

SPRING 2023

UNI NITE



THE UNION UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

EXCELLENCE-DRIVEN

CHRIST-CENTERED

MORE THAN 200 YEARS OF CHRIST-CENTERED EDUCATION

*The Lord
has done
great things
for us
and we
are
glad.*

PSALM 126:3

EST.

1823

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UNIONITE

THE UNION UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE
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ON THE COVER:
Psalms 126:3
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FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

Over the past year, we at Union University have had the opportunity to do what few other institutions have done – celebrate our bicentennial. As we looked back on the past 200 years, we have been reminded all year long of God’s faithfulness to Union and of the incredible legacy that has been built by the generations that have come before us. But we also look to the future with a renewed sense of purpose and hope.

When Union was founded as Jackson Male Academy in 1823, it was a small school with just a handful of students. But over the years, it grew to become one of the premier Christian universities in the country.

As we celebrated our bicentennial, we have been reminded of the many challenges that Union has faced over the years. From wars and economic downturns to natural disasters and pandemics, Union has weathered many storms. But through it all, God has protected and provided for Union, and we have remained committed to our mission of providing a Christ-centered education that prepares students for a life of service and leadership.

Looking back on the past 200 years, we are inspired by the countless stories of Union alumni who have gone on to make a difference in their communities and around the world. From pastors and missionaries to doctors and business leaders, Union graduates have left their mark on the world in countless ways.

Now, as we look to the future, we know that there is much work to be done. Our world is facing complex challenges that will require innovative solutions and compassionate leadership. As a Christian university, we are uniquely positioned to provide the kind of education and training that will enable our students to meet these challenges head-on.

We remain committed to providing our students with a rigorous academic experience that is grounded in the truth of God’s Word. We are also committed to equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their chosen fields. And we are committed to helping them develop the kind of character that will enable them to lead with integrity, compassion and conviction.

We believe the best is yet to come for Union University, and we look forward to partnering with you as we work to shape the next 200 years.

Thank you for your continued support of Union, and may God continue to bless this great institution.

With Joy,

Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver, Ph.D.
President, Union University

“

**WE REMAIN COMMITTED
TO PROVIDING OUR
STUDENTS**

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EXPERIENCE THAT IS GROUNDED IN THE

TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD.”

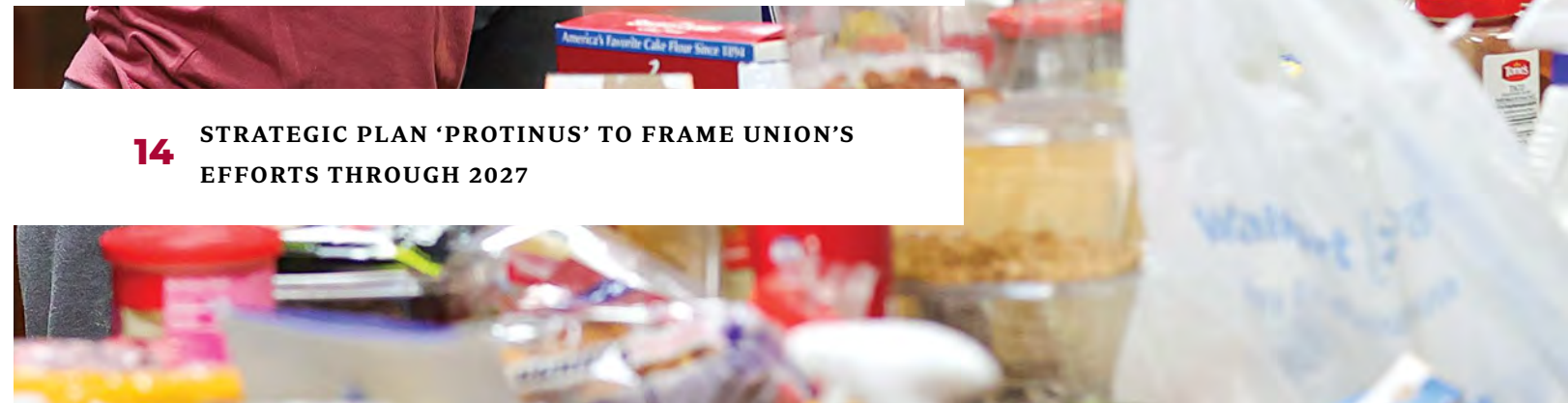
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UNION PRESENTS SBC'S MCLAURIN WITH DODD AWARD



Pictured from left are Todd Brady, Union's vice president for university ministries; Antonia McLaurin; Willie McLaurin; and Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver.

Union University presented Willie McLaurin, interim president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, with its M.E. Dodd Denominational Service Award during a June 14 alumni dinner at the SBC annual meeting in Anaheim, Calif.

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 efforts.

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, David S. Dockery and others.

"In a tenuous world where uncertainties and confusion abound, Union is glad to recognize McLaurin for his gracious, stable, competent and integrity-filled leadership in service to Southern Baptists," said Todd E. Brady, Union's vice president for university ministries.

MADISON RELEASES BOOKS INTEGRATING SOIL SCIENCE AND FAITH



Beth Madison, associate professor of science for Union's School of Adult and Professional Studies, released the first two books of her *Good Ground* series that integrates Christian theology and practice within the study of soil and environmental science.

Madison, the author of the Soul Scientist blog, said she hopes the books will become a resource to readers, helping enhance daily devotion times and small group Bible studies. As a take on modern-day parables, *Good Ground* will help readers take something they see every day — the nature at their feet — and learn more about the creator of both the world and humanity.

"I hope as readers interact with these books, they would start seeing the world around them in a new way," Madison said. "I hope they will prompt them to think of Scripture or a certain Christian living principle and that it will ultimately draw them closer in intimacy with the creator of it all."

Proceeds of *Good Ground* will go to financing student scholarships through Northeastern Baptist Press in Vermont. *Good Ground* is available to order at Amazon.com or at Northeastern Baptist Press.

POE PUBLISHES FINAL BOOK OF EXTENSIVE C.S. LEWIS TRILOGY

Hal Poe, Charles Colson Professor of Faith and Culture at Union University, has completed the most extensive C.S. Lewis biography published. His three-part *Becoming C.S. Lewis* series begins with Lewis' early childhood and ends with his death in 1963.

While the project took him about five years to complete, Poe has been teaching a Christian studies class at Union University on Lewis' life and works for over 20 years.

"All the students — dozens and dozens of students — who have taken my C.S. Lewis class are mentioned in my acknowledgements," Poe said. "I believe that most of my scholarship is an overflow of the conversations I've had with students;

I think that's the best kind of scholarship."

Relying mostly on primary resources rather than memoirs, Poe's biography of Lewis draws from over 3,000 pages of Lewis' letters and diaries, as well as letters from his family and close friends. Poe said he believes most readers who are familiar with Lewis will be shocked by this new biography series.

"There is a sort of tradition for C.S. Lewis biographies that tend to lean more as memoirs, but the problem with memory is that sometimes your memory gets reoriented," Poe said. "So, as a result, this biography corrects many facts of Lewis' life found in other biographies."



UNION UNIVERSITY SERVES THE JACKSON COMMUNITY FOR ITS 20TH ANNUAL CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY DAY

Over 800 Union students, faculty and staff volunteered at over 50 service projects throughout the Jackson and surrounding community as part of the university's annual Campus and Community Day Nov. 1.

Union University has dedicated an annual day of service in the local community for 20 years to remember the Lord's faithfulness and the Jackson community's service after devastating tornadoes that hit Union's campus in 2002, 2003 and 2008.

Union's Student Activities Council served at the Boys and Girls Club in Humboldt, Tenn., where they organized school, kitchen and recreational supplies as well as repainted the outside playground.

"We have been very short-staffed since COVID hit, so we have not had the capacity to do some of these projects," said Gladys Robinson, director of the Boys and Girls Club in Humboldt. "These Union students coming here has lifted a great burden off of me and some of my staff workers; they are making a big difference helping us today."



Pictured from left are Robyn Hari, chair of Union's Board of Trustees; SGA President Steve Williams; Carolyn McAfee Bruner; Tom McAfee; former Union President Hyran Barefoot; and Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver.



If you would like to donate to the new academic building, scan the code to the left or visit uu.edu/giving/nab.

Any donor who gives \$1,000 or more will be recognized on the building's donor wall.

UNION HOLDS GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING

Union University broke ground Sept. 9 on a 40,000-square-foot academic building on the Great Lawn that will house the McAfee School of Business and the departments of computer science and engineering.

TLM Associates of Jackson is the architectural firm handling the building's design.

The McAfee family, for whom the McAfee School of Business is named, announced in 2021 a lead gift for the building. Carolyn McAfee Bruner and her late husband, James T. McAfee Jr., graduated from Union in 1961. Their son Tom is a 1994 Union graduate and is chairman and president of Hallmark Systems Inc. His wife Julie is a 1993 Union graduate.

Tom McAfee spoke at the groundbreaking about his love for Union and for his vision of what the new academic building will accomplish.

"The faculty at Union have a unique opportunity to share how their academic discipline enables them to live in the light of their faith that has enlightened them," he said. "They're able to demonstrate how God has called them to carry their light and to share their light with others. In turn, they are preparing students to go out and make a difference in the world with their own light."

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.

UNION PHARMACY STUDENTS SCORE TENNESSEE'S TOP NAPLEX PASS RATE

The Union University College of Pharmacy's class of 2022 received a 92 percent pass rate for first-time attempts on the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination, giving Union the highest pass rate in Tennessee and 12th highest nationally.

It's the fourth straight year for Union to have the highest pass rate among Tennessee's six pharmacy schools. The

average pass rate in Tennessee was 78 percent in 2022, while the national average was 80 percent for all graduates from programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education.

Union pharmacy students' performance on the NAPLEX over the past decade ranks Union among the top 10 nationally out of 141 programs.



UNION HOSTS OVER 200 TEENAGERS ON CAMPUS FOR EQUIP YOUTH APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE

Union University's School of Theology and Missions and the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board hosted over 200 students during the Equip Youth Apologetics Conference on Sept. 10 in Union's Carl Grant Events Center.

With key speakers trained in theology, philosophy, apologetics and youth ministry, the Equip Youth Apologetics Conference helped train youth how to defend and affirm essential Christian truths.

Gregory Poore, Union associate professor of philosophy, apologetics and ethics, kicked off the conference by teaching students how to approach defending their faith in love and grace.

