

SPRING 2018

UNIONITE

THE UNION UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

Never the Protagonist

THE COMEDY AND TRAGEDY
OF CRAIG DISMUKE

**Lisa Rogers: Trustee,
Physician, Union Mom**

**Robert E. Craig:
A Brilliant Visionary**

**Meet our Alumni
Award Winners**



ON THE COVER: *Craig Dismuke* ('98), chief economist at Vining Sparks, is pictured in the Vining Sparks office suite in Memphis.
Photo by Kristi Woody ('10)

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NEVER THE PROTAGONIST

Through comedy and tragedy, the drama of Craig Dismuke's life has unfolded according to God's sovereign plan.



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Union University celebrates God's providence during Feb. 5, 2008, tornado with a full day of activities.



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Ramona Yates and her brothers, Larry and Dennis Wilson, have established the Pete and Walternine Wilson Memorial Scholarship as a way to remember their parents.

UNIONITE

The Union University Magazine
Spring 2018 | Volume 69 | Number 1

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LifeWay Bookstore 731-668-9492
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Unionite is published by Union University, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, TN 38305-3697. Union University is an academic community, affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, equipping persons to think Christianly and serve faithfully in ways consistent with its core values of being excellence-driven, Christ-centered, people-focused, and future-directed. ©2018

From the President

One of the joys of serving at Union University is seeing how so many students and alumni exercise Christ-centered leadership in a variety of ways.

Some students come to Union as natural leaders. They were leaders in high school, they continue that trajectory during college and they will likely fulfill that role for the rest of their lives. That's the way God made them.

Other students come in as first-generation college students who have not had many leadership opportunities. They are tentative and unsure of themselves. But through the guidance, instruction, coaching and opportunities they receive at Union, they gradually emerge as bona fide leaders who are ready to make a difference in the world for the cause of Christ.

Over nearly two centuries, Union University has certainly trained its share of leaders. Some of our graduates serve as university presidents. Many serve in all kinds of church leadership roles. Others are leaders in business, in health care, in education, in research, in serving their communities and in their homes.

You'll read about several leaders in this issue of the *Unionite*, from former Union President Robert Craig, who led Union during one of the most pivotal periods in its history, to current trustee chairman Lisa Rogers, to Union graduate Craig Dismuke. All of them are fine examples of what godly, Christ-centered leaders should look like—and at the center of that is the commitment to serve others.

Leadership is not about lording authority over others. Leadership, especially Christian leadership, comes fundamentally from service. As noted Christian author John Stott has observed, "The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion. Leaders have power, but power is safe only in the hands of those who humble themselves to serve."

That's why Union's mission is so important—to provide Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development *in service* to Church and society.

Please pray for us as we live out our mission on a daily basis. The Lord is gracious, and we know that he will guide us and sustain us as we pursue our mission for His glory.

Gratefully,

Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver, Ph.D.



Debate team wins top award in IPDA

Union University's debate team won the Founders Award at the International Public Debate Association Season-Long Awards in March for the fifth year in a row. The Founders Award is the highest possible award in IPDA and combines scores from all divisions and tournaments throughout the year.



Web Drake, chair of Union's department of communication arts and director of debate, said with this win, Union is tied as the winningest school in the association. He said Union's continued success speaks to the intelligence of its students and the academic rigor of its classrooms.

"One of our cornerstones is excellence-driven," he said. "And this really demonstrates that we are excellent, that our students are getting an excellent education."

Josiah McGee, a junior international relations major and team captain for the debate team, said being part of the debate team for three years has improved his writing, communication and research skills.

"Debate has taught me to think critically and quickly and communicate respectfully," he said.

In addition to the Founders Award, Union's debate team also won five of six tournaments this year and received several individual awards. Because of the team's achievements, April 5, 2018, was also proclaimed Union University Debate Team Day by the City of Jackson.

Union launches associate degree option for adult students

Union University has added a new associate degree to its programs for adult students.

Adults may now earn an Associate of Science in Professional Studies degree and choose from a variety of career-related paths.



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LEFT: President Dub Oliver presents George W. Bush with a sculpture of a bulldog by Union art student Song Kim following his interview.



Bush addresses 1,500 at Scholarship Banquet

President George W. Bush shared stories of his time in the White House, talked about his faith in Jesus Christ and encouraged college students to be involved in public service at Union University's 20th annual Scholarship Banquet Oct. 17.

The event drew 1,500 people who heard Bush discuss a variety of topics in a question-and-answer session with Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver.

"Do it," Bush replied to a question about what he would say to college students considering public service. "It's ugly at times. But first of all, you live in a fabulous country, and therefore you have a duty to serve your country one way or another. You can serve your country by feeding the hungry or by teaching a child to read.

"You can serve your country in the military," Bush continued. "And you can serve your country by being involved with the political process. It's tough. People say things about you that you may not like. But don't go into politics to be liked. Go into politics to do what you think is right for the country."

"This year's Scholarship Banquet was a delightful evening with President Bush, truly a remarkable man who provided key leadership to the nation for eight years," Oliver said. "President Bush's sense of humor was on full display, and we appreciate his openness and honesty in talking about his faith and the challenges he faced in the White House." 🍷

Lady Bulldogs basketball finishes season ranked fourth

The Union University women's basketball team was ranked fourth in the final Women's Basketball Coaches Association poll. The poll was released after Union advanced to the NCAA Division II Final Four, losing in the semifinals to eventual national champion, Central Missouri.

The No. 4 WBCA ranking is the highest ranking for Union women's basketball in the NCAA Division II era. The previous high was a No. 9 ranking in 2014-15. Union's highest ranking this season prior to the final poll was No. 10 earlier in the season.

Union finished the season 32-4, advancing to the Final Four for the first time since joining the NCAA. The 32 wins was also the most for Union since joining Division II in the 2012-13 season. 🏆

Web exclusive: Watch Final Four post-game interview with Sara Lytle and Coach Campbell at uu.edu/unionite.



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"This new associate degree affirms Union University's commitment to adult students," said Beverly Absher-Bone, dean of the School of Adult and Professional Studies. "Our mission is to prepare adults to advance in their careers and in service to their communities. An associate degree can provide the first step towards a pay increase or new career opportunity."

Three concentrations are offered for the associate degree in professional studies: Christian leadership, human services and organizational leadership. The degree requires 60 semester hours of credit, and courses are scheduled to be compatible with adults' busy schedules.

For more information, visit uu.edu/aps.

Union provides trip to Israel for Baptist directors of missions

Union University and the Tennessee Baptist Convention partnered to send 25 directors of missions to Israel for the first time in January.



Union University President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver led the trip alongside Nathan Finn, dean of Union's School of Theology and Missions, and Ernest Easley, professor of evangelism at Union. Easley said he decided he wanted to send these directors of missions to Israel after realizing at their annual meeting in April that almost none of them had visited the country before. He said he was blessed to be able to work with Union to provide that opportunity.

"For some of them, it was a dream come true to actually walk where Jesus walked," Easley said. "To stand in the middle of the Jordan River area where the children of Israel crossed over into the Promised Land; to be at Caesarea where Paul was imprisoned. What they have believed and read all their lives suddenly comes alive to them."

By partnering with a land operator in Israel, Union and the TBC were able to pay the way for these directors of missions from Baptist associations across the state to make the trip.

"We wanted to thank and encourage these men who serve as directors of missions," Oliver said. "They really are servants for the church. They're helping encourage the things we all care about, like evangelism, discipleship, church growth and development."

Van Neste appointed dean for the School of Theology and Missions

Union University has named Ray Van Neste, professor of biblical studies, as dean for its School of Theology and Missions.

Van Neste has served on the Union faculty since 2001 and also is director of the R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies. He begins his new role June 1.

“God has blessed us with the right person in our very midst, someone who can step up to assume the responsibilities of this office, and someone whom the faculty respects as a leader,” Union Provost John Netland said. “We can’t see the future, but we trust that God will continue to bless the School of Theology and Missions, and we have confidence that Ray will be the kind of leader who does not lean on his own understanding but will, in all of his ways, trust in the Lord and follow his guidance.”

A native of Millington, Tennessee, Van

Neste graduated from Union in 1992 with a major in religion/Greek. He finished his Master of Arts degree in New Testament from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and his Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

Van Neste is a prolific writer who has written dozens of articles, chapters and books. He wrote the commentaries on 1-2 Timothy and Titus for the Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary series, co-edited *Reformation 500: How the Greatest Revival Since Pentecost Continues to Shape the World Today* and contributed study notes on the pastoral epistles for the Holman Christian Standard Study Bible, among numerous other projects.

He has also served as a pastor and is a member of First Baptist Church in Jackson.

“Ray Van Neste is an incredible teacher



whose love for Christ and God’s Word is clear in all he does,” Union President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver said. “He is an accomplished scholar and an effective administrator. Having earned his undergraduate degree at Union, Ray’s commitment to Union’s Christ-centered mission is rock solid.

“His desire to serve the church and equip leaders for service in local congregations is evident,” Oliver continued. “And, his personal warmth and winsome humor make him a joy to be around. We are thrilled that Ray is stepping in to this important role at Union.”

Van Neste and his wife Tammie have six children. 📖



Dockery speaks on Baptists and evangelicals at second annual Dockery Lectures

Former Union University President David S. Dockery spoke on the relationship between Southern Baptists and evangelicals at the second annual Dockery Lectures on Baptist Thought and Heritage at Union Feb. 5.

The lecture series, named in Dockery’s honor, was established in 2016 with former

Union professor James Patterson delivering the 2017 lectures. Dockery served as Union’s president from 1996-2014 and now serves as president of Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois.

Dockery’s afternoon lecture, titled “Southern Baptists and Evangelicals: Why Southern Baptists Need Evangelicals,” focused on the relationship between those two groups, specifically in the conservative resurgence of the second half of the 20th century. When conservative Southern Baptists sought to uphold the inerrancy of the Bible at the 1979 convention, they found few within their denomination who would defend it.

“They looked down the long bench of theologians to see who could represent them in this debate,” Dockery said. “They generally had to look beyond the teaching theologians of the SBC for guidance. These Southern Baptist leaders in the late 1970s and early 1980s turned to... voices across the broader evangelical world.”

In addition to the afternoon lecture, Dockery gave an evening lecture addressing the other side of the relationship between these groups titled “Evangelicals and Southern Baptists: Why Evangelicals Need Southern Baptists.”

Educator preparation programs score high on state report card

Union University’s School of Education has been rated in the highest possible category on the Tennessee State Board of Education’s report card on the effectiveness of teacher training programs for the second year in a row.



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Berends becomes first Union undergraduate to receive Fulbright award

At first, Janey Berends wasn’t going to apply for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program award.

“That sounds too hard,” she thought to herself. “I’m not going to mess with it.”

But then some friends and faculty members encouraged her to give it a shot. She filled out the lengthy application, answered the necessary questions and hoped for the best.

Then she got the good news. Berends, who graduated from Union in May, became the first Union undergraduate student ever to receive the prestigious Fulbright award. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, record of service and leadership potential in their fields.

As a recipient of an English Teaching Assistant award, she will spend a year in Peru helping students learn to speak English. The award will cover all her travel and living costs.

“There will be a head teacher there, but I’ll be there to assist and do whatever they want and help the students practice English conversation with a native English speaker,” she said.

A native of Hudsonville, Michigan, Berends majored in Spanish and applied linguistics during her time at Union. She’s waiting to find out if her time in Peru will start in August or in March.

Scott Huelin, director of Union’s Honors Community, said that Berends has broad horizons. While many of her peers were contemplating whether they would return home or stay in Jackson after graduation, Berends decided to try to see the world.

“Janey’s willingness to take on the challenge of living and working in a foreign culture for a year is most impressive,” Huelin said. “The opportunity to live and work in Peru will give her the chance to learn and grow in a way that few first-job-out-of-college experiences will.”

Berends said she’s not entirely sure what she wants to do after her time in Peru, but she’s hoping the experience will provide some clarity about her future. Whether it’s teaching, social work or administration, she’s passionate about education and expects to be involved in the field in some way. She thinks that intercultural competency will only help make her more effective in whatever role she chooses.

