FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The UNC system recognizes David Shapiro for his work improving the lives of those who stutter.
Western CAROLINA
FALL 2016 | VOLUME 20, NO. 2

The Magazine of Western Carolina University is produced by the Office of Communications and Public Relations for alumni, faculty, staff, students, and friends of Western Carolina University. The views and opinions that appear in this publication are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the official policies of the university.

CHANCELLOR
David O. Belcher

CHIEF OF STAFF
Melissa Canady Wargo

MANAGING EDITOR
Bill Studenc MPA '10

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER
Mark Haskett '87

LEAD DESIGNER
Will Huddleston

STAFF DESIGNER
Will Guthrie

STAFF WRITERS
Keith Brenton
Geoff Cantrell
Sean Forrester
Randall Holcombe
Daniel Hooker '01
Christie Martin '71 MA '78
Marlon W. Morgan

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Ashley T. Evans

VIDEO EDITOR
Joseph Hader '12

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Robin Oliver

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Ashley Beavers

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindi Magill

BUSINESS MANAGER
Linda Mallonee

Search for this icon throughout the magazine for stories that feature online extras—videos, photographs and more, available ONLY online.

magazine.wcu.edu

FEATURES
20 A JOYFUL NOISE
Marching band helps launch special needs music program

22 DESIGNING WAYS
Campus construction projects underway, on drawing boards

26 RELATED EXPERIENCE
Student internships are key component to future employment

30 FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
WCU’s David Shapiro receives UNC system’s highest faculty honor

36 CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS
Connections run deep with national, state parks

SECTIONS
4 Opening Notes
5 The Inbox
6 News from the Western Hemisphere
14 Catamount Athletics
42 Alumni Spotlight
46 Class Notes
60 Events Calendar
62 The View from Here
63 The Last Look

ON THE COVERS
FRONT: From his office in the Health and Human Sciences Building, professor David Shapiro has become internationally known as an articulate voice for people around the world who stutter.
BACK: Centennial celebrations take place this year for both North Carolina State Parks and the National Park Service. Western Carolina University has a long and storied connection with parks and outdoor recreation, including enjoying the views in nearby Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
In 1965, I founded what was to become the Zeta Xi chapter of Phi Kappa Alpha in Room 214 of Ranchman Dorm. I was outraged that out of all the Greeks that have come and gone, you simplified us out as an example of Greek life gone bad. Many of us have given back to WCU since we graduated. I urge each of my brothers, myself included, to follow the example of the Catamount Club. Our brothers stay closely connected. Your article has been the main topic of discussion since it arrived in my mailbox. You represent WCU, and many an invaluable eye is currently cast upon you.

Roger W. Chance ’67

I just read your story on the “Greek Empire” at WCU, and how so many students have had positive experiences in fraternities and sororities. I know of many different experience pledging for an honors fraternity. I pledged for one Greek organization, hoping for academic recognition and social connections. It was discovered later that the initiation requirements, only to be rejected since I did not pass the national exam. I repeated this process the next term, only to become very ill at the end of the semester and have to take a year off school. While recovering, the fraternity told me that they would accept me as a full brother when I returned. That fall, though, I was told that I would have to go through initiation for a third time. To this day, I believe it has caused me to develop a general dislike of Greek organizations in general, though I know not all brothers in this manner. I know some Greek groups do behave wild and fun things, but I just wanted to provide an alternate side of the coin for comparison’s sake.

Russell Conover ’71 MA ’89

I am writing concerning the fall issue of WCU magazine. I really enjoy reading through it even though I’ve graduated and moved on. I love my time at Western and I appreciate the service you continue to give.

Lynda Elliott ’08

I was pleased to see Chancellor Belcher’s “Opening Notes” column in the winter 2016 issue devoted to supporting the North Carolina bond referendum. The passage of the bond means a boost to our economy, as well as a springboard for the future of our students. The benefits WCU will realize from the bond will give many more students the expanded options for their future that I received.

Wait Russell ’93

I am a charter member of the Gamma Mu chapter of Phi Mu Fraternity. I was pleased to read the very positive article about the Greeks on campus. I was also a Paphianic representative and I enjoyed the pictures of the other Greeks as well. We need this kind of positive publicity. Too much hazing goes on.

Sasha A. Wolfe MAE ’23

I am writing concerning the fall issue of WCU magazine titled “Giving Back to the Earth.” I was interested to see any practice such as composting of the human body would be taking place anywhere on this earth, much less at WCU. Perhaps you could enlighten me as to the legality of this practice in North Carolina. The burial procedures are very strict so as to not contaminate water sources, etc. How can the human body so carelessly be disposed of? Is there not value of the human body above the value of the decomposition for enriching the soil?

Mary Vernon Harkin ’66 MAED ’90

COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS

I just read the 2016 winter edition of the WCU magazine, and wanted to thank you for keeping the alumni up-to-date. After graduation I spent a long time in the Army including a tour in Vietnam. Along the way, I lost contact with the school, but reconnected through my grandson who graduated 85 years after me. I read every issue now, and appreciate it very much.

Tom Clag “64

I just read the latest WCU magazine. How well written. After a long period of feeling disconnected from Cullowhee, it’s coming back. The recent publication reinforced it. Proud to be a Catamount!

Ed Phillips ’85

It was great to read your article, which included the many positives and negative aspects. I was disappointed that out of nine “close-ups” of Greek members, only one focused on a historically African-American Greek organization. I would have hoped that pictures would have included more diversity, especially since it has been about 40 years since Alonzo and I became a part of WCU Greek life.

Edith Carolice M. Graham ’76

Cliff Levin was not a dudrot my favorite professor while I was at WCU. He not only had an amazing knowledge of history, but he had the unique ability of making me want to learn and retain as much of it as possible. He was the one professor that I always thought would be a Catamount!

Donnie Rhodes ’71

Cliff Levin was not a dudrot my favorite professor while I was at WCU. He not only had an amazing knowledge of history, but he had the unique ability of making me want to learn and retain as much of it as possible. He was the one professor that I always thought would be a Catamount!

Have a comment about this issue? Let us hear from you!

Email us at magazine@wcu.edu or send us a letter to 420 B.F. Robinson, Cullowhee, NC, 28723. We’ll select a few to share with your fellow readers.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.
UNC President Margaret Spellings Gets Whirlwind Tour of WCU

After a crash course on the topic of all things Western Carolina University, new University of North Carolina system President Margaret Spellings departed Cullowhee with a newfound appreciation for the color purple and a better understanding of WCU’s unique role in the UNC system. On just her 10th day on the job as UNC president, Spellings began what WCU Chancellor David O. Belcher described as a “24-hour, action-packed experience at Western Carolina.”

During her whirlwind visit March 10 and 11, Spellings took a guided tour of campus and met with students, representatives of Faculty Senate and Staff Senate, community members, regional political and business leaders and the university’s Board of Trustees.

“I have learned a lot in the past 24 hours as I have made the rounds. I’ve had the opportunity to talk to faculty, to staff, to students, to you all,” Spellings said in remarks delivered during the March 11 trustees meeting. “What I have seen is the familial, community pride, the understanding of what this institution means to this region, the affinity and the affection for the Eastern Band (of Cherokee Indians) – it just screams out at you.”

Spellings said her visit has given her a better awareness of WCU’s emphasis on hands-on learning opportunities for students that include working side-by-side with faculty members to help solve real-world problems facing Western North Carolina. “The opportunities that students have here are so unique and so powerful, for undergraduates in particular, where they can go into the community and see lives as part of an EMS program or work in a health care program or be in our schools or at the body farm, just on and on and on – that real-life, practical application of skills is very unique in this country,” she said.

Sharing her early priorities, she spoke of the importance of understanding the roles that everyone plays – the president of the UNC system, the UNC Board of Governors, the trustees and administrators at each institution, and the Legislature – in conducting the business of public higher education in North Carolina. “We need to have a recognition that each of our institutions and each of our roles is unique,” she said. “Those institutions are individualized and we have to understand those missions and hold everyone accountable in that unique way.”

Spellings took office March 1, with plans to visit every campus of the UNC system within her first 100 days. Her stop at WCU was the second on the statewide tour. She was elected president of the UNC system in October, succeeding Thomas W. Ross, who stepped down in January after five years in the post.

“By Bill Studenc MPA ’10

chief diversity officer begins role as advocate for inclusion

Ricardo Nazario-Colon began his duties as Western Carolina University’s chief diversity officer on June 1, following a yearlong search to find a campus champion for inclusion and diversity initiatives at the university. Previously he was the director of student activities, inclusion and leadership at Morehead State University. His hiring concluded a nationwide search for the university’s first chief diversity officer conducted by a campus committee chaired by Shean Brown, associate general counsel.

“I had 10 months of meetings with faculty, staff and students across the campus asking for their input on the characteristics they would like to see in the person who would fill this important position,” Provost Allison Morrison-Shetlar said. “They told me that the university needed someone who could successfully and diplomatically champion diversity; who views diversity as more than skin color but also in terms of language, disability, sexual preference and other personal attributes; someone with the skills to educate and train; and someone who can coordinate existing efforts but also has experience generating new initiatives. I am pleased to report that’s exactly what we have found in Ricardo Nazario-Colon.”

The appointment fulfills initiatives in the university’s “2020 Vision” strategic plan calling for increasing the diversity of the student body to serve the needs of the changing demographics of the region and state, and improving the diversity among faculty and staff.

Chancellor David O. Belcher announced in his August 2014 opening assembly the launching of an “an enhanced, in-it-for-the-long-haul commitment to diversity” that would include the budget-neutral creation of a position to lead diversity efforts on campus.

“The position at WCU, which represents a restructuring of an equal opportunity and diversity programs directorship previously held by Henry Wong, is similar to others across the University of North Carolina system. The appointment of Nazario-Colon comes during a period of heightened awareness and increased conversation about issues of race and diversity across the nation, in North Carolina and on campus.”

“This position represents a major leap for the institution,” Nazario-Colon said. “By establishing a position that will shape the work of diversity, Western Carolina University recognizes how vital diversity continues to be to the educational experience.”

By Bill Studenc MPA ’10

vice chancellor for development, alumni engagement joins WCU

Lori A. Lewis, an advancement executive with nearly 20 years of experience in development and alumni affairs in higher education, joined Western Carolina University in June to lead its fundraising efforts. Lewis, formerly vice president for institutional advancement at McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland, is WCU’s vice chancellor for development and alumni engagement. She fills a vacancy created by the departure of Jim Miller, who is now executive director of development for regional and major gifts programs in the Office of University Development at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Lori Lewis possesses exactly the skill set, the experience and the vision the university needs to take our development efforts to the next level,” Belcher said. “Lori will build upon the solid foundation already in place as we gear up for our upcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign and as we endeavor to increase the number of endowed scholarships to provide financial assistance to deserving students.”

Lewis’ primary responsibilities will be to design and implement strategies for development and alumni engagement initiatives at the university and college levels, build and lead the staffs and volunteers needed to support university fundraising activities, and support the chancellor and other key internal and volunteer leaders in their work with top donors and donor prospects. She will work closely with leadership in the Catamount Athletics office on fundraising efforts in support of the intercollegiate sports program.

“I see my role as vice chancellor for development and alumni engagement as twofold: advise campus leadership on all aspects of development and alumni affairs, and effectively promote internal and external support of the university’s mission as correlated with giving and engagement goals,” she said.

By Bill Studenc MPA ’10
Operations center and monitors the campus emergency services, from his emergency (above), director of (inset) participates Shane Stovall preparedness exercise. Services at Western Carolina University evaluate current strategies and tactics exercise in May. has gone through over the last several years, said Shane Stovall, WCU’s director of emergency services. Stovall, hired in August 2015, is responsible for the development of personnel, plans, processes and systems to provide for safety, protection and preparedness. That means for people and property on the main campus in Cullowhee, as well as WCU facilities in Cherokee and at Biltmore Park in Asheville, and at Highlands Biological Station. In addition to personnel from WCU, the exercise involved the State Bureau of Investigation, Jackson County Office of Emergency Management, Cullowhee Volunteer Fire Department and Harris Emergency Medical Services. The exercise was facilitated by EnviroSafe Consulting, a Burlington-based company specializing in helping organizations in their preparedness, emergency response and regulatory compliance programs.

“We want to make people feel safe and actually be safe,” Stovall said. “It is similar to managing a small city. Our challenge is it’s a largely rotating population. Every year, we have students who have been here before and others who have not. So that’s where a culture of outreach and communication is so important for safety measures, providing the information needed to know your surroundings and taking the steps to take care of yourself. We want students, staff, faculty and visitors to be aware of their surroundings, to report suspicious activities and be an active partner in campus safety.”

By Geoff Cantrell

Emergency Services Plans, trains for ‘when things go wrong’

EMERGENCY SERVICES PLANS, TRAINS FOR ‘WHEN THINGS GO WRONG’

Staff in the Department of Emergency Services at Western Carolina University stand ready for a long list of situations, most in the category of “when things go wrong.” Consider the descriptive words that can be found in their work plan: “catastrophe, disaster, imminent danger.”

There is a constant vigil to prevent harm and provide or coordinate assistance when needed, which means being ready for a long list of situations, such as natural hazards, man-made hazards and technological hazards. Part of their preparation was a campus-wide disaster preparedness exercise in May.

The exercise, which involved a simulated “active shooter” incident on campus, was held to help law enforcement agencies, emergency responders and university officials evaluate current strategies and tactics relating to emergencies and disaster. It was a capstone to a series of exercises that the university has gone through over the last several years, said Shane Stovall, WCU’s director of emergency services.

Stovall, hired in August 2015, is responsible for the development of personnel, plans, processes and systems to provide for safety, protection and preparedness. That means for people and property on the main campus in Cullowhee, as well as WCU facilities in Cherokee and at Biltmore Park in Asheville, and at Highlands Biological Station.

In addition to personnel from WCU, the exercise involved the State Bureau of Investigation, Jackson County Office of Emergency Management, Cullowhee Volunteer Fire Department and Harris Emergency Medical Services. The exercise was facilitated by EnviroSafe Consulting, a Burlington-based company specializing in helping organizations in their preparedness, emergency response and regulatory compliance programs.

“We want to make people feel safe and actually be safe,” Stovall said. “It is similar to managing a small city. Our challenge is it’s a largely rotating population. Every year, we have students who have been here before and others who have not. So that’s where a culture of outreach and communication is so important for safety measures, providing the information needed to know your surroundings and taking the steps to take care of yourself. We want students, staff, faculty and visitors to be aware of their surroundings, to report suspicious activities and be an active partner in campus safety.”

By Geoff Cantrell

Distinguished Professors Appointed

Two distinguished members of the Western Carolina University faculty now have the word “distinguished” as part of their official titles following action by the Board of Trustees in March appointing them to endowed professorship positions.

The trustees approved Lisa Bloom, a professor in WCU’s School of Teaching and Learning, as the Jay M. Robinson Distinguished Professor in Educational Technologies, and Todd Collins, associate professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, as the inaugural David and Lois Steed Distinguished Professor in Public Policy.

Established in 1997, the Robinson Professorship is designed to attract or retain experts from the educational or corporate sectors who are using electronic technologies to enhance the teaching and learning process. It is named in honor of Jay Robinson, the late former chairman of the State Board of Education and brother of the late H.F. “Cotton” Robinson, who served as WCU chancellor from 1974 to 1984.

The professorship is endowed at more than $500,000 with a combination of contributions from the late former president of the UNC system, C.D. Spangler Jr., and matching state funds. Bloom said her new position will allow the university to prepare educators to incorporate new technologies in learning at all levels – preschool through high school and beyond. “WCU has always been a leader in preparing and supporting P-16 education, and I am looking forward to continuing and building on that tradition,” she said.

The Steed Professorship is designed to attract or retain an individual with a record of public service and proven capability in teaching and research who can guide the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs’ efforts to enhance the quality of life in the region by forming effective partnerships to elevate the policy dialogue and increasing the expertise of government and nonprofit professionals.