"A lot of times, we have this impression that if we think too much, we will lose our faith," Poore said. "Christ is the maker of heavens, the earth and our minds, so we don't need to be afraid that there's going to be some deep incompatibility between seeking truth and faith."

The ultimate goal of apologetics, Poore said, is not to win arguments. Rather, it is to be faithful to Christ through reason as a way to love and serve one another's neighbors in truth.

The second annual Equip Youth Apologetics Conference is scheduled for the fall of 2023.

CAMPBELL BECOMES FASTEST COLLEGE BASKETBALL COACH TO 700 WINS

Union University women's basketball coach Mark Campbell won his 700th career game Jan. 18, reaching that mark faster than any collegiate coach in history.

The achievement came in a victory at the University of West Georgia in Campbell's 811th career game.



"I am overwhelmed with all the people that God has surrounded me with over the years at Union," Campbell said following the game. "From assistant coaches, to graduate assistants, to student assistants, to players, and to high school coaches that did a lot of work to prepare players to play in college. I am very thankful for administrators that have been extremely supportive to the point that I never wanted to leave."

Campbell passed the record set by Geno Auriemma of UConn with 700 wins in 822 total games. Adolph Rupp was the fastest men's coach to 700 wins, in 836 games.

In December, Campbell was announced as the next director of athletics at Union University, a position he will hold in addition to his coaching duties. He will replace Tommy Sadler, who is retiring after 16 years in the position and 12 years as the associate director of athletics under David Blackstock. Prior to his 27 years in athletics, Sadler worked in public relations and fundraising for the university. His cumulative service to Union has spanned 37 years.



UNION UNIVERSITY HENDERSONVILLE OFFERS FIRST SUMMER NURSING CAMP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Union University's Hendersonville campus hosted its first nursing camp for high school students interested in pursuing a career in healthcare.

Teresa Johnson, chair of undergraduate nursing at UU Hendersonville, said the camp allows students to connect with Union University faculty and to explore different aspects of the nursing profession.

"Our Union University faculty volunteered their time to provide critical thinking activities for these students through nursing simulations," Johnson said. "These simulations help students gain firsthand experiences with injections, IV fluids and more."

Johnson said she is excited to continue offering nursing camps for high schoolers in the Nashville area as Union University prepares students to serve church and society through excellent, Christ-centered health care education.

Union University Hendersonville will host its second nursing camp for high school students in July 2023. To learn more about Union University's Hendersonville campus, visit uuu.edu/hendersonville.

BELIEVERS ACROSS REGION GATHER FOR WEST TENNESSEE EVANGELISM RALLY

Church members and leaders gathered in Union University’s G.M Savage Memorial Chapel Sept. 11 for the West Tennessee Evangelism Rally featuring worship and a message from Clay Hallmark, president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Lexington, Tenn.

Sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, the rally was held following a series of break-out sessions throughout the afternoon aiming at equipping and encouraging believers to spread the gospel throughout Tennessee and beyond.

Hallmark’s message focused on Luke 14:15-24. His sermon sought to inspire local believers to evangelize the state of Tennessee.

“The majority of our neighbors, the majority of our friends, the majority of the people who live within the shadow of our church building are lost and headed to hell without the love of Jesus Christ,” Hallmark said. “That means tonight their life is hanging in the balance.”

UU GRADUATES BENEFIT FROM AGREEMENT THAT SHORTENS SEBTS M.DIV. PROGRAM

A new partnership between Union University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary will allow graduates of Union University to complete an advanced Master of Divinity degree in less time.

Graduates with credits from Union’s School of Theology and Missions can be admitted to Southeastern’s Master of Divinity program and receive as many as 27 hours toward that degree. The partnership could reduce the duration of the degree program by almost a year for Union graduates.

Union’s School of Theology and Missions offers majors in biblical studies, biblical languages, Christian ministry and missions, philosophy and theological studies.



UNION’S SCHOOL OF EDUCATION RECEIVES HIGH SCORE ON STATE REPORT CARD

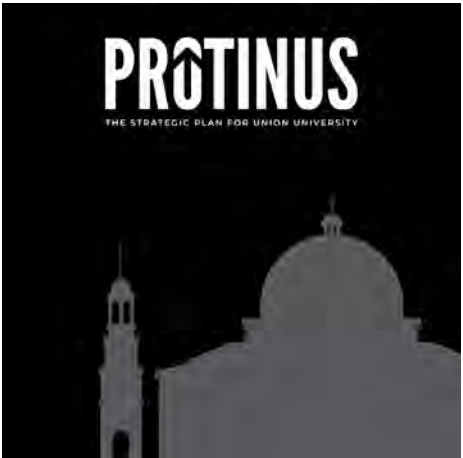
Union University’s School of Education received excellent ratings on the effectiveness of teacher training programs from the 2022 Educator Preparation Program Report Card, published by the Tennessee State Board of Education.

The UU School of Education candidates achieved a 90.5 percent pass rate for literacy assessment. In addition to this, Union received higher-than-average placement rates and retention rates of other Tennessee public schools, and Union’s candidate assessment rating exceeded expectations, demonstrating pass rates above the state averages in all categories.

In the area of candidate profile, Union University’s percentage of racially diverse completers was 12.9 percent above the state average.

“We are blessed to have dedicated students, faculty and local education partners who work hard to support these students in their preparation,” said Mandy Cates, director of accreditation and assessment at Union’s School of Education. “It is wonderful to see this hard work represented publicly among our educator preparation program colleagues.”

The Tennessee State Board of Education report card is designed to give educator preparation programs information they can use to improve effectiveness by rating the program’s overall performance across three scored domains: candidate profile, employment and provider impact.



STRATEGIC PLAN
‘PROTINUS’ TO
FRAME UNION’S
EFFORTS
THROUGH 2027

Union University trustees in their Dec. 2 meeting approved a strategic plan that will guide the university’s operational goals and planning over the next five years.

The strategic plan is entitled “Protinus,” which is a Latin word that means “to move immediately, forward, continuously, uninterruptedly, as from the very first,” according to Union University President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver.

“The principle of strategic plans is important for institutions,” Oliver said. “‘Protinus’ builds off the strength of our commitments from the beginning of Union’s history, including our most fundamental commitment, ‘Religio et eruditio’ – faith and learning.”

“Protinus” includes four major themes – advancing Christ-centered higher education, pursuing faithful innovation throughout and across campuses, continuing to solidify and develop Union’s financial position and enhancing Union’s culture of shared life and commitment to one another’s flourishing.

Union’s most recent strategic plan, “United in Spirit. Grounded in Truth,” was adopted in 2015 and originally scheduled for completion in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic delayed its completion. The planning process for “Protinus” began in November 2021, and over the past year all university departments and programs have been involved in meetings and strategy discussions to help develop it.

MCAFEE SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS STUDENTS
PARTICIPATE
IN TRI-SCHOOL
COLLABORATION
PROJECT

Union students in the McAfee School of Business managerial communications and organizational behavior class participated in a tri-school collaboration project with Western University’s Ivey Business School and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill’s Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Union participants partnered with students from each school to assess community issues, brainstorm solutions and present their proposals through virtual communication. The goal of this tri-school collaboration was to help students gain greater experience managing team relationships remotely.



April Rowsey, assistant professor of management, served as the overseeing professor of this collaboration and believed this project helps Union students consider the way they can love their neighbors, co-workers and peers well in today’s ever-growing virtual landscape.

“[When I started this project before COVID-19], the goal was about teaching students how to learn the new technology of a virtual workplace,” Rowsey said. “Now, we’re bringing it back to the basics, which is all about how students can think appropriately about the people on the other side of the computer.”



UU GERMANTOWN
CELEBRATES 25TH
BIRTHDAY

Union University Germantown marked its 25th birthday Feb. 28 with a celebration for faculty, staff, administrators and community leaders.

Andre Jones, campus and facilities director for Union University Germantown, said the campus has made a significant impact on the community since it opened in the fall of 1997.

“There are several leaders from the community here who are Germantown alumni,” Jones said. “We’re really the only major Christian university here within the city. Union is a fixture that has been a consistent beacon of light here in this community.”

Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver and the rest of Union’s Executive Council held their weekly meeting at the Germantown campus to celebrate the milestone birthday, and Union trustees and Germantown community and civic leaders were also in attendance. In addition, faculty and staff from Union University Germantown and the Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies also were on hand.

Union University Germantown provides graduate degrees, undergraduate degree completion programs and professional development opportunities for adult students in the Memphis region.



NATALIE GRANT AND DANNY GOKEY
PERFORM CHRISTMAS CONCERT
FOR UNION UNIVERSITY’S 24TH
ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

Award-winning musicians Natalie Grant and Danny Gokey kicked off the holiday season with a Christmas concert at the Carl Perkins Civic Center on Nov. 29. Over 1,300 donors, students and community members attended the 24th annual Scholarship Banquet to raise support for student scholarships at Union University.

Before their concert, Grant and Gokey joined Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver on stage for an interview, where they discussed Christmas memories, pursuing a career in the music industry and coping with grief.

Sharing about the death of his wife, Gokey told the audience the most memorable lesson he learned from that experience is the power of letting go. Reading Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God,” Gokey said he realized that he had two options. He could either grasp God’s word or hold on to the bitterness of losing her.

“When I let go and trusted the Lord with all of my heart and did not lean on my own understanding, it was like someone pulled the cork out of my heart, and all the toxic emotions just came running out,” Gokey said. “I was able to see and live life again.”

Gokey and Grant shared advice to young people interested in pursuing a career in music, and they both agreed that aspiring musicians must first and foremost seek the kingdom of God and the calling of the Lord.

Following the musicians’ interview, Oliver joined New York Times and U.S. Today best-selling author, Donna VanLiere, on stage. The author of 14 books discussed the story behind her best-selling book, *The Christmas Shoes*, as well as being a mom of a current Union University student.



OLIVER URGES UNION COMMUNITY ONWARD AS IT CONTINUES 200-YEAR-OLD RACE

As Union University celebrated its bicentennial during the 2022-2023 academic year, Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver offered insights from Hebrews 12:1-2 during the university’s fall convocation service Aug. 26.

“For 200 years, Union University has stood as a model of excellence in Christian higher education,” Oliver said. “A place where learning is integrated with faith, where it is infused with hope and where it is transformed by love. Union stands as a testimony to God’s faithfulness, and we remain committed to our mission of providing Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development in service to church and society.”

Hebrews 12:1-2 reads, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (English Standard Version)

Oliver settled on that passage since the title of James Alex Baggett’s history of Union is entitled *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses*.