“I’ve been very thankful for the amount of support I’ve gotten from the faculty here,” Berends said. “I got a lot



of encouraging words. I still can hardly believe it.”

The Fulbright Program is funded through an annual appropriation by the United States Congress to the U.S. Department of State and managed by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Two Union faculty members have previously received Fulbright awards – David Austill, professor of accounting and business law, and Jean Marie Walls, professor of language. A graduate student, Kathy Tucker, in Union’s Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies program, also won a Fulbright and spent time in Bolivia creating workshops for teachers.

Fulbright awards are highly competitive and very prestigious, Huelin said, noting that Berends’ achievement reflects not only on her but also opens the door for other Union students in the future.

“Historically, once a college or university has its first winner of a prestigious national fellowship, that makes it easier for subsequent applicants,” he said. “Union is no longer an unknown entity in these national competitions thanks to Janey’s success.” 📖

I’ve been very thankful for the amount of support I’ve gotten from the faculty here. I got a lot of encouraging words. I still can hardly believe it.

Union celebrates God's providence in 10-year anniversary of 2008 tornado

Union University marked the 10-year anniversary of the Feb. 5, 2008, tornado that hit the campus with a full day of activities Feb. 2 featuring former administrators, students and others closely involved with the event.

Former Union University President David S. Dockery, in a Founders' Day chapel address in G.M. Savage Memorial Chapel, spoke on providence and hope as he remembered the tornado.

He recalled sitting in his office and thinking perhaps the tornado had missed the campus when he got a call telling him to come to the residence life area. His mind was not prepared for what he was about to see, as the residence life area was completely in ruins.

"Buildings were devastated," Dockery said. "The campus remained frighteningly dark having lost power across the area. Students were stumbling out of the

buildings dazed, confused, bleeding from the cuts that had come from the flying, broken glass. Some students were trying to carry other students who had been injured."

As emergency crews arrived on campus and students were taken to safety, Dockery said the hours were full of prayerful and hopeful moments. The rescue crews searched for bodies beneath the rubble and made sure everyone was accounted for while Dockery and others



LEFT: Former President David S. Dockery is greeted by current President Dub Oliver.

BELOW: Kimberly Thornbury, former dean of students, reflects on the 2008 tornado in chapel.



Indeed, the Lord had answered our prayers in ways that baffled every person associated with the emergency response.



STUDENT PANEL: (L TO R) David Wilson, Cheryl Dahl, Danny Song, and moderator Tim Ellsworth, associate vice president for university communications.

prayed that their worst fears of losing a student would not be realized.

"Indeed, the Lord had answered our prayers in ways that baffled every person associated with the emergency response," he said. "Thanks be to God, there were no fatalities."

Dockery said God's providence did not end there. The next two weeks were hectic as national news media were focused on Union and decisions were made for completing the spring semester and rebuilding the residence area.

"We made more decisions each day than we normally make in a month, and looking back, the accomplishments of each day often included several weeks' worth of work and activity," Dockery said. "Those were certainly days like no other."

Kimberly Thornbury, former dean of students at Union, also shared her testimony in the chapel service about the day of the tornado. She said she never anticipated what a crisis like the tornado would require and how the university

would care for the students, but God showed himself faithful.

"Before the tornado, the RAs reached out to all the students to make sure that they knew where they needed to be, in the downstairs bathroom," Thornbury said. "However, our crisis plan never addressed what to do after the tornado when you walk out of your bathroom and your entire living room is gone."

The campus had 1,100 students who needed beds that night, and thanks to volunteers from churches in the area, every one of them was housed somewhere. She said over the next few days, students and parents had many concerns, and the media and emergency personnel were looking to Dockery, but Dockery always prioritized prayer.

"That kind of godly leadership set the tone for reliance on Christ for all things," she said.

The day of remembrance also included a luncheon, with remarks by Carla Sanderson, former Union provost,

and Harry Smith, former chairman of the Union Board of Trustees, in addition to a special recognition service for first responders.

The day concluded with a community worship service that featured a concert by Christian recording artist Phil Wickham, testimonies from a panel of students who were injured during the tornado and an address by Gene Fant, president of North Greenville University and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Union.

Danny Song, one of the panelists, said the tornado changed his perspective about God.

"It's the collection of stories that shows how big our God is," Song said. "I used to think that God can't care about me that much. I'm just one person."

Now, however, he sees a much broader extent of God's love, both for individuals and for entire communities.

"God is just as with us now as he was then," Song said. ■

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The report card, which was implemented in its current version in 2015, is designed to give accountability to educator preparation programs and supply information they can use to improve their effectiveness. Union was rated on its undergraduate, graduate and Memphis Teacher Residency programs and received an overall performance score of four, the highest possible.

Dottie Myatt, assistant dean for teacher education and accreditation at Union, said the rating is a clear reflection of the quality of the faculty at Union.

"We have a very strong teacher preparation team that works diligently to prepare teachers for today's classrooms, whether it's an urban classroom or a rural classroom or anything between those," Myatt said.

Derryberry, Bradford share story of friendship at EDGE fundraiser

HK Derryberry and Jim Bradford, authors of "The Awakening of HK Derryberry," shared the story of their friendship at "The Power of Friendship," a fundraiser for the Union EDGE program Feb. 15.



Bradford met Derryberry at a Mrs. Winner's chicken restaurant when Derryberry was 9 years old. His grandmother brought him to the restaurant on weekends during her work shifts. Bradford saw him there and began to come by every Saturday morning to spend time with him. Derryberry is blind and has cerebral palsy. He was born three months premature after an automobile accident killed his mother.

Through Bradford's help, Derryberry was also diagnosed with Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory, an ability that allows him to remember a vast number of life experiences. Fewer than 100 people have received the diagnosis, and none of them share Derryberry's physical disabilities.

"In life, I have always been considered the underdog," Derryberry said. "What I mean by that is people tell me things I can't do without complementing me on things that I can."

The Union EDGE program was started in 2015 and exists to give students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to have a college experience. The students live and work on campus alongside students in traditional programs while learning life skills, employment skills and social skills. All funds raised at the event will go to scholarships for the EDGE program.



Bestselling author Goff speaks at Union Auxiliary event

Bob Goff, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Love Does*, kept a sold-out crowd of more than 400 people laughing April 17 in the Carl Grant Events Center as part of the Union University Auxiliary's event, "An Evening with Bob Goff."

With his witty jokes and engaging personal stories, Goff kept the night lighthearted and entertaining while teaching how to live a life that is defined by love, connection and purpose.

He challenged the crowd to strive for meaningful conversations every day to act as a connection with the "creepy people" in their lives. Through meaningful conversations with those who are hardest to talk to, Goff said, Jesus Christ will be seen.

"The most orthodox faith a person can have is to love everybody, always," Goff said.

The event raised money for student scholarships. Susie Oliver, president of the Union Auxiliary, described the evening as "magical." 🌟

Netland selected as provost

John Netland, previously dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Union University, has been named the university's provost.

Netland joined the Union faculty in 2008 as chairman of the English department. He became the arts and sciences dean in 2013.

"John Netland embodies our core values and Christ-centered mission at Union," Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said. "Along with his intellectual gifts as a scholar and teacher, he leads with humility, passion and integrity in ways that will deepen and advance our vision for academic excellence under the lordship of Jesus Christ."

Netland assumed the provost position Oct. 16. He replaces C. Ben Mitchell, who became Union's provost in 2014 and stepped aside to return to the classroom. Ann Singleton served as interim provost since Mitchell's resignation.

Prior to his tenure at Union, Netland taught at Calvin College for 19 years. He completed his bachelor's degree in English from



Biola University, his master's degree in English from California State Polytechnic University and his Doctor of Philosophy in English from the University of California, Los Angeles.

He and his wife Tina, who serves as Union's administrative assistant to the vice president for student life, have two grown children, Erik and Stephanie. 📧

More than 800 attend third annual West Tennessee Evangelism Rally

Christians must ask everyone to follow Jesus and willingly associate with those who don't follow Jesus, Georgia pastor James Merritt said at Union University March 4 during the West Tennessee Evangelism Rally.



"The business of the church, and the business of every follower of Jesus Christ, is to find missing people and invite them to follow Jesus," said Merritt, pastor of Crosspointe Church in Duluth, Georgia. "If we are not in that business, we are out of business."

Merritt was the keynote speaker at the third annual evangelism rally that drew more than

800 people to the Union campus for a worship service, dinner and breakout sessions. The event included for the first time a women's track and a student track.

"The students and the ladies in the women's track were all more than just encouraged to be sharing Jesus – they hopefully picked up a few truths along the way that they can apply in their own life to be a better witness for Jesus," said Ernest Easley, professor of evangelism at Union University and the rally's organizer.

The rally was sponsored by Union and the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Pharmacy celebrates 10-years of God's providence

The Union University College of Pharmacy is celebrating its 10-year anniversary of providing excellence in pharmacy education.

"This truly has been a decade of witnessing God's providence and blessings through our pharmacy program," Dean Sheila Mitchell said.



"As the program has matured, we have sustained outstanding faculty, who have made significant contributions to the profession, receiving accolades and recognition throughout the academy. Most importantly, we have witnessed numerous successful graduates thrive and excel in their calling."

Arthur urges students to know God's word

International Bible teacher Kay Arthur said her purpose in everything she does is to encourage Christians to know the Bible.



"I'm here to provoke you to study the word of God," Arthur told students at her chapel address during the fall semester.

Arthur said knowing and understanding the Bible must become the priority of every Christian's life.

"These words are your life," Arthur said. "If they will become your life, then you will become a man or woman used mightily of God and not ashamed when you see him face to face."

UU graduates achieve 95 percent placement rate for 2017

Union University graduates have a 95 percent placement rate within six months of graduation, according to a 2017 Undergraduate First-Destination Survey conducted by Union's Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career.



The survey includes graduates who have been employed, accepted to graduate school or both. It was conducted from April to December of last year in accordance with standards created by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Though national placement rates for 2017 will not be published until August, Union's rate is 12 points ahead of the 2016 national average of 83 percent. It is also ahead of Union's placement rate of 92 percent for 2016.

"That's a good trend," said Alex Huguenard, the director for the Vocatio Center. "It tells us that our students are finding employment faster." Union also had 27 percent of graduates accepted to graduate school, a 10 percent increase over last year. Huguenard said the data shows him that more students are pursuing graduate degrees and that Union students are well-prepared to enter these programs.

Union celebrates legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.



Union University marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. with a community reading and reflection April 4 on the steps of The Logos.

The event, entitled *Where Do We Go from Here?*, began at 6:01 p.m. with the bells of Miller Tower ringing 39 times to mark the age of King at the time of his death in 1968.

Frank Anderson, director of Union's Center for Racial Reconciliation, said the name of the event came from the title of King's final published book, published the year before his death, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*

"We have come together to answer this question," Anderson said. "Here at Union University, we choose to be a community—a community of authentic Christian faith, a community

of Christian love and a community committed to social justice."

Union University President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said while the anniversary of King's death is a reminder of all that has been achieved and accomplished over the last 50 years, it is also a reminder that much more needs to be done.

"As we remember today, let's also commit ourselves to ever moving forward and ever being more committed to root out injustice and racism and bigotry in our own hearts and wherever we find it in systems and institutions in our community and this world," Oliver said.

The event included community readings from the Bible and some of King's books and speeches, led by members of the student group MOSAIC. 📧

Trustees approve faculty promotions, \$91 million budget

Union University trustees at their April 6 meeting approved a \$91.2 million budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, a resolution of appreciation for the Lady Bulldogs basketball team and a number of Union faculty members for promotions, tenure and research leaves.

The new budget reflects about a 2.4 percent increase over the current year's amended budget of \$88.9 million. Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said the financial health of the institution remains strong, and that Union is committed to effective stewardship of the resources that God has provided.

In the Lady Bulldogs' resolution, the Board of Trustees cited the team's record this year of 32-4, its Gulf South Conference championship and its first trip to the NCAA Division II Final Four. The resolution also noted Chelsey Shumpert's distinction as the conference Player of the Year, an NCAA Division II All-American and her Union record for most points in a season (856), in addition to Coach Mark Campbell's recognition as the Women's Basketball Coaches Association South Region Coach of the Year.