The professorship, endowed at $1 million, was created through a combination of a $250,000 gift by David and Lois Steed of Mooresville, $250,000 from the C.D. Spangler Foundation and $500,000 in matching state funds. David Steed ‘73, who enjoyed a 37-year career with home improvement retailer Lowe’s, made the gift to WCU with his wife Emily in memory of their mothers, Erlene Steed and Gladys Bennett.

Collins said he is honored to be the first person to hold the professorship. “Our region is one of great beauty, wonderful people and a rich culture,” he said. “However, it is a place that also faces some difficult challenges. Through the STEED DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS APPONNTED

A Burlington-based company specializing in helping organizations in their preparedness, emergency response and regulatory compliance programs.

“We want to make people feel safe and actually be safe,” Stovall said. “It is similar to managing a small city. Our challenge is it’s a largely rotating population. Every year, we have students who have been here before and others who have not. So that’s where a culture of outreach and communication is so important for safety measures, providing the information needed to know your surroundings and taking the steps to take care of yourself. We want students, staff, faculty and visitors to be aware of their surroundings, to report suspicious activities and be an active partner in campus safety.”

By Geoff Cantrell

Distinguished Professors Appointed

Two distinguished members of the Western Carolina University faculty now have the word “distinguished” as part of their official titles following action by the Board of Trustees in March appointing them to endowed professorship positions.

The trustees approved Lisa Bloom, a professor in WCU’s School of Teaching and Learning, as the Jay M. Robinson Distinguished Professor in Educational Technologies, and Todd Collins, associate professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, as the inaugural David and Lois Steed Distinguished Professor in Public Policy.

Established in 1997, the Robinson Professorship is designed to attract or retain experts from the educational or corporate sectors who are using electronic technologies to enhance the teaching and learning process. It is named in honor of Jay Robinson, the late former chairman of the State Board of Education and brother of the late H.F. “Cotton” Robinson, who served as WCU chancellor from 1974 to 1984.

The professorship is endowed at more than $500,000 with a combination of contributions from the late former president of the UNC system, C.D. Spangler Jr., and matching state funds. Bloom said her new position will allow the university to prepare educators to incorporate new technologies in learning at all levels – preschool through high school and beyond. “WCU has always been a leader in preparing and supporting P-16 education, and I am looking forward to continuing and building on that tradition,” she said.

The Steed Professorship is designed to attract or retain an individual with a record of public service and proven capability in teaching and research who can guide the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs’ efforts to enhance the quality of life in the region by forming effective partnerships to elevate the policy dialogue and increasing the expertise of government and nonprofit professionals.

The professorship, endowed at $1 million, was created through a combination of a $250,000 gift by David and Lois Steed of Mooresville, $250,000 from the C.D. Spangler Foundation and $500,000 in matching state funds. David Steed ‘73, who enjoyed a 37-year career with home improvement retailer Lowe’s, made the gift to WCU with his wife Emily in memory of their mothers, Erlene Steed and Gladys Bennett.

Collins said he is honored to be the first person to hold the professorship. “Our region is one of great beauty, wonderful people and a rich culture,” he said. “However, it is a place that also faces some difficult challenges. Through the

By Randall Holcombe

Lisa Bloom (top) and Todd Collins (bottom)
WHEE LEAD’ ALUMNI CHALLENGE EXCEEDS GOALS

The Whee Lead Alumni Challenge kicked off March 29, with a goal to secure 400 new or returning alumni donors by April 22. The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs reports that the challenge exceeded that goal, with 443 alumni contributing $66,444 for student scholarships and academic programming. Their generosity benefitted students through the North Carolina System in recognition of their efforts, thanks to the leadership of the Board of Trustees and WCU’s Board of Trustees and Foundation Board also pledged to contribute another $20,000 or more if the challenge were achieved. The goal was met by April 22, as donors increased their contributions to $69,605, bringing the total to $133,658.“I am inspired by those who step forward to make this challenge a success,” said Davis Sims ’78, Foundation chairman. “Their action is an affirmation that we can achieve great things together.”

Lander Family Endowed Athletic Scholarship, for student-athletes on the baseball team or men’s and women’s golf team, donors represented by Reese Lasker ’73 and Ernie Lasker ’77.

Rowan and Maria Kim Endowed Scholarship Fund, for student athletes on the football team, donors represented by Pam DeGrazio ’93.

John and Doreen Bell Endowed Scholarship, for in-state students pursuing degrees in the College of Arts and Sciences with demonstrated financial need; donor John Bell.

Georg E. and Ann A. Summers Endowed Scholarship, for first-generation college students from the westernmost counties of North Carolina with demonstrated financial need; donors George E. and Ann A. Summers.

Michael and Elizabeth Gillespie Endowed Scholarship, for students majoring in graphic design, visual arts or performing arts; donors Michael Gillespie ’70 and Elizabeth Gillespie.

Dr. Frank Ouel Smith Endowed Scholarship, for first-generation students from the eight westernmost counties of North Carolina majoring in the health sciences, donor Frank Ouel Smith ’83.

Lomnic and Nafila Beng Memorial Hons Endowed Scholarship, for Honor College students with demonstrated financial need; donors Mark Beng ’86 and Kelly Beng.

Steve White Family Endowed Athletic Scholarship, for student-athletes on the football team; donors Steve White ’67 and Elaine White March ’73.

Dr. John Franklyn Jacobus Endowed Graduate Scholarship, for graduate students in the College of Education and Allied Professions: K-12 education, key role WCUs role in their lives. Alumni support - a key giving level - is vital in ensuring the university fulfills its mission of creating learning opportunities that sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina University and beyond. It’s a big mission that calls on support from engaged alumni to fulfill.

Those who missed out on participating in the alumni challenge or who want to continue their support can make a donation at any time. To make a contribution or learn more about the Whee Lead Alumni Challenge, go to wheel.wcu.edu or call 828.227.2868.

By Geoff Cantrell

WCU chemistry lab.

Carmen Huffman, associate professor of chemistry at Western Carolina University, was named one of the premiere teachers in the University of North Carolina system in recognition of her superior ability to teach some of the more difficult chemistry courses on campus, while also challenging her students to have the courage to seek answers for themselves.

Carmen Huffman, associate professor of chemistry at Western Carolina University, was named one of the premiere teachers in the University of North Carolina system in recognition of her superior ability to teach some of the more difficult chemistry courses on campus, while also challenging her students to have the courage to seek answers for themselves.

Huffman says part of what keeps her motivated as a teacher is that her work is ever-changing, always with something new to try to help her students learn. But an even greater motivation for her are the interactions she has with them. “Each student has unique strengths and weaknesses, and I love working with them on their own personal journeys of learning chemistry and developing as a lifetime learner,” she said. “Each day, I learn chemistry. I learn more about education, and I learn more about the human spirit. What more could I ask for?”

Huffman began teaching at WCU in August 2005, shortly after receiving her doctorate in chemistry at the University of Maryland. “Like many professors, the inspiration for my career stems from my personal journey. From high school to college, to knowing more chemistry, I learn more about life.”

In her classroom, Huffman seeks to prepare students for their careers by emphasizing “transferable skills” that cross disciplinary boundaries, such as good communications skills and the ability to work with groups of people. Her physical chemistry lab is a writing-intensive course in which students were a proposal, carry out an experiment, prepare a report, and present their findings to the class orally.

HUFFMAN RECEIVES EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

By Kendall Holcombe

SCHLOSSERS CREATE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN MEMORY OF SON

The legacy of the late son of a Western Carolina University alumnus and her husband lives on, thanks to an endowed scholarship fund the Greensboro couple established to honor their child’s love for learning. Rebecca Neather Schlosser ’73 and Michael Schlosser (left) recently made gifts totaling $80,000 to create the David E. W. Schlosser Endowed Scholarship Fund, which will provide support to students with demonstrated financial need.

David Schlosser died unexpectedly in 2011, nine days after graduating from Elon University. “Life doesn’t always turn out exactly the way you planned, but this will give us the opportunity to enjoy helping other students succeed and pursue their academic dreams,” Rebecca Schlosser said. “This will honor our son’s relentless ambition, zeal for learning, pursuit of creative ideas, entrepreneurial spirit and love of tutoring others, especially those who are less fortunate.”

The endowed fund will provide scholarship assistance annually to a student in WCU’s Honors College, a residential academic community of more than 1,400 high-achieving students. Honors College Dean Jill Granger said the gift will strengthen the college’s programs and reputation by helping recruit high-achieving students across North Carolina to WCU.

“This gift, they are lifting up our Western Carolina students, providing needed access that will afford bright young people with infinite potential and talents the opportunity to learn and live in this community of scholars,” Granger said. “Rebecca and Michael realize how great our need is for additional scholarships in attracting and retaining some of North Carolina’s best students to Western. With this scholarship endowment, we can be confident that it will help students who want to come to WCU make that dream a reality, now and well into the future.”

The fund entitles the Schlossers to naming the latest in a series of new endowed scholarships at WCU since the installation of David O. Belcher as chancellor in March 2012. During his installation address, Belcher identified raising funds for endowed scholarships as the top philanthropic priority for WCU. Through endowments of at least $25,000, scholarship assistance can be awarded on an annual and ongoing basis. New endowed scholarship funds established between October 2015 and June 2016.

Scholars must meet demonstrated financial need and be selected by the Scholarship Committee. Interested students should apply to the Office of Financial Aid where they will be given a financial aid package and scholarship offer(s) if they qualify.

By Kendall Holcombe
ACCOUNTING FIRM ANNOUNCES $1 MILLION GIFT

Western Carolina University has renamed the accounting program in its College of Business as the Dixon Hughes Goodman Accountancy Program in recognition of gifts and pledges totaling $1 million from several WCU alumni who are partners in one of the top 20 public accounting firms in the U.S.

The gifts, announced last December, are an external demonstration of Dixon Hughes Goodman’s gratitude for what its partners called WCU’s “longstanding commitment to educate and develop business leaders, especially in the accounting profession, and in recognition of the impact that the university has made in the Carolinas and beyond,” said Ken Hughes ’74, DHG chairman. “As an alumnus of WCU’s accounting program, I am proud that we are able to give back in a significant way,” said Hughes. “WCU’s legacy of developing accounting and business leaders is greatly important to me, as many of our partners, employees and clients are graduates of the program. I hope that DHG’s gift will help ensure the perpetuation of qualified professionals in the accounting profession for many years to come.”

The contributions will enable the College of Business to support student success through a variety of initiatives including professional study grants to assist students with expenses associated with internship experiences, international study support to assist students participating in an academic experience abroad, support for students to participate in academic competitions and research, professional development programs, summer study grants, and fellowships and scholarships, said WCU Chancellor David O. Belcher.

“Western Carolina University is in the business of changing lives, and with the financial support of friends like those at Dixon Hughes Goodman, with their passion, energy, advocacy and commitment, we are able to change even more lives – and change those lives by an even greater degree,” Belcher said. “Ultimately, our mission is to teach, to support and to inspire our students to greatness. Our success is manifest in the success that our graduates achieve – graduates like Ken Hughes and other members of the Dixon Hughes Goodman family who have made this significant financial commitment to our university.”

Hillary Fearrington ’14, a WCU graduate student working on her master’s degree in accountancy, credited her internship with Dixon Hughes Goodman with helping provide her with the experience and skills she will need in her professional career. “It was able to incorporate the basic skills and knowledge I learned in my undergraduate classes and build on those to become more proficient in the fields of audit and tax,” said Fearrington. “I was not always given easy, basic work to complete but DHG challenged my knowledge by having me apply what I learned to the real world. I continue to be grateful for the experiences DHG has offered me in the public accounting field and cannot wait to begin my career with them in the coming year.”

NANOTECH ANIMATION GARNERS ATTENTION

The National Nanotechnology Initiative released “What is Nanotechnology?” video project includes (from left) Matthew Turnmire, ’16, sound engineer; Justin Warren, animation; School of Music assistant professor Darren Sink; and School of Art Design associate professor Mary Anna LaFratta.

Western Carolina University students designed and created animated videos to explain nanotechnology and its importance that received significant national attention. Three 60-second informative videos, “What is Nanotechnology?”, “Nanotechnology and Your Health” and “Nanotechnology Materials,” were produced in a motion graphics class (Art 460) taught by Mary Anna LaFratta, associate professor in the WCU School of Art and Design.

The National Nanotechnology Initiative released “What is Nanotechnology?” as part of the first in a series to show how it is possible to both educate and inspire students through nanotechnology. The videos, produced by WCU student Justin Warren, was subsequently included on a White House blog and the Science Matters website, as well as National Public Radio’s “Community Ideas Stations.” It aired on two Public Broadcasting Service TV stations in central Virginia and was shared via social media platforms.

Each animation explains the significance of studying the super-small - a nanometer is a standard unit for measuring things as tiny as atoms and molecules - for health and medical research, computer science, manufacturing and natural sciences. The National Science and Technology Council has identified nanotechnology as one of the emerging general-purpose technologies that, like electricity and the internet, will have a pervasive impact on the economy and society, with the ability to create entirely new industries, create jobs and increase productivity.

The many facets and daily life applications of nanotechnology as presented by the animations is meant to inspire students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Professors and students in WCU’s Communication Department and School of Music joined with the School of Art and Design class to compose original music, record voice-overs and build animation sequences.

SA President Plans To Listen, Enhance Inclusion

Baron Crawford, the new president of Western Carolina University’s Student Government Association, sees some of the challenges of his term of office reflecting national trends, socially and politically.

Crawford, a rising senior from Gastonia, is a communication major with a concentration in public relations and a minor in Spanish. Previously vice president of SGA, Crawford’s election as SGA president comes as the university is grappling with issues related to free speech and diversity that have included anonymous postings on campus sidewalks during the spring semester. Some of the social media messages are racist, hurtful, offensive and frightening to many members of the campus community.

In spite of the rhetoric and recent news headlines, Crawford, who is African-American, said he does not feel there is a racial divide on campus. “Sure, students like people anywhere come together in groups, as friends outside the classroom, because of shared backgrounds and similar interests, and can relate to one another. If you’re from a place or have an interest or identity, you gravitate toward others like you. That creates a community, but we’re collectively part of a bigger community - the Catamount community. Part of coming to college is about coming together with people who aren’t like you, opening your eyes to things.”

SFC President Plans To Listen, Enhance Inclusion

Darwin Ramsey ’16, Brace Talley ’16 and Reagan Henry ’15 (from left) are among the students in the program benefiting from the gift presented by Ken Hughes ’74.

New SGA President looks to improve the sense of campus community.

Baron Crawford, the new president of Western Carolina University’s Student Government Association, sees some of the challenges of his term of office reflecting national trends, socially and politically.

Crawford, a rising senior from Gastonia, is a communication major with a concentration in public relations and a minor in Spanish. Previously vice president of SGA, Crawford’s election as SGA president comes as the university is grappling with issues related to free speech and diversity that have included anonymous postings on social media platforms and chalked messages on campus sidewalks during the spring semester. Some of the social media messages are racist, hurtful, offensive and frightening to many members of the campus community.

In spite of the rhetoric and recent news headlines, Crawford, who is African-American, said he does not feel there is a racial divide on campus. “Sure, students like people anywhere come together in groups, as friends outside the classroom, because of shared backgrounds and similar interests, and can relate to one another. If you’re from a place or have an interest or identity, you gravitate toward others like you. That creates a community, but we’re collectively part of a bigger community - the Catamount community. Part of coming to college is about coming together with people who aren’t like you, opening your eyes to things.”
CATAMOUNTS EARN FIRST NCAA BASEBALL TOURNAMENT APPEARANCE SINCE 2007 BY WINNING CONFERENCE CROWN

By BOB BERGMAN

Last fall, during his first scrimmage with the Western Carolina baseball team, infielder Nobu Suzuki got out of the way when it appeared he was going to be hit by a pitch. The next day, Catamounts assistant coach Todd Guilliams had a chat with the player, who had transferred from Skyline Junior College in northern California.