Oliver said that Union has an incredible history, and that God has been faithful to it through fires and storms, changes and transformations, wars and depressions and pandemics. Oliver traced the university’s history from its founding as Jackson Male Academy in 1823, to its change to West Tennessee College.

Then West Tennessee College merged with Union University in Murfreesboro and the institution became Southwestern Baptist University, before ultimately changing its name to Union University.

He referenced some of Union’s notable alumni, including Tarleton Crawford, a missionary to China who served as Lottie Moon’s supervisor for a brief period. William Whitsitt served as the president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. John W. Conger founded Searcy College and Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas. Howell E. Jackson served on the U.S. Supreme Court.

“We are running the race and we look out into the crowd and realize that every one of them finished the race, and we know, ‘It can be done,’” Oliver said. “We look and we see examples of faith and perseverance under every imaginable circumstance. By the power and faith that got them through, I’m going to press onward, too.”

The full address is available at uu.edu/200/convocation.

19 UNION SELECTS 100 FOR INDUCTION INTO
BICENTENNIAL HALL OF HONOR

20 UNION CELEBRATES ‘MISSION FAITHFULNESS AND
CHRIST-CENTERED EXCELLENCE’ AT BICENTENNIAL KICK-OFF

22 A YEAR OF CELEBRATION

UNION UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES MURFREESBORO FOUNDING

As part of Union's bicentennial observance, university leaders celebrated the existing historical marker at the location of its original campus in Murfreesboro, Tenn. The historical marker ceremony was held March 2 at what is now the Central Magnet School campus.

Union was chartered by the Baptist General Association of Tennessee in 1848. The school's buildings were used as hospitals for armies during the Civil War, but as a cholera epidemic broke out around the South, the Murfreesboro institution was forced to close in the 1870s.

In 1907, trustees of Southwestern Baptist University in Jackson chose to rename the institution "Union University" in honor of the Murfreesboro school.

"The historical marker helps us honor those who came before us at Union University," said Keaghan Sheridan, director of alumni relations at Union University. "The marker reminds us of Union's long history and of the influence it has had in both the Jackson community and middle Tennessee community."

Prior to the historical marker ceremony, Union University leaders and alumni gathered at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Nashville to pray for the university and to praise the Lord for his faithfulness in Union's 200-year history.



Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver and Central Magnet School Principal John Ash celebrate Union's Murfreesboro historic marker. Central Magnet School is located on the site of the old Union campus in Murfreesboro, and Union made a \$2,000 donation to the school as part of its bicentennial celebration.

UNION SELECTS 100 FOR INDUCTION INTO BICENTENNIAL HALL OF HONOR



Union University recognized the 100 inductees into its Bicentennial Hall of Honor during a Legacy Luncheon Sept. 23 in the Carl Grant Events Center as part of the university's bicentennial kick-off celebration.

"With a long and storied history, Union University has been the beneficiary of a number of individuals who have served faithfully and made a significant impact upon the institution," Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said. "We wanted to recognize some of the most significant people who have helped make Union University the excellent, Christ-centered school that it is today. We are so grateful for all of these individuals and the ways that God has used them to make a difference in the life of Union University"

The Bicentennial Hall of Honor was designed to recognize and honor those who have contributed in a significant way to the vision and mission of the university. Union accepted nominations and based its final selection decision on the following criteria:

- Inductees embody the core values and mission of Union University.
- Inductees hold a degree from Union, worked at Union or served on the Board of Trustees.
- Inductees could be either living or deceased.
- Inductees are those whose dedication and achievements have significantly affected the university and should be honored for their contributions.
- Inductees supported and advanced Union's mission through leadership to alumni, students and/or the community.

A full listing of inductees is available at uu.edu/200/hall-of-honor.



UNION CELEBRATES ‘MISSION FAITHFULNESS AND CHRIST-CENTERED EXCELLENCE’ AT BICENTENNIAL KICK-OFF

With gratitude to God for his faithfulness over two centuries, Union University marked its bicentennial with a kick-off celebration Sept. 23 at the Carl Perkins Civic Center.

“Rarely has a Christian institution in this country maintained its mission and its relationship to its church constituency for this length of time,” said former Union President David S. Dockery, who spoke briefly on the program about Union’s history and legacy. “We can all agree that Union University in the fall of 2022 remains one of the premier Christian institutions in the country, with outstanding academics and wide-ranging programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, Christian studies, business, education, the social sciences and social work, engineering, nursing and pharmacy, among others.”

The evening featured worship led by Union’s vocal group Proclamation, with current students and alumni who sang with the group during their time at Union, in addition to stage band alumni. The program also included two panel discussions with trustees and current and former administrators who spoke about what Union has meant to them.

The Sept. 23 program was part of an entire weekend of activities that celebrated Union’s bicentennial, including a chapel service, Buster’s Bicentennial 5K Dash, a faculty and staff reception, a stage band alumni concert on the Great Lawn, a concert by David Crowder and a firework show.

“For 200 years, Union University has stood as a model of excellence in Christian higher education,” Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver said. “A place

where learning is integrated with our faith in Christ, where it is infused with the hope of Christ and where it is transformed by the love of Christ.

“From a small-town academy to one of the nation’s premier Christian universities, the story of Union University is one of faith, Christian commitment and dedication to excellence. And it is the story of how faithful people in faithful churches help sustain God’s ongoing work of educating our young people.”

Union’s origins trace to Jackson Male Academy, which began Feb. 3, 1823. The Tennessee General Assembly chartered Madison County in 1821, with the city of Jackson created in 1822.

In January of 1844, the state of Tennessee granted a charter for West Tennessee College to grant Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and other degrees, and Jackson Male Academy was designated to be the college’s preparatory department. Trustees of the college purchased 46 acres overlooking the town of Jackson for the campus.

While West Tennessee College was operating in Jackson, Baptists in Middle Tennessee launched Union University in Murfreesboro, with an academy beginning in 1841 and college-level classes beginning six years later. Union University came upon hard times in 1859 when its highly respected president, Joseph H. Eaton, died. The campus was also badly damaged during the Civil War. It reopened in 1868 only to close again in 1873, largely because of its financial condition and an epidemic of cholera.

Tennessee Baptist leaders in the 1870s wanted to unite regional organizations, and many thought higher education was

an important method to bring about that unification. The Tennessee Baptist Convention reorganized in 1874 and launched Southwestern Baptist University, choosing Jackson as the location when citizens offered to transfer ownership of West Tennessee College to the new Baptist university.

In 1907, Southwestern Baptist University trustees voted to change the institution’s name to Union University because they believed it was short, pleasing to the ear, full of Christian sentiment and dear to many older Tennessee Baptists. The name change was a recognition of the former Union University in Murfreesboro and the impact many of its professors, administrators, and trustees had on Southwestern.

“Through the years Union has demonstrated excellence, not only in academics, but in athletics and the arts,” Dockery said in his Sept. 23 remarks. “Union has moved to the forefront of all Christian universities in their efforts to bring the Christian faith to bear on all aspects of teaching, research, scholarship, learning and living.

“No one thinks of Union University as flawless, but hundreds and hundreds of people, for 200 years, have worked tirelessly to help Union remain faithful to its mission, even amid wars, fires, tornadoes, pandemics and other tragedies, setbacks and challenges. ... The Union story for 200 years represents and reflects mission faithfulness and Christ-centered excellence.”

For additional bicentennial kick-off coverage visit uu.edu/200/kick-off.



Special guests view the premiere of a Union University documentary following the Feb. 3 chapel service.

UNION CELEBRATES ITS 200TH ANNIVERSARY, HOSTS CHAPEL WITH THREE UNION PRESIDENTS

Union University turned 200 years old Feb. 3 with a special chapel service, bicentennial birthday party, a documentary release and more. The celebration began in the G.M. Savage Memorial Chapel with a chapel service featuring interviews from each living Union president.

David Dockery, president of Union from 1996-2014, began the bicentennial chapel service by wishing Union a happy 200th birthday and celebrating the university’s Christ-centered convictions. He joined Tim Ellsworth, associate vice president for university communications, through a video interview.

“The university has rallied for almost three decades now around some core values that hold the institution together — excellence-driven, Christ-centered, people-focused and future-directed,” Dockery said.

He urged the Union community to remain true to these core values as they continue to give thanks to God, care for each other and pursue academic excellence.

Then, Hyran Barefoot, Union president from 1987-1996, and Bob Agee, Union alumnus and president emeritus of Oklahoma Baptist University, were interviewed by Ethan Voss, current Union student and SGA president.

They recalled memories from the old Union University campus, located in

downtown Jackson, Tenn., and noted the tremendous growth Union has experienced over the past 50 years.

Barefoot said while the former Union University campus was small and poor, the people were what made Union special. He said Union had a gift of attracting excellent students and faculty who were outstanding in their specific fields.

“Union is on the threshold of its greatest days today,” Agee said. “We’ve got a voice; we’ve got a message, and that makes the future even more exciting.”

Finally, Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver, current Union University president, was interviewed by Union senior, Steve Williams. Oliver said Union’s 200th anniversary is a testament to the students and alumni who love and continue to invest in its Christ-centered mission.

“I hope that you will come back when Union turns 250 years old ... and you’ll reminisce about the people you met here, the faculty who influenced you here and how good God has been to you,” Oliver said.

In addition to the chapel service, Union University hosted a birthday party for Union students, staff, faculty and alumni with food, games, giveaways and more. During the celebration, A.J. Massey, Madison County mayor, declared an official proclamation that Feb. 3 was Union University Day in Jackson and Madison County, Tenn.

Union University also released a special bicentennial documentary of Union’s rich history, told through the voices of key leaders who know and love the institution.

Video of the chapel service and the documentary can be seen at uu.edu/200/founders-day

THREE UNION PRESIDENTS PARTICIPATE IN A SPECIAL BICENTENNIAL PANEL DISCUSSION AT UNION’S LEGACY LUNCHEON

Union University’s three most recent presidents — Hyran Barefoot, David Dockery and Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver — participated in a special panel discussion Sept. 23 as part of Union’s bicentennial kick-off celebration.

The presidents shared their Union experiences and the unique ways the Lord led them through times of transition, celebration and crisis. Bob Agee, Union alumnus and former president of Oklahoma Baptist University, facilitated the discussion.

Barefoot, Union president from 1986-1996, began the conversation by sharing the moment he knew the Lord was leading him to serve at Union. He said he had always planned to be a pastor, but it was the recommendation of Union’s president at the time and multiple professors that convinced him to begin his nearly 40 years of service at Union.

