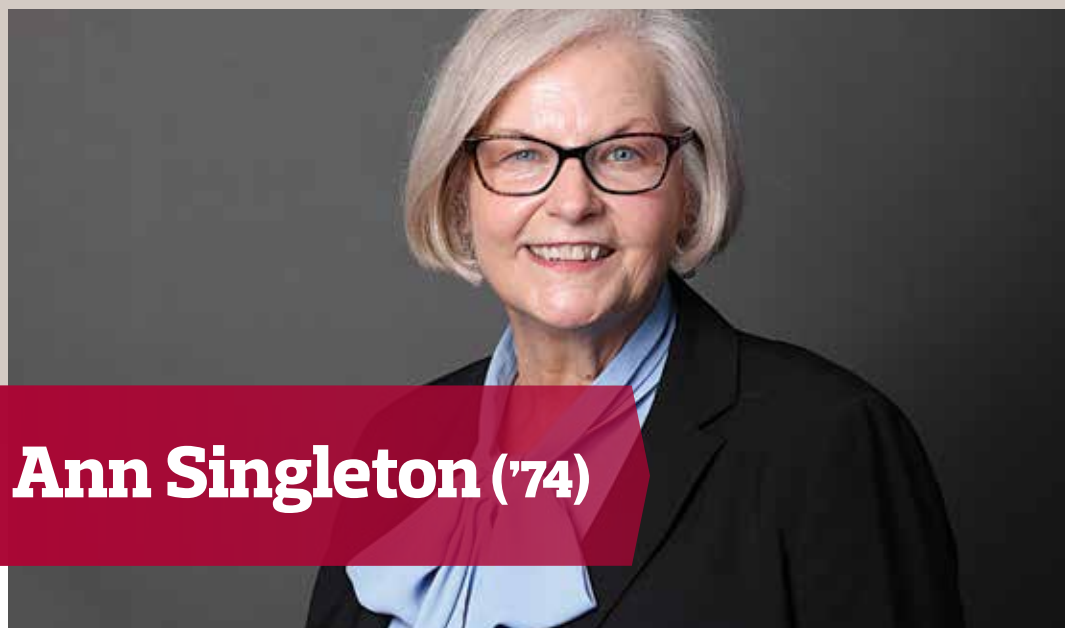
Adcock served over 20 years as a member of the Union University Board of Trustees and

has been named trustee emeritus. He was also a member of the Union University Foundation Board from 2006-2020. His wife Mary is a charter member of the Union Auxiliary and has served the Auxiliary for more than 22 years. The Adcocks’ love for the university and their passion for Christian higher education led them to establish three endowed scholarships: the Bill and Mary Adcock Scholarship Fund, the Margo Marie Petersen Nursing Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Holly M. Adcock Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund.

The Adcocks are members of Newbern First Baptist Church where Bill has served as a deacon, trustee and Sunday school superintendent and teacher. They have three children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. 🏡

# G.M. Savage *Legacy* Award

Given to a faculty or staff member for their ongoing commitment to Christ-centered education at Union University.



**Ann Singleton ('74)**

**A**nn Haltom Singleton is associate provost and dean of instruction at Union University. Previously, she served the university as associate dean of the School of Education and continues to teach as university professor of special education. Before joining Union, in 1985, she worked in the former Madison County School System, both as a classroom teacher and supervisor of special education.

Singleton received a Bachelor of Science in elementary education from Union University in 1974, a Master of Arts in special education in 1975 and a Doctor of Education in curriculum and instruction in 2001 from the University of Memphis.

Her professional activities include publications in peer-reviewed journals on academic chair leadership in higher education and effective teaching of mathematics in elementary grades. Additionally, she has co-written textbooks used to instruct elementary education majors on effective ways of teaching mathematics.

Her support of local schools includes numerous in-service presentations and consulting work. Her scholarship has been presented at state and international professional organizations, including an invited presentation to the International Teaching Professor Conference.

In 2003, she was named Union University's Faculty of the Year.

Singleton is an active member of First Baptist Church in Jackson and enjoys participating in the music ministry. 🎵



# Distinguished *Achievement* Award

Union University presents the Distinguished Achievement Award to alumni who have made significant contributions in their profession.



## **Betty Whiteaker Hurt ('55)**

Health Care

Hurt completed her dental degrees from Baylor University and practiced periodontic dentistry in the Dallas, Texas, area until her retirement.

## **Rob Dixon ('00)**

Business

Dixon has been the owner of a SERVPRO franchise in Nashville, Tennessee, for the past 14 years.



## **Kevin Adelsberger ('10)**

Arts/Media

Adelsberger is the founder of Adelsberger Marketing in Jackson, Tennessee, and a co-founder of *Our Jackson Home*, hosting its podcast from 2015-19.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Donna Gaines ('80)

### Education

In 2012, Gaines began the ARISE2Read program for underserved second graders in the Memphis city school system.



## Reggie Thomas ('85)

### Church Ministry

Thomas is president of PeakePotential and previously served in numerous church leadership roles across California, New Mexico and Texas.

## Michael Ulon Smith ('72)

### Research/Sciences

Smith is a professor emeritus in the Department of Community Medicine at the Mercer University School of Medicine in Macon, Georgia.



