Hyran Barefoot
THE TEACHER PRESIDENT

Union’s First Female
Senior Administrator

A Moses Figure in Union’s
Wilderness Wandering

Meet our Alumni
Award Winners
UNION STILL A FAMILY FOR THOMAS
ALMOST FOUR DECADES LATER.

For Reggie Thomas, his experience at Union prepared him for the race he is running. The relationships he built, the leadership opportunities the university provided – he’s grateful for all of it.

MAGGIE NELL BREWER: UNION’S FIRST FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR

From her famous “the sap’s rising” speech to a legendary fishing trip to the newly renovated cafeteria named in her honor; the legacy of Maggie Nell Brewer — the university’s first female senior administrator — lives on at Union University.

JOHN JETER HURT: A MOSES
FIGURE IN UNION’S WILDERNESS WANDERING

During the nation’s largest financial crisis in 1933, John Jeter Hurt made the decision to leave the pastorate of the thriving First Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn., to become president of Union University — an institution on the verge of closing.

ALUMNI AWARDS

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.
Union names Jeff Palmer as the 2021 Dodd Award recipient for denominational service

Union University named Jeff Palmer, founder and former CEO of Baptist Global Response, as the 2021 M.E. Dodd Award recipient, the highest denominational service award given by the university.

"Through his work as an international missionary, as the director of a global relief organization and now as a transitional pastor for a local church, Jeff’s ministry has been faithful and compassionate and has touched literally millions around the world," said Todd Brady, vice president for university ministries at Union. "Union University and Southern Baptists are grateful for God’s Work through Jeff Palmer.”

Attaining a bachelor’s degree in biology at Union and a master’s degree in agriculture at Murray State University, Palmer has used his education to serve as an International Mission Board missionary in Southeast Asia for over 20 years. In 2006, Palmer and his wife, Regina, were asked to head the formation of Baptist Global Response, a Southern Baptist international relief and development organization.

He later returned to Nashville, Tenn., and continued in local missions. Palmer helped direct, facilitate and fund compassion ministries in over 70 countries throughout his years of service with BGR.

The M.E. Dodd Denominational Service Award was established 18 years ago in honor of M.E. Dodd, a Union alumnus who served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention pastor’s conference. Dodd was also known as the father of the Cooperative Program, the method by which Southern Baptists pool their resources to fund their mission and ministry efforts.

Local accounting firm establishes endowed scholarship for underrepresented accounting students at Union

Alexander Thompson Arnold PLLC, an accounting firm in Jackson, Tenn., has donated $25,000 to establish the ATA Accounting Minority Endowed Scholarship Fund, an annual scholarship of $1,000 for under-represented

Union establishes new scholarship for students striving to enter pastoral ministry

First Baptist Church in Loudon, Tenn., has donated over $45,000 to establish the O.C. Rainwater Scholarship for Union University students striving to enter pastoral ministry.

O.C. Rainwater, a 1934 Union alumnus, was the pastor for First Baptist Church in Loudon for 15 years, and Ann Randle, chairperson of the O.C. Rainwater Scholarship committee and member of the church, said she always valued his strong ethics and godliness.

“He was a true man of God, and it has been a joy being able to carry his name,” Randle said. “We wanted to honor his memory by making sure we were faithful to Baptist education.”

Ray Van Neste, dean for the School of Theology and Missions at Union University, said the primary obstacle for students pursuing a ministry education is the financial burden, so he greatly appreciates churches like First Baptist Church in Loudon for investing in the lives of these students.

“Sometimes, [the financial burden] keeps students from being able to get an education, and other times, it leads them to settling for a lesser substitute,” Van Neste said. “Scholarships like this, which help to support ministerial students, are immensely significant kingdom investments.”
Oliver challenges Union community to demonstrate sacrificial love

A Christian’s capacity to love others grows as he or she exercises love, Union University President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver said Aug. 20.

“The more you love God, the more you are able to love others,” Oliver said. “And that outpouring of love for others will cause you to love God all the more.”

Oliver’s fall 2021 convocation address in G.M. Savage Memorial Chapel on the topic of love was the seventh in a series on the virtuous life. Previous convocation messages by Oliver have covered: courage, justice, prudence, temperance, faith and hope. Convocation is a formal chapel service that marks the beginning of the new school year.

“I want to remind us as we begin a new academic year that the virtuous life isn’t automatic,” Oliver said. “It is developed. It is the fruit of contemplation, experience and practice.”

Oliver’s message was based on the university’s theme verse for the 2021-2022 academic year, 1 Corinthians 13:7: “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” In 1 Corinthians 13, Oliver said Paul was describing “agape” love, a self-sacrificing type of love that is not based on feelings but on the will.

“Today, we are urged by the pattern of this world to spend our resources and seek fulfillment in material things, through pleasure and through expressive individualism,” Oliver said. “That is not the love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Ultimately, what the Apostle Paul here speaks of is not any one particular virtue or grace, but that which is the root and spring of all virtues and graces, and which to possess is to be both like God and in God.”

The full address is available at livestream.com/uu/chapel.

Lewis donates majority of pastoral library to Union

Pastor Frank Lewis of First Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., has donated approximately 2,000 books from his personal library to Union University to be used by students and faculty.

Lewis’ collection is expansive, including various Bible commentaries and devotionals as well as books that he inherited from the two pastors who served before him at FBC Nashville. As part of Union’s library, Lewis’ collection will be used to help train the next generation of pastors. His collection includes books that had belonged to his mother and books bought with money that his uncle had given him while he was a seminary student.

“What’s the possibility that some student from Union is going to write a sermon and preach it in a youth camp, and a kid is going to give their heart to Christ?” Lewis asked. “And it may be from an illustration that was provided by a book that my uncle gave me. That’s amazing!”

Lewis, who has been pastor of FBC Nashville since 1997, is not the only FBC Nashville pastor to donate his personal library to Union. Franklin Paschall, who served as the pastor there from 1956-1983, gave his library to Union.

Dating back to 1957, the library includes works by Charles Swindoll, John MacArthur, Don Thomas and Ben Sibley. Paschall died on Jan. 26, 2021; Lewis, who has been pastor of FBC Nashville since 1997, is not the only FBC Nashville pastor to donate his personal library to Union. Franklin Paschall, who served as the pastor there from 1956-1983, gave his library to Union. Also...
Poe writes second book of C.S. Lewis trilogy


Poe’s first book of the trilogy, “Becoming C.S. Lewis (1898-1918): A Biography of Young Jack Lewis,” covers an overview of Lewis’s early life, childhood interests and experiences. Poe said it is essential to understand Lewis’s childhood and teenage years to fully appreciate his work as an adult.