“I said the Lord must be in it, so I decided to say yes,” Barefoot said.

Agee turned the conversation to Dockery, Union president from 1996-2014, asking him to share details from the night Union’s campus was devastated by an EF-4 tornado on Feb. 5, 2008.

By God’s grace, there were no fatalities from the tornado, but the damage to Union’s campus was still massive. Dockery said they did not know how, but everyone on Union’s leadership team knew they had to complete the spring semester.

“God has done great things at Union since, and it’s not because of anything I did,” Dockery said. “It’s because of an incredible team who should be the ultimate cloud of witnesses.”

Agee concluded the discussion by asking Oliver, Union’s current president, of his experience leading the university during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

As Union University canceled all classes on March 16, 2020, Oliver admitted that at first, he was frustrated and confused as to why God would allow such a global crisis to hit. Oliver said as he was leaving for work the morning the campus shut down, the birds outside his house seemed to be singing louder that morning than they had before.

“Immediately, the Lord brought to mind 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?’” Oliver said emotionally. “I knew then that God had us. He was going to see us through, and he was going to provide for us in every way.”

Video of the panel discussion is available at uu.edu/200/legacy.

A YEAR OF **CELEBRATION**





UNION UNVEILS \$80 MILLION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Union University has launched a comprehensive fundraising campaign that will seek to raise \$80 million by the end of 2026 to fund two new buildings on campus, to boost student scholarships and to enhance academics.

“Union 200: Tradition. Truth. Transformation.” has already raised about \$38 million toward that goal through gifts that have been made and pledged. Founded in 1823, Union celebrated its bicentennial during the 2022-2023 academic year, and the “Union 200” campaign is an important part of that observance, according to Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver.

“For 200 years, Union University has been an institution committed to its mission of providing Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development in service to Church and society,” Oliver said. “Today, Union remains as resolute and devoted to its biblical foundation as ever.”

Oliver made the official announcement launching the capital campaign Sept. 24 prior to a David Crowder concert on the university campus as part of a bicentennial celebration kick-off event.

Union would not be where it is today without the faithful giving of supporters over the years, Oliver said, expressing his gratitude to those who have made financial contributions in many ways. He added that he believes God has great things in store for Union, despite challenges the institution is facing.

“We find ourselves in an increasingly secular, post-Christian society that disdains many of the beliefs and convictions that Union holds most dear,” he said. “Private Christian schools like Union are fighting for their very survival and are facing obstacles that loom larger than they ever have. The higher education environment has never been more competitive, and schools like Union must be equipped with the resources necessary to successfully navigate the cultural waters in which we sail.”

Catherine Kwasigroh, Union’s vice president for advancement, said the “Union 200” campaign is a way for the university to recognize God’s faithfulness to the institution over the past 200 years and dream about what the Lord will do in the days ahead.

“We want to dream big about what God can do through Union – making disciples, equipping students to serve, supporting churches and reflecting and proclaiming the glory of God to the world around us,” she said.

The campaign has three primary components: expanding facilities, boosting scholarships and enhancing academics. Union broke ground Sept. 9 on a new academic building on the Great Lawn that will house the McAfee School of Business and the departments of computer science and engineering. That facility is the first of two buildings that will be funded through the campaign.

The second building will be a freestanding chapel on the eastern edge of campus that will be clearly visible from the heavily-trafficked Highway 45 Bypass.

Regarding scholarships, the campaign will seek to grow the university’s endowment by \$20 million, which will be an increase of about 50 percent from its current amount. The largest portion of Union’s endowment is used to support student scholarships, and the endowment generates about \$1.5 million annually for that purpose.

The third component, enhancing academics, will seek to raise funds for program endowments and endowed chairs that will help Union recruit quality professors to teach, mentor and live in community with students.

“The success of Union over the years would not have been possible without the generosity of donors who believed in its mission and gave to support its work,” said Harry Smith, chairman of the campaign steering committee. “Today, as Union celebrates its past and looks forward to its future, I hope you will join those ranks.

“Your gift will bolster and strengthen an institution that has not changed from its biblical foundation,” Smith continued. “Your gift will help prepare a generation of students to make a difference in this world for Christ.”

Other steering committee members are Gary Taylor (vice chair), Bill Dement, Brooke Glover Emery, Judy Fletcher, Robyn Hari, Jeff Perkins, Lisa Rogers, Danny Siquefield and Sabrena Wilson.

More information about the campaign, including information on how to contribute, is available at uu.edu/union200.

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“WE ARE THE MOST ALIVE THAT WE’VE EVER BEEN”: A UNION ALUMNA AND UKRAINIAN NATIVE REFLECTS ON LIFE DURING WAR

PHOTOS AND STORY BY SUZANNE RHODES

February 2022

Hundreds of suitcases roll on the pavement, and it sounds like jets zooming past the window. The sky lost its color six days ago — leaving only an eerie gray haze in the air. The line of stagnant cars stretches for miles, each containing Ukrainian citizens desperate to flee from the violence that struck overnight.

Anna Slabetska, a 2021 Union University graduate and native Ukrainian, watches the families pass by her car window with their jet-like suitcases dragging behind them — believing it quicker to flee to the border by foot than by car. She sits in silence, listening in frozen anticipation, wondering if the Russian bombs will hit them next. She sees fathers playing with their children and husbands kissing their wives one last time before having to return to defend their country from the Russian invaders.

This is the second day Slabetska and her mom spend in their car, hoping tomorrow will be the day they finally reach the border to Poland. It was only six days ago when a single message reverberated through the Slabetska household like a chill running down their spines.

“Please wake up. War started. They are bombing Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Mykolayiv. I can’t reach Sasha, please call...”

At 6:57 a.m., the explosions reached Slabetska’s house. The disoriented memories feel like knees hitting the cold cellar floor, sirens blaring outside like a never-ending scream, the very ground beneath them shaking and lips fervently mouthing nearly silent whispers of the Lord’s Prayer.

When the Russian bombs ceased, Slabetska and her mom packed what they could into her car to become one of the over 7 million Ukrainian refugees who have fled the country since February 2022.

“We’ll be back in three days,” the women cried as they clung to Slabetska’s dad — unable to leave with his family due to the Ukrainian army draft restrictions. “The war will only last for three days.”





No one imagined that those days would be spent sitting in a car, trying to reach the border. Afraid of more bombings, the two women spent the night at a friend's house before getting up the next morning to continue their journey. For Slabetska and her mom, sleep that night was like a distant memory; rest was certainly unimaginable.

Slabetska's phone lit up to a text message from a dear friend. The text contained a screenshot of Union University's most recent Facebook post, which had nearly 800 reactions, 37 comments and over 90 shares.

"We're praying for 2021 Union graduate Anna Slabetska, a Ukrainian native and resident, her family and the entire Ukrainian nation," the post read. "May the Lord cause peace to prevail."

Slabetska turned to her mom and said, "We're going to be able to sleep tonight; we're being covered in prayer." She would later realize that moment was the tangible intercession of God's people right before her eyes.

The following morning, the women finally passed through the border into Poland, where they continued traveling until they reached the Czech Republic.

As winter slowly turned into spring, the hope of returning home stretched further and further away, and with it came time for Slabetska and her mom to officially declare to the Czech government their temporary protected status. Looking down at the mounds of paperwork, the Czech government official stamped the women's visas.

"You're now a war refugee here," he said handing the women back their documents.

Refugee. The word reverberated off the walls as the two women sat in silence. Slabetska could feel her mother's shoulders shaking as she stifled a silent cry, but the only thing Slabetska felt was vulnerability — realizing that her own home was no longer safe to return to.

October 2022

The downtown streets of Tuscaloosa, Ala., come alive with bustling weekend crowds. It's homecoming week at the University of Alabama, and people push past each other on the wide sidewalks with giddy excitement as they prepare for the football game.

A group of college girls hops from one boutique to the next hoping to find the perfect gameday outfit. Three men laugh and embrace each other as they reunite with some old college buddies at the local sports bar. A mom and dad treat their student and his roommate to lunch at one of the many steakhouses as a break from their usual cafeteria cuisine.

At the same time, Slabetska walks past them and pulls out her phone, checking the news to make sure Russia has not bombed her parents' home.

Slabetska moved to Tuscaloosa in August — six months after her home was attacked — to pursue a Master of Arts at the University of Alabama in teaching English to speakers of other languages. There is no handbook for how to live as a Ukrainian in America. There is certainly no handbook for how to be a graduate student when the worries of war fight for constant attention.

Despite this, Slabetska believes it is for a divine purpose that she is continuing her education. Prior to beginning her master's degree, Slabetska spent the first few months of the war living in the Czech Republic and teaching English through Zoom to students still living in Ukraine. During one of the online lessons, Slabetska heard a loud noise through the computer when the student stopped and said, "I think something is flying at us."

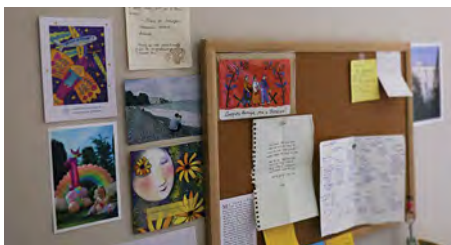
At the same time, Slabetska received a notification on her phone that an air raid had been detected in the student's city. As the noise got louder, the student began panicking, and Slabetska insisted that they hang up and resume the lesson another day.

The student looked up with pleading eyes through the computer and said, "No, I need you to stay with me."

That was the moment Slabetska realized her job meant much more than simply teaching English. By showing up every day with lessons, homework and writing exercises, she was actually providing care, companionship and a sense of normalcy to students who needed it most.

"If coming to Union and getting my degree was just for this one moment, I think it was worth it," Slabetska said.

Slabetska hopes to use her degrees to return to Ukraine and help provide quality, Christ-centered education — like the life-changing educational community she experienced at Union University. She believes that nurturing Ukrainians' love of learning through the lens of Christ's redemption can help care for and counsel people living with post-war trauma. While her heart remains back home in Ukraine, she knows that the Lord has nevertheless divinely orchestrated her to be in Tuscaloosa. So, even when the guilt of living away from her people weighs on her heart, she still chooses to invest in a



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community that could never imagine the kind of pain she has felt because she believes that life is most cherished when it is shared with others — a lesson she said she learned at Union University.

June 2022

Slabetska was raised in western Ukraine, a place of breathtaking natural beauty. Most of her childhood memories take place in the rolling green hills and luscious forests of her hometown. An old airfield sat just miles behind her house. She would climb over the tattered fence and play in the fields of overgrown wildflowers for hours before the old security guard chased her off.