## Chris Todd ('89)

### Government/Public Service

Todd was elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives for District 73, which covers most of Madison County, in 2018.

## Glenna Veteto Marshall ('03)

### Humanities

Marshall is the author of two books, writes for several publications and is social media director for Practical Shepherding's women's branch.





## Gary Johnson ('92)

Athletics

Johnson serves as chair of the Department of Physical Education, Wellness and Sport at Union.

## Luke Pruett ('06)

Not-for-profit

Pruett is the recruiting director at City Leadership in Memphis, Tennessee.



# *Save the Date for* **Homecoming 2021** NOVEMBER 4-6

Make plans to be a part of special events throughout the weekend, including the 50-year reunion of both the Class of 1971 and 1972. We hope to see you back home on campus this fall!



### 40's | FORTIES |

#### Carl ('49) and Bonnie ('52)

**Duck** celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Aug. 28, 2019. They live in Brentwood, Tennessee.

### 60's | SIXTIES |

**Philip Jeffress ('63)** has completed his first novel, *Pretty Bird*, recently published by LifeRich Publishing. This work of religious fiction is set in West Kentucky in 1921. It is the story of 11-year-old Joshua and his fight for survival after being swept away in a flash flood.

### 70's | SEVENTIES |

**Lynn Hammonds ('75)** serves as the executive director of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board, which licenses teachers and approves teacher preparation programs in Hawaii. She is the immediate past president of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, vice chair

of the National Professional Educator Standards Boards Association and vice chair of the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation, a national teacher education accreditor.

#### Wanda Toombs Patrick ('77)

retired after 35 years with the UT Health Science Center. She served as assistant to the chair of pathology in medicine for 14 years, worked as a recruitment and admissions coordinator with the College of Pharmacy for 15 years and served as human resources business manager in the College of Dentistry for six years.

**Ray Clark ('78)** is an advanced math teacher at Hayti High School in Hayti, Missouri, and a sports official in Tennessee and Missouri.

#### Ramona (Stewart) Vance ('78)

has been enjoying retirement for over five years after more than 43 years in the nursing field. She worked in critical care and achieved certification in BLS, ACLS, CCRN and other areas of expertise, including certification as a Public Health Nurse Consultant.

**Becky Gardner ('79)** earned her Doctor of Education in May 2019 from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

### 80's | EIGHTIES |

In 2008, **Leo Percer ('82)** became the director of the Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics program at Liberty University. In 2020, the program reached a milestone by graduating the 50th recipient of the Ph.D. in theology and apologetics. Percer has also served on the board of directors for Ratio Christi, an international apologetics ministry, since 2012.

#### Todd ('84) and Jan ('84) Smith

recently moved to Glen Allen, Virginia, after 36 years of ministry in different states. Jan became director of The College Place Richmond, which provides free college access services for first-generation, low-income students. While visiting First Baptist Church in Ashland, Virginia, they met one of the pastors, **Bill Ellis ('64)**, and his wife

#### Marilyn ('62).

"From the minute we realized we had the Union University connection, it just felt like home,"



Jan said. "Sharing a meal after church, it was like catching up with old friends hearing about their days at Union and life after. Here we were, grads of UU 20 years apart having only known each other for 60 minutes, and the bond was just there."

**Valerie Rock Barton ('85)** was promoted to dean of secondary career and technical education at Hinds Community College.

**Mike Oliver ('88)** is the 2020 winner of the HOPE Award from Recordati Rare Diseases Inc. USA as the top regional business manager of the U.S. endocrine business unit. Oliver leads the southeastern regional business area for Recordati, a biopharmaceutical company.

### 90's | NINETIES |

**Tim Hooker ('93)** completed his Doctor of Education in higher education leadership from Union University in July 2020. In May, Tim was inducted into the Kappa Delta Pi honorary society due to his academic achievements. Tim currently teaches in the ESL Institute at Campbellsville University.

**Peter Cosmiano ('93)** has taken a position as the director of recreation and parks for the city of Jasper, Alabama, after 18 years of coaching collegiate volleyball at Millsaps College and Mississippi College.

**Andy Kirk ('96)** was selected as the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges Softball Coach of the Year in 2019 for the second consecutive season. Kirk led Itawamba Community College to

## Chester Parker

**Chester Parker ('45)**, of Knoxville, Tennessee, celebrated his 100th birthday on March 17, 2021. His friends and family celebrated the milestone event, and Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver sent a congratulatory letter, along with a Union baseball hat and other gifts.

"He was thrilled," his daughter Rebekah Fetzer said. "He put his ballcap on right away, and I think he wore it most of the day."

Parker met his late wife Margaret while both were students at Union. After graduating, he attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as pastor of churches in Arkansas, Tennessee and Illinois over several years.

He received a special proclamation from Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee and Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon to mark his 100th birthday.

In addition to his daughter Rebekah, Parker has a son, Woody, who lives in Nashville, seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. 🍷



back-to-back state championships, a Super 8 finish at the national tournament and four consecutive seasons with top 10 national rankings.

#### Jennifer Carter-Johnson ('96)

was appointed to the position of associate dean for academic affairs at the Michigan State University College of Law. Carter-Johnson is also a tenured member of the faculty and a director of the Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurial Law Clinic.

