Annual Spring Luncheon
Noon, Wednesday, April 25

The Union Auxiliary Newsletter
An Interview with Kimberly Thornbury

Tell us a little bit of your background. Where did you grow up, where did you attend school, what did you study—those kinds of things?

I grew up in Northern New Jersey. After graduating from Governor Livingston High School, I attended Messiah College in Pennsylvania. It was there I met my husband, Greg, initially while working together at the college’s radio station. We were married very shortly after graduation, and the day we returned from our honeymoons we packed a van and headed to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., where Greg began his master of divinity degree. During his time at Southern, I worked in the Student Life Office and also completed my master’s degree in higher education administration at the University of Louisville.

After completing that degree, I began my PhD. in organizational leadership with a focus on higher education administration through Regent University and finished a few years ago. Greg also completed his PhD. the day before our first daughter was born (and she was 10 days late!—how thoughtful of her!). Meanwhile, we moved to begin our positions at Union University in 1999 and now have two beautiful daughters, so we have been busy.

Why did you decide to pursue a career working with college students?

I think that working in higher education is in my genes. My mother, Dr. Carolyn Carmichael, is a lifelong college professor, and my father, Dr. John Carmichael, was a president of two large community colleges in the Northeast, and still teaches business and marketing at the college level. My sister is the director of citizenship and service learning at a large Midwestern university, so again, I don’t think I could have escaped it!

What are some of the challenges of your job?

First of all, I have to say that I absolutely love what I do. All day I am allowed to provide opportunities, resources and solutions for students and their families. I enjoy talking with students about how a dynamic faith with Christ impacts body, soul and life decisions (e.g. How will I treat my roommates today?) How will I manage my time to prepare for this exam as well as future dreams (e.g. How might God use my degree in accounting? What does Christian leadership look like?)

Probably the most challenging part of my time is not being able to spend as much one-on-one time with all the students. The amount of administration and “behind the scenes” work in my job is substantial. But I enjoy that as well because we are always trying to examine what we do (e.g. policies, events) to see how we can make them a better experience for our students.

At the Auxiliary luncheon, you’ll be speaking about some of the characteristics of today’s college students. Can you give a small preview of what listeners can expect to hear?

I am really looking forward to the luncheon. I will talk about the seven characteristics of the millennials generation (those born between 1982 and 2002) who are currently in college now. Specifically, those characteristics include a generation of students who can be seen as social, sheltered, confident, trend-oriented, conventional, pressured and achievement-oriented. We will also talk about how those characteristics have had some very specific implications for Union University. The lecture will hopefully benefit parents or grandparents of the millennial students, and even help women understand the characteristics of that age group in their church.
The Spring semester is off to a wonderful start. The students were thrilled to have a “snow day” which for most was a play day during the first week of the semester. We are pleased to report a record spring enrollment, for which we give thanks to God, David and I were able to attend the 55th Annual Presidents’ Conference in Washington, D.C. Provost Coburn and Union grad Josh Trent (’91), who now serves in the White House, was our keynote speaker. The Spring Luncheon will be our Spring Luncheon was moved to April 25. At the Presidents’ Conference, we announce a new endowed scholarship for students in the Social Sciences. The President, who is currently Charles and Sandra Fowler, announced plans to host the Christmas dinner for both the Interns and Students of the Spring Luncheon, will be our Spring Luncheon will be our Spring Luncheon speaker. He will be on "Millenials," the current generation of university students. His focus will be on how we can attract more students to our university. He will help us all understand how to better serve these wonderful students, looking forward to seeing you at the luncheon.

Warmly,

Chairman

Union Auxiliary Receives 4th Endowed Scholarship

The Keith and Beverly Absher Endowed Auxiliary Scholarship was announced during the Union Auxiliary’s annual scholarship luncheon at the Tiki Room. The scholarship is open to students in the College of Business Administration and is used to support students in the areas of accounting, finance, and marketing.

Keith Absher is currently President of the Continuing Studies Department and Program Director of the SOWL program at the University of Arkansas. In 1996, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center and is also a member of the Board of Directors for “Shoals Unlimited,” an organization that supports economic development in the two-county area.

Beverly Absher is currently the Director of the Continuing Studies Department and Program Director of the SOWL program at the University of Arkansas. Previously, she was the Director of Human Resources for the University. Mrs. Absher graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.S. in Accounting, and also completed a Master’s Degree in Business Administration from the University of North Alabama. She is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

The scholarship was announced at the Spring Luncheon, which was held on April 25. The luncheon was attended by over 100 guests, including students, faculty, and staff.

Jen Allan, Vice President for Membership, Nelle Agee, Vice President for Programs, Bill Weeks, President, and Mary Evelyn Patton, Secretary, were present at the luncheon. The Auxiliary is grateful for the support of its members and looks forward to continuing to provide scholarships to deserving students at Union University.