"The team measured its success less by on-court achievements than by the relational and spiritual maturation of the student-athletes," the resolution reads. "Coach Campbell publicly testified that his privilege of baptizing two members of the program represents a greater accomplishment than all of the team's wins."

Regarding faculty research leaves and promotions, Oliver said Union remains committed to supporting meaningful research among faculty and students, one of the themes included in the university's strategic plan, "United in Spirit. Grounded in Truth."

Union dedicates and opens R.G. Lee birthplace

A piece of Southern Baptist history has been moved to the campus of Union University.

The university opened the newly renovated birthplace of R.G. Lee, which was moved to Union's Jackson campus from Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, on Nov. 11.

"R.G. Lee was a leading statesman among Southern Baptists and other evangelicals during the middle years of the 20th century," said Nathan Finn, dean of Union's School of Theology and Missions. "Because of his ties

to the Mid-South region and this university, it is fitting that his childhood home be located on the Union University campus so that younger generations can learn about the life and legacy of this important Christian leader."



The 32 feet by 16 feet house was originally built in the mid-19th century in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Lee was born in the house on Nov. 11, 1886, to a family of sharecroppers. The opening of the home at Union marked the 131st birthday of the renowned evangelist, pastor and orator.

Ernest Easley, professor of evangelism at Union, oversaw the moving and renovation of the home. He said this is the third time the home has been moved, but he hopes Union will be its final resting place.

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Foubert named dean for College of Education

John Foubert, professor of higher education and student affairs at Oklahoma State University, will join Union University as dean for the College of Education in July.

Foubert is a nationally-recognized scholar who has written extensively on Title IX, and he is a leader on initiatives to combat sexual harassment and pornography.

"As a believer who has worked in secular higher education for my whole career, I've been seeking just the right Christian institution at the right time," Foubert said. "God made it clear that working at Union is the right place and now is the right time."

Union University President Samuel

W. "Dub" Oliver said Foubert will be a wonderful addition to the academic leadership team at Union.

"His service at a major research university, his excellent scholarship that makes a meaningful difference for people, his commitment to excellence in all things, and his deep faith in Christ combine in such a way that our College of Education will continue to advance in the years ahead," Oliver said.

Foubert has worked in higher education since 1992. He received his bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and his master's degree in general psychology from the University of Richmond. He completed his doctorate in college student personnel



administration at the University of Maryland, College Park in 1998.

He served as assistant dean of students at the University of Virginia and became an associate professor of higher education in 2002 at the College of William and Mary. In 2009, he moved to Oklahoma State University, where he is currently serving. He has written numerous books and scholarly articles on issues such as gender, pornography and rape on college campuses. 📖

Writing Center launches with grand opening celebration

Union University celebrated the grand opening of its new Writing Center with a Feb. 27 ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Located in a portion of the space formerly occupied by the library in the Penick Academic Complex, the Writing Center officially launched in the fall, but Feb. 27 marked the official opening of the physical space where the center is housed.

"Writing centers are very important to universities," said Aaron Beasley, assistant director of the Writing Center. "Our main goal here is to make better writers, not just better papers."

The Writing Center was a result of the Quality Enhancement Plan that Union was required to produce as part of its

reaffirmation of accreditation. Union's previous QEP established the university's Honors Community in 2010.

Christine Bailey, associate professor of English and director of composition support, and Patricia Hamilton, professor of English, originally submitted the proposal for the Writing Center. Bailey is serving as the center's interim director until the position is filled permanently.

The Writing Center consists of four consultation rooms where students can meet with peer tutors, 11 computers for student use and an open study area.

"We want this to be a welcome spot for students to come and just hang out, study and work on their writing," Beasley said.

Union President Samuel W. "Dub"

Oliver at the grand opening thanked those who had been involved in establishing the Writing Center and in renovating the space for its use, including Russ Allison, the general contractor for the project.

"I don't know if you remember what this space looked like, but it didn't look like this," Oliver said. "It really is beautiful, and his folks did an incredible job in bringing the vision to reality."

Oliver and Lisa Rogers, chairman of Union's Board of Trustees, cut the ceremonial ribbon as part of the ceremony to mark the center's official opening.

The Writing Center occupies about 2,500 square feet along the main hallway of the PAC. 📍



Graphic design students create promotional projects for UN's Perception Change Project

Union University's graphic design students have worked for the Perception Change Project, based at the United Nations in Geneva, over the past several months, illustrating children's books and creating projects used in international events and across various social media platforms.

The opportunity began thanks to alumnus Jon Mark Walls, who connected the PCP with Union. Walls has worked alongside Melinda Posey, associate professor of art, and her graphic design classes from early in 2017.

Posey said this marks the first time Union's graphic design students have worked for an international organization. The students communicated with clients through Skype, Slack and other channels.

"This partnership showed the students that their skill sets and professionalism could be used on a global stage," Posey said. "The Perception Change Project gave us a wonderful opportunity for our classroom to think globally about messages of design. Students rose to the challenge, meeting deadlines and creating large work for print, web and social media."

The projects included several illustrations for a children's book, *Fairy Tales for a Fairer World*, created to promote the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Union graduate Kayli Sommers, as a senior in 2017, illustrated the book *After the Rain* created by the PCP.



Sommers and Union University were mentioned in the liner notes inside *After the Rain*.

"Needless to say, receiving such a warm reception for something that was very new to me as an artist was really encouraging to experience," Sommers said.

Mary Scarlett LaBerge, now a Union graduate, said her favorite projects included creating illustrative backgrounds and templates for characters of the *Fairy Tales* children's book. The greatest challenge, she said, was that "it had to feel corporate and professional enough to be associated with the work done by an international organization, but also

It was the closest thing to agency life I had experienced at that point, and I think it prepared me well for my agency job now.

remain whimsical and imaginative enough to be associated with a children's book."

"We all competed to have our designs used by an international organization, but at the same time, we relied on each other a lot to carry out all of the finished pieces once the design was chosen," LaBerge said. "It was the closest thing to agency life I had experienced at that point, and I think it prepared me well for my agency job now."

In addition to the children's books, graphic design students created stand-up character displays, booth designs, coloring book pages and promotional posters for the April 2017 Salon Du Livre book fair in Geneva. They also designed social media templates and other digitally interactive character stand-ups for the PCP's booth at the Expo 2017 Astana in Kazakhstan.

Posey said her graphic design students have other projects for the PCP that they are continuing to produce on an ongoing basis. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

The house sits on the edge of Union's Jackson campus, where it can be seen clearly from the Highway 45 Bypass. The exterior of the house was rebuilt after the move from all new cypress lumber and hand-cut pine shingles, but the interior walls, doors, floors and ceiling joists maintain the original wood from the house as it was built in the 1800s.

While the home will remain locked most of the time, visitors can set up tours by contacting Abby Scott in the School of Theology and Missions at ascott@uu.edu or at (731) 661-6587.

Union settles lawsuit over HHS abortion mandate

Union University has settled its lawsuit against the U.S. government concerning the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' mandate that Union provide abortion-causing drugs as part of its employee health plans.

Under the terms of the settlement, the U.S. government agreed that the mandate was a violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and that under the Supreme Court's decision in the *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* case, it imposed a "substantial burden" on Union's free exercise of religion.

"We rejoice over this outcome, in which the government acknowledges that the contraception mandate would impose a substantial burden on our exercise of religion and violate the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," Union University President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver said.

"We believe, based on the Bible, that life begins at conception," Oliver continued. "We went to court to defend religious liberty (the right to believe and to live according to those beliefs), and we are glad that religious liberty prevailed. Rights of conscience were enshrined in the U.S. Constitution as the first freedom. I hope Union will always be a place that stands for such God-given rights."

The agreement between Union and the U.S. government specifies that Union's employee health plans are permanently exempt from the HHS contraception mandate.

Union filed one of 56 lawsuits involving more than 140 faith-based plaintiffs against the federal HHS mandate in 2014 that sought a judgment declaring that the abortifacient mandate of the Affordable Care Act violated the university's rights, not only under RFRA but also under the First and Fifth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and the Administrative Procedures Act.

"Causing the death of the embryo conflicts with Union University's beliefs based on Scripture," the Union lawsuit stated. "Therefore, Union University has religious-based objection to drugs and devices that kill the embryo and to education and counseling related to the use of these abortion-causing drugs and devices." ■

Baker named dean for College of Arts and Sciences

Union University has named Hunter Baker as dean for its College of Arts and Sciences.

Baker, associate professor of political science who has been serving as interim dean, joined the Union faculty in 2010 and has held a number of roles at the university, including senior associate dean of arts and sciences, dean of instruction and associate provost.

John Netland, Union's provost who previously held the position of arts and sciences dean, said Baker brings an extraordinary and wide-ranging background to the position.

"He is an accomplished classroom teacher, an exceptional scholar, a valued mentor, an experienced administrator and an articulate advocate for Christ-centered higher education," Netland said. "He has a keen awareness of both the challenges facing higher education and the opportunities for Christ-centered, academically-excellent higher education."

Baker earned his bachelor's degree in economics and political science from Florida State University, his master's degree in public administration from the University of Georgia, his law degree from the University of Houston Law Center and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in religion, politics and society from Baylor University.



Baker came to Union from Houston Baptist University, where he served as director of strategic planning, associate provost for academic affairs and assistant professor of government.

He is the author of three books – "The System Has a Soul: Essays on Christianity, Liberty, and Political Life," "Political Thought: A Student's Guide" and "The End of Secularism" – and has contributed articles to such publications as Christianity Today, The Federalist, The Gospel Coalition, First Things, National Review, Touchstone, Modern Age, the Journal of Law and Religion and Perspectives in Political Science, among others.

Baker is also a research fellow with the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and an affiliate scholar of the Acton Institute.

Baker and his wife Ruth have two children, Andrew and Grace, and are members of Englewood Baptist Church. ■



NEVER THE PROTAGONIST

THROUGH COMEDY AND TRAGEDY,
THE DRAMA OF CRAIG DISMUKÉ'S LIFE HAS UNFOLDED
ACCORDING TO GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN

BY TIM ELLSWORTH ('96)

**"ALL OF US WHO ARE WORTH ANYTHING, SPEND
OUR MANHOOD IN UNLEARNING THE FOLLIES,
OR EXPIATING THE MISTAKES OF OUR YOUTH."**

– PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Picture Craig Dismuke as a senior in high school. He's at Union during the summer for the Rising Senior program, where he sees some of the McAfee apartments under construction.

Hmm. There's a forklift, he observes. I wonder...

He finds the keys in the ignition. He fires up the forklift and sets out on a joy ride across campus.

Somehow Dismuke still got admitted as a full-time student to Union.

Now picture him as a Union freshman. It's the chapel hour, and the G.M. Savage Memorial Chapel is full of students. A friend of Dismuke's has a cow costume, which he dutifully adorns, while Dismuke dresses up in overalls and a hat, like a farmer. In the middle of the chapel service, outside the large windows of the chapel where everyone can see, Dismuke's friend in the cow costume rushes by, with Dismuke in full farmer gear hollering and racing after him.



ABOVE: Dismuke appears as a guest on CNBC March 7, 2018.
RIGHT: Dismuke speaks to a colleague at Vining Sparks.



ABOVE: Dismuke and his wife Ashley will celebrate their 20th anniversary this summer.

An English major at Union, Dismuke’s early collegiate years were certainly full of comedy, with stories like this and many others. Ask anyone who was one of Dismuke’s contemporaries, and chances are they’ve heard a story about his hijinks and exploits.

Charles Fowler, who was Union’s vice president for student services during part of Dismuke’s time at Union, says Craig was a fun young man who had an extra dose of mischief in him.

“He was well acquainted with the judicial process at Union,” says Fowler, now the senior pastor of Germantown Baptist Church. “I’m surprised he didn’t become a lawyer because he was so familiar with the judicial process at Union.”

But Dismuke’s story is more than just comedy. There’s an abundance of tragedy as well, from the early failures in college, to personal health issues, to an even greater challenge his family faced with the brain tumor diagnosis in his youngest son. The man who faced those later adversities was a vastly different person than the youth who once released a skunk in the men’s commons.