After four months of living in the Czech Republic, Slabetska and her mom made the difficult decision to return to their home in western Ukraine — despite the progress of the Russian army.

Driving through her Ukrainian hometown, the lights of shops and street lanterns were replaced with silent darkness. Soldiers set up multiple checkpoints throughout the city to validate each passerby's documents. Stacked sandbags barricade the front of each home and business to block stray bullets.

As they reach the airfield, they see the land that was once full of vibrant wildlife now covered with dug-up trenches and steel blockades to prevent enemy tanks from breaching its borders. Black craters filled with old ash lie sporadically around the field — revealing the scars of the bombings it has endured.

"It was one of those moments I realized that everything was out of my control," Slabetska said. "Usually, when things in your life or family are out of control, you can still trust that at least your city and even your country is still in control, but now, I had to realize absolutely nothing was in my control."

Slabetska urged people to stay informed about the war and to read stories of the Ukrainian survivors — even when it is difficult to comprehend.

"I wanted to stay quiet because I thought to myself that there is nothing I could possibly say that could be worthy or even good enough," she said. "But, I think anybody can speak truth when they realize someone is actually, truly listening to them."

Personally, she said the Lord has used the friends and community she gained at Union University to help heal her heart during wartime.

"Seeing the pain they felt reminded me that the Lord restores healing to those who share their suffering with one another," Slabetska said. "I don't know how the war would have gone for me if I didn't have those friends, and I just praise the Lord for giving me that kind of treasure."

Even as evil presses forward through an unjust war, Slabetska believes the Lord is using the Russian invasion to work in the hearts of Ukrainians.

"I think [Ukrainians] have realized we are the most alive that we've ever been because our life is wanted by someone whom it doesn't belong to," Slabetska said. "It feels like we're awakened to realize the freedom of human life is God's gift."



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REDEFINING SUCCESS: CHELSEY KURZHAL’S JOURNEY FROM BIOLOGY MAJOR TO STAY-AT-HOME MOM

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TIM ELLSWORTH

Chelsey (Sauls) Kurzhal returned to campus this past September for Union’s bicentennial celebration with her husband Trevor and their two young children. Though she was excited to see some of her former professors, questions dogged her a bit as she thought about updating them on her life: “Are they disappointed in me? Do they think I’m just a failure?”

Those are questions Kurzhal herself has struggled with in recent years. A standout biology major at Union, she didn’t have a complete map for what her future career would look like, but she certainly had a general idea.

“I kind of assumed that I would just graduate and maybe go off and do some research or something,” she says. “Just go explore and have fun across the country doing things I was interested in and really build up my career. Kind of make a name for myself, I guess.”

Whether it would be working in wildlife

rehabilitation, researching raptors or whatever, Kurzhal had her heart set on being a free spirit and using her biology degree in fun and exciting ways.

Those plans changed quickly and drastically. Now a stay-at-home mom, Kurzhal is a long way from where she expected to be. And through the challenges and fears she’s had to overcome in the aftermath of that decision to forego a career, she couldn’t be happier.

“This life is the opposite of what I would’ve chosen for myself initially, and the Lord has been so strong in those weaknesses,” she says. “I’ve just seen his provision and his hand and his grace so much. That’s what gives me so much joy where I am now. He’s brought me through and he has taught me so much, and I’ve grown insanely in the last five years. Now I take so much joy in serving these kids, and I love the life that I’ve been given instead.”

A native of Mt. Juliet, Tenn., Kurzhal found Union as a high school student when she was looking for a small school with a strong wildlife biology program. She was considering other colleges as well, but a visit to the Union campus sold her.

“It was just so vastly different in the way people treated us, in the way people talked to us,” she says. “You could tell there were people who were really committed to loving Christ and loving people.”

The education she received at Union lived up to her expectations. She learned a great deal about the world, the beauty of it, nature and wildlife – the things she is most passionate about.

“I didn’t know that science could be approached from a Christian perspective and that science and creation and biblical ideas could be put together,” she says. “And going to Union and learning some of that from my professors was huge for me.”

Kurzhal was not a Christian when she came to Union, and it wasn’t until her junior year that the Lord saved her. About the same time, she began dating her future husband. Though not a Union student, Trevor had done the Rising Senior program at Union when he was in high school, and a mutual friend at Union played a role in introducing him to Chelsey.

Both of those developments contributed to Kurzhal rethinking her previous plans to pursue a career for herself.

“A lot of my desires started to shift,” she says. “I wasn’t really just wanting to live for me anymore. ... A lot of that change really came from choosing to submit to God’s word and to his leadership through

my husband, even though I really didn’t feel like it at the time.”

During their dating relationship, Trevor and Chelsey began discussing what their family situation would look like. They married in January 2018 after Chelsey’s December 2017 graduation and settled near Florence, Ala., where Trevor was a member at Grace Life Church in Muscle Shoals.

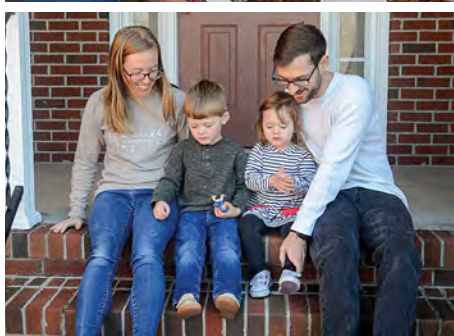
Malachi came along in December of 2018, with Eliza following in 2020. Though Chelsey had originally tried to get a job relating to biology after their wedding, nothing ever materialized. When Malachi was born, she followed their plans for her to quit working and stay at home full-time.

Despite the couple’s commitment for Chelsey to be a stay-at-home mom, it didn’t come without challenges. Financial pressures were an obvious external struggle, with Chelsey no longer bringing home any income. But from the beginning of their marriage, the Kurzhal’s had committed themselves to living on Trevor’s salary alone, so money Chelsey made could be set aside for savings. That practice helped.

“We don’t drive the fanciest cars,” she says. “We don’t have the fanciest house, just because we have higher priorities than that, and it’s not something that I regret.”

Trusting in the Lord to provide for their needs, they have seen him do that time and time again.

But for Chelsey, her decision to stay at home with her kids came with far greater internal struggles, even more than the financial strain. She was initially plagued by profound fears.



“I was scared to give up the things that I wanted and the life that I wanted to live,” Chelsey says. “That was a huge, huge struggle for me going into this life. And really, for the first two years of (Malachi’s) life, I just was riddled with this fear that maybe I had missed out on part of my life or fear that I had made a mistake, that I had wasted my degree. Fear of what people were thinking of me.”

She thought a lot about her professors and what they would think after they had invested so heavily in her biology education.

“I felt like my identity was so wrapped up in my education, in what I had been planning to do, in what I thought my life

would look like, and I didn’t want to let go of that,” she says. “I was terrified of letting go of that and feeling like I would just lose everything about myself if I let go of these plans that I had and these dreams that I thought I wanted and embraced this life instead.”

Through her fears and uncertainties, Kurzhal says she saw the Lord extend grace every time she needed it. She has learned to unwrap her identity from her education, from her planned career and from other worldly trappings “and to fully cling to Christ, and to fully cling to letting go of myself and loving God and loving my family, and now that is my joy.”

“I believe that the things that are meant to give us joy are loving God and loving people,” Chelsey says. “I’m finally getting to the point right now in my life where I’m seeing that joy. It’s really a joy to just make dinner for them or to just watch them grow and do the mundane things that were so hard before.”

It’s not like she has given up on her future dreams and goals, either. But she says she is content with letting them go for a while and doesn’t need those things

to survive.

She hopes one day to do wildlife rehabilitation at her home, and she’d like to do educational programs of various types for area schools. She is still using what she learned at Union in other ways, too. She has a python-breeding business that she runs out of her home, and she loves teaching her children about caring for their dog, cat, chickens and the eight acres of land on which they live.

“I get to pass on what I learned from Union about caring for the world that God has made because God has made it,” she says. “And seeing his beauty in all of these things, and seeing his order and learning to identify things outside. I can teach them those things and why they should care about it.”

She’s also applying her biology skills in helping to feed her family in a sustainable and self-sufficient way and caring for them when they are sick.

“I learned a lot about how to help wild animals when they’re sick, but now I get to do that with kids,” Chelsey says. “A lot of the things I loved about biology were the



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LOVING PEOPLE.”**

care-taking aspects of it and the nurturing. I never really connected that until I started doing it with the kids.”

Her fears about the disappointment of her professors proved to be unfounded. During her visit in September, she enjoyed catching up with them and introducing them to her family.

“They still care about me,” she says. “They had conversations with me and wanted to see me again, asked me to come back and visit sometime. There are relationships that were built (at Union) that are just lasting, and that’s been huge for me.”

She may not be working full-time in the biology field, but Kurzhal knows that when it comes to Union’s core values – excellence-driven, Christ-centered, people-focused and future-directed – there’s no better way for her to live those out than by being a stay-at-home mother.

“When I start to feel really discouraged or that everything I do here is just useless, or I get really irritated with them and frustrated, I can remember that what I’m doing here has such eternal significance – because I get to pour truth into these hearts that know nothing of it. They don’t know God. They don’t know Christ. And I get to give them that every day.”



UNION UNIVERSITY GRADUATES MAKING AN IMPACT FOR CHRIST ACROSS THE GLOBE

STORY BY TIM ELLSWORTH

For much of Union University's 200-year history, missions and church planting have been a central focus. Hundreds of Union graduates have left Jackson to take the gospel into all the world, serving both domestically and internationally.

"Missions has been in the DNA of Union for as long as I've known it, and that's why they continue to be one of the leading sending schools," says Andy Pettigrew, a 2000 Union graduate who now serves the International Mission Board as team leader for NextGen mobilization.

Pettigrew says that emphasis comes from Union's focus on the integration of faith and learning.

"You do not just study for the sake of studying and getting a degree," he says. "You study for the sake of advancing the gospel."

As Union has celebrated its bicentennial over the past year and remembered how God has faithfully provided for the institution, it has also looked to the future and how God can and will use Union in the days ahead. One thing is certain: Union's commitment to missions and church planting remains, and recent Union graduates are making an impact for Christ all over the world that will be felt for years to come.