“The first book ends, and [Lewis] focuses on the primary sources to Christianity – such as his time studying at the University of Oxford and his friendships with well-known Christians like J.R.R. Tolkien and Dorothy Sayers. Poe focused on the primary sources of diary entries and letters between Lewis and his colleagues for this book, and he said the detailed diary of Warnie Lewis, Lewis’s brother, served as an important tool for his research. Poe is contracted to write the third volume of Lewis’s life, “The Completion of C.S. Lewis: From Bachelor to Widower (1945-1963)” for Crossway Publishing.

Union sends volunteers to help with Waverly flood relief efforts

Over 40 volunteers from Union helped in Waverly’s disaster relief efforts, and Johnny Grimes, volunteer with Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief, said he is thankful for the students’ hard work in helping respond to over 200 destroyed homes and properties. Grimes said their help and willingness to serve allowed local volunteers to respond to the need as quickly as possible.

“I know [this work] is what the Lord would want us to do,” Grimes said. “I feel for these [Waverly residents], I really do feel for them.”

Todd Brady, vice president for university ministry, said when Union was in need after a tornado, the local community helped in numerous ways. As a part of the Tennessee community, he said it is important to be good neighbors to those just 80 miles down the road. Brady believes serving those in need is just one way Union community members can strive to love the Lord with all their hearts, souls and minds.

“When we serve others, we are modeling the [Jesus] who said, ‘For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’” Brady said.

As a leader in nonprofit ministry for 15 years, Manning said studying at MCUTS broadened his knowledge of the gospel mission by introducing him to the academic and historical understanding of Christian theology. “Through MCUTS’ equipping of local nonprofit leaders, pastors and Christians with sound doctrinal education, Manning said the gospel can reach Memphis communities even more.

“When people see the love, concern and academic rigor that they’ve exposed to at MCUTS, they have the opportunity to take that back out to their communities,” Manning said. “So, they’re able to work with people with a little bit more empathy.”

As MCUTS admissions counselors, Manning and Smith wholeheartedly believe in the mission of this program, and they feel honored to share their opportunities with more families in Memphis.

“I believe in this role, and I believe in the people here in this program,” Smith said. “This is a place where you can find your calling, and where you can find a family unit and where sound teaching is going forward.”
“I spoke very little English and came to live in Middle Tennessee in December 2000 because my brother was already living in Madison,” Garcia said. “Freedom and a chance for a better life drew me to the United States.”

After becoming a U.S. citizen in 2008, Garcia told his family in Cuba that he wanted to be a police officer. He said they laughed at him, but in 2009, he was hired to work for the Hendersonville Police Department.

Denney Coarsey, a former detective sergeant of the criminal investigations division for the Hendersonville Police Department, introduced Garcia to Union and to the idea of pursuing a college degree. Coarsey taught two courses in the criminal justice concentration at Union University Hendersonville and believed Garcia could greatly benefit from its Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership degree.

Garcia enrolled at Union University Hendersonville in 2014 – working as a full-time police officer, student and parent of two children. In 2019, Garcia graduated summa cum laude and received an Academic Medal of Excellence. He was promoted to the rank of detective, where he continues to serve the Hendersonville community and support his family.

Jeremy Camp shares story behind award-winning film, plays acoustic performance at 2021 Scholarship Banquet

Almost 1,000 donors, students and community members gathered in the Carl Perkins Civic Center on Oct. 19 for Union’s 23rd annual Scholarship Banquet with Jeremy Camp. The Grammy-nominated contemporary Christian singer and songwriter performed an acoustic concert for the audience.

Before the concert, Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver hosted a special “Not So Late Show with Dub Oliver,” which included various interviews with students and faculty members from the departments of engineering and biology.

Before his performance, Camp joined Oliver for an interview, where he discussed the reality of touring, his family and the story behind the award-winning film, “I Still Believe.”

Since the release of “I Still Believe,” a movie based on Camp’s testimony of losing his wife to cancer, he has heard numerous stories of how God used the film to comfort others in difficult seasons.

“There is a Scripture I love in 2 Corinthians; it says that we’re called to comfort others with what we have been comforted,” Camp said. “God gave me such a great comfort in that time, and I knew in some way, if I could encourage someone who was going through that pain and suffering, I wanted to do that.”
Curtis releases fifth album, producing a musical journey of Philippians

Dedicated to writing music that is artistically excellent and theologically rich, Cody Curtis, assistant professor of composition and theory at Union University, and his wife, Melody, founded the musical group Psallos in 2012. Since then, they have crafted musical compositions for various New Testament letters, including Psallos’ fifth album, “Philippians,” that released in October. Along with “Philippians,” the group has written and produced music set to the biblical letters of Romans, Hebrews and Jude. “My hope is to give people musical experiences that teach them more about God and that facilitates worship and to do so in a way that is maybe unconventional at times,” Curtis said. “We try to preserve and communicate unconventionally at times,” Curtis said.

“Philippians” features musical styles and compositions that best represent each set of Scripture. Curtis believes the fluidity and flexibility of musical style help communicate the author’s intentions for each passage of Scripture, serving both the biblical text and the listener. Philippians being a “friendship letter,” Curtis wanted to portray the warmth and joy from Paul’s epistle to the Philippian church. “There’s a familiarity in [Paul’s] words, so I thought, ‘Let’s bring in our friends, partnering in the gospel together to help do what Paul was initially doing in Philippians,’” Curtis said. Collaborating with other musicians is important to Curtis and the Psallos mission, which is why Union University students and alumni are featured in every album Psallos has produced. Along with these students and alumni, “Philippians” features musical guests Andrew Peterson, Dennis Parker, Shai Linne and Taylor Leonhardt on their special “Psalos and Friends” album.

To learn more about Psallos and to purchase “Philippians,” visit psallos.com.

Union University’s College of Pharmacy has launched an accelerated track that will allow students to complete their Doctor of Pharmacy degree in three and a half years. By taking elective courses during the summer months of their first and second professional years, this new track will allow pharmacy students to enter practice sooner while completing the same number of credit hours as the traditional four-year program. The new track will begin in the fall of 2022.

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**College of Pharmacy announces 3.5-year accelerated track**

Renée Dauer has been named dean for the School of Adult and Professional Studies at Union University. Dauer has served as campus director for Union University Hendersonville and chair of instruction for SOAPs since 2016.

“Sheila Mitchell, dean of Union’s College of Pharmacy, said, “We are excited for the flexibility this will allow our students.”