Despite the early indications, which suggested that success for Dismuke would be elusive, he matured and persevered. He’s now the executive vice president and chief economist at Vining Sparks, an institutional broker/dealer in Memphis. He makes regular appearances on Fox Business, CNBC and Bloomberg to talk about the state of the nation’s economy and where it’s headed.

“When he was a sophomore, his mother would not give him money directly,” recalls Stephen Wilks, one of Dismuke’s close friends at Union. “She gave it to his roommates, and they had to dispense it as needed. And now he’s in charge of millions of dollars of other people’s money.”

Through it all, Dismuke is quick to deflect any credit to his own personal ability or skills.

“My life isn’t a success story about me,” he says. “I don’t want it to be portrayed that way. I’ve been allowed a certain amount of worldly success by a sovereign God. And to do that, I’ve had to work harder than my peers every day of my career because I chose not to in college.”

The bigger story on display in Dismuke’s life is one that he says illustrates the depths of man’s depravity and the persistence of God, the hound of heaven, who pursued him graciously and relentlessly. It illustrates what Dismuke calls “the inherent trials of life in a fallen world and the unfailing love and presence of God.”

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**“A MAN CAN’T SOAR TOO HIGH,
WHEN HE FLIES WITH HIS OWN
WINGS.” – WILLIAM BLAKE**

Dismuke’s family moved around a lot during his childhood. He was born in Florida and lived in Louisiana, Michigan and Texas before settling in Oklahoma, where he graduated from high school in 1992. He wanted to attend the University of Florida, but his dad Keith, who majored in chemistry at Union, wanted Craig to follow in his footsteps.

Craig’s high school was large, with about 2,500 students, and Dismuke described himself socially as “a little bit of a loose cannon.” Keith thought the structure of Union would be good for Craig. Keith had a good experience at Union and valued the Christian academic environment, so he pushed. Craig reluctantly acquiesced.

Moving from Tulsa to Jackson proved to be a difficult adjustment for Dismuke. Back in the early 1990s, a large percentage of the student body was from West Tennessee, and most of them went home on weekends. Sometimes Dismuke felt alone during the weekend exodus.

“I thought I was the farthest from my house of anybody there,” Dismuke recalls.

Unfocused. That’s how Dismuke describes his early days as a Union student. He didn’t have a career path laid out. He didn’t have an academic track that he was pursuing.

“I was going to school, really, because that’s what my father and mother ingrained in me – you go to college when you’re done with high school,” Dismuke says. “That was basically it. And so I get there, and for the first time in my life, I’m living by myself and don’t have parents around. I’m in the process of experiencing freedom and just getting to do whatever I wanted. I made a lot of poor choices.”

His priorities were social events, friends, relationships and having fun. Intramurals were more important than coursework. He began as a chemistry major, but the chem labs conflicted with intramural football, so he often skipped them before dropping the chemistry major entirely.

Dismuke’s wild streak often ran afoul of the Union rules. Breaking them was exhilarating for him, so that’s what he pursued. His grades reflected the poor choices he was making. At the end of the first semester, his grade point average was 0.5.

Keith was clearly not happy with his son’s performance. Craig assured his dad that the fall semester was a one-time aberration, and that he’d get his act together. He attended January term and got his GPA up a little bit. The spring semester brought further improvements and ended with Dismuke’s GPA at 1.9.

His dad made Dismuke come home for the summer, attend junior college and work cleaning oil rigs—a hot, dirty and miserable job.

“It was 110 degrees every day, it seemed like,” Dismuke says. “I would come back at the end of the day and had oil all over me. I got that Lava soap that was real gritty, and I would wash my face with it, and my face would get all scratched up. My hands were all scratched up. It was serious manual labor.”

Convinced that Dismuke was more mature, Keith allowed his son to return to Union for the fall. That semester he began dating Ashley Jones, a freshman at Union who was unaware of his less-than-stellar reputation on campus.

One day in the cafeteria, Ashley noticed Craig staring at her from across the room.

“Apparently, that was how he was sending out his, ‘Hey, I want to meet you’ kind of vibe,” Ashley says. “I guess it worked.”

After they began dating, some of Ashley’s sorority sisters tried to warn her about Dismuke. His best friend even called her to tell her she shouldn’t date him. “But he’s so nice to me,” was Ashley’s response. The warnings went unheeded.

The fall semester of his sophomore year was cut short for Dismuke when he contracted pneumonia, but from that point on, Dismuke began to focus more. His grades improved enough to allow him to be initiated into the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

The aimlessness of his early Union experience was a thing of the past.

“FRIENDSHIP IS A SHELTERING TREE.” — SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

From a spiritual standpoint, Dismuke’s time at Union was transformative. He acknowledges that he became a Christian as a boy but says “lukewarm” would be a good way to describe his faith for much of his teenage years. He didn’t read the Bible. He wasn’t involved in his church youth group.

“There was very little fruit,” Dismuke says.

When he came to Union, he was for the first time immersed in an authentic Christian community. He found it off-putting at first, when people he barely knew would ask him about his quiet time or his walk with the Lord.

But eventually, Dismuke encountered some guys, especially in his fraternity, who had a significant influence in his spiritual growth. One of those was Brian Delk. Delk and Dismuke developed a friendship through both SAE and their mutual love for soccer.

“Craig was just fun to be around,” Delk says. “He was one of those guys who could be friends with just about anybody. Although there were things he would do that would frustrate you, you wanted to pull for him. You wanted the guy to succeed.”

One day, in Delk’s room, Brian told Craig that he could see Craig wrestling with a lot of things, and that he was praying for him. Though Delk doesn’t remember that exact conversation, Dismuke says it was a turning point in his life.

“I’d say within a month of that, I took my faith much more seriously,” Dismuke says.

The transformation in Dismuke’s life from his freshman year to his senior year was profound. He majored in English, studying especially the European Romantic writers. His grades were stellar. He liked the Romantic period because it represented an intellectual recoil from the Enlightenment.

“As someone who found myself often governed by my passions rather than

reason,” Dismuke says, “I associated with the characters much more than those in other literature.”

He got engaged to Ashley. He attributes that relationship as one key factor in his maturation. He realized he had to provide for someone else, not just himself, and that made him much more serious about life.

Another part was the community of people around him. University personnel like Fowler, Dave Oran, Randall Bush and Lynn Gnaegy. Friends who were committed Christians and yet loved life, like Wilks, Blake Ward, Bubba Holsinger, Michael Laffoon, Stephen Eldridge and others.

As an upperclassmen, Dismuke took on leadership roles, often helping to shepherd and mentor new SAE initiates in ways that Wilks says nobody could have imagined, if they knew him as a freshman.

“I think I realized that Christianity doesn’t equate with a lack of fun,” Dismuke says. “That was a piece of it. Having guys like Brian Delk around me, who cared about who I was and cared about my soul, when I didn’t, that had an impact.”



Dismuke, front row middle, pictured with other Sigma Alpha Epsilon officers from the 1996 *Lest We Forget* yearbook.

CRAIG WAS JUST FUN TO BE AROUND. HE WAS ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO COULD BE FRIENDS WITH JUST ABOUT ANYBODY.



“ADVERSITY IS THE FIRST PATH TO TRUTH.” — LORD BYRON

After graduating from Union in 1998, Dismuke thought about trying to get a job teaching English in Shelby County, but after looking at the pay scale, decided he couldn’t support a family doing so. He went back to school to get a master’s degree at the University of Memphis and eventually ended up landing a job in finance. He was a natural. Though he majored in English, math was always Dismuke’s strength.

First he worked as a loan officer in Memphis before becoming a fixed income broker with Morgan Keegan, a wealth management and capital market firm. He discovered that he loved economics and began studying voraciously on his own time. From Harvard’s website, he found reading lists for different economics classes and began devouring those books. From MIT’s open courseware, he listened to lecture after lecture.

He excelled at Morgan Keegan, ranking

in the top 10 of their brokers, and then moved on to Bear Stearns, where he was the youngest managing director in institutional fixed income.

While working at Bear Stearns, Dismuke noticed that he regularly got dizzy when he ran. One day his physical condition after a run was bad enough that he went to the emergency room, where hospital personnel hooked him up to machines and started panicking, calling out various codes and wheeling in the crash carts.

“What are you doing?” Dismuke asked. “This happens all the time.”

Dismuke’s condition was serious. He was in ventricular tachycardia, the “death spiral,” the doctors explained. Diagnosed with severe dilated cardiomyopathy, he has an enlarged and weak heart that pumps about half of what it’s supposed to pump. Doctors told him that with his condition, he might only live a couple of years. He was 33 years old at the time.

“So I thought I was dying, which

changes everything,” Dismuke says. “You don’t chase money or titles or whatever. Yeah, that was hard, but I came to peace with it very quickly. It took about 24 hours to come to peace with that.”

His biggest fear was his two young daughters growing up without a father. But he knew Ashley was strong and capable of caring for them. Whatever the outcome, “We wanted God to be glorified through the process, whatever that looked like,” he says.

He soon decided to take a job with Vining Sparks doing economic research. Though the job came with a sizeable pay cut at first, his brush with mortality made Dismuke less concerned with such things.

More than a decade later, Dismuke is still going strong. Sometimes his condition causes low energy levels, but for the most part, it hasn’t affected his life.

The same could not be said a few years later, when the health scare was not his own, but his 3-year-old son Ingram’s.



“NOT WITHOUT HOPE WE SUFFER AND WE MOURN.” — WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Being told he had two years to live was a difficult day for Dismuke. Exponentially more difficult was the day he was told his son Ingram had a brain tumor.

The headaches were the first symptom. Then the nausea started. The doctor’s office told them it was probably just migraines but to call back if the symptoms persisted. They did.

“On a Sunday afternoon he had one, and I saw it for the first time,” Dismuke says. “He was just gripping the back of his head and crying and laying on the floor, and he threw up. I was like, ‘That’s more than a headache.’”

Ashley took Ingram to the doctor who ordered a CT. The results were horrifying. Ingram would need surgery to remove a tumor the size of an egg on his brainstem.

“It’s sheer terror,” Dismuke says. “It was the sound in (Ashley’s) voice. I couldn’t understand what she was saying. All I could understand was ‘tumor’ and ‘get to the hospital.’”

The experience produced a crisis of faith for Dismuke. While his wife and daughters were praying “normal” prayers that God would heal Ingram, Dismuke prayed something different: “God, stay away from my son. If you’ve got a problem with me, take it up with me.” He thought Ingram was being punished for his sins.

The next day, however, Craig’s outlook was radically different. God, in his grace, had made it clear that he was sovereign, and that all Dismuke had to do was trust. He soon came to the realization that as much as he loved Ingram, God loved Ingram more.

“OK,” Dismuke prayed. “Since you love my son even more than I do, it must hurt you even more to see my son hurt. So, whatever your plan is, I can deal with it. I pray that your plan is to heal him. Whatever it is, we’ll try to deal with it.”

Anaplastic ependymoma was the technical diagnosis for Ingram—a rare and aggressive brain tumor. Most patients with that type of tumor see a recurrence

within the first two years of treatment. Ingram’s surgery to remove the tumor was successful, and he went through one year of chemotherapy and radiation.

He’s now at almost five years post-treatment, with no indications of any problems. Other than some minor issues with Ingram’s speech and a scar on his head that’s covered by his hair, he shows no signs that anything was ever wrong.

The episode with Ingram’s cancer gave the Dismukes a deep love for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Craig’s two daughters, Madison and Lindsey, both teenagers, have raised nearly \$1 million for St. Jude by meeting with management teams and CEOs of various companies and asking for donations. Some of Dismuke’s business contacts have helped grease the wheels, but Madison and Lindsey have accomplished most of it on their own.



“HE IS THE HAPPIEST MAN WHO CAN SET THE END OF HIS LIFE IN CONNECTION WITH THE BEGINNING.” — JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

For Dismuke, as turbulent as much of his college experience was, he is grateful for his time at Union and for the role it played in his life.

“I did a lot of really dumb stuff, and it was just a general lack of focus and lack of understanding of, ‘This is why you’re in college,’” he says. “I’m thankful for Union, because it put some parameters on it. You

could go astray, and you could do some really dumb things, but you weren’t going to go too far astray.