Take David Kagaruki ('20) and his wife Tiffany ('21), for example. After serving as a pastoral intern

at Cornerstone Community Church in Jackson for the past couple of years, David is heading to Brooklyn, N.Y., where he will serve as a pastoral intern for the next year at Grace Baptist Church alongside fellow Union alumni Chris and Sarah Ortiz. Chris has been serving the church as pastor in an effort to revitalize the small congregation and provide a faithful gospel witness in the city.

"We're going to go by faith," Kagaruki says. "We know it's going to be expensive, but we know that the Lord will provide."

The work of the church in Brooklyn is vital, Kagaruki says, as churches all around the city have been closing over the past decade.

"It seems like the numbers of believers there are dwindling, in some sense," he says. "One of the challenges is just trying to be bold and courageous in the midst of a culture that's anti-church, anti-truth, anti-gospel, and really, it's going to be a battlefield."

Other recent Union alumni are serving or have served as missionaries and journeymen with the IMB in places like Taiwan, West Africa and Turkey.



TO READ MORE OF THEIR STORIES
visit uu.edu/unionite or
scan the QR code.



David, Tiffany and Isaiah Kagaruki

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MERITORIOUS 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. Complete biographies are available at uu.edu/alumni/awards/2022.



Scan the code to make a nomination or visit uu.edu/alumni/awards

ALUMNUS OF **THE YEAR**

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

JOHN ADAMS ('63)

John Adams graduated from Union University with a Bachelor of Arts in religion. He has earned Master of Divinity and Doctor of Divinity degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as vice president for religious affairs and professor of practical Christian ministries at Union University from 1982 to 1999. While at Union, he implemented several notable programs, including the missionary-in-residence program and a lunch and learn program for senior adults that is now the annual Senior Adult Extravaganza.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG **ALUMNI**

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

JOSHUA B. CLARKE ('07, '11, '16)

Josh Clarke is a three-time graduate of Union University, earning a Doctor of Education as his last degree in 2016. Currently, Josh serves on the executive leadership team of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Vestavia Hills, Ala., as the missions pastor. In this role, Josh is leading efforts to help equip, mobilize, and send God's people at Shades Mountain to fulfill the Great Commission in their everyday lives, whether that is in inner city Birmingham or on the other side of the globe.

KATIE MCCOY ('07)

Katie McCoy serves as director of women's ministry at Texas Baptists. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree in systematic theology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas where she served on faculty for five years. Katie's research includes the patterns of justice for women in Old Testament laws as well as the intersection of theology, gender and women's studies.

DREW YATES ('05, '10)

Drew is a Jackson native and works at FirstBank as a senior relationship manager. He was recognized as one of Jackson's Finest Young Professionals in 2013 by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and was part of the Forty under 40 Class of 2015. Drew is a Jackson Chamber of Commerce emissary, a 2010 graduate of Leadership Jackson, and is a 1999 graduate of Leadership University. Drew has also served as president of Sigma Alpha Epsilon's Tennessee Eta alumni chapter.

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

ASHLEY BLAIR ('94)

Ashley Fitch Blair is chair of the communication arts department at Union University where she coordinates the public relations major and serves as the faculty adviser for the Public Relations Student Society of America, Bulldog Communication Group, Alpha Psi Omega and Blank Slate Improv. She is chair of Union's Faculty Development Committee, an Edelman PR Fellow and an active member of the National Communication Association.

DISTINGUISHED **SERVICE**

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

TONY WAMBLE

Tony Wamble is a 1978 graduate of Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. After completing his studies at Auburn, he returned home and opened a solo practice in Henderson, Tenn. The final 10 years of his practice career was spent in a specialty practice he developed in south Jackson. He now serves as laboratory specialist, director for anatomical services and director for plastination at Union.

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

GARY A. TAYLOR

Gary Taylor is the president of Gary A. Taylor Investment Company in Jackson, Tenn., and has developed approximately 3,000,000 square feet of commercial retail, office, hotel, banking and restaurant space in his career. He has received numerous honors and awards, including the Jackson Exchange Club Man of the Year in 2007, and has served on numerous boards, including Union University's Board of Trustees. Union awarded him with an honorary Doctor of Humanities in 2001.

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

KAREN MCWHERTER ('81)

Karen graduated from Union University with a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science. She recently retired from Union after a 40-year career in the IT department. She was named Staff Member of the Year for 1998-1999 and elected to the Union University Sports Hall of Fame in 2019. She was also named to the IT Hall of Fame in 2021.

G.M. SAVAGE **LEGACY**ROBERT E. CRAIG **SERVICE**LEST WE **FORGET**

UNION FAMILY **LEGACY**

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.

THE PHIL JETT FAMILY

Born in Jackson, Michigan, in 1936, Philip Jett moved to McCracken County, Ky., at the age of 6 and grew up there until called to the ministry at the age of 27. He graduated from Union University in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and served at several churches before becoming pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson in 1983.

Phil married the late Marilyn Ruley in February of 1957 and had three children, David Jett, Steven Jett, and Susan (Jett) Larson. All three of Phil's children graduated from Union, and two met their spouses at Union. Two of Phil's grandchildren have graduated from Union and married Union graduates, and one grandson is a current Union student.

Presented to a Union University graduate recognizing significant contributions in areas of profession.

KIMBERLY HOLLAND ('99, '01)

Healthcare

Kimberly Holland is the director of nursing at The Jackson Clinic in Jackson, Tenn. Prior to her position at The Jackson Clinic, Kimberly taught nursing at Jackson State Community College and was a nurse education instructor at the Jackson-Madison County General Hospital. She also has experience as a registered nurse at JMCCH.

CODY CURTIS ('09)

Humanities

Cody Curtis is a composer, educator and performer who serves as assistant professor of music theory and composition at Union. He also oversees and writes music for Psallos. He has engineered and produced six albums and is the author of the fantasy-adventure novel *The New and Better Way*.

DISTINGUISHED **ACHIEVEMENT**

Presented to a Union University graduate recognizing significant contributions in areas of profession.

STEPHEN MOORE ('84)

Business

Stephen Moore founded his own independent financial planning firm, Financial Strategies Group in Franklin, Tenn., in 1997. He is a member of Kingdom Advisors, an organization that helps Christian advisors have a process to deliver biblical advice to their clients, and he has earned the Certified Kingdom Advisor designation.

TOMMY SADLER ('76)

Athletics

Tommy Sadler has spent the last 36 years working at Union University, his alma mater. After starting at Union in the fund raising and media relations office, he transitioned to a newly created position as the associate director of athletics. He worked in that role for 15 years before becoming director of athletics in 2008, a position from which he recently retired.

CHRIS MATHEWS ('95)

Education

Christopher W. Mathews serves as the vice president of academic affairs at Crown College in St. Bonifacius, Minn. Prior to his role at Crown, Dr. Mathews was dean of the College of Fine Arts at Oklahoma Baptist University, chair of the Department of Music at Union University and director of choral activities at Clemson University.

FELIPE ARAÚJO ('12)

Not-for-Profit

Felipe Araujo came to Union to play soccer and received his Master of Business Administration degree. After Union, Felipe returned to Brazil and soon joined Minas, one of the biggest sports clubs in the country, as a sports manager. He co-founded Next Academy, which became the biggest chain of soccer academies in Latin America.

DISTINGUISHED **ACHIEVEMENT**

DISTINGUISHED **ACHIEVEMENT**



Presented to a Union University graduate recognizing significant contributions in areas of profession.

TRENT BULLOCK ('88)

Church Ministry

Originally from Gleason, Tenn., Trent Bullock is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Paris, Tenn., where he has served since 2008. He is a member of Union's Board of Trustees and has served in various denominational leadership positions.



BRAD DOUGLASS ('86)

Arts/Media

Originally from Brownsville, Tenn., Brad Douglass has worked at WBBJ in Jackson since 1994, first as weekend weather anchor and now as anchor for 7 Eyewitness News. He has helped co-host many telethons for the West Tennessee Cerebral Palsy Center, The Circles of Hope and the Children's Miracle Network.



KERSTIN URE ('04)

Research/Sciences

Kerstin Ure serves as the manager of the University of Ottawa Behaviour and Physiology Core in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The Core facility provides state-of-the-art equipment and protocols for behavioral testing of mouse and rat models of human disease. Her work has been published in several scientific publications.

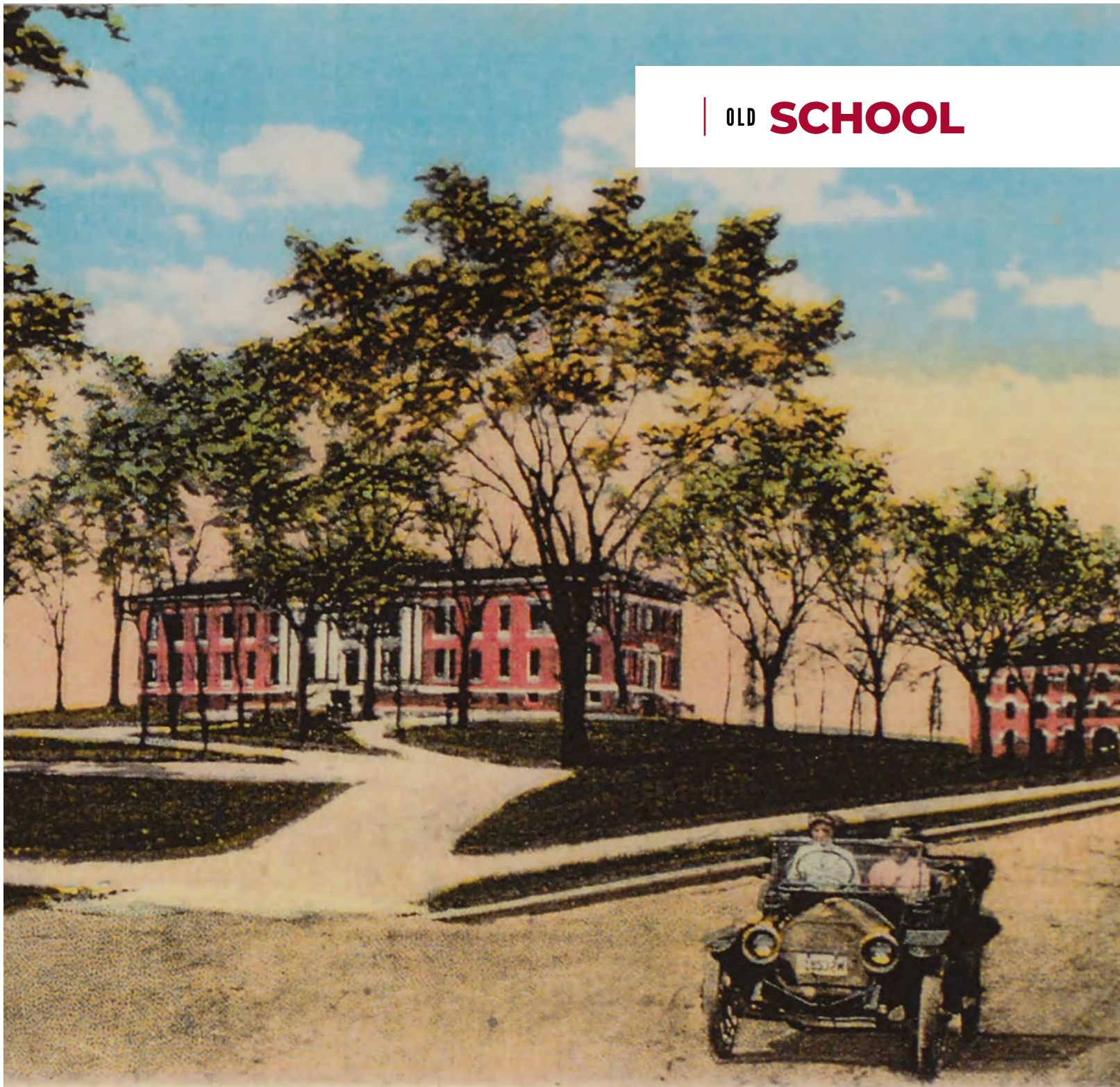


OLIVIA ABERNATHY ('11, '12)

Government/Public Service.