#### Andrea McDaniel Smith ('99)

was named a partner of CarterBaldwin Executive Search. She joined CarterBaldwin in 2015 following more than 15 years of work in public service and nonprofit organizations. She leads CarterBaldwin's Washington, D.C. office.



#### OO's | TWO THOUSANDS |

#### Stephanie Mabry Perkins

('01) was named director of the S. Lee Kling Proton Therapy Center at Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri.

#### Steven Jenkins ('03)



received his doctorate in health administration from the University of Mississippi Medical Center.



#### Glenna Marshall ('03)

published her first book, *The Promise is His Presence: Why God is Always*



## Join the Union University alpine tour

Experience the world-famous Oberammergau Passion Play on an alpine tour with Union University. The play began in 1634 and is only produced once a decade. Don't miss your chance to see this production and travel through the Alps on an 11-day tour July 9-19, 2022, with Dr. Dub and Susie Oliver and Union alumna Louise Lynch.

The Oberammergau Passion Play incorporates more than 2,000 residents of the German town. The tour will include stops in the Rhine Valley, Salzburg, Munich and other alpine cities in Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

Total cost of \$4,951 per person includes admission to the passion play, travel from Memphis, lodging and most meals. Space is limited, so reserve your spot today. Visit [uu.edu/alumni/travel](http://uu.edu/alumni/travel) for more information. 📖



## OLD SCHOOL

ALUMNI NEWS

*Enough*, with P&R Publishing in August of 2019. Her second book, *Everyday Faithfulness: The Beauty of Ordinary Perseverance in a Demanding World*, was published by Crossway in 2020.

**Jeff Lash ('04)** completed his Master of Library and Information Science degree from Valdosta State University in August 2019. He has given presentations with his fellow Cornerstone University librarians at the Michigan Instruction Exchange Conference and the Association of Christian Librarians Annual Conference.

**Jason Hernandez (MBA '04)** has been named chief human resources officer for Centerstone, a not-for-profit health system providing mental health and substance use disorder treatments, in Nashville, Tennessee. Hernandez was previously vice president of human resources for FedEx Freight in Memphis.

**Jonathan Kee ('04, '09, '11)** was named director of schools for the Huntingdon Special School District in Huntingdon, Tennessee.

**Kristin Ulmer Cole ('05)** was named president of A. Larry Ross Communications, an award-winning, full-service public relations agency founded in 1994 to serve faith-based and humanitarian leaders and organizations through media relations, digital communications and crisis management.



**Melissa Alexander ('06)** was recognized by GlobeSt. Real Estate Forum as a "Woman of Influence," a distinction that spotlights the achievements of women in commercial real estate. Alexander is vice president for Foundry Commercial and based in the firm's Nashville office.



**Karley Bond (MBA '06)** served as president of the Tennessee Mortgage Bankers Association for the 2020-21 term.



**Michelle Smith Miller (M.Ed. '06)** was named 2019-2020 Collierville School District Level Teacher of the Year, the Southwest Tennessee Teacher of the Year and was a finalist for Tennessee Teacher of the Year. Miller is in her 18th year of teaching and has served as the reading interventionist at Bailey Station Elementary School in Collierville, Tennessee, for the past seven years.



**Andy Morris ('06)** and his wife, Kesiha Jung Morris, were appointed as IMB missionaries in January 2019 and are currently serving in South Korea.

**Ben Burleson ('07)** completed his Certified Public Accountant exams and became a licensed Tennessee CPA.

**Tyson Cadenhead ('07)** became the chief technology officer at Aloompa, a company dedicated to changing the live events experience. The company publishes around 300 apps a year, with a client list that has included Bonnaroo, CMA Fest and Coachella, among others.

**Wesley Calvert ('08)** is the stock clerk and social media manager for Creative Dining Services at Union University.

**Gray Coyner ('08)** has been named principal of Thompson Greenspon, a full-service accounting firm in the Washington, D.C. metro area. Coyner joined the firm in 2007 as an intern while a Union student.

## 10's | TWENTY TENS |

**Mike ('10) and Jewel Evans ('10)** celebrated 10 years of marriage in June 2020 and have a daughter, Jemma Day, who turned 2 on August 24, 2020. They are members of Third Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and love to spend their time with friends, hiking, running/ biking, reading and exploring cities.

**Chris Spence ('11)** has been named regional director of operations for American Health Communities and oversees 15 communities in West Tennessee. AHC operates 29 senior living, skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers in Tennessee and northern Alabama.



**Katlyn Moncada ('12)** is the associate digital food editor for *Better Homes & Gardens* in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Christian Wallen ('12)** started a new position as an assistant professor at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, after completing a three-year postdoctoral position at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Christian is married to **Rebecca Wallen ('13)**.

**Lydia Dahl Garizio ('13)** graduated with a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling in 2018. She married James Garizio in October 2019, and they live in New Jersey while her husband completes his medical residency.



**Ben Horne ('14)** joined the University of Tennessee Knoxville as an assistant professor in the School of Information Sciences in August 2020 after finishing his Ph.D. in computer science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.



