



Three Union alumni take on leadership roles at Southern Baptist Convention

Members of the SBC Pastors' Conference elected Union University alumnus Steve Gaines as the group's president during their annual meeting at the Indianapolis Convention Center June 13.

Gaines serves as pastor of First Baptist Church in Gardendale, Ala. He is a 1979 graduate of Union and formerly served as pastor of West Jackson Baptist Church.

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., nominated Gaines, calling him one who has "the mind of a scholar and the heart of a personal soul-winner."

Gaines also delivered the convention sermon June 16, calling Southern Baptists to be wall builders as modeled by Nehemiah of the Old Testament. "America is in desperate need of some spiritual wall builders," Gaines said. "Our spiritual walls in America have crumbled because as a whole we have turned our backs



on the Lord Jesus Christ.... Southern Baptists, God is calling us to be spiritual wall builders."

He reminded pastors that America's spiritual walls can only be rebuilt through prayer. "If you're a Baptist pastor, I want to suggest to you that you need to make prayer the priority of your life and preaching the priority of your ministry.... We are not prepared to stand up and speak for God until we have first knelt down and spoken with God. Where prayer focuses, God's power falls."

President David S. Dockery expressed appreciation for the message, "Steve Gaines' powerful words delivered at this year's annual convention of the SBC were challenging, timely, bold and prophetic," he said.

Gaines' wife, Donna Gaines, was the 2004 president of the Ministers' Wives Conference of the SBC. Donna Gaines is an alumna of the Union class of 1980.

Union University's first lady, Lanese Dockery, who served as the president of the Ministers' Wives Fellowship in 1999, said

"Donna Gaines' hard work over the past year as president of the ministers' wives fellowship was evident to all. The program was uplifting and encouraging for all who were present at this year's luncheon. We thank God for Donna's marvelous leadership."

Jamie Parker, minister of worship at Gardendale's First Baptist Church and a 1992 Union graduate, served as worship leader during the morning session on June 16. Along with leading the congregation in praise and worship, Parker directed a concert by the choir and orchestra of First Baptist Church, Gardendale, Ala.

Dockery said, "Jamie Parker's musical and leadership abilities ushered the entire Convention congregation into heartfelt worship and praise of our great God. We thank God for Jamie, for his giftedness, and his faithfulness. Union is blessed to name him as an alumnus of this institution." @



LifeWay president is first recipient for first M.E. Dodd Denominational Service Award

LifeWay Christian Resources President James T. Draper was honored as the first recipient of the Union University M.E. Dodd Denominational Service Award in a special presentation by the university during the Southern Baptist Convention meeting this year in Indianapolis. Union President David S. Dockery presented the award that was established last December by Union's board of trustees.

"When we think of statesmen among us, Dr. Draper's name rises to the top," said Dockery. "As president of LifeWay for the past decade, he has exemplified the spirit of the Cooperative Program for our entire convention, in the same way he did in his days as pastor and local church leader."

The Union University M. E. Dodd Denominational Service Award was established to recognize service and leadership in behalf of Tennessee Baptists and Southern Baptists and is awarded annually by vote of Union's board of trustees. The award is named in honor of M. E. Dodd, who served as president of the

SBC, president of the SBC pastors conference and shaped today's Cooperative Program.

"This is a very humbling, very special privilege," Draper said, addressing the university's

gathering of alumni and friends after receiving the award. "We appreciate and believe in Union University and the tremendous recognition this great university has all over the country." @



INDIANAPOLIS



Booksigning at the SBC

Director of visual communications Jim Veneman (right) and former director of news and media relations Sara Horn (now with LifeWay) sign their new book entitled *A Greater Freedom* at the Lifeway booth. The book features photos by Veneman and stories told by Horn.



Alums gather at the Convention

Gary Williams, associate vice president for advancement and executive director for alumni services, welcomes more than 200 attendees who enjoyed ice cream sundaes, coffee, tea and fellowship at the annual Alumni and Friends Dessert Reception held June 15 in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, Ind.