For Immediate Release
Media Contact: Jennifer Vieweg
Media Contact Phone: 304.400.7304
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EDUCATION ELEVATORS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NAMED "WOMAN ON A MISSION" HONOREE

Charleston, W.Va. - Union Mission Ministries this month named Education Elevators Executive Director Allison McJunkin a 2016 "Woman on a Mission" honoree.

According to the organization's website, Union Mission created the awards to recognize and celebrate local community members who consistently dedicate their time, resources, talents and hearts to help others.

"I am truly honored to receive this award and be counted among these other amazing ladies," said McJunkin. "But, I am particularly excited because I know that this recognition will introduce *Education Elevators* to many people who otherwise would not know about our organization or our mission. I've seen the extraordinary impact the program has had on the lives of kids in our community. I am on a mission - on a mission to make sure that as many kids as possible get to have an Elevator."

The mission of *Education Elevators* is to elevate the skills and abilities of local elementary school students by pairing them with volunteer mentors from the business community (called Elevators).

McJunkin stepped into her role with *Education Elevators* in the fall of 2011, following the death of her father, the program's founder, Tom McJunkin. At the time, she was working at her own law firm, McJunkin Law LLC, specializing in race, gender and disability discrimination.

"I am so passionate about *Education Elevators* because I have seen, firsthand, the impact of a strong mentor relationship!" She continued, "This honor has me reflecting, even more so than usual, on my father and his impact on my life. I am who I am because I followed in his footsteps and learned from the strength and passion of his character," McJunkin said " My dad was my Elevator and I am on a mission to carry on his vision, love for education and his legacy."

During her tenure with *Education Elevators*, McJunkin worked to establish the program as a recognized non-profit: creating and expanding its Board of Directors, launching its website, fostering expansion of the

program to new schools and businesses (including Columbia Pipeline Group's partnership with Edgewood Elementary and Energy Corporation of America's involvement with Chamberlain Elementary) and forged partnerships with several organizations, including the Education Alliance, West Virginia Extension and Generation Charleston.

McJunkin shares, "When I was contemplating attending law school in 2000, my Dad sent me a letter saying 'I think that law school is a good choice for you. Not that you shouldn't consider other options - you should. But a law degree, together with your experience, charm and ability to organize and motivate people, will give you many options, including management of a non-profit organization."

McJunkin said "I graduated with my J.D. from Washington & Lee in 2004, but somehow he knew where my path following law school would eventually lead me."

Several years ago, McJunkin hung up her cleats as a social justice attorney in order to dedicate herself full-time to *Education Elevators.* "Non-profit management was never something I considered until *Education Elevators* fell into my lap. I'm in awe at the irony of his guidance, 16 years ago," she said. "It's something I never could have predicted but seems like all of my life experiences were meant to lead me exactly where I am in my role with

McJunkin, along with the five other recipients, will be honored at a luncheon on May 19, 2016 at the Charleston Marriott Pavilion at 12 p.m. To purchase tickets, visit unionmission.com.

For more information about the *Education Elevators* program, visit educationelevators.org/

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About Union Mission

Since 1911, Union Mission has been a ready, active, hand of help to the needy of West Virginia. Its scope of ministry is wide, but largely consolidated into five areas: Brookside Women's and Children's Center, a residential program for single women with children, as well as single mothers-to-be; Union Mission Crossroads, a downtown rescue shelter facility for men; Union Mission: Foundations, a discipleship program for men committed to addiction recovery; Union Mission Family Services, which offers food, clothing, and counseling to struggling families in 17 West Virginia counties; Union Mission Outreach, which satisfies physical and spiritual hunger throughout 28 West Virginia counties; and the Union Mission Thrift Store.

About Education Elevators

Education Elevators is a West Virginia-based, non-profit organization that partners companies with local schools for the purpose of fostering mentor relationships between business leaders and elementary school students.

The program's mission is to elevate students' abilities and aspirations, with the ultimate goal of helping them be more confident and receptive to learning.