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**Transformational gift to provide multiple scholarships to outstanding humanities students at Union**

A major gift will help Union University recruit students at outstanding humanities students at Union University. "This generous gift will allow Union to provide multiple scholarships to outstanding humanities students at Union University, and its students," said Hunter Baker, dean for Union’s College of Arts and Sciences. "It truly is a transformational gift that will be a huge blessing to Union University and its students.”

The gift will provide “last dollar” merit-based scholarships to incoming Union University freshmen majoring in such fields as English, history, language, political science, theology and philosophy. A “last dollar” scholarship means that the Lifespace Scholarship will be applied to students' university costs after all other financial aid is calculated, which will essentially cover all the recipients' tuition.

"The Lifespace Scholarship will help Union not just to attract students, but to attract the best, most academically-qualified students,” said. Hunter Baker, dean for Union’s College of Arts and Sciences. "It truly is a transformational gift that will be a huge blessing to Union University and its students.”

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Dawson releases calculus textbook published by Oxford University Press

Bryan Dawson, university professor of mathematics at Union University, released a textbook detailing a new calculus method using infinitesimals. Dawson's textbook, “Calculus Set Free: Infinitesimals to the Rescue,” was published by Oxford University Press — one of the most prestigious academic presses.

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**Dauer leads Union’s School of Adult and Professional Studies**

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“We are excited for the flexibility this will allow our students,” said Sheila Mitchell, dean of Union’s College of Pharmacy. “Not only will our program produce top-quality professionals, it will also enable students to enter the workforce more quickly than other programs.”

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Shirlene Mercer, families of the ‘Freshmen Four’ honored at Black Heritage Month Celebration

Union University hosted its annual Black Heritage Month Celebration Feb. 17, sharing the story of four students at Lane College — the “Freshmen Four” — who organized sit-in protests at a “whites only” lunch counter in Jackson, Tenn. Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver reminded the audience of the importance of recognizing that “there are heroes among us,” giving honor where honor is due.

Shirlene Mercer, the last living member of the Freshmen Four, received the Bastion of Freedom medal. In her speech, ending with a standing ovation from the audience, she recalled many core memories as a fighter for freedom during the civil rights movement.

“I could take people spoiling on me because I would just take a piece of tissue, wipe it off and keep on going,” Mercer said. “A lady slapped me one time, and she said, ‘You can march all day, but you’re not ever going to get the chance to eat at the lunch counter.’”

Mercer was introduced by Union student and president of Union’s Black Student Union, Kamaria Tramser, who called Mercer a noble participant of public service with a lengthy record as an activist fighting for civil rights. Mercer, a fervent believer of equality and the importance of lifting everyone’s voices, led weekly anti-civil rights marches across the city of Jackson for years, leading to significant change and awareness against neighborhood crime across Tennessee.

Along with Mercer, the families of the remaining members of the Freshmen Four were awarded Bastion of Freedom medals. The late Wesley C. McClure, president emeritus of Lane College, was honored by his wife, Mary McClure, and former student, Michael Jones. The late Ernest Brooks Sr., former president of Jackson-Madison County NAACP, was honored by his son, Ernest Thomas Brooks Jr., attorney and city councilman of Jackson, Tenn. The late Kimmie Powell Davis, a prominent philanthropist and pastor in West Tennessee, was honored by Barry Chaney, Davis’ successor as the pastor of New Life Christian Center, and Elder Elvis Hollis, Davis’ godson.

The night concluded with vocal performances by Union University Voices of Proclamation and Lane College Concert Choir and a recognition of thanks by Faith Zamamiri-Davis, associate professor of biology at Union University.

“For all of us at Union, I want us to remember the Freshmen Four and to know that they were four flesh-and-blood human beings — brothers and a sister — who stood for freedom at great cost to themselves,” Oliver said. “Let’s not just be satisfied for the progress that’s been made; let’s press on ever to achieve that which we are called to.”

Union to offer increased scholarships for IMB, NAMB missionary students

Beginning in fall 2022, Union will offer its highest financial merit scholarship to all students who are dependents of missionaries through the Southern Baptist Convention’s International Mission Board or North American Mission Board. Dan Griggs, vice president for enrollment management, said giving children of missionaries more opportunities to attend Union is invaluable.

“Really, the benefits are endless with diversifying our undergraduate population and exposing our current students to other cultures and experiences,” Griggs said.

Children of IMB or NAMB missionaries will receive a Union merit scholarship of $17,500 and will be eligible to receive any additional Union scholarships, partnerships and grants they are qualified for.

“These families are on the mission field, sacrificing, and many times, they don’t have the financial resources to afford an educational experience at Union,” Griggs said. “So, we created additional scholarship opportunities to assist these families in achieving their educational dreams.”

Rogers releases new book of poetry

Bobby Rogers, professor of English and writer in residence at Union University, said an interest in southern labor history in West Tennessee inspired his new book of poetry, “Shift Work,” that focuses on the influence of economic survival throughout one’s family history.

As a West Tennessee native, Rogers wanted to help keep his family’s story alive by writing a collection of poems that highlight the working classes of the upper south. According to the publisher, Rogers composes portraits of small-town dwellers, “always packing their past with them — an inheritance as ephemeral as vapor, made mostly of memory, even as it was being lived.”

“Try to convince my students that their lives are worth writing about,” Rogers said. Published by LSU Press, one of the nation’s prestigious scholarly publishers, “Shift Work” is available at Amazon.com.

Foubert releases book for parents protecting children from internet pornography

John Foubert, professor and dean of the College of Education at Union University, released a new book to help educate parents on the harm of pornography and to guide them in difficult conversations with children of all ages.

Foubert’s second book, “Protecting Your Children from Internet Pornography,” shows parents how pornography consumption has changed and how it’s affecting their children and what they can do to keep their kids safe.

Foubert, an expert on sexual assault prevention and the dangers of pornography, opens the door for parents to understand the reality of pornography use — how it affects the brain’s anatomy, influences the increase of sexual violence and more. At the end of each chapter, Foubert also gives parents helpful guides on navigating these difficult conversations with children of all ages.

Union University’s student publication wins Best College Magazine

The Cardinal & Cream, Union University’s student online and print publication, was named Best College Magazine for the fourth year during the Southeast Journalism Conference’s Best of the South competition.

On March 26, Union University was one of over 30 schools across eight states that participated in the Best of the South competition, including the University of Alabama, University of Tennessee, University of Mississippi and more.

Ted Kluck, assistant professor of communication arts and adviser for the Cardinal & Cream, said it is a great honor to see Union students be awarded for such a high achievement while also not compromising their Christ-centered ideals.

“We have become robust at the craft, but at the same time, we have not become less Christian,” Kluck said. “We could curate our content to the culture, but I’m proud of these students who have not wavered on their Christian values.”