“You could go on an intellectual journey about faith and creation and whatnot, but there were a lot of people showing you a Christian lifestyle, so I’m thankful I went to Union for that reason. I think, had I gone to another school and not had those boundaries, not had that peer group, I’d have ended up in a gutter somewhere.”

Twenty years after graduating from Union, the follies of Dismuke’s youth are a distant memory. He’s a successful business leader and active churchman. He’s a devoted husband and father of three extraordinary kids.

“Through the experiences he’s had with his own health and his son’s health, God has used those to deepen his faith in ways that I can’t even imagine,” Wilks says.

HE’S A GODLY INFLUENCE AND USES HIS PLATFORM IN THE BUSINESS WORLD AND IN HIS CHURCH FOR GOOD.

“I loved him as a student,” Fowler says. “I love and respect him now for the man and the father and husband that he’s become. He’s a godly influence and uses his platform in the business world and in his church for good.”

Dismuke is proof that despite how things may start out in life, through God’s grace, early setbacks and failures can be overcome. He says if his life is anything, it’s a clear picture that God is gracious, merciful and persistent.

“Life is a drama,” he says. “But I am not the protagonist. That role is reserved for Christ.” ■

TRUSTEE PHYSICIAN UNION MOM

ROGERS REFLECTS ON HER TENURE AS
UNION BOARD CHAIRMAN

BY TIM ELLSWORTH ('96)



I LOVE THE
FOCUS ON THE
STUDENTS, AND
THE PRIMARY
GOAL OF TRULY
EXCELLENT
CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION.

Lisa Rogers was walking in the woods, one of her favorite pastimes, when she got a phone call from outgoing Union trustee chairman Norm Hill. Hill asked Rogers if she'd consider serving as the next chairman for the Union Board of Trustees.

Rogers immediately knew the answer: No. But she told Hill she'd pray about it.

"I figured I'd pray about it and then tell him no," she says.

But as she considered the opportunity, God began to reveal to Rogers that she should accept. In November, she will rotate off the Board and conclude her three years as chairman.

"I would say primarily it's been a challenging experience," Rogers said.

Rogers, an obstetrician/gynecologist with the Jackson Clinic, has served as a Union trustee off and on since 1999. Being chairman and more deeply involved with the inner-workings of the university has brought challenges she didn't have to deal with previously. The academic world has its own vocabulary and structure that is completely different from medicine.

Despite the steep learning curve, Rogers has enjoyed the experience, especially working closely with Union President Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver and the Union leadership team. Rogers' son Austin graduated from Union in May, and seeing Oliver's love for students is deeply meaningful for Rogers.

"I was on the search committee, and

that was the number one thing that was immediately evident, the way his whole spirit just lit up when he's with students," Rogers says.

Her title of "Union mom" is one that Rogers cherishes.

"To see how (Austin) has matured and grown spiritually, and the friends that he's made, and to see how Dr. Oliver and the faculty he has had have nurtured him and encouraged him just as I was nurtured and encouraged when I was here, has just been tremendous," Rogers says.

A 1983 Union graduate who majored in biology and minored in chemistry, Rogers pointed to professors such as Elsie Smith and Charles Baldwin who had a positive impact on her life. She attended medical school in Memphis at the University of Tennessee after finishing at Union.

Rogers met her husband Kenny while she was doing her residency in Mississippi and returned to Jackson, Tennessee, where she had lived as a child before her parents moved to the Memphis area, shortly thereafter. She has a step-daughter Kristi and a daughter Rebecca, in addition to Austin.

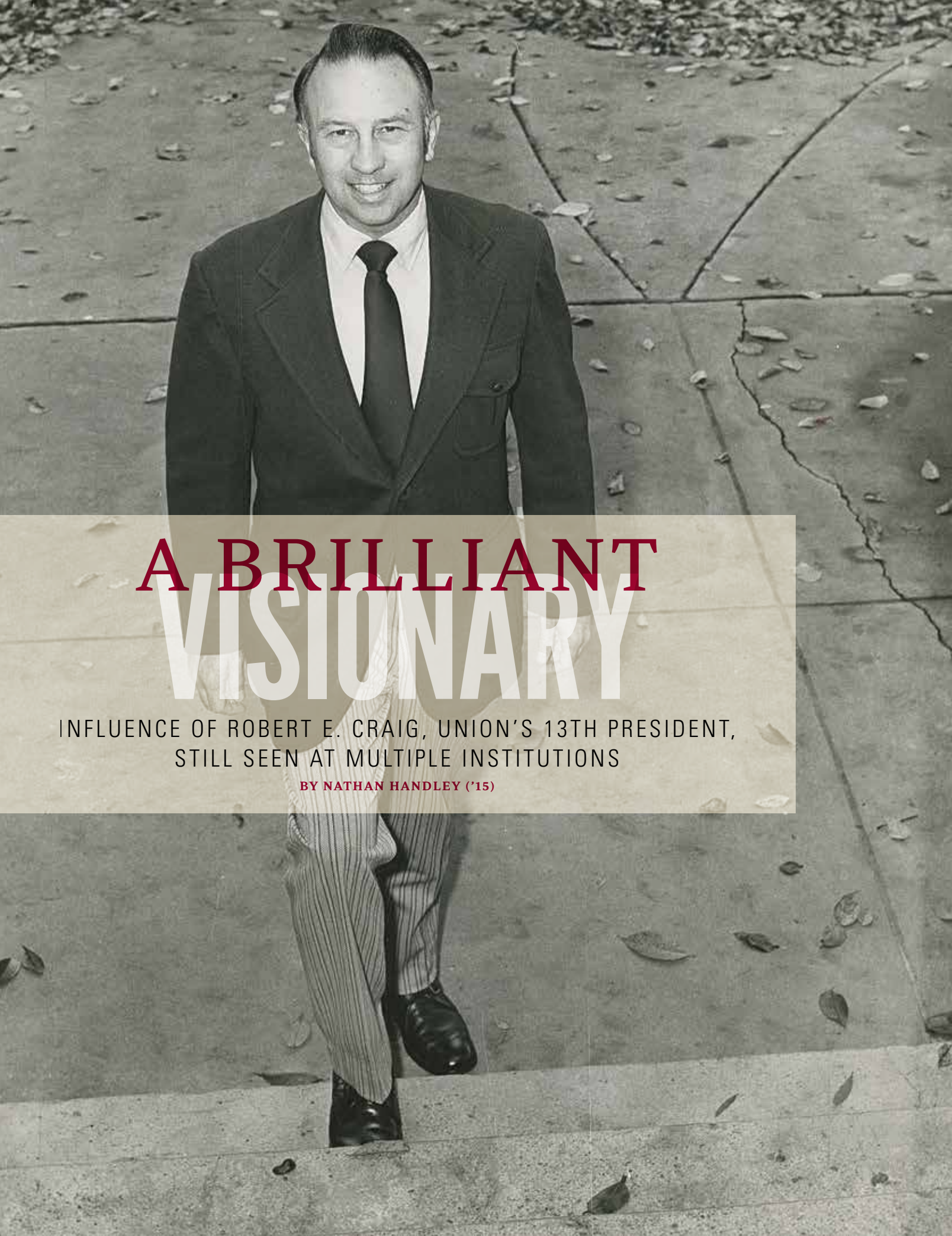
She may be nearing the end of her time as board chairman, but Rogers' commitment to and love for Union will go with her as she leaves.

"I love the focus on the students, and the primary goal of truly excellent Christian education," Rogers says. "Students who have multiple challenges in today's culture are strengthened in their faith here, come to know Christ while they're here, learn of Christ and biblical truth and are able to form solid relationships.

"Union holds true to its core values and mission, and in today's world, I wish all students could come to Union."

Not only do students at Union receive an education that prepares them for their chosen field, Rogers says, but they also learn how to incorporate their faith in their profession.

"Whether you go to the international mission field, or you're meeting with clients, or patients, or whatever you're doing, you can carry Christ with you in whatever you do." ■



A BRILLIANT VISIONARY

INFLUENCE OF ROBERT E. CRAIG, UNION'S 13TH PRESIDENT,
STILL SEEN AT MULTIPLE INSTITUTIONS

BY NATHAN HANDLEY ('15)

ON MAY 19, ABBIE WILLIAMS WALKED ACROSS THE STAGE TO RECEIVE HER UNION UNIVERSITY DEGREE. DURING HER FOUR YEARS AT UNION, ABBIE MADE CONNECTIONS WITH MANY FRIENDS AND MENTORS. BUT SHE ALSO MADE A SPECIAL CONNECTION WITH HER FAMILY.

Abbie is the granddaughter of Robert E. Craig, the 13th president of Union. Craig was the longest-serving president in Union's history, joining the university in 1967 and serving for nearly 20 years. Abbie never met Craig, who died in 1992, but aspects of her grandfather have been present throughout her life.

Abbie says she has seen Craig's vision for Union playing out, and she has seen how he influenced the many students and employees he worked with at the university.

"I've met a lot more people that knew him," Abbie says. "It's been interesting to hear from them."

One of the people Abbie has met is Carroll Griffin, a Union graduate and



Abbie Williams looks at photos of her grandfather, Robert E. Craig, in the Union archives.

She says his ideas of hard work and determination were passed down to her through her mom. His dedication to Christian faith and education have always been the cornerstones of their home. But in being a part of the Union community, Abbie thinks she has gotten to know him even better.

"Sometimes when I walk around campus, because I never met him, never got to have a relationship with him, I think, 'I'm walking the same paths that he walked,'" Abbie says. "There's no other place on earth I can say that except here."

recently retired director of marketing and enrollment for Union's School of Adult and Professional Studies. Abbie worked as a student worker in that office, and Griffin says he was elated when he realized that Abbie was Craig's granddaughter. Griffin met Craig as a freshman at Union in 1967 and later worked under him as director of student enlistment.

"All the students respected and admired Dr. Craig because he deserved it," Griffin says. "He was a quiet man, but once you got to know him, you could see a sense of humor. I loved making Dr. Craig smile."

Griffin says Craig was a humble and modest man, and he always made sure his employees knew they were appreciated and were doing good work. He says part of the genius of Craig and what made his endeavors successful was his ability to surround himself with expert people and to delegate.

“His philosophy was always, ‘Hire good people underneath you, and then let them do their job,’” Griffin says.

Cherrie Craig Williams, Robert Craig’s daughter and Abbie Williams’ mother, says she heard this refrain from her father many times, and it has influenced the way she does her work. Williams is an associate professor of communications at Motlow State Community College in Tullahoma, Tennessee.

“What he was at home, he was at work,” she says. “And what he was at work, he was at home. He was a very genuine man.”

Williams says that authenticity allowed Craig to relate to people at all different levels. She says anyone who met Craig on the street would probably not know he was a university president—his best friend during his time in Jackson was a maintenance worker at a local factory, and his favorite recreational activity was gardening.

She says this part of his personality was useful when it came to making business deals and decisions, such as the decision in the 1970s to purchase land in north Jackson and move the Union campus.

“He could talk to the person who had a lot of money, and he could talk to the

person who did not,” she says. “He related to them the same.”

At Union, Craig is still most remembered for this decision to move the university in 1974 from its historic downtown campus to its current location in north Jackson. The downtown campus was landlocked, and Craig knew if the school were to grow, it would have to move.

“That decision was transformative for the institution,” says Union University President Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver. “It was a considerable risk to move this far out. There was nothing out here but cornfields and wooded property. Now of course in hindsight, it was brilliant.”

In Craig’s plan for the campus, everything—from the cafeteria to the gymnasium—was housed under one roof.



WHAT HE WAS
AT HOME,
HE WAS AT WORK.
AND WHAT HE
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HE WAS AT HOME.
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That building is now the Penick Academic Complex, where his granddaughter Abbie had classes every week.

Oliver says he sees no way the school could have grown at the rate it did without Craig’s decision to move.

“Who knows what would have happened, but because he had that vision and because he worked to bring it about, we’re able to enjoy what we enjoy today,” Oliver says.

Union is not the first place Oliver has enjoyed the benefits of Craig’s work. Before coming to Union, Oliver served as president of East Texas Baptist University, Craig’s alma mater and the place he went to serve upon leaving Union in 1986.

“He was beloved there,” Oliver says. “He was like a giant. Everybody talked about Dr. Craig and how amazing he was.”

