



Dedication DAY

Union celebrates the
opening of \$20 million
WHITE HALL

Hailing the day as one of the most significant in Union University history and thanking God for his blessings, Union University President David S. Dockery and other university leaders dedicated White Hall during a May 11 ceremony.

“It is a hallelujah day on the campus of Union University,” Dockery told a crowd of about 700 who gathered on the steps of Union’s new science building for the dedication ceremony. “We have looked forward to this day for many years. We have dreamed

and prayed and worked, and today is the culmination of that, and we give thanks to our great God.”

The building is named in honor of Roy L. White of Memphis, the lead donor for the project.

“I really think God laid that on my heart,” White said following the ceremony about his decision to give the lead gift for the building. “Before I really got involved with Union, I started walking through the halls of Union and talking to students. I would listen, and a lot of the things students would talk about at Union University were not discussed at public institutions.”

continued on page 24 >



WHITE HALL by the NUMBERS



- \$20 million to build White Hall
- \$4.2 million for a highly sophisticated HVAC system that re-circulates air every eight minutes
- 145,000 man-hours to complete construction
- 63,345 square feet
- 47,085 square feet increase over current science allocation
- \$40,000 washer for laboratory glass ware
- 1,400 drawers of laboratory equipment
- 750 gallon fresh water aquarium
- 66 miles of electrical wiring
- 42 offices and 3 conference rooms
- 23 miles of cabling installed by Union's network support department
- 20 teaching laboratories including a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) facility
- 7 hospital bed bays
- 6 human patient simulators
- 3 dedicated undergraduate student research suites
- 1 operating room

continued from page 21

White said he realized how important education was to the Union students, and added that God prompted him to get involved at Union. He has served on the board of trustees for about 10 years now.

One of the things White is most excited about is what White Hall will mean in the future – not only for West Tennessee, but for the world.

“The students who go through this building, I think will touch mankind throughout the whole world,” White said. “I think God has got his hand on Union University. I am just delighted and privileged to be a part of it.”

Jill Konkol, a senior biology major and chemistry minor, led in a time of praise and adoration during the ceremony. Konkol has accepted a full scholarship to study medicine at Wake Forest University.

“We are impressed when scientists develop instruments so powerful they can pick up the sound of galaxies in collision 270 million light years away,” Konkol said. “We are amazed to see a laser beam cut through a diamond as if it were paper. We marvel at the quiet power of a few drops of water which, when frozen, can tear apart a brass valve that half a dozen men cannot turn. But we are completely in awe when we contemplate the greatness and the majesty of one God in three persons.”

Union trustees in December 1997 approved a campus master plan that set in motion the events leading to White Hall’s construction. Two years later, Union chemistry professor Charles Baldwin and biology professor Elsie Smith, in a conversation with Dockery, confirmed that the university should build a new science facility if at all possible, Dockery said.

“At that time the Lord brought Roy White our way,” Dockery said. “Roy White was God’s instrument to help chart the course for this marvelous facility.”

Inside White Hall

Opening the doors to White Hall is like uncovering a promise of future treasures.

The main entry hall, with its warm, red oak paneled walls, leads to more than 63-thousand square feet of classroom, laboratory and office space. Biology, chemistry and nurs-



ing each occupy entire floors dedicated to their respective disciplines.

These departments are moving into 42 offices, seven lecture halls, three conference rooms, a Nuclear

Magnetic Resonance facility, three undergraduate student research suites, and 20 teaching laboratories.

The student lab space is crucial because research is required of all undergraduate science majors at Union. At most schools, projects of this type are usually reserved for graduate school. Now Union students will have the best facilities and advanced learning opportunities.

“The biology department anticipates a continued offering of excellent classroom and laboratory experiences in greatly updated facilities, said Mark Bolyard, biology department chairman. “White Hall allows us to escalate the types of research and independent study opportunities available.”

Biology, chemistry and nursing faculties had a role in the design of White Hall. The result is a building that should make learning easier and more comprehensive.

“This facility is designed to promote rich student-to-student and student-to-faculty relationships, said Charles Baldwin, O.P. and Evalyn Hammons University Professor of Pre-Medical Studies Education. “Union graduates of these programs will be better equipped to lead their respective professions in the 21st century.”

A fully equipped operating room lab and a human patient simulator provide nurse anesthesia students with instruction and preparation not available in many other schools in the region.

“The opportunity to learn in state-of-the-art classrooms while gaining innovative clinical experiences through simulation and use of other clinical teaching devices will prepare nursing students to provide a higher quality of care for the sick,” said Tim Smith, dean of Union’s School of Nursing.

A Big Move

The White Hall move is the largest for Union since the 1975 campus relocation. Eight students have been hired to help, and professional movers will oversee the larger

and more difficult assignments. Faculty members prioritized the moving schedule room-by-room.

“There are a lot of details to consider,” said physics professor Kyle Hathcox, who is helping coordinate the moving schedule. “Just when you think you have them all taken care of, something else comes up.”

Because potentially hazardous chemicals are involved, Hathcox said those working on the move were required to take a seminar on procedure and safety precautions. In addition, faculty submitted special handling instructions when appropriate.

The move officially started May 21 and is expected to take at least six weeks. Faculty members were free to move smaller items by mid-April. Nurse anesthesia classes were scheduled for early summer, so Tim Smith and his staff were the first to make a complete move into the new building.

Biology Professor Elsie Smith started as a student at Union’s east Jackson campus. She began her teaching career there in 1962, and has observed the body of basic scientific knowledge increase many fold during her 45 years at Union.

So Smith is in a unique position to witness White Hall’s completion and the impact this new facility will have on future generations of students.

“The move to our present campus in 1975 greatly expanded the facilities of the biology department, but the move to White Hall is a dream-come-true,” said Smith.

“Such state-of-the-art equipment and technology puts the icing on the cake of my teaching career at Union.” ♦

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