Union debate wins national championship and season-long championship awards

Union University’s debate team was named season-long champion for the third consecutive year and the national tournament champion of the International Public Debate Association national tournament for the second consecutive year.

Union ranked first for its season-long debate tournaments — competing against nearly 200 teams and over 1,000 individual competitors this season — and during the 2021-2022 debate championship that took place April 8-11 in Abilene, Texas.

Rebekah Whitaker, assistant professor of communication arts and director for debate, praised the hard work and resiliency of these students, who have striven to practice, researched and competed for hundreds of hours this season.

She said while she is proud of the students’ excellence in the tournament, she is proudest of their humility and love during these competitions.

“I had competitors and coaches from other teams repeatedly seek me out to tell me how ethical and high quality our debaters are, and more importantly, that they are also kind, respectful and full of grace,” Whitaker said.
Hyran Barefoot, Union University president emeritus, stands in front of a large, wooden window box that sits right off his back porch. The planter holds hundreds of waxy, green leaves. With his hands pressed together, he patiently explains the nature of his beloved flowers — tuberoses. Being early afternoon, the tiny white flowers barely peak through the closed buds. But as night bloomers, they open to their full potential when the sun begins to set. Every evening, the Barefoot household would be filled with their sweet, musty fragrance.

“How does a flower know when to release its scent?” Hyran Barefoot would say teasingly to his wife. “They just do,” his late wife Joyce would reply to her husband with a knowing smile.

Hyran Barefoot loves tuberoses because Joyce Barefoot loved tuberoses.
Right inside the glass doors that lead to his small backyard garden hang the framed words, “Make it do, wear it out, use it up, do without.” They hang amongst a dozen cross-stitched signs—handmade gifts from different family members. The frames hang just above a refurbished 1900s icebox from Canada, because as a renowned antique collector and restorer, Barefoot remembers and recites the story of each piece of furniture in his house.

In the heat of midafternoon July, Barefoot gently holds the flower’s stem as he brings the blooms closer to his nose, reciting facts about the tuberose as if he were captivating an entire classroom. Though he is only speaking to an audience of two, teaching comes as naturally to him as the tuberose blooms at sunset.

THE LEGACY OF A TEACHER

Bob Agee’s eyes fill with tears when telling of Barefoot’s influence on his life. As a 1960 Union alumnus and president emeritus of Oklahoma Baptist University, Agee has the unique opportunity of remaining dear friends with his professor. “I often credit [Barefoot] with stirring a love for learning,” Agee said. “He believed in them and nurtured their love for learning and their love for Scripture.”

Barefoot left Union in 1960 to teach at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, but after two years at the seminary, decided to return to Union University. “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 said in a 1996 Unionite article. “There has always been something about Union’s atmosphere and students that does not exist anywhere else.”

Even as Union president from 1987 to 1996, Barefoot continued to teach classes. When asked his favorite part of teaching while serving as the university president, Barefoot quickly replied with a laugh that it was the ability to choose to teach the classes that had the least amount of grading.

As a renowned scholar, Barefoot influenced students who would later influence biblical scholarship, ministry and Christian academia.

“It’s been a satisfying process to see so many people I knew as students go on to become heads of enterprise, ministry— even presidents of other Baptist colleges,” Barefoot said in the 1996 Unionite article. “Union’s alumni are proof of this institution’s quality.”

George Guthrie, professor of New Testament at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, began his career as a highly sought-after scholar of biblical Greek and New Testament in a classroom at Union University. As one of Barefoot’s former students, Guthrie recalls the unique opportunity to partake in roundtable interpretive discussions as undergraduate students, which would later influence his role as a professor. “I still remember those discussions 40 years later,” Guthrie said. “It really led me to a love of advanced learning and would eventually lead me to doing Ph.D. work.”

Barefoot was known for his rigorous, excellence-driven teaching that sought to nurture each individual student in his or her learning. Seminary professors noted the quality of “the Barefoot student” when they came from Union. Guthrie recalled his first day of intermediate Greek as a seminary student. The professor asked if anyone in the class was able to read the first chapter of 1 John from the untranslated Greek New Testament. After an extended pause, Guthrie and a fellow Union alumnus looked around the room, realizing they were the only two students raising their hands.

“One of the gifts [Barefoot] gave to us as students was that he pushed us for academic excellence,” Guthrie said. According to Barefoot, teaching at Union was “almost like you were a pastor to them but in a new and academic way.”

“I’ve always felt that Union’s mission is the same as mine,” Barefoot said in the 1996 Unionite article. “I am able
family packed up for a six week trip across Europe. Judy, the eldest daughter, stayed up every night with her dad that summer, studying maps to plot out where they were going to drive the next day. Every day, Judy would sit in the front, navigating, while June, Joyce and Jane squeezed in the backseat of the European car. While traveling through Belgium, the family needed to rush to the nearest bank before it closed, so Barefoot parked his family on a nearby street and took off through the packed-in buildings, searching for a bank.

As the four ladies sat in the car for what felt like forever, Joyce Barefoot looked at her daughters, shaking her head and said, “He’s lost.”

Not speaking any of the languages, Barefoot wandered up and down the sidewalks for almost an hour before finally rounding a corner and spotting his family’s car. He walked toward his family with the biggest grin on his face.

“I told you,” Joyce said with a laugh as her husband made his way back to the car. Hyran and Joyce Barefoot had an unspoken love and respect for one another, but it was never void of laughter.

“Mother was silly and playful, and I think she always amused Daddy,” June said as she looked at her sister with a smile.

“We just knew they always respected him,” Judy said. “He was just Daddy, you know?” June added.

As it hangs beside Barefoot’s presidential portrait, students are able to walk through the building’s doorway, reminded of the legacy of Hyran E. Barefoot. Despite given numerous leadership opportunities elsewhere, there was always one role that remained ever close to his heart — the purest love of a teacher.
Reggie Thomas stepped onto the Union campus in the fall of 1981 as a shy, reserved kid from Huntingdon, Tenn. The next four years proved to be instrumental in his development and in his ministry in ways Thomas never imagined.

“Union, first of all, was formative for me in social skills,” Thomas said. “I’ve always liked people, but I learned how to interact with people. And the reason for that is there were so many different types of people here at Union. I think being able to interact with a broad array of people prepares you for life.”

Thomas owes his Union experience largely to the persistence of Elizabeth Wingo, a longtime Union recruiter for whom one of the buildings in the Heritage Residence Complex is named. Thomas had felt called to ministry during his sophomore year of high school and had lost that confidence and overcame some of his initial shyness. Thomas said he was well accepted and embraced by the entire Union community – students, faculty and administrators. Though he took the initiative to get involved and integrate, the Union community reciprocated, and he said that’s the heart and culture at Union.