Craig left Union to help ETBU out of a difficult situation. The school was struggling, and most assumed it was going to close when Craig arrived. But Craig was able to turn the situation around, and enrollment nearly doubled during his six years as president there.

“Dr. Craig was effective at so many things,” Oliver says. “Number one, recruiting students. Number two, fundraising. But also he was very engaged with the Baptist churches in the community. That’s part of his legacy here at Union as well.”

Oliver says Craig would do things some would describe as quirky, but they were very effective. One year at ETBU, he gave Christmas bonuses in two dollar bills so that when the bills were spent in the community, the community would see the value of the university.

Bob Agee, former president of Oklahoma Baptist University, worked with Craig for 10 years at Union in various roles. He says he can remember Craig’s unique strategy in purchasing the land for the new Union campus.

“He bought property on both sides of the 45 Bypass, both the property where Union sits and the area across the road that was a peach orchard,” Agee says. “Then he sold the peach orchard right away to pay for the buildings. That’s just

the way he thought through things.”

Agee says Craig was an exceptional leader in his understanding of what a distinctively Christian and Baptist university ought to be. He says Union’s administrative council in the years he was president was one of the most effective leadership teams he has ever seen. Craig could select people who would carry out the vision and mission of the institution, organize a leadership team and define their roles clearly.

“Serving on that team was tremendous preparation for my leadership as a college president,” Agee says. “He held us all accountable for our assigned tasks and strengthened Union’s commitment to be an intentional, Christ-centered institution. He wanted Union to be excellent in every arena and to stay close to its faith heritage.”

While Craig had a shrewd understanding of business and how to grow a university, Cherrie Williams says she sees only one reason for his success.

“He gave absolutely everything to God,” she says. “My dad never underestimated the power of prayer. He knew that when he took things to God, God’s will would be done.”

Williams says her father’s dedication to Scripture was the foundation of their family life. She can remember countless family devotions, biblical counsel and family prayers. She says Craig’s faith was integral to his home, and that’s why it was so important in the institutions at which he served.

Craig came to Union from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri, where he had taken it from a two-year to a four-year college. According to James Alex Baggett’s history of Union, many in Jackson protested his appointment at



Union and feared that his commitment to Christian foundations, biblical principles and Baptist heritage would undermine the success of the university in West Tennessee.

“They were protesting the fact that he was coming because he was going to make some changes that people didn’t like in regard to the fidelity to Scripture and the Christ-centeredness of the institution,” Oliver says. “I was not surprised that Dr. Craig would be a champion for higher education, being faithful to the authority of Scripture and maintaining that in Union’s identity.”

Williams, herself a Union graduate, says she has seen Union grow over the years since her father left, and she is grateful to have had men like Hyran E. Barefoot, David S. Dockery and Oliver to continue the good work done by Craig and his team. With Abbie’s graduation, all three of her daughters have graduated from Union.

She says it is comforting for her to know that after her father is gone, he would be pleased with what has happened at Union University.

“On his tombstone, he wanted placed, ‘This one life will soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last,’” Williams said. “At all the colleges that he’s touched, that’s what’s happening. He’s continuing to have an impact on the world for Christ through these schools.” ■

HE WANTED UNION
TO BE EXCELLENT
IN EVERY ARENA
AND TO STAY
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FAITH HERITAGE.



MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

17
18

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.

Awards include the Alumni of the Year Award, the Distinguished Service Award, the Outstanding Young Alumni Award, the Lest We Forget Award, the G.M. Savage Legacy Award, and several Distinguished Achievement Awards.

In the pages that follow, we highlight the winners of the 2017 Meritorious Service Awards. We congratulate them on all they have accomplished, and we are thankful for the ways their lives have helped to extend the mission of Union University to serve the church and society. 📖



Ken Newman ('62)

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.

Ken Newman said teaching at Union was a lifelong dream of his, and he has been able to live that dream for 18 years.

Newman joined the faculty at Union in 2000 after nearly 40 years working in public education. He received his bachelor's degree from Union in 1962, completing the education program in three years.

"I entered Union as a very naive youngster, who probably wasn't ready for college," Newman said. "Even though I finished Union in three years, I grew tremendously during those years. When I was hired to teach, I was only a couple of years older than many of my students, but I feel I was prepared for the task."

Newman said one professor at Union, Helen Blythe, was a great influence as he began teaching English in the classroom.

"She made literature come alive," he said. "To this day, I find myself modeling myself after Mrs. Blythe."

Newman taught English and French at North Side High School for seven years. While there, he received a Master of Education degree from Memphis State University. He then received his library certification and served as a school librarian for more than two decades. Newman received his doctorate in 1994 and continued working in public education for the next six years, serving on the Tennessee Board of Education from 1996 to 1999.

Newman said Blythe and other professors during his time as a Union student showed him the unique value of teaching at such an institution and gave him a desire to teach at Union. During his time at the university, Newman has served as M.A.Ed. director and Ed.S./Ed.D. director, but he has always remained a classroom teacher.



"All I ever wanted to do was teach," Newman said. "Thanks to my degree and training from Union, I've been able to do just that. When I'm asked when I will stop, my response is, 'When I no longer enjoy teaching.'" 📖

Outstanding Young Alumnus

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



Ashley Pugh ('11)

Ashley Pugh, assistant professor of pharmacy practice at Union, said pharmacy gives her daily opportunities to serve other people.

Pugh graduated from Union in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and completed her doctorate in pharmacy at Union in 2014. She said because she was mentored well as an undergraduate and graduate student at Union, she is able to mentor her students better.

"Both undergraduate and graduate faculty members showed me what it means to be strong in the classroom, strong in your knowledge and strong in how you interact with your students," she said. "Science is important, health care is important, but ultimately it's about how you serve other people and serve the Lord through that."

Pugh said Union's emphasis on the integration of faith into learning and practice is what drew her to the university in the first place, and it is what made her want to teach.

"Faith is the foundation," she said. "Science or art or whatever you are going to do as a profession is just an extension of that."

As a professor of pharmacy practice at Union, Pugh spends about half of her time in the classroom and the other half practicing as a clinical pharmacist for Kroger. She said she is a relationship builder and communicator, and both teaching and pharmacy practice allow her to use those gifts.

"Pharmacy is a perfect career for that because you get to use the knowledge that you have to directly communicate with patients to help them to use their medications well," she said.



Pugh said being named an Outstanding Young Alumna is a great honor, considering the caliber of the individuals who graduate from the university.

"Union has a lot of phenomenal young alumni," she said. "I think about my peers when I was on campus, and I am glad Union gave me the opportunity to build relationships with so many wonderful people." 🍷

Outstanding Young Alumnus

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



Fred Shackelford ('99)

Fred Shackelford, senior pastor at Ellendale Baptist Church in Bartlett, Tennessee, graduated from Union in 1999. He said studying at Union set him up well to continue his biblical education and ministry.

"Having a foundation in biblical studies there at Union, even including the Greek and Hebrew languages, and building on that in seminary certainly created great guidelines for me to use consistently in ministry," Shackelford said.

Upon graduation, Shackelford served as student minister at Malesus Baptist Church in Jackson. In 2004, he took his first role as senior pastor at Spring Hill Baptist Church in Paris, Tennessee, where he served for almost 10 years before taking his current position. During that time, he earned both a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He has also been active in the Tennessee Baptist Convention, serving as convention president from 2011-2012.

Shackelford said his time at Union gave him many strong, encouraging relationships that

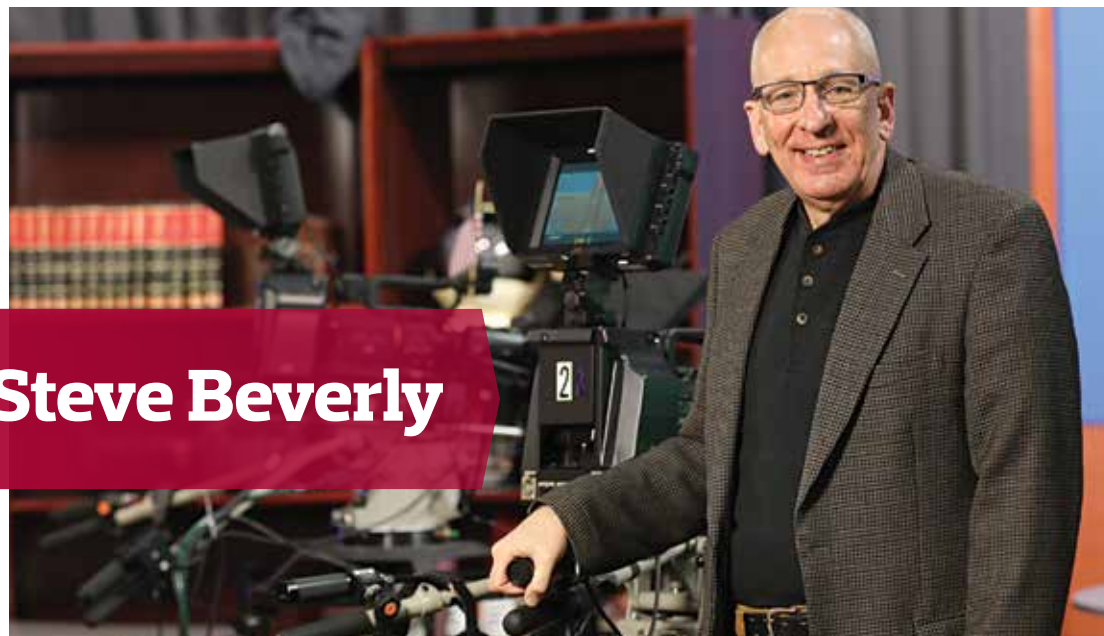
he has carried with him through his years in ministry. Most importantly, Union is where he met his wife, Jennifer, who he said serves alongside him in every ministry.

A native of Memphis, Shackelford said when he was looking for a college to attend, he had already submitted to a call to ministry, and he wanted to find a place that would foster that calling. He said Union fit the bill and provided him with an education that is rare among higher-education institutions and reflects the university's four core values of being excellence-driven, Christ-centered, people-focused and future-directed.

"The coming together of quality liberal arts education with a Christian worldview is the most significant thing that I noticed while I was at Union," Shackelford said. "That's what makes Union a special place." 🍷

Distinguished Service Award

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



Steve Beverly

Steve Beverly, associate professor of communication arts, said teaching broadcast journalism at Union allows him to make a difference in more places and over more time than any other profession.

"I love the relationships," Beverly said. "In my time at Union, I have had the opportunity to work with and mentor some of the best young people around. Now I see them working in newsrooms around the country."

Beverly teaches classes in broadcast news and produces the daily local news program *Jackson 24/7*, which is run entirely by Union students. He joined the faculty at Union in 1993 after spending 19 years in television news broadcasting. He said he loved the newsroom, and he always knew that if anything could take him away from it, it would be the opportunity to teach at a Christian school.

"God opens doors to where he wants you," Beverly said. "Union is a special place that prizes excellence in education but also takes its foundation of Christian faith seriously."

Beverly said at Union, he has been able to use his gifts as a broadcaster to host events, broadcast basketball games and do many other things to "make Union University and its people look good."

Beverly loves to laugh, and he said the camaraderie he has found with his fellow faculty members in communication arts is second to none. He said his students also bring him laughter and joy every week as he works with them on the newscast.

"News can be a high-stress venture," Beverly said. "You have to have a sense of humor."

He said in his time at Union, many students with many different backgrounds and stories have crossed his path, and they have taught him more than he could ever teach them.

"They've changed me," Beverly said. 📖

Lest We Forget Award

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

Norman Hill ('80)

Norman Hill, a 1980 Union University graduate, said he serves and promotes Union so that the university can pass on its distinctive mission to the next generation.

Hill has spent his life working in health care business. He is the executive director of the medical group practice Pathology Group of the Mid-South and executive director of Trumbull Laboratories, LLC, where he is a co-founding member. He is in his 18th year serving as a Union University trustee and has also served on Union's Finance and Audit Committee. He said he will continue to support Union because of how the university affected him and continues to influence students.