**Trinity Minter (MSW '14)** was appointed as correctional administrator for the west region of the Tennessee Department of Correction.

**George L. Parks Jr., ('16)** senior pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Arkansas, was a contributor to *Say It!: Celebrating Expository Preaching in the African American Tradition* (published by Moody Publishers), a multi-author work edited by Eric C. Redmond.

Send us your news!



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University Drive  
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**Jenny Sanders ('17)** graduated from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center with a M.S. degree in speech language pathology. She is now a practicing speech language pathologist in Nashville.

## Marriages

**Cam Tracy ('93)** married **Breanne Oldham ('03, '06)** in



Jackson, Tennessee, Dec. 28, 2019. Cam is the web development agent at Union and has been

with the university since 1995. Breanne teaches math at Madison Academic High School in Jackson.

**Jeff Reese ('05)** and his wife Bethany were married June 22, 2019.

**Stacey J. (Smith) Taylor ('05)** married Rich Taylor of Clarksville,



Tennessee, on June 8, 2019, at Bethel Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Clarksville.

Stacey is an elementary music teacher at Rossview Elementary in Clarksville. She has been teaching for 12 years.



**Bethany Hobbs ('07)** and Duncan Lindsley Hilton were

married on Aug. 8, 2020.

**Liana Saffel Guinn ('12)** and her husband Zach were married July 20, 2019. She serves Wycliffe USA as an administrative assistant at Dallas International University.



**Andrew Blackard ('15)** married **Josselyne Bustillo ('15)** in Humboldt, Tennessee, on

Sept. 14, 2019.

**Vicki Searl ('15)** and Ryan Modisette were married on Dec. 21, 2019, in Louisville, Kentucky.

## Births

Sophie Beth Grace Moore, the firstborn daughter of **Matt Moore**



**('14)** and his wife Sarah R. Moore, was born Feb. 19, 2019. Matt is the pastor of

Hatchie Baptist Church in Hornsby, Tennessee.

Pruitt James Greenwood was born July 30, 2019, to **Reagan Greenwood ('16, '18)** and her husband Cameron.

**Julia Appleton de Zavala ('13)** and her husband Rommel welcomed their first son, Sauvier, in February 2020. Zavala is in her seventh year of teaching at the bilingual Christian school Academia Los Pinares in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Caroline Avery Willis was born Nov.

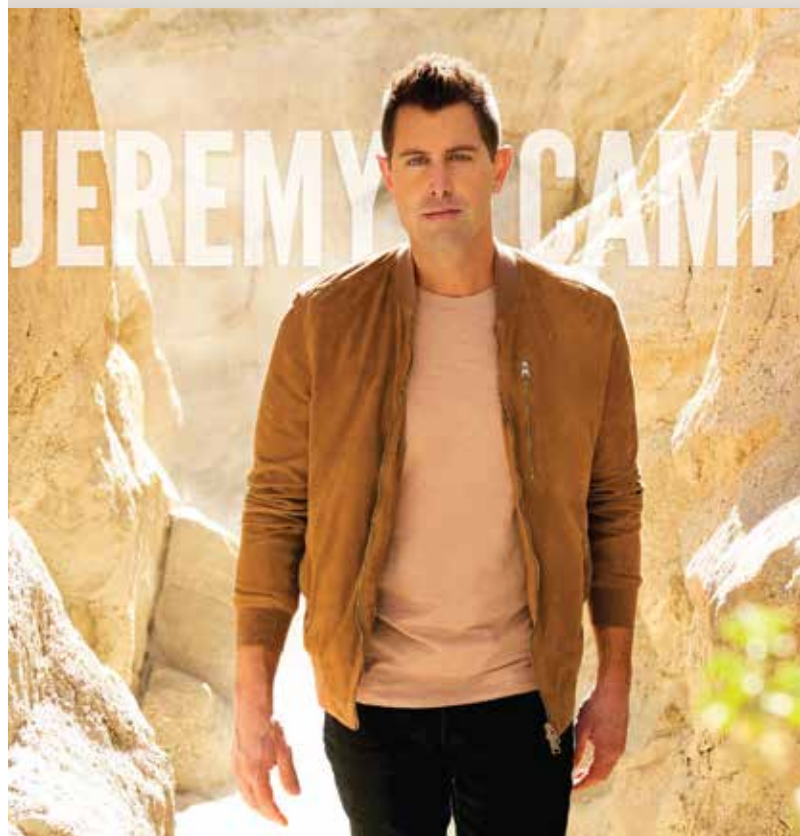


27, 2018, to **Thomas Willis ('12)** and **Elizabeth Harland Willis ('11).**



# THE 23RD ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP *Banquet*

FEATURING



**Join us for the 23rd annual Scholarship Banquet  
Tuesday, October 19, 2021.**

Featuring an interview and concert with Jeremy Camp, the banquet will celebrate the generous donors who have made a Christ-centered education at Union possible for so many students.

Sponsorships are now available and include priority dinner seating and a photo opportunity. For more information, call the Office of Institutional Advancement at 731.661.5050 or visit [uu.edu/events/scholarshipbanquet](https://uu.edu/events/scholarshipbanquet)



**UNION  
UNIVERSITY**

# Memoriam

**Elizabeth Roberts King ('41)** died April 9, 2020, at age 99.

**Merle Basden ('43)** died April 26, 2020, at age 90. He served on staff at churches in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas and was director of education for Tarrant Baptist Association in Texas for 27 years.