“Union was one of only a handful of African American students at Union at the time. In that sense, though, the university wasn’t much different than Thomas’ high school experience. He had navigated that well, and he decided he would duplicate that when he came to Union.

“What I’ve learned about race relations, especially if you’re a minority student, you have two choices,” Thomas said. “You can isolate or integrate. I decided I was going to try to integrate. Now, obviously that wasn’t easy. I mean, obviously growing up in West Tennessee there is some systemic racism, and so I did encounter some of that here. It wasn’t widespread. It wasn’t bad. But I just made up my mind that I was going to navigate through that and integrate.”

His efforts to connect with other students worked well, as he grew in confidence and overcame some of his initial shyness. Thomas said he was well accepted and embraced by the entire Union community – students, faculty and administrators. Though he took the initiative to get involved and integrate, the Union community reciprocated, and he said that’s the heart and culture at Union.

Thomas was elected president of his freshman class and re-elected as president of his sophomore class. His junior year, a friend convinced him to run for Student Government Association president. Thomas did, and he won, becoming the first black student in Union’s history to serve as SGA president. He was re-elected to that position during his senior year.

“That was probably one of my highest moments here at Union,” he said. “This small-town kid from Huntingdon, Tenn., African American, a predominantly Anglo college. For the student body to have that kind of confidence and respect for me, it was just a moment of elation for me. It was amazing.”
Published in time for Christmas

200 YEARS BETWEEN HARDCOVERS

Coming Fall 2022:
A large and colorful hardbound, coffee-table book celebrating the rich history and continuing story of our beloved Union University. More details on availability and purchase options will be forthcoming at uu.edu/200.
DO YOU KNOW A FUTURE BULLDOG?

We’re looking for the next generation who will be transformed by thoroughly Christ-centered academic excellence and a close-knit learning community. Know someone who would be a good fit for Union? Send us their contact information, and we’ll take the next step.

LEARN MORE at uu.edu/suggest

THE BICENTENNIAL HALL OF HONOR

The purpose of the Union University Bicentennial Hall of Honor is to recognize and honor individuals who have contributed in a significant way to the vision and mission of the university.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Embodies the values (Excellence-driven, Christ-centered, People-focused, Future-directed) and mission (to provide a Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development in service to Church and society) of Union University
- Holds a degree from Union University or worked at Union University or served on the Board of Trustees
- Can be living or deceased
- Whose dedication and achievements have significantly affected the university and should be honored for their contributions
- Supported and advanced the mission through leadership to alumni, students, and/or the community

Please complete your confidential nomination no later than June 30, 2022. If you have any questions, please contact Jason Vaughan in the Office of Institutional Advancement at alumni@uu.edu or 731.661.5050.
From her famous “the sap’s rising” speech to a legendary fishing trip to the newly renovated cafeteria named in her honor, the legacy of Maggie Nell Brewer — the university’s first female senior administrator — lives on at Union University. For Brewer, however, the fondest memories of her 30-year Union career were her relationships with students.

“I got to know a lot of really fine students, and I got to know some that were struggling,” Brewer said. “They’re really some of the closest friends you have, sometimes.”
DR. BREWER’S LONG, SUCCESSFUL CAREER LEADING STUDENT LIFE AT UNION EMBRACED STRONG CREDIBILITY FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP WHO FOLLOWED HER.

Each spring, Brewer would notice that when she walked among the dormitories, men and women would be out in shorts and swimsuits soaking up the sun on blankets together. However, public displays of affection were against Union’s rules at the time, and this behavior was not the image they wanted to present to anyone who came on campus, she said.

“I would say, ‘The sap’s rising,’ because the spring trees — the sap is rising, the trees bud out, nature begins to take its course,” she said. “Well, the kids, they had somewhat of the same fever, so I would say, ‘The sap’s rising, you’re going to have to put the brakes on. So, it just stuck.’

Her legacy extends to Union’s cafeteria, Brewer Dining Hall, which was renovated in 2010 and newly remodeled this past winter. During Brewer’s early career, Union received quite a few complaints from students about the food. She did her best to coordinate the students’ wishes and needs with the food service personnel to help the university grow in this area.

“I feel honored to have the dining hall named after me,” she said. “A lot of people think I am more deserving than I am to have their name on a room, but I do appreciate it. It had a lot of good years working with food service.”

Rick Taphorn, vice president for business affairs, said that although the dining hall has undergone slight upgrades over recent years, a complete renovation was needed to serve Union students well.

“The dining experience is a vital way students build community,” Taphorn said. “With this being Union’s last January term, now was the time for a renovation and an excellent opportunity to renovate a space named after a distinguished administrator who loved and fostered a community with students.”

Though Brewer’s career demonstrated she knew the importance of working hard, “you had to have some fun along the way,” she said. Union’s administrative council held a planning retreat each fall at a cabin on the Tennessee River. Brewer said they would bring along the president’s secretary to have another administrator who loved and fostered a community with students.

“The men ended up fishing off the dock for about half an hour before they figured out what Brewer had done. During the next Board of Trustees meeting, the chairman asked Brewer to give a report on the fishing trip. ‘Til this day, they still remember the fishing story,’ she said.

Of course, Brewer also had to deal with some difficult problems in her time at Union, such as student discipline issues. However, she said good support staff and friends in the same profession helped her — “but the Lord [helped] more than anything.”

Sanderson said she sees Brewer as a person of influence and role model of integrity and wisdom in the lives of generations of Union University students.

“No one has ever forgotten Dr. Brewer across their years — her example and the expectations she set live on in thousands who were a part of Union University in her time,” Sanderson said. “I feel a sense of accountability to her even now, in the best kind of way.”
During the nation’s largest financial crisis in 1932, John Jeter Hurt made the decision to leave the pastorate of the thriving First Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn., to become president of Union University — an institution on the verge of closing.

In front of the Southern Baptist Convention pastor’s conference, he was asked why in the world he would leave such a good church to save a struggling college “head over heels in debt.”

“Well, gentlemen, it’s quite easy,” Hurt replied jokingly. “The deacons at FBC Jackson meet once a month, whereas the trustees at Union University only meet twice a year.”

When Hurt began his tenure as president, the Union University Board of Trustees was ready to declare the school bankrupt, but Hurt’s leadership and sacrificial service helped keep the school moving forward.

James Baggett, author of “So Great a Cloud of Witnesses,” said Hurt would become a “Moses figure,” leading Union out of the wilderness during the nation’s struggle for survival, and leading Union University out of the wilderness is exactly what Hurt did.