“He told me we don’t move. It will help us win the championship,” said Suzuki, who was born in Connecticut but spent most of his early years in Japan before returning to America for his senior year in high school.

Fast forward to May 29 at Fluor Field, in Greenville, South Carolina. It’s the bottom of the ninth inning in the winner-take-all game for the Southern Conference championship between Mercer and WCU. Score tied at 2, bases loaded and Suzuki is at the plate. The first pitch sails directly toward Suzuki, a right-handed hitter. He rolls into the pitch, taking it on the left thigh. Matt Smith scores from third, and the Cats win 3-2 to advance to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2007.

“My first day last fall, (Moranda) had a meeting,” Suzuki recalled. “I got hit, I lost my mind. I didn’t know what was going on.”

When Suzuki finished junior college, he told his coach he wanted to play for a Division I program. Moranda was looking for an infielder and, through connections he has in California, wanted to play for a Division I program. Moranda was at the plate, taking it on the left thigh. Matt Smith scores from third, and the Cats win 3-2 to advance to the NCAA championship game, said Suzuki. “I never thought I would have that opportunity to do something for the team. To be honest, being hit by a pitch was the last thing I expected to happen. After I got hit, I lost my mind. I didn’t know what was going on.”

Suzuki was hit eight times this past season. As a team, the Cats had first base bag 94 times without getting hit by a pitch. That’s a number that pleases head coach Bobby Moranda, who has stats that show the more times you’re hit, the better chance you have of winning. “We don’t try to get hit,” Moranda said. “We’re giving them the proper way to roll into it, which is the safest way, looking the other way. That’s exactly what Nobu did.”

“Thirty-plus years ago when our program wasn’t so good, we decided to focus on the 4x400 relay,” Williamson said. “We wanted people to think we were good, and most people remember the last thing they saw at a meet – so we wanted to be good at that. Not a lot of people want to run it, to be honest, because it hurts. But our kids take pride in it … so I was calm. I knew we had a shot because of who we had on the track.

Indeed, that foursome (Corinna Archie-McMillan ’16, Tayla Carter, Sage Profitt and Bri Anne Adams) smoked the rest of the field to help Western Carolina’s women join the men atop the podium. WCU was leading Samford by 1.5 points going into the final and pivotal event.

“Thirty-plus years ago when our program wasn’t so good, we decided to focus on the 4x400 relay,” Williamson said. “We wanted people to think we were good, and most people remember the last thing they saw at a meet – so we wanted to be good at that. Not a lot of people want to run it, to be honest, because it hurts. But our kids take pride in it … so I was calm. I knew we had a shot because of who we had on the track.

Indeed, that foursome (Corinna Archie-McMillan ’16, Tayla Carter, Sage Profitt and Bri Anne Adams) smoked the rest of the field to help Western Carolina’s women join the men atop the podium. WCU was leading Samford by 1.5 points going into the final and pivotal event.

“There was a lot of pressure, but we had trained all year for it,” said Carter, who also won the individual 160- and 200-meter titles for the fourth straight year while running a leg on the winning 4x400 relay squad. “We knew once we stepped out on the track that we had to win for the team.”

While WCU’s women scored a 255-251.5 victory over Samford, the Catamounts men overcame a one-point deficit at the start of the meet’s second day and cruised to a 93-point victory over VMI. Though Williamson wasn’t sure how many SoCon team championships the Catamounts have won since his first season as an assistant coach in the program, has been named interim head coach, said Randy Eaton, WCU director of athletics.

“Thirty-plus years ago when our program wasn’t so good, we decided to focus on the 4x400 relay,” Williamson said. “We wanted people to think we were good, and most people remember the last thing they saw at a meet – so we wanted to be good at that. Not a lot of people want to run it, to be honest, because it hurts. But our kids take pride in it … so I was calm. I knew we had a shot because of who we had on the track.

Indeed, that foursome (Corinna Archie-McMillan ’16, Tayla Carter, Sage Profitt and Bri Anne Adams) smoked the rest of the field to help Western Carolina’s women join the men atop the podium. WCU was leading Samford by 1.5 points going into the final and pivotal event.

“There was a lot of pressure, but we had trained all year for it,” said Carter, who also won the individual 160- and 200-meter titles for the fourth straight year while running a leg on the winning 4x400 relay squad. “We knew once we stepped out on the track that we had to win for the team.”

While WCU’s women scored a 255-251.5 victory over Samford, the Catamounts men overcame a one-point deficit at the start of the meet’s second day and cruised to a 93-point victory over VMI. Though Williamson wasn’t sure how many SoCon team championships the Catamounts have won since his first season as an assistant coach in the program, has been named interim head coach, said Randy Eaton, WCU director of athletics.

“Thirty-plus years ago when our program wasn’t so good, we decided to focus on the 4x400 relay,” Williamson said. “We wanted people to think we were good, and most people remember the last thing they saw at a meet – so we wanted to be good at that. Not a lot of people want to run it, to be honest, because it hurts. But our kids take pride in it … so I was calm. I knew we had a shot because of who we had on the track.

Indeed, that foursome (Corinna Archie-McMillan ’16, Tayla Carter, Sage Profitt and Bri Anne Adams) smoked the rest of the field to help Western Carolina’s women join the men atop the podium. WCU was leading Samford by 1.5 points going into the final and pivotal event.

“There was a lot of pressure, but we had trained all year for it,” said Carter, who also won the individual 160- and 200-meter titles for the fourth straight year while running a leg on the winning 4x400 relay squad. “We knew once we stepped out on the track that we had to win for the team.”

While WCU’s women scored a 255-251.5 victory over Samford, the Catamounts men overcame a one-point deficit at the start of the meet’s second day and cruised to a 93-point victory over VMI. Though Williamson wasn’t sure how many SoCon team championships the Catamounts have won since his first season as an assistant coach in the program, has been named interim head coach, said Randy Eaton, WCU director of athletics.
Larry Hunter at Western Carolina, Waginger has been on the sidelines for the Catamounts since his graduation. He spent the 2010-11 season as the director of basketball operations before assuming a full-time coaching role in the summer of 2011. Following the 2014-15 season, Waginger was promoted to the program’s recruiting coordinator.

“I am happy to see Brigham get this recognition. He is an outstanding young coach with a bright future in the coaching field. He is a very hard worker, intelligent, knowledgeable, a good teacher, an insatiable learner, and passionate about coaching and the game of basketball,” said Hunter.

Through five seasons on the sidelines, Waginger has proved to be a valuable asset to the program in both player development and in game planning, especially in the areas of scouting, Hunter said. With Waginger on the sideline under Hunter’s tutelage, WCU has won 81 games, advancing to two Southern Conference tournament championship games. Last season, the Catamounts earned a post-season berth for just the third time in program history, accepting a bid in the College Basketball Invitational.

Known for his tough, hard-nosed play on the court during his four-year career at WCU, Waginger finished with 810 points including 27 double-digit scoring outputs. He shattered the school’s career steals benchmark for steals by 64, finishing with 285 career thefts, well above the previous record of 221 held by WCU Hall of Famer Henry Logan. His 285 career steals rank third in SoCon history.

Through five seasons on the sidelines, Waginger has proved to be a valuable asset to the program in both player development and in game planning, especially in the areas of scouting, Hunter said. With Waginger on the sideline under Hunter’s tutelage, WCU has won 81 games, advancing to two Southern Conference tournament championship games. Last season, the Catamounts earned a post-season berth for just the third time in program history, accepting a bid in the College Basketball Invitational.

Known for his tough, hard-nosed play on the court during his four-year career at WCU, Waginger finished with 810 points including 27 double-digit scoring outputs. He shattered the school’s career steals benchmark for steals by 64, finishing with 285 career thefts, well above the previous record of 221 held by WCU Hall of Famer Henry Logan. His 285 career steals rank third in SoCon history.

30 SOMETHING

ASSISTANT BASKETBALL COACH IS NAMED AN ‘UP-AND-COMER’

By SEAN FORRESTER

Western Carolina men’s assistant basketball coach Brigham Waginger ’08 was named to the Under Armour “30-under-30” team as selected and released by the National Association of Basketball Coaches. The announcement was made during the organization’s annual convention held in conjunction with the 2016 NCAA Men’s Final Four. The “30-under-30” team is designed to highlight and recognize up-and-coming basketball coaches across the nation. A former four-year standout on the basketball court under head coach Dave kesאיor, Amy Manshack and Jessica Graning, assistant professor and academic coordinator of clinical education in WCU’s Department of Physical Therapy.

DANCE SENSATION

Competing against 20 Division I teams, the WCU Dance Team made the finals in the National Choreleaders Association/National Dance Alliance’s annual Collegiate Cheer and Dance Championships, held this year at Daytona Beach, Florida, on April 8, the Catamount squad placed third – WCU’s best results to date – performing a contemporary jazz routine dedicated to the mother of junior dancer Kristan Dotson, Teresa Dotson, who lost her battle with colon cancer last year. The squad is coached by Lindsi Cauley ’13, Amy Manshack and Jessica Graning, assistant professor and academic coordinator of clinical education in WCU’s Department of Physical Therapy.

ON THE FAST TRACK

THE CATAMOUNTS AND BUCCANEERS WILL RENEW THEIR FOOTBALL RIVALRY AT BRISTOL MOTOR SPEEDWAY

By DANIEL HOOKER ’01

Catamounts, start your engines! Western Carolina football’s road game against East Tennessee State University will be played at Bristol Motor Speedway, hailed as the “Last Great Colosseum,” when the Catamounts battle ETSU on Saturday, Sept. 17, for the Buccaneers’ first Southern Conference football game since 2003.

ETSU, which is coming off its first football season in 12 years, played in an NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Independent last fall. In 2016, the Bucs will play a full SoCon schedule, with the meeting with WCU representing their first league game.

“We are, first of all, very excited about the renewal of the Southern Conference football rivalry between Western Carolina and ETSU,” said WCU head football coach Mark Speir. MAEd ‘95, who has guided the Catamounts to consecutive seven-win seasons. “We’re looking forward to being the first SoCon team to welcome Buccaneer football back to the SoCon and to be able to do so in such a storied American sports venue like Bristol Motor Speedway is an awesome opportunity for both of our programs.”

Bristol is an iconic emblem in one of America’s most popular sports, Speir said. “It’s especially cool for me, a guy from Kannapolis who grew up in the heart of NASCAR country and has been a fan all my life, to have our team compete on that stage in what will be transformed into college football’s largest stadium. This is a great opportunity for our program and our fans.”

ETSU head coach Carl Torbush echoed Speir’s thoughts on the historic event. “We are very excited about this opportunity to play at Bristol Motor Speedway,” said Torbush. “Not only will this be a historic event for the schools, but also our fans, the conference and FCS Football. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our players, coaches, staff, university and fans.”

Bristol Motor Speedway is less than 20 miles away from the ETSU campus, and is approximately 127 miles – or two hours and 15 minutes of drive time – from WCU’s Cullowhee campus. East Tennessee State is playing its other home football games at nearby Science Hill High School in Johnson City, Tennessee, until its new football stadium is finished.

The Buccaneers will host the Catamounts at the 165,000-seat speedway one week after the University of Tennessee and Virginia Tech are expected to set a record for most fans at a collegiate football game.

WCU and ETSU have played a combined 45 times in the head-to-head series with the first meeting being held in 1932. The Catamounts hold a slim 23-21-1 edge in the all-time series, which has lain dormant since 2003. WCU won the most recent game, 28-21, in Johnson City, and has victories in three of the last four series meetings.
COACH CLASS

OHIO BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTS WCU'S LARRY HUNTER

By SEAN FORRESTER

Western Carolina men’s basketball coach Larry Hunter has joined the basketball greats in the state of Ohio after being selected to the Ohio Basketball Hall of Fame. The 11th annual induction took place May 21 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center.

In 45 seasons as a collegiate basketball coach – 30 of which were spent in the state of Ohio – Hunter has put together a resume deemed worthy of induction by officials at the hall of fame. He has been a part of 845 wins as a coach, including 680 as the leading man on the sideline. His 680 victories rank him ninth among active NCAA Division I coaches and 39th all-time, ahead of two giants of the sport he passed this season – John Wooden (664) and Gary Williams (668).

“I am very humbled and excited to receive this honor,” said Hunter. “As a coach, you can’t achieve anything without the help of others. This is a coaching recognition and obviously I am indebted to a great many players, assistant coaches, managers, trainers, administrators and support staff who worked extraordinarily hard to help make this possible. I have been fortunate to have worked at four outstanding institutions with leadership who value athletics and the student-athlete experience. While I’m the one being recognized, this is an honor I share with all those who have been by my side throughout this amazing journey.”

In his 25 years as a head coach in Ohio at Wittenberg University and Ohio University, Hunter amassed an incredible 509-224 record while winning the 1977 NCAA Division III National Championship and advancing to the 1983 National Championship game. He has advanced to 18 NCAA tournaments, including 11 as a head coach, and has suffered just nine losing seasons in his 36-year head coaching career.

After four seasons as assistant coach at NC State University, Hunter returned to the head coaching ranks in 2005, taking over WCU’s men’s basketball program. He has guided Western Carolina to just its second and third Southern Conference divisional titles, sharing both the 2008-09 and 2010-11 crowns with Chattanooga. He also led the Catamounts in setting a Ramsey Center record with 14 home wins in 2009-10, leading WCU to its first 20-plus win season that year as the Cats earned 22 victories.

PITCHER PERFECT

TAYLOR SIGMON MAKES WCU SOFTBALL HISTORY

By BOB BERGAUS

When Western Carolina pitcher Taylor Sigmon ’16 retired the last batter she faced in the opening game of a softball doubleheader against North Carolina A&T in April, she knew she had done something special. She just didn’t know how great it was until she saw coach Jim Clift bound out of the dugout a little quicker than usual after the 7-0 win.

“He was really excited and said, ‘You just threw a perfect game,’” she recalled. “I was like, ‘Oh thanks.’”

The last play was a bounce to the mound that Sigmon fielded, then threw to first for the 21st out. She knew she hadn’t allowed a hit, but wasn’t aware that no opposing player also had reached base.

“She did not know what was going on,” said Clift, who had informed his outfielders before the last inning not to let anything bounce in front of them. “Whom that last out happened, that probably startled her. A guy jumping off of a bucket, jumping into the air and running out to the line and giving her a big hug. I don’t hug my players like that.”

Sigmon became the first softball pitcher in school history to record a perfect game. She struck out 11 and had some big defensive plays behind her, most notably a hard-hit ball that shortstop Karley Harkey ’16 handled and a bounce up the middle that second baseman Crystal Cyr reached and then made the throw to first to get the runner.

“I definitely couldn’t have done it without my teammates because obviously I didn’t strike everyone out,” said Sigmon, from Catawba. “They were definitely making big plays behind me and those were a couple that stood out.”

Sigmon also reached a milestone when she drove in runs in the sixth inning of the same game, becoming the Catamounts’ career leader in RBIs with 101. “It was really more excited for my team because winning those two games meant we’d have a winning season for the first time since 2006,” said Sigmon.

“It was just a good day all around.”

The team finished the season with a 33-24 overall record and a third place in Southern Conference play.

ROOKIE BALL

Former Catamount baseball standout Tyler White broke into the big league in a big way as the 25-year-old rookie with the Houston Astros matched a pair of three-hit games, three home runs and nine RBIs in the first week of the season. His debut start, which included smashing a single on the road in Yankee Stadium in his first Major League at-bat, garnered the former Catawba shortstop a trip with American League Player of the Week honors. While, who began his baseball career at WCU as a walk-on, also appeared on the TV show “MLB Tonight” after earning his way into the Astros’ starting line-up. Above (from left), the MLB Network’s Ken Rosenthal, Brian Kenny and Al Leiter interview White and his WCU head coach, Bobby Moranda.
The Pride of the Mountains teams up with the University Participant Program to launch a national model for musical experiences for students with special needs.

