IT'S TIME TO MOVE FORWARD
The Magazine of Western Carolina University is produced by the Office of Communications and Public Relations for alumni, faculty, staff, friends and students 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 Wargo

MANAGING EDITOR
Bill Studenc MPA ’10

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Randall Holcombe
Teresa Killian Tate

ART DIRECTOR
Rubae Schoen

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER
Mark Haskett ‘87

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
John Balentine
Will Huddleston
Haley Medford ’12
Zack Keys

STAFF WRITERS
Keith Brenton
Kaitlyn Connelly
Daniel Hooker ’01
Christy Martin ’71 MA ’78

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
As we look back, we recognize that our growth and success as a university is because of our alumni. Your story of success is our story. That’s why we want to be a part of the next chapter of your life and your career. We’ve designed online and face-to-face graduate programs in Cullowhee and in Asheville to fit into your busy lifestyle, and we’ve kept fees at one of the lowest rates in the UNC system so we can deliver a real return on your investment. Get a graduate degree from your alma mater, Western Carolina University.

It’s time to move forward, together.

**PROGRAMS IN CULLOWHEE AND ASHEVILLE**
- Accountancy *
- Art – MFA
- Art Education
- Biology
- Biology Education
- Business Administration MBA *
- Chemistry
- Chemistry – Professional Science
- Masters in Natural Products
- College Student Personnel
- Communication Sciences & Disorders
- Counseling – Clinical Mental Health *
- Counseling – School *
- Elementary Education
- English *
- English Education *
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- History
- Family Nurse Practitioner *
- Middle Grades Education
- Nurse Anesthesia *
- Psychology
- Specialist in School Psychology
- Public Affairs *
- Social Sciences Education
- Social Work *
- Technology *
- Cherokee Studies Interdisciplinary
- Graduate Certificate
- Technical and Professional Writing Certificate *
- Family Nurse Practitioner Post-Master’s Certificate
- Substance Abuse Studies
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
- Alternative Licensure / Teacher Certification
- Doctor of Educational Leadership *
- Doctor of Nursing Practice *
- Doctor of Physical Therapy

**ONLINE PROGRAMS**
- Construction Management
- Entrepreneurship
- Health Sciences – Health Education
- Health Sciences – Health Management
- Health Sciences – Emergency Medical Care
- Human Resources
- Education – Special Education
- Nurse Educator
- Nurse Leadership
- Project Management
- School Administration, MSA
- Special Education
- Culturally-Based Native Health Certificate
- Project Management Certificate
- Public School Leadership Post-Master’s Certificate
- Nurse Educator Post-Master’s Certificate
- Academically or Intellectually Gifted – Add-on Licensure

---

*Program, or some program courses, offered at WCU’s Biltmore Park Town Square instructional site in Asheville.
The year 2014 is emerging as an important time in the history of Western Carolina University, and not just because this is the year in which we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of this institution. Pausing to salute our past and to recognize the contributions of those who came before us is important. But even as we take the time for a collective stroll down Memory Lane, we also are focusing – with laser intensity – on taking the steps necessary to ensure that WCU is well-positioned to move into the future and to meet the challenges that face our community, region, state, nation and planet in the years and decades ahead.

This is the year in which, thanks to $1.4 million in state funding shepherded through the legislative budgeting process by N.C. Sen. Tom Apodaca ’80, our Cullowhee-based undergraduate engineering program is being extended to Biltmore Park to meet the needs of business and industry in the fast-growing Interstate 26 corridor of Buncombe and Henderson counties. We expect the expansion of engineering education to the Asheville-Hendersonville area to be a vital component of future economic development for all of Western North Carolina.

This also is the year in which the university underscored its commitment to the far western region of our state. I joined about 30 other campus leaders in May for a weeklong tour that included stops in Hayesville, Murphy, Brasstown, Cherokee, Otto, Franklin, Highlands, Rosman, Brevard and Arden. Our trip was designed to enable university leaders to learn more about the region that we serve and to help strengthen our relationships with our surrounding communities. One of the biggest take-aways from this invigorating journey was the impressive number of leaders we met from across the region who received their educations at WCU – from supervisors in a manufacturing facility to public school principals and superintendents, from community college administrators to leaders of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

This is the year in which we will welcome a new full-time primary care clinic to our Health and Human Sciences Building, the result of a partnership with our friends at WestCare Health to expand access to health care to members of the community while providing important educational opportunities to students in the health sciences. This clinic, scheduled to open in September, marks an important step in the development of the Millennial Initiative, our comprehensive regional economic development strategy that promotes partnerships with private industry and government entities to enhance hands-on student learning and collaborative research. With recent approval of a plan to lease the 344-acre “millennial campus” tract to the university’s Endowment Fund, the Millennial Initiative, under the leadership of Tony Johnson ’78 MBA ’80 MPA ’91, is poised to fulfill its promise as a national model for public-private partnerships in a rural environment.