By the time he retired in 1945 — serving as Union president through two national crises — Union University had paid off a quarter million-dollar debt and was officially declared debt-free.

Such provision, however, did not come without sacrifice. Union faculty voted to accept 20 percent pay cuts, and some Union professors took “IOUs” instead of a paycheck until Union was back on stable financial footing.

“Just as God faithfully provided for his people in the wilderness, so God was faithful to provide for Union during these wilderness years under Hurt,” said Justin Wainscott, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson and now assistant professor of Christian ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, during a 2022 Founders’ Day address about Hurt. “Those of us who have come after him really do owe him a debt of gratitude for his service to this institution.”

Unsought success became a recurring theme for Hurt and Union University during these times and would only continue as the world stepped into its second world war.

After the United States entered the war, Union University was converted for military use, helping train navy pilots and army aircrewm. While less than 100 civilian students still remained on campus, the majority of students were young men training for the military.

This small, private university in West Tennessee would end up ranking in the top third of all colleges who had students completing advanced training at military air bases. In fact, one military leader stated in his report that “no institution in all the south handled its program better than Union University.”

Along with military excellence, Union University would defeat unexpected odds in its athletics, competing at the national level. Hurt loved sports, especially football, so it was in his tenure that Union hired coaches who would soon become legendary in the sport. Few know that Paul “Bear” Bryant began his famous coaching career at Union University, helping lead Union’s football team to an all-expense invitation to play in Mexico City against the University of Mexico.

The game ended with a Union win of 32-6, leading to an exclusive feature in the New York Times the next day.

Finally, Hurt would propel Union University — a forgotten, almost bankrupt school — toward the top-notch, excellent academics it is now known for today. Under Hurt’s leadership, Union was granted the Southern Association of Colleges accreditation, ensuring students received the best quality education.

Hurt’s vision for Union University was not led by blind ambition but by faith and trust in a God who would continue to grow Union for the next 100 years. Baggett appropriately labeled Hurt as a Moses figure, leading Union University in the midst of overwhelming uncertainty, but the hero of the Bible — and in Union’s history — has and will always be the Lord. Moses was never able to enter the promised land, yet he led, instructed and encouraged the generation of Israelites who would experience the Lord’s promise firsthand. Hurt never saw what Union University would become, but by God’s grace, he helped Union get to where it is today — one of the top Christian institutions in the country.

Union’s history has been marked by fearless leaders, humble servants and passionate advocates for excellent Christian education, but far more importantly, Union’s history has and will always be characterized by the Lord’s divine providence for his people and his university.
Alumnus of the Year

Aubrey M. “Roe” Neal (’55)

Aubrey “Roe” Monroe Neal, from Marianna, Arkansas, served in World War II before enrolling at Union. He graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, served as a pastor and then entered the Chaplain Corps of the Navy, where he traveled the world and taught the Word of God. He retired after 25 years of service in the Navy and returned to the pastorate.

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. Complete biographies are available at uu.edu/alumni/awards/2021.

Outstanding Young Alumnus

Gray Coyner (’08)

Gray Coyner earned his bachelor’s degree in accounting from Union and is a principal with Thompson Greenspon, a Northern Virginia CPA firm, where he has served since 2007. He first joined the firm as an intern and was hired as a staff accountant upon graduation from Union. Coyner is responsible for providing accounting, auditing, and tax services to clients engaged in various industries such as construction, nonprofit, closely-held business, and employee benefit plans.

Melissa Kay Lowe (’07)

Elizabethtown, Kentucky
Danny Sinquefield

Danny Sinquefield is the harvest field team leader for the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board and the pastor emeritus at Faith Baptist Church in Bartlett, Tenn., where he began serving in 1994. He has been a leader in Southern Baptist life and a joyful participant in the Great Commission by supporting the North American Mission Board and International Mission Board as the author of several key resources and serving as president of both the Tennessee Baptist Pastor’s Conference and Tennessee Baptist Convention. He has also been a member of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee and recently finished a term as a trustee of Union University.

Distinguished Service Award

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

The Robert and Martha Jelks Family

In the fall of 1936, Robert Mixon (“Bobby”) Jelks arrived on Union’s campus from Tylertown, Mississippi, on a scholarship to play football and basketball. He met Martha Moore Frey from Coopertown, Tennessee, and the Jelks family’s legacy at Union University was born. It now spans 85 years and four generations.

Bobby and Martha eventually settled in Paris, Tennessee, and started an insurance agency. Bobby served as a Union trustee for 21 years and was elected to Union’s Sports Hall of Fame posthumously in 2006. Of their six children (Barbara, Beverly, Bobby, Cindy, Bill and Jennifer), four attended Union and three graduated from Union. They also have several grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are Union graduates or current students.

Union Family 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.
Mark Campbell was named the women’s basketball head coach for Union University in 1999 and has compiled a record of 686-108 in his 23 seasons. In 2018-19, he made college basketball history, winning his 600th career game faster than any coach in the history of the sport at any level, men or women. In the summer of 2019, Mark was selected as the head coach for the USA U16 Women’s Basketball National Team. His team went undefeated in Chile, winning a gold medal for the USA in the American’s Championship Tournament.

G.M. Savage Award

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

Mark Campbell (`96)

Presented in recognition of significant contributions in areas of profession.

Catherine Scarbrough (`00)

Health Care

Cathie Scarbrough is the associate program director for the Gadsden Regional Family Medicine Residency Program in Gadsden, Alabama, and assistant professor of family medicine for the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Lest We Forget Award

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

Commander George Ed Fullerton, Jr. (`52)

Chesapeake, Virginia

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

Robert E. Craig Service Award

Presented to a faculty or staff member for his or her ongoing commitment to Christ-centered education at Union University.

Anonymous Recipient

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
Jonathan Kee, of Huntington, Tennessee, is the Director of Schools in Huntingdon and has spent the last 16 years as a public educator in the Huntington Special School District.

Thomas Willis ('12) - Arts/Media

Thomas Willis is the director of digital content at EMF, the home of K-LOVE and Air1. He previously served for seven years with the Nashville Predators, revitalizing the team’s content strategy and fan experience.

Ricky Clark ('79) - Church Ministry

Ricky Clark is minister of music at First Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and has served in the local church as a minister of music for over 40 years.

Rebecca Wilkes ('96) - Research/Sciences

Rebecca Wilkes is the section head for molecular and virology lab sections at the Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University, where she is also an associate professor in the Department of Comparative Pathobiology.

Carma Dennis McGee ('93) - Government/Public Service

Carma Dennis McGee serves as a judge of the Tennessee Court of Appeals. A native of Savannah, Tennessee, she was appointed by Governor Bill Lee and confirmed by the State Legislature in 2019.