**William "Bill" Stott ('46)**, age 98, passed away on Sept. 12, 2020, in Humboldt, Tennessee. He enlisted into World War II and was commissioned as an ensign in the navy in 1944. He farmed, raised cattle and operated a commercial greenhouse for many years until his retirement in early 1990.

**Eloise McCallen Phillips ('46)**, age 96, passed away July 27, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. She was a devoted member of First Presbyterian Church of Jackson for more than 40 years.

**Dorothy Byrum Sipes ('49)**, age 93, died Sept. 16, 2020. At Union, she pledged Zeta Tau Alpha sorority.

**Irene Kent Bishop ('49)**, age 91, died on May 20, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. After working at several churches and the Tennessee State Sunday School Department, she served as an educator for 25 years in Jackson and Adamsville.

**Nelda P. McCune ('50)** of Rossville, Tennessee, passed away on June 14, 2020, at the age of 91. She was the widow of **James K. McCune Jr. ('50)** and sister of **Beverly Huston ('56)**.

**Ray Smalley House ('50)**, died on June 21, 2019, in Franklin, Tennessee. He began his academic career at the University of Memphis and served at Loyola College, Barry University and Christian Brothers University.

**Rose McIlwain Smith ('50)** passed away on July 22, 2020, in Bells, Tennessee, at the age of 92. Rose was a strong supporter of the Union basketball team. She was the mother of Beth Hale whose husband, Michael Hale, is the end-user support services and asset management administrator at Union.

**Ira P. Singleton Jr. ('50)** died Dec. 31, 2019, at age 93. He was a pastor of churches in Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri, and was director of missions for Baptist associations in Tennessee and Kentucky.

**Christine "Tina" Johnson Fairless ('51)** died Nov. 19, 2019, at age 89. Tina was elected Miss Union in 1950, and she and her husband Mark were recipients of Union's Distinguished Service Award in 2004.

**Mark W. Fairless Sr. ('51)**, died on Dec. 9, 2019, at age 89, 20 days after the death of his wife Tina (mentioned above). He and Tina were season ticket holders for the Union women's basketball team for many years. They were given the Union Distinguished Service Award in 2004.

**Thomas Harold Pinkley Sr. ('51)**, age 90, passed away on July 12, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. He was a retired agent of State Farm Insurance and a member and longtime deacon of The Church at Sugar Creek in Humboldt.

**Georgia "Faye" Daugherty ('53)** of Kingwood, Texas, died on April 14, 2020, at age 88. In her career as a teacher, she had the gifts of making math fun and building relationships with students.

**Betty Jo Scrivner ('53)** of Owensboro, Kentucky, passed away on Aug. 7, 2020, at age 88. She met the love of her life, **Robert Lee Scrivner ('52)**, at Union University, and they were married in 1952.

**Sylvia Giles ('53)**, 90, died Feb. 19, 2021, at her residence in Jackson, Tennessee.

**Joe B. Gaffney ('53)**, age 87, died on June 29, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. He served Madison

County for 24 years as the Circuit Court Clerk before retirement.

**Douglas Arnold "Doug" McGill ('54)**, age 94, died on Nov. 21, 2019, in Tupelo, Mississippi. He served as a school principal and coach for 25 years and raised and showed Black Angus cattle for 30 years, winning several blue ribbons and championships.

**Jerry R. Blackwell ('54)**, age 85, died on May 20, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. He was retired from AT&T as a supervisor and had been a member of Woodland Baptist Church for 40 years.

**George Horton ('54)** died June 24, 2019, at age 88. Horton served as pastor of several churches in Tennessee, Kentucky and Oklahoma.

**Alfred Carl Hart ('55)**, age 90, passed away on Sept. 23, 2018. He served for many years in the chaplain ministry and as interim pastor for 42 churches in Georgia and Tennessee.

**James Bryant Johnson ('56)**, age 86, passed away in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on June 3, 2020. He was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and retired from the IBM Corporation after 35 years of service.

**Vernon Wesley (Wes) Forsythe ('56)** died Feb. 18, 2021, at his Jackson, Tennessee, home.

**Charles Melvin Edmonds ('56)**, age 85, died May 2, 2019, in Collierville, Tennessee. He was a Southern Baptist minister for over 43 years and was a member and deacon of Trinity Baptist Church in Cordova, Tennessee.

**Thomas Denton Lillard ('56)** of Germantown, Tennessee, died on

The **UNIONITE** welcomes news from alumni. Please include contact information with your submission. There are three ways to send information:

## Standard mail:

Unionite  
1050 Union University Drive  
Jackson, TN 38305

Email: [unionite@uu.edu](mailto:unionite@uu.edu)

Online: [uu.edu/unionite](http://uu.edu/unionite)

## Joyce Barefoot

Former Union University first lady, **Joyce Lynn Barefoot**, wife of Union's 14th president Hyran Barefoot, died Jan. 23, 2021, at Maplewood Nursing Home in Jackson at age 93.