Thanks to director of athletic bands David Starnes, Western Carolina University became the first university to form a chapter of the nonprofit organization United Sound, which provides musical performance experiences for students with special needs. It was nearly two years ago that Starnes, a trombone player through high school and college, approached United Sound founder Julie Duty to help put together a board for her nonprofit organization. At the time, United Sound catered to only middle and high school-aged students with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

After serving as chairman of the nonprofit’s board for about a year, Starnes came up with the idea of starting a university chapter for members of the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band, incorporating it with WCU’s University Participant Program, a two-year, on-campus living and learning experience for college-aged students with intellectual disabilities. Last fall, that idea became a reality.

“As soon as I mentioned it to our special education department, they said, ‘This is exactly what we’ve been looking for,’” Starnes said. “It’s changing some students’ minds from one branch of education to special ed who maybe have a musical background and they’ve merged the two of those together. It could be life changing for those people.”

Starnes saw that happen with chapter representatives Katelyn Johnson ’16 from Asheville and Sara Cope, a rising junior from Statesville. Both served as peer mentors for UP students.

Johnson, who received her bachelor’s degree in music performance and plans to pursue a master’s degree in music therapy, said she wants to continue working with those with special needs. “I knew that, in his hands, it would be the best possible first example of what it should look like and what it could be. There’s a huge part of the music education community that watches whatever David’s doing. And that’s exactly what has happened. We will be at five universities by this fall, and three of the four new ones only know about it from Western, having watched via social media what was going on there.”

Starnes said the program consists of two aspects. First, the peer mentors learn their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to teaching in adaptive education. Then, special needs students, or “new musicians” as they are called, not only learn to play an instrument but work toward a goal of performing in a live concert with their peer mentors.

The first concert was held in March in the recital hall of Coulter Building, where the new musicians teamed up with WCU’s Concert Band to perform “Risk Everything for a Dream,” a piece specifically designed to the United Sound national initiative. Last fall, the new musicians got a taste of performing in public as they played the fight song with WCU’s Pride of the Mountains Marching Band during the Homecoming football game.

During the program’s first year, 12 peer mentors worked with five new musicians. They met on Mondays from 7 to 9 p.m. The curriculum is based more on visual instruction rather than oral instruction, Starnes said. Johnson said the first 15 minutes of each meeting were usually spent playing a game or getting acquainted, with the final 30 minutes devoted to working on the music, with UP students often asking to stay later. Johnson said her favorite part was seeing the new musicians’ reactions to some of the things she tells them.

“I tried a lot of out-of-the-box teaching things to get them to do what I wanted them to do,” Johnson said. “I told one of the students to pretend he was blowing a paintball at me to get him to put enough air through the horn to make a noise, and he cracked up laughing and that immediately fixed everything. It was just a great to see him love it and to see it work.”

“I like to see their faces when they finally get something that they’ve been working hard toward,” Cope said. “Like if there’s a note that they’ve been struggling with and all of a sudden it clicks and they get it, to see those faces light up, it’s just an amazing feeling. They give us a lot of inspiration as the directors of the program. When we see how they react to the new methods they’re learning, it gives us more courage to want to do better as well.”

With the success United Sound had at WCU, Starnes said he would like to see it spread throughout the country. Duty said Marshall University has started the process for hosting a chapter this fall.

Under the direction of David Starnes (facing page), United Sound participants perform with The Pride of the Mountains Marching Band during the 2015 Homecoming football game.

“...it would be the best possible first example of what it should look like and what it could be.”

– United Sound founder Julie Duty

“I’m just so proud of Sara and Katelyn, I can’t stand it,” Starnes said. “This was a dream that happened a year-and-a-half ago, and then we thought, ‘Let’s just pilot it at the university level and see if it’ll work.’ Now that we know it will, I’ll bet I’ve gotten a dozen emails from university directors saying, ‘We heard this is happening, tell us about it,’ which is awesome. That means we did it right and the pilot didn’t crash the plane.”

Julie and I gave a presentation at the state music convention this past fall, and we couldn’t get out of the room with the number of teachers who wanted this at their schools. Our goal is to make this an optional part of every musical education curriculum,” he said. “WCU could be a beacon for a lot of schools around here to get involved with this.”

Not only was United Sound’s duty expected that Starnes wanted to bring a university chapter to Cullowhee, but she said she was confident WCU was the right university to test the example of how it should be done.

“I have just an unbelievable amount of respect and admiration for the music educator that David is,” Duty said. “I know that, in his hands, it would be the best possible first example of what it should look like and what it could be. There’s a huge part of the music education community that watches whatever David’s doing. And that’s exactly what has happened. We will be at five universities by this fall, and three of the four new ones only know about it from Western, having watched via social media what was going on there.”

Starnes said the program consists of two aspects. First, the peer mentors learn their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to teaching in adaptive education. Then, special needs students, or “new musicians” as they are called, not only learn to play an instrument but work toward a goal of performing in a live concert with their peer mentors.

The first concert was held in March in the recital hall of Coulter Building, where the new musicians teamed up with WCU’s Concert Band to perform “Risk Everything for a Dream,” a piece specifically designed to the United Sound national initiative. Last fall, the new musicians got a taste of performing in public as they played the fight song with WCU’s Pride of the Mountains Marching Band during the Homecoming football game.

During the program’s first year, 12 peer mentors worked with five new musicians. They met on Mondays from 7 to 9 p.m. The curriculum is based more on visual instruction rather than oral instruction, Starnes said.

Johnson said the first 15 minutes of each meeting were usually spent playing a game or getting acquainted, with the final 30 minutes devoted to working on the music, with UP students often asking to stay later. Johnson said her favorite part was seeing the new musicians’ reactions to some of the things she tells them.

“I tried a lot of out-of-the-box teaching things to get them to do what I wanted them to do,” Johnson said. “I told one of the students to pretend he was blowing a paintball at me to get him to put enough air through the horn to make a noise, and he cracked up laughing and that immediately fixed everything. It was just a
After the polls closed on North Carolina’s primary election day last March 15, the state’s residents tuned in to media reports to find out who the winners were, in terms of political party nominees. But the students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of Western Carolina University had another reason to sit on the edge of their seats as the vote results were tallied – election day also included a referendum on a $2 billion state bond issue containing $110 million for replacement of WCU’s four-decades-old Natural Sciences Building. As the votes were counted, the numbers quickly took a positive turn for WCU, with just shy of two-thirds of voters giving the thumbs-up to the bond issue. The final result: future Catamounts win, by a landslide.

Jay Strum ‘87 and his wife, Susan Strum ‘87, were among the WCU alumni keeping close tabs on the referendum. “We were watching TV and following along on the internet as well. It was very quickly apparent that (the bond) had enough votes to pass,” Jay Strum said. “We were elated and proud to be North Carolinians. The bond approval showed that we care about investing in infrastructure and providing a quality education to all students, regardless of background or socioeconomic status. And we were ecstatic that WCU is getting a badly needed new science building.”

Jay Strum earned bachelor’s degrees in both chemistry and biology at WCU. He says he was strongly influenced as a student by Roger Lumb, now a retired professor emeritus of biology, and he spent a lot of time in the current Natural Sciences Building, which then was a relatively new facility. “I spent many days and nights in his lab learning to perform biochemical research,” Strum said. “I made a lot of mistakes, but Roger would always say, ‘Well, you’ll never do that again.’” Strum left WCU and went on to earn his doctorate in biochemistry at Wake Forest School of Medicine. He is now chief scientific officer and a member of the management team at GI Therapeutics, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company in Research Triangle Park that focuses on the discovery and development of new treatments for cancer. Prior to joining GI Therapeutics as its first employee, Strum led drug discovery programs in cancer and metabolic diseases at pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline. The current rapid rate of scientific discovery requires universities to quickly incorporate new knowledge into their training of future scientists, Strum said. “The need to have a state-of-the-art facility is critical. This new building, coupled with the high quality of WCU’s faculty and students, will better prepare the students for advanced degree programs and will provide them an advantage when competing in the job market,” he said.

Floyd “Ski” Chilton ‘80 says he “practically lived” in the Natural Sciences Building and Hunter Library during his junior and senior years at WCU. After receiving his bachelor’s degree in biology, Chilton also earned his doctorate in biochemistry at Wake Forest School of Medicine. He is now a professor of physiology and pharmacology at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. Chilton said he was among those keeping a close watch on the referendum vote tally. “It was hard for me to imagine that Western Carolina could have reached its potential and purpose as an institution without this new science facility,” he said. “So many of the critical things we do as a society funneled through the basic sciences, and those sciences and the informatics associated with them now is so dramatically different from 40 years ago. With so many degree programs at WCU depending on students learning cutting-edge basic science, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for WCU to have maintained its leadership position in all those areas in Western North Carolina without the new science building. I’m so thankful that the people of North Carolina recognized that.”

Another WCU alumnus was watching the referendum vote with high anticipation from his home several miles from campus. Richard Starnes ‘92 MA ‘94, dean of the university’s College of Arts and Sciences, earned degrees in history at WCU but, like so many thousands of other alumni of the university, took general education courses in the Natural Sciences Building. For Starnes, it was chemistry in Room 208 and astronomy in the auditorium. “I see this new structure as the campus’ next evolution,” he said during a moment of reflection from the dean’s office in the Stillwell Building.
180 workers have been hall, where upwards of the final stages for the construction reaches semester opening.

after it receives input from faculty and Facilities Management the day after the referendum. WCU’s Board of Trustees will be approved by voters and funding would be secured for the their place of work.”

What we want to do is train students because it will provide us with capabilities that we don’t have he said. “We may revise our curriculum based on the design performance, but it also will change the nature of our teaching,” change the nature of the research our faculty and students change, the number of the current building. WCU leaders hope to have the new natural sciences facility will begin in 2018 on or near the site of the current building. WCU leaders hope to have the new faculty completed by 2020, Starnes said.

A NOBLE ENDEAVOR, AND OTHER PROJECTS
Construction continued through the summer on Noble Hall, the new $23.3 million four-story mixed-use facility that is filling the space previously occupied by a commercial strip on Centennial Drive in the heart of WCU’s campus. Consisting of three segments, the building is named in honor of the Noble Nine, the group of nine trustees from the late 1800s who were instrumental in the development of the school that evolved into WCU. The 120,000-square-foot structure will feature a mix of residential units and commercial and dining establishments on the ground floor, with residential spaces on the upper floors. University officials expected the residential portions of the building, with about 430 student beds, to be ready for occupancy by the start of fall semester, with the dining and retail establishments scheduled to open later in the semester.

By fall, four of the five commercial tenants had been announced: the first Chili’s Grill and Bar in north Carolina west of Asheville, which will be operated by Aramark, WCU’s food service partner; a new Bob’s Mini-Mart convenience store; an upgraded Subway sandwich shop and a Cullowhee outpost for the Sygma-based outdoor recreation retailer Blackrock Outdoor Co. Negotiations were still in progress for the fifth and final business, a combined bookstore and coffee shop. The opening of the convenience store and sandwich restaurant will mark the return to campus of two of the businesses that previously operated in the commercial strip, portions of which were damaged by fire in 2013.

Around the corner on Central Drive, work continued over the summer on the $27.4 million Brown Building project, which includes the renovation of 30,000 square feet of existing space and the addition of another 25,000 square feet of space to the 54-year-old structure. Work commenced in the spring, and by early summer the erection of steel beams was underway and the facility was beginning to take the shape of the project renderings, said Mike Byers, WCU vice chancellor for administration and finance. Brown Building served for many years as a campus food option located in the historic hill area, but food services moved out when WCU opened Courtyard Dining Hall in 2010. After the project is completed in the summer of 2017, Brown once again will be a dining option for students while also providing space for Residential Living administration offices.

On WCU’s West Campus, plans are still in the works for a project that will be the first privately developed structure built as part of the Millennium Initiative. In December 2015, Summit Healthcare Group of Winston-Salem came aboard as WCU’s partner in the project, and the two parties have been working together to find the best site for the facility, which will be near WCU’s Health and Human Sciences Building. Byers said: “The primary concern has been to find a suitable site that will not diminish the availability of parking,” he said. By summer, a concept had been approved for the development of design plans, and construction may begin in spring 2017. The building is expected to include at least 30,000 square feet of space for health care professionals and health-related businesses.

Just across N.C. Highway 107 from the main campus, demolition work was completed early in summer on a 35-unit faculty-staff apartment complex that had provided short-term housing for WCU employees since the 1960s. Located off Long Branch Road, the complex is being replaced by a 480-space parking lot slated to be ready for use by fall semester. The new lot will be targeted toward freshmen students living in Scott and Walker residence halls, which are walking distance from the lot via the pedestrian bridge over the highway.

Also in early summer, installation was finished for the Electron Garden on the Green, which is believed to be the first combination solar power generating facility and hammock “hanging lounge” on any college campus in the nation. Located in green space across Memorial Drive from Walker Residence Hall and near Cullowhee Creek, the facility includes 40 solar panels capable of generating 10-kilowatts of power. The EGG, a project of WCU’s Sustainability Energy Initiative, is the first physical structure funded through a student sustainability fee of $5 per semester. It includes hanging space for about 10 hammocks, internet and USB ports, and electrical outlets. One other project that is not a WCU initiative but that will have an effect on the university community is the N.C. Department of Transportation’s replacement of the bridge that spans the Tuckaseigee River on Old Cullowhee Road on the back side of campus. Construction began in March and is scheduled to continue into late fall. The new bridge is being built in the same location as the old bridge, and traffic delays and congestion are expected when just one lane is open for traffic, starting in August. Red lights installed on each side of the river will regulate the traffic flow.
Students everywhere always have been taught the importance of maintaining good grades. But when it comes to landing a job, lofty grade-point averages aren’t near the top of the list of things employers are seeking.

According to a survey by the Chronicle of Higher Education in 2012, the No. 1 thing employers look for when hiring recent college graduates is internships, followed closely by employment during college.

“For any student that I see, I’ll highly recommend they do an internship if they haven’t already just because it is such an important thing,” said Dean Paulk ’05, internship coordinator in Western Carolina University’s Center for Career and Professional Development. “It’s one of the best and easiest ways to get that experience employers are looking for.”

Internships are a way for students to gain valuable work experience while still in school, which often times can’t be simulated in the classroom. Learning in a work environment also can help students confirm their career goals, Paulk said.

“Internships are great for resumes,” he said. “It shows employers that the students have done hands-on work and not just entry-level work. It gives them that extra kind of edge, or leg up, on students who don’t have internships. And it does show employers that they do have the skills, that they’ve actually been on the job, especially if it is one of those larger name companies, or a well-known company.”

While students across the WCU campus participated in numerous internships this summer, several of them did so at some prestigious locations. Laney Browder, Alma Plaza-Rodriguez, Anna Oates ’16, Jessica Flowers ’16, William Pfeiffer, Sara Clark ’16 and Adrianna Warner were among those who significantly bolstered their resumes with impressive internships over the summer.

Browder, a rising senior from Wilkesboro, was one of 16 students from the U.S. selected by the American Chemical Society to participate in its International Research Experiences for Students program. Browder, a chemistry major who is also going for a minor in biology, spent her summer doing research at the National University of Singapore.

In addition to the countless hours she spends in the laboratory at WCU, Browder also is a member of the Catamounts’ cross country and track and field teams. “She’s one of the best students in our program, especially with her doing cross country and track and field,” said Channa De Silva, WCU assistant professor in the department of chemistry and physics. “With that and doing chemistry and research on top of classes, that’s a really big deal. I consider her like a role model for other students because I don’t know how she does that with practices and everything.”