"It all boils down to Union's mission," Hill said. "I think that it's extremely important for people of all professions to serve the Lord in their professions. Union has a distinctive mission that embraces that philosophy and encourages its professors to incorporate God's word into their curriculum."

During his time at Union, Hill served as president of the senior class, president of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity chapter and chairman of the Resident Life Board. He said while he was not tuned in to his own spiritual growth at that time, Union's community, mission and philosophy influenced him in the right ways.



"Later on in my adult life, after truly committing my life to the Lord, I began to see the great value that can bring," Hill said. "It benefits students who are engaged at that level at that age, and it even benefits kids like me."

Hill went on from Union to earn his Master of Business Administration from Christian Brothers University. He has worked in health care business for more than 30 years, and he said without the foundation laid by his professors at Union, he would not have been prepared to enter the business world. He said while he will continue to serve Union however he can, the real service comes from the faculty and staff members who invest in students daily.

"It really is all about preparing students for life beyond college," Hill said. 📖

Robert E. Craig *Service Award*

Presented to men and women who have given significant service and contributions to ensure the future of Union University.



Harry Smith

Harry Smith has served on Union’s Board of Trustees for more than 10 years, and he said he can’t think of a better way he could have used his time.

“I’ve gotten to see the value of Christian education,” Smith said. “I think it’s a great place to invest your time and your finances.”

Smith worked in accounting for many years before taking the CEO position at Schilling Enterprises. He first became familiar with Union through a friendship with former university president David S. Dockery, and he said he was impressed with the faculty, staff and administration from day one. During his time serving at Union, he helped oversee the inception of the nurse anesthesia program, the construction of White Hall and the establishment of the Union University Foundation.

Smith was serving as board chairman on Feb. 5, 2008, when a tornado struck Union’s Jackson campus, damaging much of the campus and destroying several residence life buildings. Smith was part of the planning effort to rebuild the campus and get the school running again.

“It was a situation where God took something bad and made something good out of it,” Smith said. “We were able to build some beautiful new buildings, and by God’s grace, no lives were lost.”

In 2009, Smith was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Union. He later served on the search committee to bring in current Union president Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver. He said after many years in business, he believes he can bring insight in serving on non-profit boards.

“I think we all have a responsibility to give back,” he said. “I enjoy being active, and I’d like to think that I’ve been able to take my experience that I’ve learned as I’ve gotten older and use it for something good.” ■

G.M. Savage *Legacy Award*



George Guthrie ('81)

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

George Guthrie, the Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible at Union and a 1981 Union graduate, said seeing how the university has grown over the last 40 years has been a blessing to him.

“I have loved being at Union University,” Guthrie said. “The joy of seeing this place grow dramatically and thrive under good leadership, both past and present, has been a great gift, and I have had great pleasure in Christian community with my colleagues.”

Guthrie spent some time away from Union after his graduation, completing a Master of Divinity degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Master of Theology Degree in New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

In 1990, while working on the dissertation for his Ph.D., Guthrie was invited back to Union to teach. In 1993, he became chair of the Religion Department—later changed to the Department of Christian Studies—where he served for more than a decade. He also led in the establishment of the Ryan Center for Biblical Studies.

Guthrie said he loves the balance of teaching, research, writing and ministry that academic life provides. He said as a student at Union, he learned to love learning and grew academically and spiritually.

“To arrive at Union and find all of these brothers and sisters who were serious about the Christian life shaped me,” he said. “So my spiritual and academic lives were growing and blending, leading to a life of integration.”

Guthrie has written numerous articles and more than a dozen books in his time at Union. He has also participated in translation projects, such as the revision of *The New Living Translation*, and has served as a consultant on the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, the *New Century Version* and the *English Standard Version*.



Guthrie, whose tenure at Union ended after the spring semester, said he wants to do all he can to advance God’s kingdom and build up the body of Christ.

“My prayer is that in various ways, by God’s grace, I have been able to participate in that greatest of all calls during my time at Union,” he said. ■

Distinguished Achievement Award

Union University presents the Distinguished Achievement Award to alumni who have made significant contributions in their profession.



John C. Jennings ('67)
Health Care

Jennings is professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at the Permian Basin, where he also served as regional dean from 2006-2012.

Robert Dailey III ('76)
Business

Dailey is the president and chief operating officer of Intex DIY, Inc., one of the largest textile wiping cloth suppliers in the country.



Lyda Kay Ferree ('67)
Arts/Media

Ferree is a feature writer, travel writer and account executive at VIP City Magazines in Jackson.



Haylie Mulliniks ('03)
Research/Sciences

Mulliniks is the clinical director at Toyos Clinic, which specializes in refractive surgery and dry eye.



Luis Ortiz ('04)
Athletics

Ortiz is the assistant hitting coach and minor league hitting coordinator for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Linn Stranak ('70)
Education

Stranak began working at Union in 1980, coaching baseball and serving as chair of the physical education, wellness and sport department.



Lawrence Ragland ('87)
Church Ministry

Ragland is president and CEO of The Paris Youth Enrichment Project, which teaches youth the necessary skills for mission work in the local community and beyond.



John Carroll ('09)
Government/Public Service

Carroll is the executive director of City Leadership and founder of Choose901 in Memphis.





Mandy White ('98)

Not-for-profit

White is senior vice president of economic development for the Jackson (Tenn.) Chamber.

Richard and Barbara McDade ('68)

Humanities

Richard retired from Baptist Hospital in Memphis in February after 34 years of service. Barbara is a teacher at First Assembly Christian School, where she has served since 1984. 📖



Save the Date for Homecoming 2018

NOVEMBER 1-3

Make plans to be a part of special events throughout the weekend, including the 50-year reunion of the Class of 1969. We hope to see you back home on campus this fall!



OLD SCHOOL

ALUMNI NEWS

60's | SIXTIES |

John R. Hamilton ('62) of Hamilton, Laughlin, Barker, Johnson & Jones was honored in Best Lawyers in America's section on Eminent Domain and Condemnation Law. He is a member of the Topeka, Kansas, and American Bar Associations and Owner's Counsel of America. He is also on the Washburn Law School Foundation Board.

Gayle Alexander ('62) and **John Adams ('63)** have co-written the book *Who is in Control of the Church? A Guide to Unity and Peace within the Church*. The book is available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

70's | SEVENTIES |

Mike U. Smith ('72) retired from Mercer University School of Medicine after 32 years of teaching human genetics and development. He has served on the editorial boards of major journals in science education and was the primary developer of Native STAND, a sexual risk and AIDS reduction program. In 2008 he was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Mike Jernigan ('74) retired June 30, 2017, after 24 years teaching in elementary schools in the United States and Germany and 18 years as Educational Technology

Specialist at Crowder College in Neosho, Missouri.

Ginger Diamond ('77, '82) has been appointed to the Coalition Against Childhood Cancer Board, an organization that advocates for children with cancer.

Diamond has been involved with childhood cancer advocacy for 12 years after losing her nephew to the disease. She currently lives in Douglas, Georgia.

Randall Phillips ('77), a former Union trustee, has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tennessee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

80's | EIGHTIES |

David Samples ('85) and his wife, Tina Samples, published their latest book, *Messed Up Men of the Bible*, in 2016. It has been named a finalist for the ECPA Christian Book Awards for Best Bible Study of the Year. The book previously won a Golden Scroll Merit Award from the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association.

Mike Oliver ('88) has been awarded the Global Ambassador Award by the Cambridge, Massachusetts, biopharmaceutical company Novilion Therapeutics, formerly Aegerion Pharmaceuticals. The award is given annually to the individual who best exemplifies the core values of the organization and commitment to patients with rare diseases. Mike is the Southeast Regional Orphan/Rare Disease Manager for Novilion.

90's | NINETIES |

Lauren Cummings, daughter of **Tricia Cummings ('92)** and **John Cummings ('92)** will attend Union as an undergraduate in the fall of 2018.

PJ Godwin ('93) began her 20th year teaching chemistry and other upper-level science classes at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. She was made chair of the chemistry department in 2008.

Klay Aspinwall ('96) was endorsed by the North American Mission Board as a military chaplain and accepted a commission with the U.S. Army. He is now serving as a battalion chaplain with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Scott Lamb ('96) began serving as Vice President of Special Literary Projects for Liberty University. His fourth book, *The Faith of Donald J. Trump*, co-authored with CBN journalist David Brody, released in February. It explores the worldview background of the president and his relationship with evangelicals in America.

Jay Watson ('99) published his book *By Design: How the Bible Fits Together*. The book's 12 chapters explain how God planned salvation for the world since before time began.

The **UNIONITE** welcomes news from alumni. Please include contact information with your submission. There are three ways to send information:

Standard mail:

Unionite
1050 Union University Drive
Jackson, TN 38305

Email: unionite@uu.edu

Online: uu.edu/unionite

OLD SCHOOL

ALUMNI NEWS

00's | TWO THOUSANDS |

Michael Slaughter ('00) was named assistant principal at Wylie High School in Wylie, Texas. He holds a bachelor's degree from Union, a master's from Lamar University and is in the process of completing his doctorate from Grand Canyon University.

Jennifer Fry Yates ('02, '04, '06) was named assistant principal at Milan High School in Milan, Tennessee.

Jen Bourbonais ('05) was named a Grammy Music Educator Award 2018 quarterfinalist. She teaches music at Overpark Elementary School in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

April Houston ('05) graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with Master of Social Work and Master of Public Health degrees and began a new position at CARE, an international organization dedicated to ending poverty, in Atlanta.

Kelley McCall ('06) was appointed as interim executive director of Columbia Power & Water Systems in Columbia, Tennessee. She has served there as director of finance and administration for seven years.

Joshua J. Wilkinson ('07) was appointed associate director of admissions for communications at Bucknell University. He was previously associate director of admissions at Widener University Commonwealth Law School.

10's | TWENTY TENS |

Florence Jones ('12), who received a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Union, was selected as a 2018 recipient of the Murray State University Distinguished Alumni Award.

Jones received her bachelor's degree in nursing from Murray State in 1975.

Leigh Andrews Talley ('12) earned her Doctor of Education degree from Carson Newman University in May 2017. She is a kindergarten teacher for North Carolina Virtual Academy and is married to **Scott Talley ('07)**.

Births



Poston ('11).

Dakota Leigh Poston was born June 18, 2016, to **Natalie Poston ('12)** and **Cory**



Bethany Williams ('99) and Dan Williams.

Malachi James Williams was born April 26, 2017, to



and **Leslie Nicole Robus ('04)**.

Zachary Campbell Robus was born July 3, 2017, to **John Campbell Robus ('03)**



('11) and Hunter Wilson.

Lily Grace Wilson was born Aug. 11, 2017, to **Claire Wilson**



Meeks ('08) and Ben Meeks.

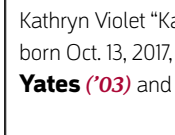
Lydia Joy Duchek was born Sept. 1, 2017, to **Mary Alisa Duchek ('11)** and Matthew Duchek.



Lincoln Isaac Meeks was born Sept. 23, 2017, to **Sydney**



Weston James Barnes was born Oct. 4, 2017, to **Ashley Barnes ('06)** and Joel Barnes.



Kathryn Violet "Katy" Yates was born Oct. 13, 2017, to **Melissa Yates ('03)** and Mark Yates.



Brown ('13) and Hannah Brown.

Margo McAuley Brown was born Feb. 12, 2018, to **Mark**

Marriages

Cassandra Harris ('07) married Andrew Lindberg on June 11, 2016, in Amherst, New Hampshire. They live in mid-coast Maine with their dog, Ranger.



Nathan Handley ('15) married **Anna Isbell ('15)** in Jackson, Tennessee, April 14, 2018.

THE 21ST ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP Banquet

FEATURING

MERCYME



Join us for the 21st Annual Scholarship Banquet
Thursday, October 18, 2018.

Featuring Grammy nominated and Dove Award-winning MercyMe, the banquet will celebrate the generous donors who have made a Christ-centered education at Union possible for so many students.

Sponsorships are now available and include priority dinner seating and a photo opportunity. For more information, call the Office of Institutional Advancement at 731.661.5050 or visit uu.edu/events/scholarshipbanquet

DO YOU KNOW A FUTURE BULLDOG?