"Joyce Barefoot was a Union treasure," Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said. "Her graciousness and encouragement were hallmarks of her faithful life. Her service to Union University and, more specifically, the people of Union cannot truly be measured this side of heaven. Even still, we give thanks to God for all of the lives she impacted in Jackson, Tennessee, and around the globe by her hospitality and friendship."

Mrs. Barefoot graduated from Ouachita Parish High School in Monroe, Louisiana, and continued her education at Louisiana Tech University. She earned her degree in elementary education in 1948 and immediately began teaching in the Ouachita Parish Schools.

She met and married Hyran Barefoot, the pastor of her church, Liberty Baptist Church, in Calhoun, Louisiana, in 1949. She then joined her husband as a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where she earned a master's degree in religious education. During her studies from 1949-1955, she gave birth to her daughters, Judy, June and Jane.

Her career in education included two years of teaching in Louisville, Kentucky; one year in Albuquerque, New Mexico; one year in Monroe, Louisiana; and 30 years of

teaching kindergarten in the Jackson-Madison County School District. In addition to teaching, she was a hospital volunteer for 25 years at the former Regional Hospital in Jackson.

Joyce became Union's first lady in 1986 when her husband was chosen as Union's 14th president.

"Her strongest role was as first lady to Dr. Barefoot," Oliver said. "Her steadfast love and support for him and her unique contributions allowed Union to thrive in every way. We are ever grateful to God for the good gift of her life even as we grieve her homegoing."

The Barefoots, longtime members of West Jackson Baptist Church, were married for 71 years. Mrs. Barefoot is survived by her husband, three daughters, six grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and one sister.

The family requests memorials be directed to the Hyran and Joyce Barefoot Scholarship Fund at Union University, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, Tennessee 38305 or to West Jackson Baptist Church, 580 Oil Well Road, Jackson, Tennessee 38305. 📧



Nov. 4, 2019. He had a long career in banking, serving as president for several banks, and was elected board chairman for Union in 1977.

**William "Billy" Jesse Bickers, M.D. ('58)**, of Memphis, Tennessee, passed away June 5, 2018, of cancer. He practiced and taught for 30 years at the V.A. Hospital and U.T.

**Charles Wesley Hausser ('58)** died Jan. 16, 2019, in West Covina, California. He served as pastor for more than 50 years, the last 30 years in southern California, and

continued to preach until his death.

**Joseph Oscar Clark ('59)**, age 83, died on July 31, 2019, in Alabama. He served in the National Guard and was an engineer for Harmon Automotive.

**Elizabeth Carlene Henson Presson ('59)**, age 84, passed away on Aug. 18, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. She was an elementary school teacher for several years, a social worker and a homemaker.

**Ivan N. Raley ('59)** passed away on July 20, 2020. He served the last 18 years of his life as pastor of First Baptist Church of Byrdstown, Tennessee.

**John King Meadows ('59)**, age 89, died Oct. 13, 2020, in Lexington, Tennessee. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War and worked at Milan Arsenal for 32 years as a purchasing agent and time study engineer.

**Betty Ann (Morgan) Molen ('60)**, age 84, of Brighton, Illinois, died

on April 1, 2019. She taught Sunday school for about 60 years in various churches, loved to bake and was an excellent seamstress and artist.

**Royce W. Agerter ('60)**, age 86, died on Aug. 20, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee.

**William Carlos "Bill" Jackson ('60)** died Jan. 6, 2021.

**Fred Hewitt Harris ('61)** died Feb. 10, 2021, in Nashville, Tennessee.

# Memoriam

**William “Bill” E. Hopkins (‘61)**, age 82, died on Oct. 31, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. He worked in insurance and financial services for many years before returning to his true passion of coaching basketball and teaching.

**Jean Dove Carter (‘61)** died March 23, 2021, in Memphis, Tennessee.

**John Wendell Ginn (‘62)** died Jan. 24 at age 80.

**Virgil Presley (‘62)**, of Trezevant, Tennessee, died Feb. 11, 2019, at Jackson Madison County General Hospital at age 81. Presley was a retired Southern Baptist minister who served five Tennessee Baptist churches over his 50-year ministry.

**William Joshua Greene III (‘62)** died August 13, 2009, and was buried in Crown Hill Cemetery in Albany, Georgia.

**Otis Griffin (‘62)** died Sept. 14, 2019. He played basketball at Union and was inducted to the Union Sports Hall of Fame in 2015.

**Melvin Otis Childress (‘63)** died May 27, 2020. He was a faithful servant of God as a minister of music and pastor in Baptist and Presbyterian churches.

**Effie Ann Thomas Walker (‘63)**, age 78, of Germantown, Tennessee, died on Aug. 16, 2019, after a six-year battle with metastatic breast cancer. After her retirement as a teacher, she helped launch the EDGE program at Union for young adults who have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

**Fred “Sonny” Foster Hawkins (‘63)** passed away on Nov. 2, 2020,

in Jackson, Tennessee, at the age of 80. At Union, he was a record-breaking basketball player and a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

**Reba L. David (‘64)**, age 88, died on Nov. 12, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. She was a graduate of Union’s inaugural nursing class.