Paulk agreed that Browder’s accomplishments represents an impressive feat, one that future employers will also notice on her resume.

“It’s definitely something that she can put on her resume and on her cover letter as being able to multi-task, to handle various responsibilities in different areas,” Paulk said. Browder participated in nanoparticle research and will present her work this fall at the ACS National Meeting and Exposition in Philadelphia. In addition to being exposed to a new culture, Browder was excited about the opportunity to work on research she is passionate about. “I hope to learn more about inorganic chemistry through this internship, too. This will hopefully prepare me for graduate school,” she said before leaving for Singapore.

Interning at one of the top chemistry schools in the world will be beneficial to WCU, too, De Silva said. “That experience
In addition to being a member of WCUL's cross country and track and field teams, rising senior Laney Browder is among 16 students selected for a summer research project at the National University of Singapore.

Laney Browder is among 16 students selected for a summer research project at the National University of Singapore. In addition to being a concentration in literature, applied for the position out of Oates worked with her project mentor to perform a Summer Intern Program, where she worked in the Library Research in April. Oates, from Wilson, spent the summer with the Library of Congress Junior Fellows Summer Intern Program, where she worked in the Library Services Music Division. Oates, who majored in English with a concentration in literature, applied for the position out of the blues. "I wasn't expecting anything from it, so being considered was just an honor, and when I actually got the position, I didn't know what to do. I emailed all of my professors who had helped me with the process. They were less surprised than I was," she said.

Plaza-Rodriguez also was involved in an internship with personal appeal. She spent 10 weeks conducting research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, after being selected as a recipient of the 2016 Howard Hughes Medical Institute Exceptional Research Opportunities Program Award. The goal of the Exceptional Research Opportunities Program is to ensure that a diverse and highly trained workforce is ready to take on leadership roles in science. Following completion of the summer study programs, HHMI will continue working with the recipients to encourage them to pursue careers in science.

The rising senior, who is originally from Puerto Rico but now resides in Buncombe, is majoring in chemistry with a concentration in biomedical science and technology. Plaza-Rodriguez came to WCU as a political science major, but quickly discovered a passion for science, especially chemistry. "I started developing a strong interest in relation to diseases particularly," she said. She believes that stemmed from her teenage years when she helped care for her grandfather, who developed ALS. While at St. Jude, Plaza-Rodriguez worked with Dr. Paul Taylor, who specializes in cell and molecular biology. In addition to lab work, she attended two meetings at HHMI headquarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland, to present her research in a poster session. Because she plans to pursue a doctorate in biochemistry, Plaza-Rodriguez is eligible to receive continued support from HHMI during her doctoral training through the Gilliam Fellows program.

Flowers, a spring graduate from Wadeboro with a degree in biology, Clark, from Marion who also graduated in the spring as a dual major in biology and Spanish, Pfeiffer, a senior from Raleigh majoring in emergency medical care, and Warner, a rising senior from Brevard majoring in special studies with a neuroscience pre-professional concentration, all participated in eight-week internships with the Mountain Area Health Education Center in Asheville.

The internships, which were from March through April, provided them with an opportunity to gain firsthand experience and working knowledge in health careers. MAHEC is a Western North Carolina family care provider and, as part of the University of North Carolina system trains physicians and health professionals with a goal toward increasing health care availability throughout WNC. "These internships are quite competitive and, in addition to getting a high level of exposure to medicine, pharmacy and dentistry, they also as a group have a high percent chance of getting into medical, pharmacy or dental school as a result of their experience," said Dr. Jeffrey E. Heck, MAHEC president and CEO.

It also gives the students an opportunity to give back to their surrounding communities, said Theresa Cruz Paul, director of the WCU Center for Career and Professional Development. "Students are able to work with professionals in their field in the local community," Cruz Paul said. "Western Carolina University's relationship with MAHEC provides a straightforward path for students who want to enter these fields as a profession." Personal experiences are what helped the four students decide on health career professions and seeking an internship. Pfeiffer believes a pivotal moment for him was early in an emergency medical training class and the real-life experiences that came with such training.

"It may sound cliché, but at that moment during my first morning in the back of an ambulance holding a patient's hand and talking to her about her family, I knew exactly where I belonged," Pfeiffer said. "I learned that I am at my best when I can be helping others, whether by listening to them and being supportive or just lending a helping hand."

Not only are internships like these valuable to the participating students, but provide employers with exposure to the talent pool being provided at WCU. "Those organizations can see the kind of quality students that we have," Paul said. "If the students are doing a good job, they’ll see us again. And they’ll come to us looking for students."

"It also shows that Western is prioritizing experiential learning, which is getting bigger and bigger. As the students go out and have these experiences at these important and influential places, it just helps us to build those connections and show these places that Western does put out good quality, high-caliber students," he said.

Theresa Cruz Paul, director of WCU Center for Career and Professional Development.
Growing up in Peekskill, New York, David Shapiro often could be found with his favorite companion, his pet dog Buddy, who seemed undeterred by that young boy’s often debilitating stutter. Like other people with the fluency disorder, the boy spoke without hesitation when talking with his pet or when alone. Today, as an acclaimed speech-language pathologist, clinician and researcher, Shapiro is an articulate voice for people around the world who stutter.

The Robert Lee Madison Distinguished Professor of Communication Science and Disorders at Western Carolina University, Shapiro has developed a holistic approach to the treatment of stuttering and other disorders of fluency, one that incorporates not only the person who stutters, but also that person’s family and support system.

In recent years, he has taken his treatment methods to all corners of the world to assist people with fluency disorders in developed and developing nations, including countries where reaction to stuttering may lead to discrimination, injury – even death. Through his international outreach, Shapiro has positively affected the lives of people who stutter in more than 30 countries on six continents, ranging from the Czech Republic to several African nations, and from Japan to Norway.

Throughout his career, his life’s mission has been to help give voice to those who have difficulty participating in perhaps the most human of activities – using speech as a form of communication.

“Stuttering continues to be one of the most perplexing communication disorders. Although it is the most common of fluency disorders, each case is different. It is the most common individualized condition,” said Shapiro, a fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. “Helping someone visualize dreams and work toward achieving them is such a special and empowering experience. It is the birthright of every person to be able to use speech and language freely and to enjoy communication freedom.”

In recognition of his work to improve the lives of people from around the world who stutter, the Board of Governors of the 17-campus University of North Carolina named Shapiro one of two recipients of the Oliver Max Gardner Award. It is the highest faculty honor the board bestows — and the only award for which all faculty members on UNC campuses are eligible.

Established through the will of late North Carolina Gov. O. Max Gardner, the award recognizes faculty who have “made the greatest contribution to the welfare of the human race.” The 2016 award came with a $20,000 cash prize and was presented during the May 2016 board meeting.

TOWARD FLUENCY FREEDOM

While working to overcome his own stutter, Shapiro made it his life’s ambition to help others with similar communication disorders. A noted scholar, beloved teacher and prolific researcher, he honed his methods through decades of work in WCU’s Speech and Hearing Clinic, providing diagnostic and treatment services to residents of Western North Carolina and beyond to help them on their journey toward what he calls “fluency freedom.” Shapiro’s clinical methods and research have been disseminated through his 200 presentations...
and 85 publications in seven languages and supported by approximately $1 million in grant funding.

Among his clients is Charlotte resident Michael Lefko, who, in his 40s and enjoying a career in education, decided to resume speech therapy as he tried to make additional progress in his efforts to overcome a lifelong stutter.

“I had been in and out of speech therapy, from early childhood through adulthood. I had acquired everything I needed in my bag of tools to help me speak fluently, and yet I wasn’t getting the job done with consistency on a daily basis,” Lefko said.

“Dr. Shapiro’s was different than any other therapy I had ever experienced. He cared about me. He wanted to get to know me as a person. I truly felt he had a personal investment in my finding success in fluency freedom, the definition of which he was helping me to cultivate for myself. Our client/professional relationship was a true partnership that became a friendship. I was never on the clock when we met. It was real, not contrived. It was comfortable,” he said.

In that clinical setting where Lefko and multitudes of others have received treatment, Shapiro has taught and mentored countless undergraduate and graduate students in WCU’s communication sciences and disorders program, many of them going on to successful careers of their own as clinicians using techniques they learned from Shapiro, a WCU faculty member for 32 years and also a 1999 recipient of the UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

THE QUIET REVOLUTIONARY

Stuttering affects an estimated 1 percent of the planet – including more than 3 million people in the U.S. and 70 million worldwide – leading Shapiro toward an international focus in his work.

As part of his international outreach efforts, David Shapiro works with people who stutter in more than 30 countries on six continents.

In that clinical setting where Lefko and multitudes of others have received treatment, Shapiro has taught and mentored countless undergraduate and graduate students in WCU’s communication sciences and disorders program, many of them going on to successful careers of their own as clinicians using techniques they learned from Shapiro, a WCU faculty member for 32 years and also a 1999 recipient of the UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

A WCU communication science and disorders graduate student from Hendersonville, Amanda Glover ’15 has worked under Shapiro’s instruction and supervision in both classroom and clinical settings. “In the clinical realm, students who are interested are given the opportunity to observe and participate in fluency treatment. I have been privileged to work with Dr. Shapiro as his student, graduate assistant and student clinician,” said Glover. “Dr. Shapiro stands apart from others because he always treats me as a valued member of his team despite my inexperience. He not only listens, but embraces any ideas or suggestions I express.”

Shapiro’s critically acclaimed book “Stuttering Intervention: A Collaborative Journey to Fluency Freedom” (now in its second edition) has been adopted as the “go-to text” by communication sciences and disorders programs across the U.S. and beyond. In his book, as throughout much of his work, Shapiro shines a light on the faces of people who stutter, sharing their stories and unveiling the mysteries of stuttering as he provides guidance for how they can achieve their goals of fluency freedom.

While most practitioners working with people who stutter focus on the 15 to 20 percent of words with which the person struggles, Shapiro shifts the strategy to focus instead on the 80 to 85 percent of words with which the person does not struggle. “Not only have I used his textbook in my own class to help my students better understand this condition, I have also talked to many professionals around the world who have been moved by Dr. Shapiro’s writings, citing this text as perhaps the most important book in the field,” said J. Scott Yaruss, associate professor of communication science and disorders at the University of Pittsburgh.

He has been a member of the International Fluency Association (the professional association of speech-language pathologists, speech scientists and researchers devoted to understanding and managing stuttering and other fluency disorders) since its conception, and was elected its president in 2012. Under Shapiro’s leadership, the organization expanded its membership, which then consisted only of individuals from the U.S. and United Kingdom, to include representatives from six continents. During his term as president, the IFA also began to partner with the International Stuttering Association, the global organization dedicated to self-help of and advocacy among people who stutter.
"He is a quiet revolutionary who changes the world in a gentle way."

- Harsha Kathard

SCHOLARSHIP FUND SUPPORTS COMMUNICATION DISORDERS STUDENTS

David A. Shapiro and his wife, Kay, initiated a scholarship fund in 2014 at Western Carolina University to provide financial assistance to outstanding graduate students who want to specialize in helping children and adults overcome disorders of speech fluency such as stuttering, cluttering and acquired forms of speech disruption. Shapiro’s work nationally and internationally has helped raise public awareness of stuttering, combat negative stereotypes that exist, and give a message of hope and support to those who need it. His leadership in international professional organizations and his association with the world’s top fluency disorder specialists have given his students opportunities to learn about the disorders from a global perspective, and graduates of the program have gone on to have outstanding careers, said Bill Ogletree, head of the WCU Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

We are so fortunate to have a scholar like David, and he frankly has attracted his share of students with interests in fluency disorders,” said Ogletree. “This scholarship fund will enable these and other students to receive financial support as they study with David and others.”

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.

"Years ago, I swore an oath that if I could find a way to talk, I would do all I can to help others. This position enabled me to contribute on a broader scale and to coordinate such efforts internationally."

- David Shapiro

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.

"To serve as IFA president was a dream come true for me.” Shapiro said. "Years ago, I swore an oath that if I could find a way to talk, I would do all I can to help others. This position enabled me to contribute on a broader scale and to coordinate such efforts internationally."

The IFA presented Shapiro with its Award of Distinction for Outstanding Clinician in 2006 in recognition of his impact on the profession of speech-language pathology. "But, in my opinion, the biggest impact David Shapiro has made is on the lives of people who stutter and their families around the world – through his international presentations, through his research and writing, through his mentorship of clinicians, through his delivery of clinical services, and through his unique accessibility, patience and genuine caring,” said Amy Weiss of the University of Rhode Island communicative disorders program, who chaired that year’s awards committee. In 2003, with a colleague from Australia, Shapiro initiated the International Speech Project – Stuttering, an international advocacy effort similar to Doctors Without Borders, which provides information and treatment services to people who stutter in underserved regions of the world. The project brings pragmatism ranging from cutting the membrane beneath the tongue to heating a metal tool or knife, letting it cool slightly and then briefly applying it to the lips of the person who stutters.

Shapiro’s work nationally and internationally has helped raise public awareness of stuttering, combat negative stereotypes that exist, and give a message of hope and support to those who need it. His leadership in international professional organizations and his association with some of the world’s top fluency disorder specialists have given his students opportunities to learn about the disorders from a global perspective, and graduates of the program have gone on to have outstanding careers, said Bill Ogletree, head of the WCU Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

“We are so fortunate to have a scholar like David, and he frankly has attracted his share of students with interests in fluency disorders,” said Ogletree. “This scholarship fund will enable these and other students to receive financial support as they study with David and others.”

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.

"Years ago, I swore an oath that if I could find a way to talk, I would do all I can to help others. This position enabled me to contribute on a broader scale and to coordinate such efforts internationally."

- David Shapiro

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.

"Years ago, I swore an oath that if I could find a way to talk, I would do all I can to help others. This position enabled me to contribute on a broader scale and to coordinate such efforts internationally."

- David Shapiro

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.

"Years ago, I swore an oath that if I could find a way to talk, I would do all I can to help others. This position enabled me to contribute on a broader scale and to coordinate such efforts internationally."

- David Shapiro

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.

"Years ago, I swore an oath that if I could find a way to talk, I would do all I can to help others. This position enabled me to contribute on a broader scale and to coordinate such efforts internationally."

- David Shapiro

For more information or to make a donation to the David A. and Kay Ogletree Shapiro Scholarship for Specialists in Fluency Disorders, contact the WCU Office of Development at 828-227-7124 or by email at development@wcu.edu. To make an online gift, go to giveshapiroscholarship.wcu.edu.

More information about WCU’s program in communication sciences and disorders is available online at http://commdis.wcu.edu.
Both the National Park Service and North Carolina State Parks turn 100 years old this year. All things considered, Western Carolina University probably should help blow out the candles on those birthday cakes. WCU has contributed much to national and state parks, through research assistance, archival support and, perhaps most importantly, people. Beyond those working relationships there is another kinship born of proximity.

The National Park Service was established on Aug. 25, 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior. The state parks system had its beginnings on March 3, 1916, when Mount Mitchell officially became North Carolina’s first state park. State parks, much like the national parks, had origins in the conservation movements of the turn of the century.

A groundswell of public support for parks came about in the late 1800s because of concerns over environmental degradation, a lack of resource management and the desire for shared spaces that could afford an escape to the general public. Coupled with an increasing desire for more outdoor recreation, the push for parks carried into the 20th century, including in the Western North Carolina region. Great Smoky Mountains National Park was established in 1934 and construction began on the Blue Ridge Parkway in 1935, while the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site officially opened in 1974.

Today, the state park system has grown from the sole Mount Mitchell site to having 75 protected natural areas in its care, while the NPS manages 59 national parks and 352 other units, such as historical sites, trails, monuments and seashores.

CAREER PATHS

Several majors offered by WCU can lead to a career with parks. Among the academic programs of interest to students pursuing such jobs are parks and recreation management, forest resources, hospitality and tourism, and natural resource conservation and management, along with geology and environmental science.