Tim Henderson ('86) - Humanities

Tim Henderson has been executive director of Humanities Tennessee since December 2012. Prior to that, he had been both director of operations and director of digital programs.

Micky Wolfe ('99) - Athletics

Mickey Wolfe is the director of golf operation at the The Huntsville Country Club in Huntsville, Alabama, and earned membership in the PGA of America in 2002, winning more than 20 tournaments in his professional career.

Stephanie Laffoon ('92) - Not-for-profit

Stephanie Laffoon currently serves as capital campaign manager for the Dream Center of Jackson, Tennessee, a faith-based nonprofit that provides educational, job, and family support opportunities and housing for women who are homeless or going through personal struggles.

Matthew Bleecker ('93) - Business

Matthew Bleecker serves as a judge of the Tennessee Court of Appeals. A native of Savannah, Tennessee, she was appointed by Governor Bill Lee and confirmed by the State Legislature in 2019.
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OLD SCHOOL
ALUMNI NEWS

80’s [Eighties]

After living on the Chesapeake Bay for 21 years, Pamela Newbill Davis (’89) is moving home to Jackson, Tenn. She looks forward to attending many Union University events.

90’s [Nineties]

Anthony Neal Kirk (’96) achieved his 500th career softball victory during the 2023 spring season. He led Kawamba Community College to a third consecutive MACCC state championship, a No. 5 national ranking in the final NJCAA poll and collected his third consecutive state coach of the year award.

Melissa Mann Bean (’96) published an art journal and sketchbook for elementary age kids, “Words of Art.” She hopes to help parents, teachers and homeschool educators connect with their children’s art.

200’s [Two Thousands]

In 2020, Joshua Matthew Hall (’07) earned his Doctor of Biology from Auburn University and now serves as assistant professor of vertebrate physiology at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tenn.

Jocelyn Delany Chumney (’21) is a college access counselor at Hardin County High School in Savannah, Tenn. She is grateful for Union, where she had the opportunity to study as an extern at Hardin County Hospital and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.

10’s [Twenty Tens]

Mason G. English (’15, ’22) began his training in neurological surgery at the University of Louisville in July 2021.

Jacob Landfield (’15) has accepted a position to protect the great outdoors and natural areas within the southeastern portion of Florida. His current work primarily involves lead tank inspections, reporting and compliance assistance.

Births

Jacob “Jay” Gregory English was born to Mason English (’15) and Allie Durham English (’20) on Nov. 29, 2020.

Isaiah Tumani Kamugisha Kagaruki was born to David Kagaruki (’20) and Tiffany Kagaruki (’22) on Feb. 17, 2022.

Jonathan Fulton Tracy was born Aug. 29, 2022, to Cam Tracy (’13) and Breanne Oldham Tracy (’16).

50’s [Fifties]

David Kagaruki, (’71) launched his own coaching business this past year, where she serves as a life coach for high school and college women. She would also love to be a resource for moms of teenage daughters.

Marriages

Megan March (’10) married Nikodim Bourguignon on Oct. 31, 2020, in Mechelen, Belgium.

Abby Ross (’13) married Rick Dickey at Harvest Church of Southern Ill. on July 24, 2021. Abby teaches pre-K at Maple Grove Elementary in Joppa, Illinois. Rick is the general manager of Chick-Fil-A in Paducah, Ky. They are living in Paducah.

Holly Grace Chumney (’79, ’21) is a college access counselor at Hardin County High School in Savannah, Tenn. She is grateful for Union, where she was surrounded by professors who helped deepen her faith.

10’s [Twenty Tens]

Mason G. English (’15, ’22) began his training in neurological surgery at the University of Louisville in July 2021.

Sarah Helton (’74) launched her own coaching business this past year, where she serves as a life coach for high school and college women. She would also love to be a resource for moms of teenage daughters.

Ward Howard (’75) successfully completed his Doctor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Emily (Winters) Wright (’74) is currently an English teacher at Halls High School in Halls, Tenn. She also has three historical Christian fiction novels in publication: “Trial of Strength,” “Trial by Fire” and “Trial of Courage.”

Matthew Bentley (’75) of the University of Colorado Boulder’s environmental engineering program, has been awarded an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship with a placement at the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance.

Jonathan Fulton Tracy was born Aug. 29, 2022, to Cam Tracy (’13) and Breanne Oldham Tracy (’16).
Memoriam

William “Bill” Adcock, Jr. (*72), died on July 30, 2021, at the age of 86. He founded a jean manufacturing company, was named the national CEO of the Year by “The Bubble” magazine in 1990 and served as a United Nations delegate, representing business and labor. He served for more than 20 years as a member of Union’s Board of Trustees and was named Trustee Emeritus. He also was a member of the Union Foundation Board. He and his wife Mary established three endowed scholarships at Union.

Betty L. Baker (*71), died on May 1, 2021, at the age of 71. She retired from a long career in nursing while serving alongside her husband in the ministry.

Lisa Lynn Blackburn (*84), in Jackson, Tenn., died at the age of 58, died on Dec. 14, 2020. She worked in retail sales for many years.

Joy Lane Blair (*58), died in Georgetown, Washington, D.C., on Jan. 5, 2022, at the age of 86. Running the Blair House Antiques shop in Georgetown for over 40 years, she used her shop to minister to others, especially helping countless homeless citizens in her community.

Karen Duval (*85), at the age of 58, died on Dec. 14, 2020. She worked in children’s ministry for many years before beginning her own nonprofit organization to help teach English to the Hispanic community.

Joseph DiMarco (*84), in Jackson, Tenn., died on Feb. 23, 2022, at the age of 71. She served in the U.S. Army and Army National Guard, and he was a long-time member of the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Elizabeth “Betty” Dugard (*62), died on Dec. 7, 2020, at the age of 81. She spent her life teaching, serving as an art and history teacher as well as a counselor.

LaVerne Powell Boone (*45), in Jackson, Tenn., died at the age of 94, on Dec. 4, 2021. She worked in Washington, D.C., for the FBI before moving back to Jackson to work for Southern Railways, Bus Lines and Mitchell’s Furniture Store.

Kimberly Jo Brasfield (*62), died on March 11, 2022, at the age of 63. She was a former special education teacher with the Dyer County School System and a member of Bethabara United Methodist Church.

William Baylus “Billy” Clemons (*54), in Jackson, Tenn., died at the age of 91 on April 22, 2022. He served in the Marine Corps and was the longest-serving member of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn.