**Billy Lee Watson (‘65)**, age 77, died on Oct. 6, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. After retiring from his teaching career, he was inducted into the Band Directors Hall of Fame.

**Jerry R. Thompson (‘65)** died on Feb. 25, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. He was the first charter member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity.

**Glynda Jane Thompson (‘66)** died on Sept. 15, 2019, at age 77 in Jackson, Tennessee. She taught Spanish at Alamo City Schools, Bradford City Schools and Old Hickory Academy.

**Jerry Stallings (‘67)** of Bartlett, Tennessee, died on Dec. 19, 2019, at age 77.

**Suzanne Arie Paradis (‘69)** of South Carolina passed away on May 24, 2019. She was an honors graduate of Union with a B.A. in psychology.

**Ralph Hays “Wolf” Lovell Jr. (‘69)**, died May 26, 2020, at age 72 in Jackson, Tennessee. At Union, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

**Dyanne Buckelew (‘70)**, age 69, died on June 7, 2019, in Paris, Tennessee. She retired after 40 years as an elementary school teacher in both Texas and Tennessee.

**Jack A. Wilson (‘70)**, age 72, passed away on Nov. 25, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. He served on the Jackson Police Department, and in 1978, he became a criminal investigator for the 26th Judicial District of the State of Tennessee until his retirement.

**Larry Randolph Scallion (‘70)**, age 71, of Parsons, Tennessee, passed away on Aug. 24, 2019. He was a product manager for Welbilt, where he worked for over 25 years.

**Danny J. Rhodes (‘71)**, age 70, died on Dec. 24, 2019, in Scotts Hill, Tennessee. He was a retired captain for the Tennessee Army National Guard and a retired teacher with Decatur County School System.

**Joyce Fesmire (‘71)**, age 69, passed away on July 23, 2019, in Lexington, Tennessee.

**William Thomas Spencer II (‘71)**, age 83, passed away Feb. 6, 2018. He and his wife, Wanda Spencer, served in numerous Southern Baptist churches and associations.

**Charles Curtis Ritchie Jr. (‘75)** died August 22, 2020, at age 66. He was the pastor of Agape Baptist Church in Memphis for 31 years and served the Lord through a nationwide concert ministry.

**Mary R. Funderburk (‘76)**, age 66, passed away on Nov. 2, 2019, in Alamo, Tennessee. She taught at Friendship High School and Crockett County High School after the schools were consolidated.

**Regina A. Crowder (‘76)**, age 70, passed away on June 23, 2020, in Memphis, Tennessee. She was a longtime educator in the Memphis City School System.

**Beverly Sue Elam Foropoulos (‘77)**, passed away Aug. 28, 2020, in her home in Jackson, Tennessee, at the age of 65. She was a member of West Jackson Baptist Church.

**William “Gene” Stevens (‘79)** passed away on Jan. 17, 2021.

**Mae Jewel Giles (‘80)**, age 83, died on Aug. 28, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. She was retired from nursing at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital.

**Bret Rodriguez (‘81)** passed away on Feb. 1, 2021.

**James Bane (‘83)** died April 11, 2021, at age 63.

**Emily Lois Johnson (‘84)** passed away March 13, 2021, in her home in Jackson, Tennessee, at age 57.

**Bobby Gene Butler (‘85)** died Feb. 3, 2021 in Lebanon, Tennessee, at age 76.

**Michael O’Neal Cisco (‘89)** passed away Nov. 12, 2020, at his home in Jackson, Tennessee.

**Tawanda Catrice Burchett (‘92)**, age 48, died on Aug. 31, 2020, in Brownsville, Tennessee.

**Kelly Emily Key (‘93)**, age 55, died on May 10, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. She was a teacher for Haywood County Schools for 25 years and was a member of Oakfield Baptist Church.

**Shari Ann Long (‘93, ‘94)**, age 50, died on July 5, 2019. She participated in four mission trips to Honduras with a medical/dental team and developed a great passion for immigrants and appreciation for other cultures.

# Memoriam

**Michael Jayson Cash ('99)** died at his home in Jackson, Tennessee, on Feb. 2, 2021.

**Kathy Latham ('07)**, age 73, died on June 9, 2020, in Jackson, Tennessee. She was an IMB missionary who was appointed in 1975 and served in the Philippines and the Ukraine before retiring in 2004.

**Hayley McBride McAdams ('11)** died April 15, 2021, at her home in Jackson, Tennessee, at age 32.

**Mary "Slimey" Hardin ('17)**, age 55, died on June 4, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee.

## Faculty/Staff

**Roy Glen "Bob" Elliott ('56)**, age 92, died on Dec. 14, 2019, in Jackson, Tennessee. He was retired as vice president of business at Union, and he also served many churches.

**Melinda Scott Krei ('74)** of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, passed away on June 13, 2019, after a long battle with cancer. She was a lifelong teacher and educator who received her Ph.D. in political science and education from Columbia University. She had served in Union's School of Education.

**Charles Haun Huffman**, age 91, of Jackson, Tennessee, died on June 15, 2019. He was well respected as a music educator, composer, arranger and conductor and served as a music professor at Union from 1967-1992.