“A lot of the students attracted to the programs in the Department of Geosciences and Natural Resources — natural resources conservation and management, geology, and environmental science — became interested in the major because they love spending time outside, like science and care about the environment,” said Mark Lord, WCU department head. “By earning a degree in one of these fields, they can pursue a career that will keep them outside and make a difference in the conservation and management, and understanding, of our environment and natural resources. The career opportunities are strong in these areas. A geologist, for example, shows up on almost all lists, of top outdoor careers.”

Harold Kelly ’09 returned to finish a bachelor’s degree at WCU after what he described as “falling in love with hiking” during weekend trips to the WNC mountains. “I left an office job where I was making a good living, but not happy,” Kelly said. “I started at WCU and began volunteering in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.”

He later attended a national park law enforcement academy as an intern, then was a full-time student hire for a couple of years. Upon graduation with a bachelor’s degree in parks and recreation management, he was hired by the Natchez Trace Parkway. Recently, he transferred as a park ranger to Congaree National Park in South Carolina. Kelly also serves on the Southeastern Regional Special Events Team, performing dignitary protection details such as the papal visit to Philadelphia and commemorative occasions such as the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King’s march in Alabama and the 150th anniversaries of Civil War battles.

“The guidance and tutelage I received while at WCU led me to the career of my dreams,” he said. “I do what I do to try and serve my country and my community in the best way I know how. I want to make a difference in some small way. I found my calling, to protect these special places.”
Tholkes worked as a WCU professor, Ben “works” for the park NPS ranger. He still Prior to becoming a service, now as a volunteer. Tim Van Cleave MA ’03 also provide a foundation for jobs with state and national parks. career. Communications, fine and performing arts, and history prominently, other WCU degree paths can lead to a parks programming, exhibits and special events to commemorate the American Revolutionary War, Civil War, Civil Rights more than 300 years — from early American history through...
The collection's extensive holdings include maps, photographs, and manuscripts related to the history of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Kephart wrote numerous outdoor articles for national publications and authored the classics "Our Southern Highlanders" and "Camping and Woodcraft," both still in print, and a posthumously published novel, "Smoky Mountain Magic." A peak in the park was named for him and he remains well-regarded figure in Smokies history. He died in 1931. The Mountain Heritage Center will open a major Kephart exhibit in the center’s Hunter Library gallery this fall.

Crucial aspects of the formation of the Great Smokies as a national park, the groundwork and building of trails and infrastructure and much more are preserved at Hunter Library. The digital archive makes available to the public a collection of almost 100 maps, including several showing proposed park boundaries at various points in time. The archives also includes maps hand-drawn by Kephart. More than 600 photographs document the activities of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, an influential regional group. Plan and now. Over 300 photographs, drawings, and documents tell the story of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Construction photographs show the building of the "Skyway," plans from Newfound Gap to Clingmans Dome. Digital documents relating to the Cataloochee Valley include land surveys, title searches, maps and interviews from state and national agencies associated with the community. While the images are protected by copyright, they can be used for research, education and personal use. All images and documents can be found at digitalcollections.wcu.edu.

"A lot of this material is fragile and otherwise inaccessible," said Anna Fariello, WCU associate professor for digital initiatives and project director. "Having it online definitely increases accessibility to the material and fulfills the preservation aspect that is incredibly important." A big part of Special Collections is the personal correspondence, maps, photographs and other belongings of Horace Kephart. An Ivy League-educated librarian who came to WNC in the summer of 1964, he was a leading proponent to establish Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Kephart wrote numerous outdoor articles for national publications and authored the classics "Our Southern Highlanders" and "Camping and Woodcraft;" both still in print, and a posthumously published novel, "Smoky Mountain Magic." A peak in the park was named for him and he remains well-regarded figure in Smokies history. He died in 1931. The Mountain Heritage Center will open a major Kephart exhibit in the center’s Hunter Library gallery this fall.

"In both the Smokies and at Goose Creek, I led environmental education programs and provided workshops with park maps, brochures, and locations of restrooms," Whalen said. "I really enjoyed meeting people and providing excellent customer service.

Teaching people about the natural world came easy to me and I loved to talk."

The desire to avoid the unnecessary killing of wildlife while balancing public safety is an important issue for park staff. The desire to avoid the unnecessary killing of wildlife while balancing public safety is an important issue for park staff. The desire to avoid the unnecessary killing of wildlife while balancing public safety is an important issue for park staff. The desire to avoid the unnecessary killing of wildlife while balancing public safety is an important issue for park staff.
I wanted to chase a dream that wasn’t possible with a political career, something I could hand down to my children.”

-Michell Hicks ’87

Where does one go when one has reached a career pinnacle? For Michell Hicks ’87, the answer would seem to be the top of the next peak, trading one position as chief for another and expanding his work on behalf of Native Americans beyond his own people. Serving three terms of four years each as principal chief of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Hicks decided not to seek a fourth term in 2015 in order to spend more time with family. He recently became CEO of his own financial consulting firm, Chief Strategy Group.

“I wanted to chase a dream that wasn’t possible with a political career,” Hicks said. “Something I could hand down to my children.” Hicks, his wife, Marsha, and their children Savannah, Noah, Lynsey, Amaya and Marlee live in the Painttown community on the Qualla Boundary, where he has built a lodge next to their home to serve as a headquarters for the business.

In addition to offering a sleeping loft for traveling business guests, it is also a kind of small museum of Cherokee crafts and culture, from locally created baskets and pottery to the hunting trophies that ring the walls next to the ceiling – some of which were hunted with centuries-old ceremonies.

“I wanted to chase a dream that wasn’t possible with a political career, something I could hand down to my children.”

Among the memorabilia are some children’s books. “These are some of the things I am most proud of, that the tribe did while I served as principal chief – a series of 10 children’s books telling simple stories of our culture in the Cherokee language,” Hicks said.

“Local artists illustrated them, we published them and distributed them to seven of our schools as gifts. I even got to read one to a kindergarten class.”

Hicks is a product of those schools. After graduating from Cherokee High School, he earned an associate degree in accounting at Southwestern Community College, and then a bachelor’s degree in business management at Western Carolina University. He had been familiar with the campus for a long time, thanks to the Upward Bound children’s math and science program that WCU hosted for many years.

“I had a history with Upward Bound starting when I was 14 and was on campus every summer,” Hicks said. “I got to know professors, counselors who understood that Native peoples can have trouble adjusting to a big campus; we’re home-driven. They helped me to see what campus life was about, from the classroom to socially. It was a good experience for me – a good fit.”

Attaining the title of certified public accountant, he began serving as assistant business manager for the tribe in 1987, then became finance officer for the EBCI’s Qualla Housing Authority in 1990. After working as a senior accountant for a private firm in Boston, Philadelphia and New York, he became the tribe’s executive director of budget and finance.

“There were grant compliance needs and an opportunity to create capital improvement processes,” Hicks said. “It gave me a good idea what needed to be done as principal chief.”

During his first term as head of the tribe, in December 2003, he created an annual report to the more than 15,000 registered members of the EBCI. “It was a matter of transparency, and it worked out well,” Hicks said. “We began to grow substantially.”

His term was marked by several major advances in Cherokee and other areas: the expansion of Harrah’s Cherokee Casino and Resort, as well as the construction of the Harrah’s Cherokee Valley River Casino and Hotel in Murphy, a tribal justice center and a hospital, development of the Sequoyah National Golf Course and the expansion of an accredited Cherokee language immersion school.

In addition, a housing program and the tribe’s social services programs have benefited from the $250 million increase in government revenues during Hicks’ tenure as chief, along with a program providing full funding for higher education.

“We wanted to say to students, ‘Why not try to be great? Bring back good grades and we’ll incentivize that.’ We wanted to apply the resources to the daily lives of members of the tribe and neighbors in the region.” Hicks said.

Among Hicks’ most important legacies is his length of office, said Chris Cooper, head of WCU’s Department of Political Science and Public Affairs.

“The political environment today is one where voters are suspect of incumbents and suspect of politicians more generally, yet Chief Hicks was able to secure an extraordinary three terms of office. This is a monumental achievement for any elected official and speaks to his attention to constituency service,” Cooper said.

Hicks feels that he now has the opportunity to serve the needs of the EBCI and extend that service to other Native peoples. One of the working outreachs of his Chief Strategy Group is called Gen7 Healthcare, a partnership he is forming with other firms. “It’s an initiative within our health system to use the tax advantages we have and coordination in purchasing to bring back good grades and we’ll incentivize that.’ We wanted to apply the resources to the daily lives of members of the tribe and neighbors in the region.” Hicks said.

“The name comes from a principle in Native thought to ‘take care of seven generations,’” he said. “We hope to accomplish things that will be here for a long time. I ask, ‘what are we doing for way down the road? Will our daily dealings matter in 50 years?’”

As one of three WCU alumni honored at Homecoming ceremonies in 2015, Hicks accepted the Professional Achievement Award from Alumni Association President Francis Owl-Smith ‘83, who said of him, “His tenure as the top leader for the Cherokee people turned out to be a period of spectacular advancement for the tribe in terms of economic development and cultural advancement.

“The Cherokee people needed a strong, smart and discerning leader with great vision at the helm as they entered the 21st century, and you answered the call,” Owl-Smith told Hicks.
She built her share of treehouses as a youngster, surveying the wooded mountainside where she grew up just outside Weaverville. And as it happened, McKenzie Dillingham ’09 found herself building in the same woods several years later, this time on a much larger scale, assembling a real house for herself.

“It feels like home,” Dillingham said. An outgoing 27-year-old with dreadlocks, she has already established herself as a homebuilder, having worked as a general contractor for a few years. And a homeowner, too.

Less than one-tenth of a mile from where she grew up, in a similar house where her mother and father still live, her home has a rustic appeal, its dark pine exterior and gabled roof fashioned by her mother and father, her uncle lives nearby. “This is a house I’ll grow into,” said Dillingham, a member of the project management team with Morgan-Keefe Builders, a top luxury custom home builder in Western North Carolina and upstate South Carolina. “The east side is cantilevered, leaving room for growth. ‘Here, it’ll always be a project.’”

The projects of McKenzie Dillingham, WCU’s 2009 Homebuilder of the Year, reflect taking with her family literally set him on his life’s path. Brandon, barely past toddler age, walked beside his mother as she carried her other son in her arms, making the 3-mile roundtrip from their home in Mocksville to the Davie County Public Library. It was the only way to get there. The family didn’t have a car. Inside the library, the young Brandon cultivated his newfound passion for books. He could read before he began kindergarten.

Brandon A. Robinson ’05 MA ’10 visits one of his favorite campus spots, the stacks at Hunter Library.

Brandon Robinson’s Board of Visitors, Robinson has returned to campus frequently over the years to continue his engagement in campus activities, including his presentations of the keynote address for the university’s 2013 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Week.

Still a voracious reader, Robinson is currently writing two books—one about U.S. presidents and the other focusing on Reconstruction in North Carolina.
THE RIGHT FIT

For U.S. Air Force Cadet Leslie R. Newton ‘03, a typical training day includes a track workout, supplemented with a “little” 300-pound rudder tip-flipping. Newton, an attorney who serves as the special victims counselor at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, served 190 among all military women in the world in the 2018 CrossFit Games. She originally planned to go to law school, but decided instead to focus on strength training. In 2012, Newton earned her law degree at Florida’s Stetson University. She joined the Air Force after earning her law degree in 2012. “In my life, I didn’t succeed at everything, and some things have been harder than others, but doing things that I didn’t have the background for has reinforced my belief that if I try hard and work hard, it can happen,” she said. “I have an understanding that talent can bloom later, and that has allowed me to pursue many dreams.”

THE RIGHT FIT

1957

Steve White

Former Catamount basketball and football player George W. Kirby retired to WCU last year in a new role as proud grandfather. Kourtney R. Kirby ’15 received her diploma. A cheerleader during her senior year as a student, she has enrolled in graduate school at WCU and serves as her cheer team’s assistant coach.

1967

Bill Hoke

Bill Hoke has retired from his education career of 34 years and works part-time at High Point University. Hoke was a counselor, assistant principal and principal in Guilford County for 25 years. Wife Joy Lane Hoke ’73, retired school media coordinator in Guilford County, is a real estate agent in the High Point/Greensboro area. “We still make a point to visit WCU at least once a year and are amazed at the campus as compared to 43 years ago,” he said. “The rest of our spare time we spend at our cabin in the mountains and enjoying outdoor activities.”

1973

Levin E. Wilson

Levin E. Wilson of atlanta, Georgia, has been named associate provost of Clark Atlanta University. Wilson previously was a professor of legal studies at Georgia State University. In his new position, he will oversee enrollment management and work with the university’s leadership in the areas of academic policy, strategic direction and resource planning.

1976

George Frizzell

George Frizzell MA ‘81, longtime director of Special Collections at WCU’s Hunter Library, retired in July. Frizzell devoted his entire professional career to the library, beginning in 1974 as a student worker. He had headed Special Collections since 1989.

1977

David Machado

The N.C. Board of Education has appointed David Machado as new director of the Department of Public Instruction’s Office of Charter Schools. Machado has been chief administrator of the Liggett Charter School for the past 12 years. He previously owned and managed an automotive and tire business.

1980

Jim Lanning

Jim Lanning has been promoted to president and CEO of Ingles Markets, Inc., a Black Mountain-based supermarket chain that operates 202 supermarkets in six southwest North Carolina counties and area in the states. Lanning joined the company when he was a teenager, working afternoons and weekends at a small store in Sylva, a few miles from his high school. In more than 40 years with the company, he has held key roles at every level of management in several states. In 2009, he was recipient of WCU’s Professional Achievement Award.

1981

Karen J. Torrence

Karen J. Torrence MAE ’83, celebrated June 1 after a career of more than 25 years devoted to helping those with visual impairments. Torrence received the award for outstanding rehabilitation supervisor of the Asheville district office of the N.C. Division of Services for the Blind, an agency of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. She also has served as a vocational rehabilitation counselor and a vocational rehabilitation counselor in-charge.

1983

Jim Buchanan

Jim Buchanan received first place for editorial writing in the North Carolina Press Association’s 2015 awards competition.

1984

Donna Neatherly

Donna Neatherly MAE ’99, director of Appalachian Community Services’ day treatment program for middle school and high school students in Murphy, has more than 30 years of experience in accounting. She graduated from WCU.

1986

Scott E. Hall

Scott E. Hall and wife Michelle Hall are renovating and operating a mental health and health care professionals published by Celadon Publishing Co. in July. He has been a member of the faculty at the University of Dayton in Ohio since 1995. His wife is an associate professor in the counseling department at Xavier University. Their book is titled “Managing the Psychological Impact of Medical Trauma: A Guide for Mental Health and Health Care Professionals.”
1995

Moore County Schools has named Tim Locklear to the new position of chief officer for academics and student support services. Locklear had served as assistant area superintendent for Wakey County Schools since 2001. His new position served as principal at Holly Springs High School, Apex Middle School and Montgomery County’s West Middle School. He also was a social studies teacher, football and basketball coach, and assistant principal at Pisgah High School in Moore County.

1996

John Bowers MA and Kyle McCurry ‘07 MBA ‘12 are the latest additions of Del & Spade, the magazine of Warren Wilson College, which won two gold awards and one platinum award in the Hermes Creative Awards competition of the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals.

David Allen McNeill MPA ‘01, Communication Professionals.

1997

Thomas Slusser has won the N.C. Governor’s Award for Excellence for a creative solution to an environmental cleanup. Slusser is a project manager at the N.C. Department of Environment Quality, and Chris Niver, an environmental engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation, teamed up for the project, making use of expired-date soda donated by Pepsi-Cola to help break down the asphalt testing site in Rockingham. The sugars in the soft drink acted as a catalyst for naturally occurring bacteria in soil to grow and release a biopysid to break down the contamination. The project saved the state an estimated $1.6 million. The award is the highest recognition a state employee can receive. Slusser is married to Jennifer Slusser ’96, who is a 10th-grade history teacher at Enloe High School in Raleigh.