A licensed social worker, Olivia Abernathy is the director of early education initiatives at the United Way of West Tennessee. She serves as the chair of the Jackson Equity Project Education Committee and was recently elected as a commissioner to the Madison County Commission.

OLD **SCHOOL**



UNION UNIVERSITY - JACKSON, TENNESSEE - 1920

THE 1960s

KATHY DAWS GARDNER ('68)
moved to Memphis, Tenn., from Naples, Fla., to be nearer to her son and his family. Her new book, *Alex and Amirah: From Darkness into Light*, was published in January.

THE 1970s



JAMES D. BREWER ('72)
released *Blood on the Crossties: The Florida Chautauqua Murders*, the first in his new Victorian-era Choctaw Parker historical mystery

series. Brewer lives in central Florida where he teaches composition and rhetoric at Polk State College.

BETTY (HARTSFIELD) JACKSON ('75)
retired in 2020 after 47 years as a teacher and administrator in the Dyer County, Tenn., school district

RAY CLARK ('78)
retired after 41 years teaching computer and advanced math at Grace Christian School in Hayti, Mo., and in Haywood County, Tenn. He lives in Braggadocio, Mo.

CINDY (BAKER) HATCH ('79)
retired from the Henderson County School System in Tennessee after more than 35 years of service.

The **UNIONITE** welcomes news from alumni. Please include contact information with your submission.

✉ **UNIONITE**
1050 Union University Dr.
Jackson, TN 38305

@ **unionite@uu.edu**

🌐 **uu.edu/unionite**

THE 1980s



DAVID SCHANUEL ('83)
was named the U.S. national director for Global Discipleship Initiative. GDI trains, coaches and inspires pastors and Christian leaders to establish indigenous, multiplying and disciple-making movements, both nationally and internationally.

LESLIE THOMAS STRONG ('83)
was promoted to the position of vice president of spiritual formation and student life at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College. He joined the NOBTS faculty in 1993 and became dean of Leavell College in 1999.



VERN HAMILTON ('88)
retired after working for more than 32 years at the state of Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration.

TAMMY THOMPSON HOLLAND ('88)
works at the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin in the Texas System of Care and provides leadership in school mental health services. She retired from the state of Texas after a 25-year career in public service. She and her husband Bill have five children and three grandchildren and live in Austin, Texas.

THE 1990s

ANGIE (BROWN) ELKINS ('93)
launched her podcast, Chatalogie, in 2017. The podcast is now part of the Ivey Media Podcast network.

CHARLIE WORTHY ('94)
celebrated 20 years of service with the International Mission Board and is currently serving with mobilization for the IMB's European affinity group.

SUSAN (POKORNY) JOHNSON ('97)
began a private doula business in 2020 after years of experience as an obstetrical registered nurse. She enjoys helping new moms and dads throughout their journey into parenthood.

MARION LEE SANDERS ('94)
was presented with the 2022 Laureate Award by the Iowa chapter of the American College of Physicians. Laureate Awards are given annually by the chapter as a mark of honor and recognition for achievement of excellence in medicine in the state of Iowa. Sanders is an associate professor of internal medicine and nephrology at the University of Iowa and the Iowa City Veteran Affairs Health Care System.

THE 2000s

KATHY LOFTON ('00)
has been named a fellow for the American Connection Corps with Lead for America, a fellowship program focused on bridging the digital divide. She was assigned as a project leader in Memphis, Tenn.



BETHANY CLARK ('01)
teaches science at Andrews Middle School in Andrews, N.C., where her husband Shawn serves on staff at Snowbird Outfitters and as an elder at Red Oak Church. They have five boys.

BOOGIE BUTLER ('02)
was called as pastor of 12 Oaks Baptist Church in Paducah, Ky.



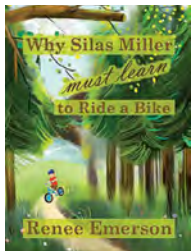
MELISSA ALEXANDER ('06),
senior vice president with Foundry Commercial in Nashville, Tenn., was recognized by GlobeSt. as a 2022 Influencer in Industrial Real Estate.

KRISTEN NICOLE (SAYRES) LOWRY ('06)
recently accepted a role with Send Relief as an orphans and vulnerable children consultant. She and her husband Daniel have three children and foster two boys. She has served as co-executive director of Shelter Yetu in Naivasha, Kenya, since 2014.



AMY LALLY DEMENT ('07)
completed her second master's degree, a Master of Science in Accounting, from Southern Methodist University.

RENEE (ROBERSON) EMERSON ('08)
recently published her first middle grade novel, *Why Silas Miller Must Learn to Ride a Bike* (Winter Goose Publishing, 2022). She also has a new poetry chapbook, *The Commonplace Misfortunes of Everyday Plants*, published in January 2023 through Belle Point Press.



ROBERT SPARKS ('08, '10)
was named the 2022 Jackson-Madison County School System Teacher of the Year and was selected by the Tennessee Department of Education as a 2022 Tennessee Teacher of the Year West Grand Division Finalist.



WILLIAM NICHOLAS BROWN ('08)
began serving as the preaching elder of Christ Community Church in Jackson, Tenn. He graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2022 with a Master of Divinity degree and plans to begin his doctorate in the fall of 2023.

RENITA (FORBES) PERRY ('02, '12)
was named chief of innovation for Metro Nashville Public Schools, a position that oversees the district's priority schools. She previously served as executive director for elementary schools in the division.

THE 2010s

TAMARA IRVING ('10)
completed her Master of Business Administration degree from Strayer University.



BARBARA JACKSON SAGO ('11)
founded a women's ministry initiative, You Are My Sister, that focuses on empowering women who have been broken and battered by life to walk in purpose and destiny.

ERIN EATON ('10)
was promoted to assistant executive director for academic and student affairs at the Mississippi Community College Board.

THE **2010s** CONTINUED



ALAN H. TURNER II ('13) was named president and CEO for Sioux Empire United Way in South Dakota.

CHARLES WILLIAM MILLER III ('13, '17)

self-published his first collection of poetry, *The Empty Theater*.



TIMOTHY PATRICK MCGRATH ('13)

is a special education teacher at Fulton High School in Knoxville, Tenn.

CHARLES TROY ROSS ('13)

was promoted to a position as chief operating officer for ACRT Services in Stow, Ohio.



ROXANNE MCMURRAY ('13)

was selected as the winner of the American Nurses Association 2023 “nurse-led team” Innovation Award. She received the award for a device she invented, the McMurray Enhanced Airway.



STEPHANIE TRAYLOR ('15)

was named marketing and research strategist for Younger Associates in Jackson, Tenn. She previously served at a local real estate firm where she created content for social media and compiled and analyzed area housing market statistics.



JODY ALAN KILBURN ('15)

is lead church planter for Real Life Church in Hollister, Mo. He previously served as associational mission strategist for Christian County Baptist Association in Hopkinsville, Ky., and as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodlawn, Tenn.



MARGARET ANN BANKS ('15)

owns and operates Direct Care Counseling, a mental health private practice in Memphis, Tenn.



RACHEL YOUNGER ('16)

graduated from the University of Memphis with her Ph.D. in psychology after completing her master's degree there. She is currently working at the Children's Center Utah as a postdoctoral psychology resident where she is providing assessment and therapeutic services to children and their families who have experienced adverse life events. She is also assisting in planting a local church in the Rose Park neighborhood of Salt Lake City.



ELVIS NASH BRANDON ('17)

was named associate dean of the College of Professional Studies for Carson-Newman University.

SHELBY HIGH ('17)

is playing professional soccer in Portugal and has played professionally in Chile, Sweden and Spain since graduating from Union.

ANSLEY KATZ ('18)

completed a Master of Music Technology degree from Southern Utah University.

JOSIAH MCGEE ('19)

was recently promoted to director of education for Passages, an organization that takes Christian students on trips to Israel.

THE **2020s**



HALEY HATHCOCK ('19)

graduated from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, Tenn., with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. She was awarded the DPT

Outstanding Student Award for the class of 2022 by the faculty. She resides in Jackson, Tenn., and is a full-time physical therapist for Sports Plus AquaTherapies.

MERIDETH JONES ('20)

lives in Hawaii with her husband, who serves in the U.S. Navy. She works for WinnCompanies, a privatized property manager for military housing, and has been promoted three times in two years.

AMELIA RACHEL (KANGAS) JOHNSON ('20)

works as a labor and delivery nurse in Kansas City, Mo.

SHAWNA KEYES ('21)

has been a counselor at Lyndon B. Johnson Job Corps in Franklin, N.C., since October 2021.

BRITNEY PEIRSON ('22)

is a staff auditor at Thompson Greenspon in Fairfax, Va.

THE **MARRIAGES**



ABIGAIL (JOHNSON) REFF ('20)

married Isaac Reff on Sept. 3, 2022. She is an admissions counselor at Boyce College in Louisville, Ky., and he is a full-time student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and part-time water scientist at Louisville Water Co.