## Joe Tucker

**Joe Tucker** died July 4, 2019, at age 88, in Jackson, Tennessee. He was a math professor at Union for 22 years and a member of West Jackson Baptist Church. ☞



**James Larry Stewart** passed away peacefully on Aug. 29, 2020, at his home in Jackson, Tennessee, at age 81. Most of his professional career was at Union University



as vice president for development, and he followed that position by establishing a highly successful fundraising organization.

**Ohna Jo Oglesby Jordan**, age 89, died after an extended illness on Aug. 31, 2020, at her home in Jackson, Tennessee. She worked for many years as an executive

secretary, including in the nursing department at Union University.

**Sara Sanford (Hassell) Hakeem**, age 90, passed away Sept. 26, 2020. After retirement from her career in education, she served as an adjunct professor at Union University.

**Pat H. Bouchillon**, of Macon, Georgia, died on Oct. 9, 2020. She was a former psychology and education faculty member at Union University, and her husband, Bill Bouchillon, was the dean of arts and sciences and psychology department chair for many years. ☞

## Pauline Bridger

**Pauline Bridger**, 85, died May 18, 2020, in Lexington, Kentucky. She served as a nursing professor at Union for several years and in 1993 was named Union's first Georgia Wilson Distinguished Professor. Contributions may be made to the Pauline Bridger Nursing Scholarship Fund at Union. ☞



## Linda Feeley Barber

**Linda Feeley Barber ('02)**, who spent 28 years as a nursing professor at Union, died April 5, 2021, at age 81. She was a big fan of the Lady Bulldogs basketball team, attending almost every game, and received Union's Honorary Alumni Award in 2002. ☞



# Union to add new academic building on university's Great Lawn

Union University's Faith in the Marketplace luncheon March 18 took on new excitement when **Tom McAfee** announced a lead gift from the McAfee family for a new academic building on the university's Great Lawn that will house the McAfee School of Business.

**Carolyn McAfee Bruner** and her late husband, **James T. McAfee Jr.**, were both Union graduates in 1961. Their son Tom (a 1994 Union graduate), chairman and president of Hallmark Systems Inc., said a new building for the McAfee School of Business would help the program better recruit, retain and educate the next generation of Christian business leaders.

"The McAfee School of Business is training business leaders not only in how to be successful in their business



dealings, but they're also instilling the importance of those leaders' actions to operate in a Christlike manner, acting in honesty, integrity, fairness and giving back," he said.

The 50,000-square-foot academic building on the university's Great Lawn will also house a center for free enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship, which will include the engineering and computer science departments.

The building will be located between White Hall and Pleasant Plains Extension and will match the architecture and exterior appearance of the existing buildings on the Great Lawn. The interior of the facility will be built with innovation and the future of business in mind. The project is part of the campus master plan that Union trustees approved in 2019.

"We are delighted about this incredible new facility that will help Union continue to train students to think biblically about

what it means to operate in the business world as Christians," Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said. "We are grateful that the Lord has provided this opportunity, and we look forward to seeing how he will use this building and the instruction that takes place there to transform students and prepare them for a life of service to the church and society."

Oliver said with Union observing its bicentennial during the 2022-2023 academic year, the opening of a new academic building would be a fitting part of the celebration.

Jason Garrett, dean for the McAfee School of Business, expressed his gratitude for the McAfees and said a new building would help prepare Christian business leaders for years to come.

"Our mission is to develop leaders to fulfill their purpose in Christ and society," Garrett said. "We see free enterprise and economic freedom inextricably linked

We are grateful that the Lord has provided this opportunity, and we look forward to seeing how he will use this building.

to the teachings of Christ and as the best way to influence society for positive outcomes. We are hopeful about what the future holds for the McAfee School of Business, for Union University and for those whose lives will be changed through their interactions with our graduates.”

The current home for the McAfee School of Business is the Blasingame Academic Complex, a 32-year-old building shared with the School of Social Work and the College of Education. Construction on the new building is expected to begin sometime in 2022 after funds have been raised for the project, with a projected completion date in 2023 and a dedication during Union’s bicentennial celebration that year.

We see free  
enterprise  
and economic  
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to the teachings  
of Christ and as  
the best way to  
influence society  
for positive  
outcomes.

“I’m so grateful for Dr. Oliver and Dr. Garrett’s leadership of Union and the McAfee School of Business,” Tom McAfee said in his presentation. “As a third generation Unionite, I have a deep love for this school, and over the years I’ve had a lot of opportunities to see it and see the different aspects of it. I believe that Dad would be very proud of what the McAfee School of Business is doing today.”

Anyone interested in donating to the project can contact Union’s Office of Institutional Advancement at (731) 661-5050 or email Catherine Kwasigroh, Union’s vice president for advancement, at [ckwasigroh@uu.edu](mailto:ckwasigroh@uu.edu). Donations can also be made online at [uu.edu/giving/mcafee](https://uu.edu/giving/mcafee). 📧

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OFFICE of ALUMNI RELATIONS  
1050 Union University Drive  
Jackson, Tennessee 38305



## Final Frame

Student leaders “flip out” as they welcome new students and their families to campus during Move-in Day, Aug. 14, 2020.

*photo by Kristi Woody ('10)*



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