Claire Ross Cowart (*37), died on Nov. 1, 2021, at the age of 71. He served as a counselor and was a passionate advocate for breast cancer awareness and her “pink sisters.”

Sue Sain Graves (*62), died at the age of 86 on Oct. 25, 2022. She served as a teacher and musical director for many years. She was active in the civil rights movement and participated in public protests on several occasions, even during her first pregnancy.

Karen Duval (*85), at the age of 58, died on Dec. 14, 2020. She worked in children’s ministry for many years before beginning her own nonprofit organization to help teach English to the Hispanic community.

Jean Carlisle Fitts (*61), died at the age of 81 on Oct. 25, 2021. She was one of the founders and served for over 40 years and was named the president of the VFW Club Post 566 Women’s Auxiliary.

Sue Sain Graves (*62), died at the age of 86 on Oct. 25, 2022. She served as a teacher and musical director for many years. She was active in the civil rights movement and participated in public protests on several occasions, even during her first pregnancy.

James Gill Haak (*72), died on Feb. 22, 2021 at the age of 71 in his home of Trenton, Tenn.

Christopher “Gray” Graham Hamilton (*29), at the age of 24, died on Dec. 14, 2021. At Union University, he founded the pre-professional medical organization and played baseball. He was a second-year dental student at the University of Tennessee College of Health Science.

Sheila Rhodes Emerson (*64), in Jackson, Tenn., died on Feb. 20, 2022. Her teaching career took her across the state of Tennessee. One of her lasting memories was learning about different cultures with her father in Brazil.

Angela Ferguson (*70), age 54, died on June 22, 2022. She served in ministry with her husband for many years. She later established Parachute Enterprises, where she desired to work with women who were underserved and unheard.

John “Bud” Dancy (*59), died at the age of 84 on Aug. 1, 2021. Upon graduating from Union with a journalism degree, he served as a news anchor for NBC News for nearly 30 years. He served three times as a foreign correspondent, based in Berlin, London and Moscow, for NBC News. Dancy received four national Emmys and was the first television correspondent to receive the prestigous Everett McKinley Dirksen Award. After his retirement from journalism, he taught classes at George Washington University, Brigham Young University and Duke University.

LaVerne Powell Boone (*45), in Jackson, Tenn., died at the age of 94, on Dec. 4, 2021. She worked in Washington, D.C., for the FBI before moving back to Jackson to work for Southern Railways, Bus Lines and Mitchell’s Furniture Store.

Sargent, CPAs, where he served as a business adviser for over 40 years.

R.G. “Bob” Elliott. She later became in ministry alongside her husband, and was named Trustee Emeritus. He also was a member of the Union Foundation Board. He and his wife Mary established three endowed scholarships at Union.

Betty Joe Gass, of Alamo, Tenn., died on July 28, 2021, at the age of 88. A Union donor, she traveled around the world with her husband, who served in the Navy for over 30 years. She returned to Jackson, Tenn., on her husband’s retirement, where she worked as his legal secretary for 10 years.

LaVerne Powell Boone (*45), in Jackson, Tenn., died at the age of 94, on Dec. 4, 2021. She worked in Washington, D.C., for the FBI before moving back to Jackson to work for Southern Railways, Bus Lines and Mitchell’s Furniture Store.

Barclay Newman

Barclay Newman (*53) died on Dec. 7, 2020, at the age of 89. After years of traveling throughout Asia as a United Bible Society translation consultant, one of his greatest achievements was the translation of the Contemporary English Version of the Bible. In 1992, Newman received the Outstanding Achievement Award from Union University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
Ann Bray Boston

Ann Bray Boston (’58) passed away on Oct. 15, 2021, in Tullahoma, Tenn. She was an all-star basketball player at New Albany High School and attended Union, where she met the love of her life, Rev. Raymond “Buddy” Boston. Ann served on Union’s Board of Trustees.

Paul Woodford (’62), retired pastor of Lewisburg (Tenn.) First Baptist Church, died on Aug. 6, 2021. While serving various churches throughout Tennessee, he also taught speech communications and theater arts at Union.

Donald Robert “Don” Morris

Donald Robert “Don” Morris (’62) died Feb. 19, 2022, at age 85. Morris was a longtime Union staff member and golf coach. He was born in Dyersburg, Tenn., and served in the Air Force after graduating from high school before earning his Bachelor of Music degree from Union in 1961.

Morris started working for Union in January of 1969 as an admissions counselor. He then worked as a financial aid officer for three years before being named the director of financial aid and then assistant vice president of financial aid.

He coached the Bulldogs golf team from 1973 until his retirement in 1998. He returned as coach from 2004-2016 and again in 2015-2016. All told, Morris spent 32 years as men’s golf coach and one year as women’s golf coach. He was inducted into the inaugural class of the Union Sports Hall of Fame in 2006.

Morris was an active member and deacon of First Baptist Church in Jackson where he played in the church orchestra. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Pat Holland Morris, and three sons – Bob Morris and wife Teresa, Mel Morris, and Andy Morris and wife Charity, in addition to eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
CELEBRATE 200 YEARS WITH US!

Union University will be celebrating its bicentennial birthday this year, and we cannot imagine a celebration without you! You are invited to join us as we kick off this monumental occasion on Family Weekend. Please save the date for these events.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

10:00 a.m. - Chapel - GM Savage Memorial Chapel
• Join us for a special chapel service highlighting Union’s relationship with the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.

6:00 p.m. - Bicentennial Celebration - Carl Perkins Civic Center
• An evening of celebration with alumni and current students praising God for His provision. Special performances by Proclamation Reunion Choir and Union Stage Band alumni.
  Reserved Dinner Tickets: $25 each.
  Balcony Tickets: Complimentary

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

8:00 a.m. - Buster’s Bicentennial 5K Dash
• Lace-up your running (or walking) shoes and participate in an on-campus 5K. Registration Cost TBD

4:00 p.m. - Faculty and Staff Reception
• Be a part of our come-and-go reception to honor our Bicentennial Hall of Honor recipients, faculty, and staff, both past and present.

5:00 p.m. - Stage Band Reunion Performance
• Join us on the Great Lawn and listen to classics by artists such as Chicago; Blood, Sweat & Tears; and more performed by our Stage Band alumni.

7:00 p.m. - David Crowder Concert on the Great Lawn
• Three-time GMA Dove Award winner, David Crowder, will lead us in a night of praise and worship to God for His provision through the past 200 years and the years to come.

8:30 p.m. - Fireworks on the Great Lawn
• Union will kick off our year-long Bicentennial Celebration with a bang!
Final Frame
Student leaders pose with the Buster mascot on Move-in Day, September 22, 2021.
photo by Kristi Woody ('10)