1998

Jason G. Propst is serving as the regional sales director of BH Media Group’s North Carolina Community Newspapers. The group, which has newspapers in Hickory, Statesville, Morganton, Mooresville, Concord and Marion, is a Berkshire Hathaway Company. Propst is based in Hickory.

1999

Jillian Hardin is serving as the area agency on aging director of the Kern-Tarat Regional Council of Governments, headquartered in Henderson. The agencies support the development of programs for older adults. Kern-Tarat serves the five-county region of Franklin, Grundy, Person, Vance and Warren counties.

2000

Lori Chappell of Canton is serving as the business development manager of Champion Dtid Division. A former career development coordinator for Henderson County Public Schools and teacher at Canton Middle School, Chappell also has worked in the mortgage lending field in Asheville and Hendersonville.

2001


Kevin Stina has a new job as director of the Spartanburg (South Carolina) County Parks Department. Stina previously was business administration of the Greenville (South Carolina) Parks and Recreation Department. He also has worked in the parks departments in Catawba and Jackson counties in North Carolina.

2002

Christina “Katie” Altheimer Kennedy and her husband Chris are parents of three adopted children, ages 1, 2 and 4. The Kennedys live in Jacksonville, Florida. He is an executive producer for Kennetic Productions, a video company. She was a star volleyball player who was inducted into the WCU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013.

Joan Petit MA has been awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program grant to Ethiopia for the 2016-17 academic year. Petit, an associate professor and librarian at Portland State University in Oregon, will teach information science classes, train staff and work with the Jimma University Library during her year as a Fulbright Scholar. She also will conduct a research project focusing on open educational resources.

Brad Swagginim MAC ’04, physical education teacher and boys basketball coach at Rugby Middle School, has been named the ETSU basketball coach of the year for 2016. It is the second time the Patriots have won the state championship with Rogers as their coach. Rogers’ family has a Freedom span two generations. He graduated basketball at the school as a high school student. The coach of the year was his father, Terry Rogers, who led the team to the North Carolina 4-A high school men’s basketball championship.

2003

Angela Anglin MSA is the new exceptional children/accountability director for Yancey County Schools. Anglin has served the elementary and middle schools of the county for more than 25 years as a teacher, assistant principal and principal. She was formerly principal at East Yancey Middle School.

2004

Pushpitha Kittalapudi MPA is a new partner in the law firm of Riddick, Wernet, Zatuch, an accounting, tax and advisory firm headquartered in New York. A member of the firm’s affordable housing practice, Kittalapudi has more than 15 years of public accounting service with nonprofit organizations, real estate developers and low-income housing tax credit funds. She speaks at national conferences on the topics of affordable housing and tax credit issues.

New York City tailoring Daniel Weger ’02 makes the elegant menswear worn on stage and screen by well-known actors. Nathan Lane recently came to Weger’s studio to be fitted for a new film, Tom Cruise wore this suit during his Academy Award-winning role in “Collateral.” Weger also makes clothes for Bryan Cranston, Jeff Daniels, John Lithgow, David Strathairn, Liv Tyler, John Cleese, James Franco and Terrence Mann. WCU’s Carolyn Plemmons Phillips and Ben R. Phillips Distinguished Professor of Musical Theatre, who took over for Kelsey Grammer in the Broadway production of “Finding Neverland” in 2015.

Weger started sewing as a work-student majoring in theatre at WCU, earning money for tuition by making costumes for campus productions. After graduating, he worked in the costume departures of the Santa Fe Opera in New Mexico, the Washington National Opera and the Shakespearean Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. He earned an MFA in costume production at the Julliard School in 2003. He was working in New York City as head tailor at the renowned costume shop, Eric Wintering Inc., when his son, Theodore, was born with Angelman syndrome, a rare and incurable disorder. Weger left full-time employment to help his wife, Christine, provide care for their child, now 3 years old. He set up a sewing machine in his living room and worked from home. Clients continued to call and the business kept growing. His new studio, B.D. Weger Tailoring, opened this year in the Times Square area of Manhattan.

An exciting and time-consuming craft, custom menswear tailoring is considered a dying art at a shrinking field. Weger said, “The challenges of creating a suit is a great joy, but it takes relentless work, but life’s largest reward can be achieving what you set out to do.”

CUSTOM TAILOR STITCHES TOGETHER CAREER, FAMILY

An exacting and time-consuming craft, custom menswear tailoring is considered a dying art at a shrinking field.
GAMING BECOMES A (VIRTUAL) REALITY FOR PRODUCER

Since moving to Hollywood a year ago, Bradan Dotson ’07 has been into virtual reality—for real. Dotson is the production and marketing manager at VRWERX, makers of films and video games for the virtual reality entertainment industry. The company, a division of Beast Media Group, is located on the backlot at Universal Studios in Universal City, California. Dotson is on the development and production team for “Paranormal Activity VR,” a new video game to be released this fall on the HTC Vive, Facebook Oculus and Sony PlayStation Virtual Reality platform.

In the past few months, Dotson has been in the midst of a whirlwind of promotional events for the game at conferences, expos and conventions. He traveled to France for the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, which hosted for the first time a virtual reality pavilion. “It was really powerful software. “We had a lot of visitors at Cannes trying out the game,” said Dotson.

VRWERX, which has been into virtual reality since 2006, is releasing a new video game this fall called “Three Piece Suit Festival,” which takes place in Atlanta and Boston each year. Instead of uniforms, team players don fursuits purchased in thrift shops for the tournament. Their unusual outfits often are in tatters by the game’s end. The tournament raised more than $7,000 this year for Pets for Vets, an organization that trains service dogs as companions. It was the largest amount ever raised at a single game in the group’s 10-year history. The group has raised more than $32,000 in the past four years to support charities. The next games will be in October in Boston and February in Atlanta.

SERVANT LEADER HELPS BUILD SCHOOLS IN AFRICA

If impoverished children in Africa get new schools, Emily Shapiro ’14 of Raleigh may be remembered for the role that she played in helping to build them. Shapiro is the director of partnerships and programs for JamQuest, a nonprofit organization working to provide educational support to some of Nairobi’s neediest children and teenagers living in the urban slums of Kibera. Shapiro has traveled to Kenya several times on humanitarian missions to help the children and their families. She was there for three months during the summer to help plan for a school building while also providing support for children hospitalized in a cancer ward. Shapiro believes that helping those in need, especially children, is the best use for her skills and educational preparation. “Basically, it’s just the idea being a servant first, seeing a need and trying to meet a need, not to seek a title or prestige, but for the betterment of the world,” she said.

In 2005, Former Catawba football player Francis Brown has been named associate head football coach at Temple University. Prior to joining the Owls in 2011, Brown was a high school coach and also worked as a football trainer. Instrumental in helping the Cats rank 12th place nationally in total defense in 2004, he is also remembered as the cornerbacks who suffered a broken arm early in the 2003 season and returned to start for the last five games with his arm in a cast.

2006
Cameron Miller MA was featured on CNN this year for his leadership role in a unique charity tournament called “Three Piece Suit Festival,” which takes place in Atlanta and Boston each year. Instead of uniforms, team players don fursuits purchased in thrift shops for the tournament. Their unusual outfits often are in tatters by the game’s end. The tournament raised more than $7,000 this year for Pets for Vets, an organization that trains service dogs as companions. It was the largest amount ever raised at a single game in the group’s 10-year history. The group has raised more than $32,000 in the past four years to support charities. The next games will be in October in Boston and February in Atlanta.

2007
Tin K. Hardin MA ’09, school counselor at Forest Hills Elementary, was named Calhoun County’s school counselor of the year for 2015-16. Hardin also was re-elected to a two-year term as executive secretary of the Southwest Region 6 of the North Carolina School Counselor Association. His wife is in Shelby with his wife and two sons.

The work of Eastern Band of Cherokee artist Lunee Hill MFA ’12 was recently featured in three exhibitions, including at the Art Mur gallery in Montreal; the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis, Indiana; and the Buxom Art Center in Henderson, North Carolina.

2008
Kim Pate MBA is the new director of intercollegiate athletics at James-Rhyne University. Pate, who had been director of athletics at the University of Illinois-Springfield since 2011, began her new job June 1. A native of Saskatchewan, Canada, she moved to North Carolina as a teenager, finishing high school here and earning her bachelor’s degree at Brevard College. She was formerly athletics director at Brevard.

If impoverished children in Africa get new schools, Emily Shapiro ’14 of Raleigh may be remembered for the role that she played in helping to build them. Shapiro is the director of partnerships and programs for JamQuest, a nonprofit organization working to provide educational support to some of Nairobi’s neediest children and teenagers living in the urban slums of Kibera. Shapiro has traveled to Kenya several times on humanitarian missions to help the children and their families. She was there for three months during the summer to help plan for a school building while also providing support for children hospitalized in a cancer ward. Shapiro believes that helping those in need, especially children, is the best use for her skills and educational preparation. “Basically, it’s just the idea being a servant first, seeing a need and trying to meet a need, not to seek a title or prestige, but for the betterment of the world,” she said.

In 2005, Former Catawba football player Francis Brown has been named associate head football coach at Temple University. Prior to joining the Owls in 2011, Brown was a high school coach and also worked as a football trainer. Instrumental in helping the Cats rank 12th place nationally in total defense in 2004, he is also remembered as the cornerbacks who suffered a broken arm early in the 2003 season and returned to start for the last five games with his arm in a cast.
SIGMA CHI CELEBRATES 25 YEARS AT WCU
Jesse Webb ’89 arrived at Western Carolina University in the fall of 1986 seeking to join Sigma Chi, his father’s fraternity. Without a chapter on campus, Webb launched an effort to form a chapter on campus. A month later, the Kappa Gamma Chapter of Sigma Chi was formed; the chapter will induct its 350th member this fall.

2012
Jill Darkenhoff received an award for teaching excellence from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development. She is a member of the nursing department faculty at St. Philip’s College in San Antonio, Texas.

2013
While on a trip to Los Angeles, Kasey Beam ’13 was chosen as a contestant for the CBS game show “The Price Is Right” and successfully competed to the final round before she was eliminated.

2014
Franklin native Tyler Cook has written his second novel, “Kuna,” a work of science fiction. Cook’s first novel, “Ombra,” was released in 2015. He is also the author of “A Guide to Historic Sheldon.”

Geology alumna Bailey Donnon and Blair Temple, a researcher for WCU’s Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, are among 18 contributors to a paper about climate change now being discussed in the scientific community. The research, led by retired NASA climate scientist James Hansen, suggests that drastic climate change could happen within decades rather than centuries because of the current rate of burning fossil fuels. The findings were released in March by the European science journal “Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics.” Donnon is in graduate school at East Carolina University.

Erin Karsee Garmezy wrote the proposal that won a $50,000 grant from the Grady Foundation of Asheville to help fund the construction of a new $1.4 million pool project for the town of Canton. The town’s old pool reached the end of its useful life after 70 years of operation and was closed. Garmezy, who has worked at the pool in various capacities for the past seven years, was named Canton’s first recreation program coordinator and certified pool operator in July.

Aubin Bennett Middleton has returned to his alma mater, St. Mary’s School in Bonneville, in a new role as the school’s director of admissions. Middleton, who first visited in stage and screen of WC, was also involved in his maternal arts while in high school at St. Mary’s.

2015
Katie Bell MA accepted a full-time position at the Museum of Natural History and Science of Cincinnati, Ohio, after completing a summer internship there in 2015. The university’s doctoral program in wildlife management is also affiliated with the museum.

Kevin Bell received an award for teaching excellence from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development. She is a member of the nursing department faculty at St. Philip’s College in San Antonio, Texas.

2016
Joe Barone is the new chief of the Statesville Police Department. A native of Boonville, Barone, a former United States Marine, was named Canton’s first recreation program coordinator and certified pool operator in July.

Matthew Ryan Stone MPA has been appointed vice mayor of Black Mountain, Stone, who was elected to the board of aldermen in 2013, is the grandson of the late Dick Stone, who served as the town’s first mayor for 19 years.

PASTOR BRINGS NEW EXCITEMENT TO CHARLOTTE CHURCH
Growing up in New Jersey, Michael Davis ’80 was 16 when a friend died in a car crash. Several other friends were getting into trouble. Concerned about his life path, Davis began to study the Bible and attend church, where a trusted Sunday School teacher advised him to find a college with good campus ministry programs. “I had always heard the South was called the ‘Bible belt,’ so I decided to come to North Carolina. Finding a medium-sized school with campus ministry programs was first and foremost in my mind when I enrolled at Western,” he said.

Four decades later, Davis is the senior pastor of Woodwuan Baptist Church in Charlotte. The all-white congregation of the 69-year-old churchcredits its African-American pastor with bringing renewed excitement to services and encouraging visitors to attend. Race hasn’t been an issue. “It just never comes up that I’m black,” Davis said. Sermons reflect his extensive knowledge of the Bible, which he has read and re-read countless times. “I found that teaching the books of the Bible covers the total person, how to live and how to pattern our lives. Every topic is covered there,” he said.

At WCU, Davis always carried a Bible to classes. Being from the North, he felt he didn’t fit in at first. During his sophomore year, he met Don Good ’78, a like-minded student from Tennessee. Now a professor at East Tennessee State University, Good welcomed Davis to a campus student group, “Peace One Way,” that later became affiliated with a national ministry for students, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. On a trip to an ICF conference, Davis felt called to the ministry.

Through the years, he provided support to various ministers and church groups while living and working in Gastonia and Raleigh. After becoming an ordained missionary for the Child Evangelism Fellowship and moving to Charlotte, he organized Bible clubs for children and served as teacher. He was so admired by members of the Woodwuan congregation, who met him through the children’s clubs, that he was invited to serve in an interim position when the church’s pastor retired. In 2015, the congregation voted overwhelmingly to hire him full-time.

At Woodwuan, Davis serves with WCU alumnus Jacquelyn Calpoper ’79, the church’s minister of music.
Laura Arr "Laura" Campione '82
March 25, 2016; Asheville, Virginia.
Mary F. Cartell '72
Jan. 6, 2016; Jacksonville, Florida.
Jan Willis Carter '59
Jan. 19, 2016; Gravette Falls.
Larry J. Carter MBA '74
Jan. 30, 2016; Aslen.
Guilla Jane Eargle Chapman '53
Jan. 5, 2016; Charlotte.
Ashley Jane Carter Cicconic '05
March 28, 2016; Winston-Salem.
Gary F. Collins '75
March 22, 2016; Oak Ridge.
Leo B. Cowan '52
Feb. 15, 2016; Tuscaloosa.
Nancy Potts Coward MAED '57
Jan. 13, 2016; Asheville.
Catherine P. Creamann '42
April 3, 2016; Wilmington.
Margaret Shirley Croy '34
April 6, 2016; Rome, Georgia.
Annie B. Culpepper '80
Dec. 20, 2015; Cornelius.
Robert Eugene Cunningham '54
Nov. 5, 2015; Haywood.
Larry E. Dalton MA '69
Oct. 30, 2015; Salem, South Carolina.
Lauren M. Dobson '04
Feb. 21, 2016; Charlotte.
Max Harrison Duckett '57 MA '60
Nov. 28, 2015; Canton.
Judith B. Fields MA '89
Oct. 26, 2015; Cashiers.
Stephanie Blount Fields '80
Dec. 23, 2015; Raleigh.
Judith B. Fields MA '89
Oct. 26, 2015; Cashiers.
Lauren M. Dobson '04
Feb. 21, 2016; Charlotte.
Max Harrison Duckett '57 MA '60
Nov. 28, 2015; Canton.
Judith B. Fields MA '89
Oct. 26, 2015; Cashiers.
Stephanie Blount Fields '80
Dec. 23, 2015; Raleigh.
Judith B. Fields MA '89
Oct. 26, 2015; Cashiers.
EX-NASA FLIGHT CONTROLLER ADVOCATES FOR STEM

After a career in the aerospace industry that spanned more than 20 years, Scarlet Richardson Parenteau ’85 often finds herself often called upon to talk about STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the important fields of study for 21st-century careers. Parenteau is a former flight director and flight controller for NASA missions. When she moved to New Mexico from Colorado to be closer to family this year, she was invited by the New Mexico Museum of Space History to speak at a STEM event that was part of a campaign by cultural institutions across the country to reach young people. Parenteau also recently started teaching STEM classes for elementary school students at the museum. Growing up in the small rural community of Randleman during a time when young girls weren’t expected to enjoy math and science or to pursue careers in those disciplines, Parenteau defied the odds, majored in applied mathematics at WCU and took classes in chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy. After graduating, she moved to Denver, Colorado, and worked for 17 years at Martin Marietta (now Lockheed Martin) on the flight guidance software for the Titan IV project. After taking a break to teach school for 10 years, she returned to the aerospace industry in 2013 to work at the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics based at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She served as flight controller and flight director for NASA’s 2015 mission to study magnetic reconnections that occur high above Earth. Though her classes at the New Mexico museum for budding astronauts and rocket scientists. Though her classes didn’t always focus on the mission’s instruments on four satellites.