This is the year in which our athletics teams are on the brink of new levels of success. Our baseball team captured its second straight Southern Conference regular season championship, our men’s and women’s indoor track and field teams claimed twin titles, and J.T. Poston won the SoCon men’s golf championship. Our men’s and women’s basketball teams enjoyed another exciting tournament run in Asheville, and the football team enters the coming season eager to build upon the progress of last year. And this is the year that the members of our Pride of the Mountains Marching Band will show the nation – and the world – that they are the best band in the land when they hit the Big Apple for the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.

And, this is a year in which alumni and friends of WCU have generously given to create additional funding for scholarship assistance to help our region’s best and brightest young people afford the cost of attending university. We previously identified fundraising for endowed scholarships as the university’s top philanthropic priority in order to ensure access to higher education for all capable students. Many of you have answered the call, but many more must respond if we are to continue our historic tradition of providing access to students who are prepared for the rigors of a higher education experience.

As you can tell, even as we celebrate our past there is much taking place in the present about which we can be proud. Yet, we dare not rest on our laurels. We must continue our emphasis on quality in all that we do, on setting – and achieving – high standards, and on pursuing the excellence that defines Western Carolina University. I trust that you share my belief that WCU is an ambitious institution, one with a sense of urgency to reach its goals. At this time of amazing momentum and with your involvement, we can meet our commitment to serve – in the best possible way – the people of North Carolina, with a particular focus on the western region where we are located.

You are part of the Western Carolina family, and I hope that you will persist in taking proactive ownership in advancing your institution through gifts of your time, money, passion, engagement and advocacy.

Go CATS!

David O. Belcher
Chancellor
Western Carolina University’s Mountain Heritage Center is featuring new exhibits that highlight two big milestones happening this year – the 125th anniversary of the university’s founding and the 40th anniversary of WCU’s fall celebration of mountain culture, Mountain Heritage Day.

An exhibit titled “The Dearest Spot of All: Western Carolina University’s 125th Anniversary” showcases the development and growth of the university over the decades, with artifacts and memorabilia that tell the stories of the many dedicated individuals who shaped the institution into the multifaceted regional university that it is today.

The exhibit examines WCU’s relationship with surrounding communities and the development of its athletics program. On the lighter side, it also traces changes in student life with artifacts such as May Day costumes and vintage cheerleader and mascot uniforms. Other items on display include an array of athletics championship rings and the 2009 Sudler Trophy that was won by the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band.

“This exhibit is complemented by ‘The Cullowhee Idea,’ also on view at the Mountain Heritage Center, which focuses on WCU’s service to the region through the years,” said Pam Meister, curator at the museum.

The exhibit “Y’all Come, the Best Kind of Get-Together: 40 Years of Mountain Heritage Day” showcases the evolution of the festival. The event now known as Mountain Heritage Day began as Founders Day in 1974 to celebrate the inauguration of Chancellor H.F. “Cotton” Robinson. The day ended with a barbecue and square dance, and discussions about holding a similar event the next year. The celebration was called Mountain Heritage Day the following year and it is now held on the last Saturday each September.

The exhibit will highlight activities that always have been part of the festival and examine how the university and community come together to hold a celebration that draws tens of thousands of visitors from across the region to Cullowhee.

Both exhibits will be on display through Dec. 12. The Mountain Heritage Center is open to the public free of charge and is located on the ground floor of H.F. Robinson Building. Daily visiting hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, with extended hours to 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

– By Randall Holcombe

For more information about the museum’s programs and special events, call 828.227.7129 or visit mhc.wcu.edu.
More than a century before Western Carolina commencements came to be associated with large crowds and hundreds of students who have earned diplomas, a small group of young people dressed formally in long dresses and suits with vests sat next to each other on the lawn on a sunny day to have a group photograph made. The names of the 17 boys and six girls, the 1898 graduates of Western Carolina University’s predecessor, Cullowhee High School, were written on the border of the photograph – Stillwell, Hooper, Brown, Parker, Buchanan and others – last names still prevalent in Jackson County today.

The photograph of those early alumni, along with many more historic images from WCU’s past, are now available online as part of Hunter Library’s digital collections. The collection, “Western Carolina University: Making Memories since 1889,” offers an opportunity to see the campus as it was long ago and includes photographs of old buildings and a campus farm no longer in existence as well as prominent people, including founder Robert L. Madison, who played key roles in the school’s early history. Many of the photographs, and a selection of scenic campus postcards, were previously available only by visiting Special Collections at the library.

The “Making Memories” website gives an overview of the collection, a browse feature that allows users to view the entire collection and a guided search feature to help identify images by topic. The photographs in the collection are the first of hundreds of images the library will work to digitize.

As information becomes increasingly available in digital forms and people are turning to the Internet for their information, there is a large push by libraries to make materials available digitally,” said Liz Skene, WCU’s digital initiatives librarian. “Our patrons are not always aware of the existence of some of our collections, especially the rare and fragile materials in Special Collections, and we are thrilled to make them available to a wider audience.”

