

Connie Dixon elected WMU president, succeeds Linda Cooper

June 14, 2021

NASHVILLE (BP)—Connie Dixon of New Mexico was elected president of the national Woman’s Missionary Union on June 13 in the group’s annual meeting at First Baptist Church in Nashville.

Dixon succeeds Linda Cooper, whose term ended after six years of service.



Sandy Wisdom-Martin (left) executive director-treasurer for national Woman’s Missionary Union, presents Linda Cooper, outgoing WMU president, with a gift of letters written to her. (Photo / Abby Duren)

Cooper, whose standard five-year term was extended during the COVID-19 shutdown, encouraged Dixon to remain focused on God and Christ’s Great Commission. Dixon served 13 years through December 2020 as executive director of the New Mexico WMU.

“Always remember, the Lord’s goodness, his grace, his mercy and his forgiveness is always sufficient. Never let it get old, and never take it for granted,” Cooper charged Dixon. “May it never be about who you impress, but who you impact with the gospel.”

Shirley McDonald of Texas was elected national recording secretary for 2021-2022. McDonald and Dixon join National WMU Executive Director/Treasurer Sandy Wisdom-Martin, who continues in the post she has held since August 2016.

Cindy Walker of Minden, La., received the Dellana West O’Brien Award for Women’s Leadership Development, named in honor of the former national WMU executive director. Walker has led Girls in Action and Acteens at First Baptist Church in Minden for a combined 50-plus years, has served on the WMU Foundation and has exhibited a commitment to missions and missions education, WMU said in announcing the award.

Kina Jones, a graduate of Begin Anew (formerly the Christian Women’s Job Corps), was presented the Sylvia Bentley Dove Award. Since earning a GED through CWJC at age 50, Jones has launched a cleaning business and serves as a Begin Anew volunteer.

‘God has his hand on WMU’

Cooper reminded WMU of its mission to take the gospel into all the world, referencing International Mission Board statistics that globally nearly 155,000 people die daily without a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. She termed the level of lostness as “unacceptable.”

“I truly believe God has his hand on WMU, guiding every step. ... God is not limited in his ability or his willingness to provide just what we need to those who are willing to be used for his glory,” Cooper said. “We must not allow our feelings of inadequacy to keep us from doing what God has called us to

do. If God can use a simple country girl from Kentucky, he can use you, and he wants to.”

Cooper updated attendees on WMU’s missionary and educational work through the local church and international outreaches that include WMU chapters in all 50 states and 39 countries.

Current and former WMU leaders including Wisdom-Martin, Executive Director and Treasurer Emerita Wanda Lee and President Emerita Kaye Miller were among those honoring Cooper for persevering in faith, witnessing, joy, hope, love and prayer.

Also honoring Cooper were D. Ray Davis, IMB church mobilization manager, and former NAMB missionary Travis Kerns, associate professor of apologetics and world religions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“You have a rare gift as a leader. I’ve seen you hold your own with the most prestigious in our denomination, and I’ve seen you get around on the floor with the kids at the SBC day camp,” Lee said of Cooper. “You look at everyone through kingdom eyes, seeing them as equally important and valuable.”

A WorldCrafts “Linda necklace” will be released in Cooper’s honor and available for sale July 12 at worldcrafts.org.

Attendees heard reports from missionaries including Itamar Elizalde, a North American Mission Board Send Relief ministry coordinator in Puerto Rico; NAMB church planters Jacob and Francine Zailian, and IMB church planters and trainers Carlos and Lily Llambes.

WMU spotlighted national Acteens panelists including Kayla Moore, a member of Durham Baptist Church in Lewistown, Mo., along with Texans Hope Howard of Retama Park Baptist Church in Kingsville and Rana Seddik

of Freeman Heights Baptist Church in Garland.