Richard Parenteau ’85, director for NASA’s 2015 mission to study magnetic reconnections that occur high above Earth.

Floyd Morton “Mort” Crugger, former director of the Center for Improving Mountain Living, March 28, 2016; Black Mountain.

Nancy Silver Duckworth, friend and benefactor, Dec. 22, 2015; Carolina.

Michael Paul Jones, retired head of philosophy and religion, Nov. 23, 2015; Sylva.

William Glen Hardesty MA ’77, retired director of student financial aid, Feb. 28, 2016; Asheville.

James R. Holland, retired director of human resources, Nov. 11, 2015; Sylva.

Gloria H. Houston, former College of Education and Allied Professions faculty member, March 21, 2016; Apollo Beach, Florida.

David H. Littlejohn, former world languages faculty member in Spanish, Feb. 8, 2016; Cullowhee.

Thekla M. Luz, former facilities management staff member, Oct. 13, 2015; Monroe.

Larry D. Lynch, friend and benefactor, April 21, 2016; Webster.


Yvonne Saddler Nielsen, former accounting office staff member, Nov. 1, 2015; Sylva.

Mary Elise Deal Pow, widow of Alexander Houston, friend and benefactor, Oct. 10, 2015; Houston, Texas.

Verna Plemmons, former accounting office staff member, Nov. 1, 2015; Sylva.

Michael P. Thomas MPM ’92, former College of Business faculty member, Nov. 4, 2015; Asheville.

Patty Thornton, retired food services staff member, Nov. 28, 2015; Cullowhee.

Bert L. Wiley, retired music department faculty member, Feb. 19, 2016; Haywood.

David A. Woodstock Jr., entrepreneur, friend and recipient of honorary doctor of business degree course WCU, May 5, 2015; Flat Rock.

Voting for its new slate of representatives on its board of directors. Elected to serve three-year terms ending June 30, 2019:

From N.C. District 1: Bob Buckner ’67, Waynesville; owner of United Music Enterprises and former director of WCU athletic bands.

From N.C. District 2: Christopher Everett Jr. ’12 ME ‘14, Charlotte; assistant ticket manager at UNC Charlotte and former WCU track and football athlete.

From N.C. District 3: T.J. Eaves ’12, Durham; assistant district attorney at the Wake County District Attorney’s Office and former Student Government Association president.

From N.C. District 4: Jimmy Ramsey ’73, Carolina Beach; retired executive vice president and chief financial officer for the Taylor Group Inc.

From Out-of-State District 5: James “Jim” Beddington ’67, Cumming, Georgia; U.S. Department of Labor retiree and private practice attorney.
For a dozen Decembers now, I’ve read Gloria Houston’s “The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree” – to my children when they were young, to a couple of elementary school classes, sometimes to myself. The story almost always choked me up. Houston died March 21 at her daughter’s house in Florida. She was 75 and had been fighting cancer for a couple of years. When I heard the news, I dug out my book, which Houston autographed for my kids. It’s my favorite picture book.

If you’ve been a child or read to a child in the past quarter century, you, too, may be acquainted with Houston’s remarkable books. Best known is “The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree,” set in the North Carolina mountains during World War I, about a little girl and her mother carrying on while her father is away at war. Houston set most of her books in the mountains, drawing from the family stories she absorbed growing up in Avery County. For decades, her parents ran the much-loved Sunny Brook general store near Spruce Pine.

Houston was a broke graduate student when she got the idea for the book in December 1984. She named her main character, the little girl, Ruthie, after her mother. It was her mom’s Christmas present that year. Since publication in 1988, the book, illustrated by a Caldecott-winning artist, has become a holiday classic, with some 3.5 million copies in print. It’s been adapted into a musical, an opera and ballet. Ministers have used it for their Christmas Eve services.

I should point out that even though this book makes me cry, it’s not sad at all. Just the opposite. Which is why my kids always rolled their eyes when I choked up. But when I interviewed Houston and told her this, she wasn’t surprised. The story never makes children cry, she said. They’re not sentimental. But adults – that’s another story.

She herself only cried once, she told me, while watching a dress rehearsal of the stage version at the Children’s Theatre of Charlotte. It’s the scene where Ruthie’s mama, who has no money, decides to sacrifice her wedding gown for Ruthie, who needs a dress to play an angel in the church Christmas pageant. When Mama ripped that wedding dress, Houston broke down. “People cry at different places,” she told me. “Where do you cry?”

For me, it’s near the end. Ruthie has played the Christmas angel in the church pageant. St. Nick has presented her with a tiny angel doll. As she leaves the church, she’s so mesmerized by it that she doesn’t notice the man in an Army uniform – her father, waiting for her.

“Let me look at you, my pretty young’un,” said Papa’s voice. And he hugged Ruthie, Mama, and the tiny angel all at the same time.

Houston taught in the public schools and in Western Carolina University’s Department of Elementary and Middle Grades Education, where she was author-in-residence. Her obituary says she often identified herself as “first, last and always, a teacher.” A funeral was held April 3 at the Pine Grove United Methodist Church, the inspiration for the church in the book.

Shedding a tear for the author of ‘The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree’

By PAM KELLEY
AUGUST
TUESDAY, AUG. 20
Valley Ballroom – Annual Welcome Back event. Music, food and entertainment. 4 p.m. Central Plaza, University Center. 828.227.3621

THURSDAY, AUG. 25
“Sanacoo, A Soldier’s Tale” – 7:30 p.m. A fusion of circus arts, dance, mask-and-puppet theater, original music, elaborate costumes, and digitally animated video. Part of the Galaxy of Stars Series. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

FRIDAY, AUG. 26
Week of Welcome Concert – Sufi performing. 8 p.m. Central Plaza, University Center. 828.227.2479

SEPTEMBER
TUESDAY, SEP. 6
School of Music Faculty Showcase Concert – 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Coulter Building. 828.227.7242

SATURDAY, SEP. 10
Football – vs. Gardner-Webb. 6 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

SATURDAY, SEP. 10
Second City Improv Group Comedy Show: Second City Improv Group – “Go!”. Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

WEDNESDAY, SEP. 14
Limited Appearance – Esther. Part of the Mainstage season. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SEPTEMBER
TUESDAY, SEP. 13
Southern Film Circuit: “Art of the Perks” – Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7 p.m. Theater, A.K. Hind University Center. 828.227.2612

THURSDAY – SUNDAY, SEP. 22-25
“Resident Alien.” – A new musical by WCU’s Kalpa Stanislasky examines the challenges of a Soviet family emigrating to the U.S. Part of the Mainstage season. 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday; 3 p.m. matinee Sunday. Hoey Auditorium. 828.227.2612

SATURDAY, SEP. 24
Mountain Heritage Day – Southern Appalachian food, music, dance, crafts, activities. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Intramural Fields. 828.227.3039

FRIDAY, SEP. 30
Ttakju (The Red Queen) – 7:30 p.m. Live pre-Hispanic music, dance, rituals and costumes re-create the heart of the Mayan world. Part of the Galaxy of Stars Series. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

OCTOBER
SATURDAY, OCT. 1
Football – vs. Citadel. Family Weekend. 3:30 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

FRIDAY – SATURDAY, OCT. 7-8
Limited Appearance – Esther, a talented African-American seamstress living in Manhattan at the turn of the 20th century, begins to receive love letters from George in the Caribbean. Part of the Mainstage theatre season. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, OCT. 8
Football – vs. VMI. 7 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

SATURDAY, OCT. 8
Football – vs. Wofford. 6 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

SATURDAY, OCT. 11
Southern Film Circuit: “SHU-Del (Let’s Go)” – Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7 p.m. Theater, University Center. 828.227.2612

THURSDAY, OCT. 13
Symphony Band performance – 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, OCT. 14
Haunted WCU Tour – Walking tour with sights and stories of WCU and Cullowhee community. 2 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

SATURDAY, OCT. 14
Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

SATURDAY, OCT. 29
Football – vs. Chattanooga. Homecoming game. 3:30 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 26
Comedy Show: Street Improv Group – “ совсем”. Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 26
Handmade Holiday Sale – The annual craft event features handmade gifts, with proceeds supporting the School of Art and Design. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Intramural Fields. 828.227.2479

TUESDAY, OCT. 31
“Snowkus Pocus Cirque-tacular Holiday Show” – Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, NOV. 11
Shana Tucker: Ceramicist and singer. Part of the Galaxy of Stars Series. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

NOVEMBER
SATURDAY, NOV. 5
Football – vs. VMI. Senior Day. Hall of Fame Day. 2 p.m. Bob Waters Field/E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

FRIDAY, NOV. 11
“Ain’t Misbehavin” – Performance by the Western Carolina Community Chorus. 3 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, NOV. 12
Intramural Fields. 828.227.2479

SUNDAY, NOV. 12
“Mossam”. Part of the Mainstage season. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 15
Southern Film Circuit: “Hotel Dallas.” – Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7 p.m. Theater, University Center. 828.227.2612

DECEMBER
SATURDAY, DEC. 1
Smoky Mountain Brass Quintet – 7:30 p.m. Recital Hall, Coulter Building. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, DEC. 4
Sounds of the Season Concert – Annual performance of holiday favorites. 3 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 7
“Snowkus Pocus Cirque-tacular Holiday Show” – Part of the Arts and Cultural Events Series. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, DEC. 17
Fall Commencement. Undergraduate and graduate students (including August 2016 graduates). 1 p.m. Ramsey Center. 828.227.7216

EVENTS CALENDAR

EXHIBITS
FINE ART MUSEUM
828.227.3951 || fineartmuseum.wcu.edu

“Vision & Vistas: Great Smoky Mountains.” Sixty original photographs and drawings made by photographers and artists inspired by the grand vistas of the Great Smoky Mountains across the creation of the national park. Through Sept. 23.

“Faculty Biennial Exhibition.” The School of Art and Design’s active artists and distinguished scholars – some of whom regularly exhibit in venues across the globe and speak at major conferences – share their recent studio-based works. Through Sept. 23.

“Contemporary Clay.” This exhibition, curated by Heather Max Eickmeyer, examines the evolving, expanded field of clay and ceramics, showing the depth and breadth of this material and its users’ show, ranging from non-limited to traditional and non-traditional functional objects, rapid prototyping, unglazed clay as a material and use of mixed material in objects and installations. Oct. 6 – Dec. 16.

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER
828.227.7199 || mhc.wcu.edu


“Horace Kephart.” 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekdays; until 7 p.m. on Thursday. Free. Hunter Library, first floor. Through December.

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER
828.227.7199 || mhc.wcu.edu


“Horace Kephart.” 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekdays; until 7 p.m. on Thursday. Free. Hunter Library, first floor. Through December.

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER
828.227.7199 || mhc.wcu.edu


“Horace Kephart.” 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekdays; until 7 p.m. on Thursday. Free. Hunter Library, first floor. Through December.

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER
828.227.7199 || mhc.wcu.edu


“Horace Kephart.” 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekdays; until 7 p.m. on Thursday. Free. Hunter Library, first floor. Through December.

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER
828.227.7199 || mhc.wcu.edu

Overwhelming voter approval during the March 2016 bond referendum signals strong support for WCU and higher education

By RICHARD STARNES '92 MA '94

March 15, 2016, was a momentous day in our institution’s history and in the history of our state. On that day, in the primary election, our state’s citizens overwhelmingly approved the Connect NC bond proposal. For Western Carolina University, this means a new $110 million natural science facility, the single largest project in the bond package.

Most alumni, myself included, spent time in our current Natural Sciences Building, whether for core curriculum courses or, for those in the sciences, for their major. Opened in 1978 when WCU boasted an enrollment of slightly more than 6,100 students, the Natural Sciences Building was never designed to support the current student load in science courses, nor does it offer students the benefit of modern teaching strategies or laboratory facilities.

Today, Western Carolina University is a very different place. With a vibrant campus and an enrollment topping 10,300 students, we are a recognized center of science, technology, economic development and community engagement. Fixed lab benches, limited exhaust hoods and inflexible architectural designs – the hallmarks of our current facility – do not conform to 21st-century science pedagogy that emphasizes experimentation, collaboration and student research. It also does not support our robust level of faculty and student research.

For the last two years, a steady stream of elected and appointed political officials, community leaders, and members of our University of North Carolina Board of Governors and General Administration passed through our Natural Sciences Building, taking in the inadequate facilities, but also the hard work, promise and potential of our students and faculty. They visited classes, toured labs and heard our story from students and faculty alike. Despite a failing building built nearly 40 years ago, we continued to educate our students to take their places as 21st-century scientists. Our visitors realized what we already know: a building is just a place where education takes place. Their support of our new science facility was grounded upon the great work of our people, and they embraced our vision of what we might accomplish with some much-needed investment.

Planning for our new facility is well underway, and we plan to keep the university community updated on our progress through a website and via social media. As we plan, we are focused on transformative questions and new ideas. What will our students need to know and be able to do in 10 years? In 20? How can we create a facility that embraces the best teaching strategies and anticipates new classroom evolutions? How can we provide platforms for research and collaboration that will support faculty and students? How can we leverage our new capabilities to support the region and the state? How can we use the new building to drive innovation in the sciences, in the College of Arts and Sciences and across campus? These questions will guide us as we build this important cornerstone of the university’s future.

Since 1789, the people of North Carolina have led the nation in terms of public support for public higher education. The bond referendum vote on March 15 indicates that the historic support we have enjoyed is alive and well in the Old North State. Buildings are nice – and certainly needed – but knowing our citizens still recognize the importance of a “University of the People” makes our new science building that much sweeter. Thanks to the readers of this publication and to the other citizens of North Carolina for supporting our efforts to educate the scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians and educators of tomorrow.

Richard Starnes '92 MA '94 is dean of Western Carolina University’s College of Arts and Sciences.

Moonshine and politics mix at Mountain Heritage Day

North Carolina Gov. Jim Martin (left) stopped by Mountain Heritage Day in 1986, one of a long line of elected officials and politicians who have visited the event over the years. On that September day 30 years ago, Martin met with R.O. Wilson, who until 1990 operated a distillery at the festival that produced moonshine for visiting dignitaries to sniff, but not sample. This year’s festival, the 42nd annual celebration of Southern Appalachian culture, will be held Saturday, Sept. 24. Let us know your favorite Mountain Heritage Day moment. Email us at magazinestories@wcu.edu (subject line “Mountain Heritage”); drop us a letter to Mountain Heritage Memories, 420 H.F. Robinson Building, Cullowhee, NC, 28723; or post at www.facebook.com/MountainHeritageDay.