We're looking for the next generation who will thrive in an atmosphere of Christ-centered academic excellence and a close-knit learning community. Know someone who would be a good fit for Union? Send us their contact information, and we'll take the next step.

CALL 800.33.UNION OR VISIT uu.edu/suggest



EXCELLENCE-DRIVEN | CHRIST-CENTERED | PEOPLE-FOCUSED | FUTURE-DIRECTED



Memoriam

Sandra Currin died July 23, 2017, at the age of 60. Currin served for eight



years as the academic secretary for Union's Department of Music.

She loved working with students at Union and was an active Sunday school teacher and choir member at First Baptist Church in Jackson. Currin is survived by her husband, Hal Currin, her son, Michael Currin, and her daughter, Tricia Martin.

To donate: uu.edu/giving/sandycurrin

Edna E. Rice ('39) died Aug. 13, 2017, in Jackson, Tennessee. She is survived by her two children, 10 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Elise Griffin ('40) died Mar. 31, 2018.

Mable G. Stevens ('42) died Feb. 15, 2018. Stevens worked as a secretary for the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials.

Isinell Newbill ('42) died March 1, 2018, in Jackson, Tennessee. During World War II, Newbill taught Air Force cadets at Union.

Wilma Nelle Safley ('42) died April 6, 2018, in Raleigh, North Carolina. Safley spent 28 years as a classroom teacher in Robertson County, Tennessee.

Jerry L. Glisson ('45) died July 11, 2017. Glisson served as pastor of Leawood Baptist Church in Memphis for 36 years.

Elizabeth P. Vann ('45) died Aug. 7, 2017, in Jackson, Tennessee.

Frances Kolb ('45) died Sept. 4, 2017.

Ernest P. Guy ('47) died Sept. 5, 2017.

Charlotte McFarland Beck ('47) died Jan. 21, 2018. She had a long career in health care office management in Jackson, Tennessee.

James P. McLemore Jr. ('47) died Feb. 4, 2018, in Jackson, Tennessee. McLemore practiced dentistry in Jackson for 48 years before retiring in 2000.

Ted. E Jones ('48) died Dec. 9, 2017. He was a World War II veteran who served in the Navy in the South Pacific. He was also president of the USS Appalachian veterans' group for many years.

Dolly Brandon ('48) died June 17, 2017. She is survived by her five children, 19 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Emily Evans Byrd ('49) died Mar. 6, 2018. Byrd worked as a social worker for the Tennessee Department of Human Services for more than 30 years.

Will Roberts ('50) died Sept. 15, 2017.

Francis Willard "Vick" Vickey ('50) died June 21, 2017, at his home in Tallahassee, Florida. Vickey served for nearly 40 years with the Boy Scouts of America.

Betty Ruth "BB" Hilliard ('50) died Sept. 25, 2017. She taught elementary school for 34 years and Sunday school for more than 60 years.

David A. Goodman ('50) died Nov. 1, 2017. He worked most of his life as a surveyor and mapper in California.

Mary C. Martindale ('51) died Sept. 11, 2017.

Charles Steven Arendall died Sept. 13, 2017, at his home in Memphis.



Arendall was professor of management and MBA program director at Union. He earned his

bachelor's and master's degrees from Memphis State University and Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. Arendall spent 35 years in academics, 27 of which were at Union. He is survived by his wife, Belinda Arendall, and four children. To donate: uu.edu/giving/arendall

Billy Fowler ('52) died Oct. 27, 2017. He was the music minister at Corydon Missionary Baptist Church in Kentucky.

Alisa Faye Melton ('53) died Sept. 12, 2017, in Jackson, Tennessee.

Charles "Chuck" Williams ('53) died Jan. 25, 2018. He worked for 40 years as an educator in Nashville, Tennessee.

Walter E. Coleman Jr. ('54) died Aug. 21, 2017.

Billy Smith ('55) died July 11, 2017. Smith played and coached basketball his entire life.

Fred Fiddler ('57) died Nov. 1, 2017, after a lengthy illness. Fiddler taught at Lexington High School for almost 30 years and was a plant chemist at Lexington Metal Products.

Evelyn J. McCampbell ('57) died Dec. 1, 2017, in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Pat Wellons ('58) died April 7, 2018. Wellons was one of the first women in the state of Kentucky to be licensed in private practice

Roland M. Porter

Roland M. Porter died Feb. 8, 2018, at his home in Medon, Tennessee. Porter was a longtime pastor and educator in Jackson, Tennessee, and had served as associate professor of business, assistant to the president for community relations and director of the Center for Racial Reconciliation at Union. He was the founding pastor of Agape Christian Fellowship in Jackson. 📖



Memoriam

David Blackstock ('64)

David Blackstock, Union's athletic director for 34 years and women's basketball coach for 18 years, died Nov. 1 at age 75 after a lengthy illness.

A native of Jackson, Blackstock graduated from Union with a degree in health and physical education. He played baseball for the Bulldogs for four years. He became Union's athletic director in 1973 after completing his Doctor of Education degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. He also held a Master of Education degree from the University of Memphis.

Starting in 1981, Blackstock spent 18 seasons at the helm of the women's basketball program at Union, compiling a 509-89 overall record. He earned his 500th career victory during the 1998-99 season and led the Lady Bulldogs to the 1998 NAIA Women's Basketball National Championship.

His tenure as head coach of the women's basketball team included 12 conference championships, five district crowns and 10 national tournament appearances in his final 12 years.

Blackstock took over the baseball program in 1975 where he, along with co-head coach Linn Stranak, guided the team to a third-place finish in the 1983 NAIA World Series, the only season Union participated in the event.

In the two seasons he coached the women's softball team, from 2006-2007, the team compiled a 77-36 record with one NAIA Region XI tournament appearance.

Blackstock was enshrined in the NAIA Hall of Fame, the



Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, the Madison County Sports Hall of Fame and the Union University Sports Hall of Fame. After retiring as athletic director in 2008, Blackstock stayed on at Union in a part-time capacity in institutional advancement while assisting in coaching the softball team.

Known around campus for years simply as "Coach," Blackstock served Union for more than 41 years. The court of Fred DeLay Gymnasium was named for him in 2010.

In addition to his wife Armita, a 1968 Union graduate, Blackstock is survived by their two children, Dixie and Rebel, and by his brother R.T. and wife Nita of Penney Farms, Florida. He was a member of Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson. To donate: uu.edu/giving/blackstock 📖

counseling and social work. She practiced counseling for more than 40 years until the day of her death.

Leon Cox ('59) died Aug. 26, 2017. Cox served in the U.S. Army in Korea and Japan and later worked as a chemical engineer for 38 years.

William "Billy" Henderson ('60), a native of Covington, Tennessee, died March 21, 2017, in Mobile, Alabama. He served as minister of education and church administrator in churches across the South for 41 years.

Nina Thomas Maroney ('60) died July 11, 2017, after a long illness.

William D. Sheppard ('60) died Oct. 9, 2017. He worked for SC Johnson for 40 years before retiring in 2002.

Janice Hill ('61) died Mar. 12, 2018, in Oklahoma.

Sylvia Shaw ('62) died Dec. 18, 2017.

Daniel Tickle ('63) died Jan. 1, 2018.

Dolores Moore ('64) died Jan. 31, 2018, surrounded by her family. She

worked as a nursing director and was vice president of Jackson General Hospital until her retirement in 1988.

Freida Deaton ('67) died Oct. 12, 2017. She taught physical education at Jackson Junior High for 26 years.

Sue Blass ('68) died Dec. 31, 2017, in Jackson, Tennessee. She served as director of the art program for Jackson-Madison County schools for many years.

Kenneth Flippo ('68) died Jan. 7, 2018. Flippo served in the U.S. Navy

aboard the USS Biddle in Vietnam. He later received his Doctor of Pharmacy degree and worked as a pharmacist until 2012.

Marilyn Dismuke ('70) passed away in her sleep Nov. 28, 2017, in Katy, Texas.

Phyllis Farmer ('74) died Feb. 2, 2018.

Jerry Smith ('76) died Nov. 27, 2017, after a lengthy illness. Smith practiced dentistry in Kingsport, Tennessee.

Memoriam

Doris Annette Huckabee Kennon ('76) died July 19, 2017. She served as a missionary in Costa Rica, Chile and Colombia before incurring a disability and retiring from full-time work.

Mitchell Ambrose ('76) died Jan. 17, 2018.

Betty J. Johnson ('79) died June 27, 2017.

Dalton "Jack" Peircey ('80) died June 25, 2017. A former Navy officer, firefighter and quality control manager, he was recognized by Regional Hospital of Jackson for more than 20 years of service.

Kenneth Butler ('80) died Oct. 24, 2017. He was executive assistant to the president and the board of directors at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Donna Jo Pecoraro Woodson Thornton ('80) died March 10, 2018, after a battle with brain cancer. She taught in special education in Tennessee for 20 years.

Donna McKissack ('81) died Jan. 3, 2018.

Alison McDonald-Spakes ('84) died Oct. 4, 2017.

Carol Crunk ('85) died Aug. 9, 2017.

Dana L. Kirk ('86) died Aug. 19, 2017. She worked for many years for the U.S. Postal Service in Chester County, Tennessee.

Sherri Austin ('86) died Dec. 30, 2017.

Robert Ivy ('87) died March 9, 2018.

Lynn A. Jacks ('93) died June 17, 2017.

Richard Lee Moore ('94) died Oct. 17, 2017, in Jackson, Tennessee, after a long period of ill health. He was the founder and operator of RLM Financial Consultants in Jackson.

Mildred Boone ('94) died Oct. 24, 2017, in Jackson, Tennessee.

Jessie Cogbill English ('97) died March 14, 2018.

Ricky Murchison ('98) died Sept. 10, 2017.

William Pevahouse ('03) died July 1, 2017.

Krystal Copeland Hendrix ('12) died March 10, 2017. She was a palliative care registered nurse at the

Veteran's Hospital in Memphis and a member of the Deliverance Team at World Overcomers Church.

L.G. Hansen ('12) died Jan. 6, 2018.

James "Sonny" Melton ('15) died Oct. 2, 2017, in a Las Vegas



shooting. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Nursing Accelerated degree from

Union and was president of his BSNA class. He worked in the emergency department at Henry County Medical Center and was attending the country music festival in Las Vegas with his wife, Heather Gulish Melton.

To donate: uu.edu/giving/sonnymelton

Children of Pete and Walternine Wilson establish scholarship to honor parents

Pete and Walternine Wilson never had the opportunity to go to college, but they both valued education. Born before the great depression in rural Mississippi, they had responsibilities from a young age and were raised to be hard workers.

They settled in Jackson around 1940, and Pete went off to serve in World War II. When he returned, they made Jackson their permanent home. The Wilsons grew to love Union during their time in Jackson, and Pete served as a trustee for the institution. When their children were ready for college, all three of them chose to attend the university.

"There was never any question whether or not we were going to get a college education," said Ramona Yates, the Wilson's youngest child. "That was a priority for them."

They were hard-working folks who loved the Lord and loved Union and loved West Jackson. And they had a big heart for people.



Yates and her brothers, Larry and Dennis Wilson, recently established the Pete and Walternine Wilson Memorial Scholarship in memory of their parents to allow other young people to attend Union. "It's a way to give back to the youth who want to go to a great school and to honor our parents and what they valued," Yates said.

She said she hopes that each semester,

a young person at Union will receive a scholarship and see the names of Pete and Walternine Wilson and know that they loved young people and appreciated Christian higher education.

Pete and Walternine were faithful members of West Jackson Baptist Church for more than 70 years. Pete was a lifelong deacon and served on many committees, and Walternine taught in the preschool ministry for more than 50 years, beginning when Ramona was a baby.

"Mother would always say that you're not babysitting back there, you're teaching them about Jesus,"

Yates said. "That was her ministry."

She said her parents had been through tough times, and they were strong people—strong in will and strong in character—but they were also tender and loving.

"They were hard-working folks who loved the Lord and loved Union and loved West Jackson," she said. "And they had a big heart for people. That's how they will always be remembered." ■

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Color the night sky

Fireworks light up the Great Lawn during Union Night at the conclusion of Family Weekend, Sept. 30, 2017.

photo by Kristi Woody ('10)