THE **BIRTHS**



Savannah Jean Turner was born to Ty and **JULIE (DODSON) TURNER ('02)** on May 6, 2022. She joins sister Charlotte and brother Austin.



William James Creel was born to **CALEB ('14) AND MOLLIE (TRANUM) CREEL ('14)** on Sept. 17, 2022.



Emmaline Jewell Wilcox was born to **ALLEN BRIAN WILCOX III ('12) AND RACHEL (CURTIS) WILCOX ('12, '13)** on March 11, 2022.



ANDREW ('16) and Mary Grace **PARKS** welcomed their first child, Elijah Andrew Parks, on Sept. 27, 2021.



Davis Alan English was born to **MASON ('15, '19) AND ALLIE DURHAM ENGLISH ('14, '19)** on Nov. 4, 2022.

IN **MEMORIAM**

THOMAS SCOTT MONCRIEF ('51)

of Cleveland, Tenn., died Feb. 24, 2022, at age 92. He was a Southern Baptist regional director of missions in Indianapolis, Ind., in the 1960s and 1970s, director of missions of the Southern New England and Western Connecticut Baptist Association in the 1970s and 1980s and the senior adult pastor and outreach pastor at First Baptist Church in Cleveland.

BILLY BELEW ('53)

at the age of 90, died on July 20, 2022. He practiced dentistry for 12 years before serving as a beloved educator, coach and principal for over 25 years. In 2003, he was inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame.

ELIZABETH “BETTYE” (PATTON) ALEXANDER ('56)

of Jackson, Tenn., died on August 21, 2022, at the age of 92. She was a beloved elementary school and children's Sunday School teacher as well a church musician. She is survived by her husband of 71 years, three children, six grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

CARL LONG ('57)

died Nov. 17, 2022, at age 91. He played football at Union and served as teacher, coach and administrator at several schools in Jackson and West Tennessee.

IN MEMORIAM CONTINUED

DOROTHY SIMPSON MCCOMMON ('51)
died July 26, 2022, at age 91. She was a social worker for several years in Houston County, Tenn., and retired after serving as the student tutor/coordinator with the Center for Adult Reading and Enrichment.




SHELBY LYNN ('59)
died Feb. 22, 2021, in Springfield, Ill. She was married for 65 years to Wilton Lynn ('59), who was captain of the Union basketball team and crowned Shelby as Union's basketball queen in 1959.

ANITA WEAVER ARMSTRONG ('60)
died on July 11, 2022, at age 84. She is survived by her husband, three children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandson.

ROBERT "BOB" CAPRA, JR. ('65)
passed away on Aug. 2, 2021, in Memphis, Tenn., at age 78. For more than 50 years, he spread joy through music, designing and maintaining church organs across the southern United States.

MARY ATWOOD CEPPARULO ('67)
of Jackson, Tenn., died on July 13, 2022, at age 77. She was an active member of Calvary Baptist Church, and she retired from the Eye Clinic, PC. She helped establish the local Multiple Sclerosis Society and won numerous awards from the University of Memphis and Union University for her service.



CHARLES DAVID TAYLOR ('68)
died Sept. 21, 2022, in Charleston, S.C., at age 76. He served as athletic director at Radford University from 1974-1996.



WILLIAM GEORGE "BILL" NETTLES,
professor emeritus at Union, died at his Jackson, Tenn., home June 1, 2022, at age 68.

A native of Brandon, Miss., Nettles served in the U.S. Navy and taught physics at Mississippi College for 23 years before coming to Union for 16 years. He had many interests, including growing roses, woodworking, playing croquet, riding his motorcycle, working on classic cars and playing his bass guitar.

He was a deacon at Cornerstone Community Church in Jackson, where he also led worship with the praise band.

He is survived by Alice, his wife of 46 years; daughter, Claire Gilliam (David) of Clinton, Miss.; son, Philip Nettles (Kenna) of Madison, Miss.; siblings, Jo Ellen Austin (Tony), Tom Nettles (Margaret) and Sylvia Dickson (Tom); and six grandchildren.

CHERYL ANN LOVETT ('69)
died June 5, 2022, at her home in Jackson, Tenn., at age 74. She was a teacher for 34 years in the Jackson-Madison County School System.

JIMMY VON BEDWELL ('69)
died on Oct. 12, 2022, at age 75. Known by most people as "Brother Jimmy," he served as a faithful pastor in West Tennessee for 57 years.

MARTHA ANNE DUCK ('69)
died on Oct. 25, 2022, in Booneville, Miss., at age 83. She retired after teaching for 33 years in the Shelby County School System.

STEVEN GUY WARD ('71)
of Medina, Tenn., died Dec. 1, 2022, at age 76.

WANDA OWENS ('71)
died Feb. 18, 2021, at age 76.

OUIDA ANNE WEST GREER ('71)
died Aug. 28, 2022, at age 73. She taught school for 40 years, spending the last 25 years at the Liberty Elementary School in Franklin (Tenn.) Special School District.

WILLIAM "RON" HOSSE ('72)
passed away on Jan. 14, 2022, at age 73. He was an educator for over 50 years, serving at Smyrna High School and the State of Tennessee Board of Education. He was a longtime member of First Baptist Church in Gallatin, Tenn.

WILLIAM H. BROCK ('74)
of Lewisburg, Tenn., died Dec. 4, 2021.

LARRY JOE LEATHERS ('76)
died June 11, 2022, at age 75 in Jackson, Tenn. He worked at K-Mart for 32 years, retiring in 2011 as the sporting goods manager.

STEVE CARSON ('78)
died on his 70th birthday, April 8, 2022, at his home in Chicago, Ill. He was a musician, building manager and neighbor who gave generously of his talents to others.

PATRICK CRAIG PATEY ('79)
died Dec. 5, 2021, at age 64. He served in fundraising and public relations for many years with the Boy Scouts of America and the Salvation Army.

GENEVA HALL FALL ('82)
of Rutherfordton, N.C., died on Oct. 6, 2021, at age 80. She spent decades working as a nurse at Decatur County Hospital and was a member of St. Regina Catholic Church.

ALBERT "DEWAYNE" KING ('88)
of Toone, Tenn., died June 6, 2022, at age 56. He owned and operated Medistat respiratory equipment supply for years.

JUDY BRYANT KING ('99)
died Feb. 14, 2021, in Memphis, Tenn., at age 68. She was retired as a charge nurse with Lakeside Behavioral Health System.

SHELVIE JEAN HUTCHERSON ('03)
died on April 2, 2021, at age 83. She spent most of her life serving others as a waitress and caretaker of the disabled. She was a longtime member of New Beginnings Missionary Baptist Church and loved telling others about her Lord and Savior.



REBA YOUNG COTTON, of Greenfield, Tenn., died on Nov. 2, 2022, at age 84. She retired from Union University and loved to spend her time traveling, camping and meeting new friends with her husband of 54 years.



W. ELZIE DANLEY SR. died on July 24, 2022, at age 88. He served as a trustee for Union University and spent 42 years in education. He earned his Ph.D. in education at the University of Mississippi and later earned a Doctor of Ministry to serve in the church after his retirement.

AUDREAN "JERRICE" BOND ('05)
at the age of 46, died on June 29, 2022, in Memphis, Tenn. She earned numerous degrees, including a Doctor of Education, and she served in Memphis City Schools for nearly 12 years.

JOHN WESLEY HUDSON ('05)
died on Sept. 27, 2022, at age 58, after a multi-year battle with cancer. He owned and managed Superior Tint and Electronic for over 35 years, and he was an avid runner. He was a member of First United Methodist Church in Jackson, Tenn.

SHERRIE LUSHONE FULLER ('07)
passed away on Nov. 3, 2022, at age 47. She spent more than 10 years teaching in the Fayette County School System. She battled severe health issues throughout most of her life, but she continuously showed her courage by facing those challenges with a smile.

ALUMNI EVENTS **SAVE THE DATE**

FAMILY WEEKEND - SEPT. 29-30

Join your Union family as we celebrate another year at Union. Whether you come for Buster's 5K Dash or enjoy our student booths and rides for the kids, there is something fun for everyone.
uu.edu/events/familyweekend

SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET - OCT. 24

To stay up to date with current information regarding this event, visit the link below.
uu.edu/events/scholarshipbanquet

MERITORIOUS ALUMNI AWARDS - NOV. 3

Come to campus and celebrate our 2023 award winners. If you would like to nominate an alumni award recipient, you may do so at the link below.
uu.edu/alumni/awards

TBC-ALUMNI AND FRIENDS DINNER - NOV. 14

Spend the evening catching up with fellow Bulldogs and friends of Union at our Alumni & Friends dinner during the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Chattanooga, Tenn.
uu.edu/alumni/chattanooga



UNION UNIVERSITY INDUCTS FIRST MEMBERS INTO 1823 SOCIETY

Union University inducted the UU Class of 1973 into the 1823 Society — a new Union University initiative for all alumni who have celebrated a 50-year reunion. Union's president, Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver, inducted the first class into the society during a special April 15 ceremony.

The goal of the 1823 Society is to give UU alumni the opportunity to connect with their Union community beyond their 50-year graduation reunion. All Union University alumni who graduated prior to 1973 are grandfathered into the 1823 Society and able to participate in special alumni events, initiatives and celebrations.

Each year the class celebrating its 50-year reunion will be inducted into the society.

Keaghan Sheridan, Union's director of alumni relations, said she hopes the 1823 Society will give seasoned UU alumni chances to connect to the university, to pour into current students and faculty and to celebrate fellow Union University alumni.

"The 1823 Society gives us the chance to remember these alumni and to celebrate the work they have accomplished since graduating from Union," Sheridan said. "We're aware there is so much wisdom that these alumni carry, and it would be such a loss to the university if we missed out on that gift to connect with our Union University alumni."

Contact Keaghan Sheridan at ksheridan@uu.edu if interested in joining Union University's 1823 Society.



UNION 200
TRADITION. TRUTH. TRANSFORMATION.
THE BICENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN



**FOR 200 YEARS, GOD HAS RAISED UP
FRIENDS OF UNION UNIVERSITY.**

Today, we are asking Him to do so again – and we are asking you to join with us in this effort.

Visit uu.edu/union200 to learn more or scan the code above to give.



UNION
UNIVERSITY

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



FINAL **FRAME**

Hyran Barefoot, David Dockery and Dub Oliver participate in a special panel discussion at the Legacy Luncheon, part of Union's bicentennial kick-off.

PHOTO BY SUZANNE RHODES ('21)