Another aspect of the collection, “WCU Yearbooks,” features 73 of the annual campus publications and includes 15,000 pages of photographs. The collection begins with the 1918 yearbook, the Oogoocoo, and concludes with the 2005 edition of The Catamount, the last yearbook published at WCU.

In addition to “Making Memories” and yearbook online compilations, Hunter Library’s digital collections include “Stories of Mountain Folk.” This collection of oral histories features short interviews with several people familiar with WCU’s history, including Sara Sutton Madison ’54 MAEd ’60, the granddaughter-in-law of Robert L. Madison and granddaughter of one of the institution’s first students in 1889; Stedman Mitchell, the retired longtime director of WCU dining services, and others. The series is produced by Catch the Spirit of Appalachia Inc.

“By Christy Martin ’71 MA ’78

To browse the “Making Memories,” “WCU Yearbooks” and “Stories of Mountain Folk” sites, visit www.wcu.edu/hunter-library/collections/digital-collections.asp.

Here’s Paws

As part of the university’s 125th anniversary celebration, organizers of the yearlong observance teamed up with several Jackson County merchants to sponsor a children’s activity called “Where’s Paws.” During the spring and summer, kids scoured various businesses across the county to find images of the Catamount mascot and entered a drawing to receive prizes. The event concluded with a party and meet-and-greet with Paws on the WCU campus.

DIGITIZED HISTORY OPENS WINDOWS TO THE PAST

More than a century before Western Carolina commencements came to be associated with large crowds and hundreds of students who have earned diplomas, a small group of young people dressed formally in long dresses and suits with vests sat next to each other on the lawn on a sunny day to have a group photograph made. The names of the 17 boys and six girls, the 1898 graduates of Western Carolina University’s predecessor, Cullowhee High School, were written on the border of the photograph – Stillwell, Hooper, Brown, Parker, Buchanan and others – last names still prevalent in Jackson County today.

The photograph of those early alumni, along with many more historic images from WCU’s past, are now available online as part of Hunter Library’s digital collections. The collection, “Western Carolina University: Making Memories since 1889,” offers an opportunity to see the campus as it was long ago and includes photographs of old buildings and a campus farm no longer in existence as well as prominent people, including founder Robert L. Madison, who played key roles in the school’s early history. Many of the photographs, and a selection of scenic campus postcards, were previously available only by visiting Special Collections at the library.

The “Making Memories” website gives an overview of the collection, a browse feature that allows users to view the entire collection and a guided search feature to help identify images by topic. The photographs in the collection are the first of hundreds of images the library will work to digitize.

“As information becomes increasingly available in digital forms and people are turning to the Internet for their information, there is a large push by libraries to make materials available digitally,” said Liz Skene, WCU’s digital initiatives librarian. “Our patrons are not always aware of the existence of some of our collections, especially the rare and fragile materials in Special Collections, and we are thrilled to make them available to a wider audience.”

Another aspect of the collection, “WCU Yearbooks,” features 73 of the annual campus publications and includes 15,000 pages of photographs. The collection begins with the 1918 yearbook, the Oogoocoo, and concludes with the 2005 edition of The Catamount, the last yearbook published at WCU.

In addition to “Making Memories” and yearbook online compilations, Hunter Library’s digital collections include “Stories of Mountain Folk.” This collection of oral histories features short interviews with several people familiar with WCU’s history, including Sara Sutton Madison ’54 MAEd ’60, the granddaughter-in-law of Robert L. Madison and granddaughter of one of the institution’s first students in 1889; Stedman Mitchell, the retired longtime director of WCU dining services, and others. The series is produced by Catch the Spirit of Appalachia Inc.

“By Christy Martin ’71 MA ’78

To browse the “Making Memories,” “WCU Yearbooks” and “Stories of Mountain Folk” sites, visit www.wcu.edu/hunter-library/collections/digital-collections.asp.
Although the Battle for the Old Mountain Jug, the traditional football game involving longtime rivals Western Carolina University and Appalachian State, may have ended with ASU’s departure from the Southern Conference earlier this year, there’s a different kind of jug of interest on the Cullowhee campus these days. Actually, there are nine of them. Students in an upper-level ceramics class created jugs featuring likenesses of each of the Noble Nine, the original trustees of the institution that became WCU.

Matt Liddle, director of WCU’s School of Art and Design, suggested the idea of the creation of face jugs depicting the university’s early leaders as a way for art students to contribute to the yearlong celebration of the 125th anniversary of the institution’s founding. Joan Byrd, now-retired professor of ceramics, took the idea and ran with it, soliciting student volunteers from her ceramics classes to take on the project. The participating students worked on the jugs on their own time outside of the classroom. Kevin McNiff, a student in the Master of Fine Arts Program with a concentration in ceramics, first made the basic jug forms on the wheel in the school’s ceramics studio, and then the undergraduate students created the faces based on their interpretation of images of the Noble Nine from the university’s Special Collections in Hunter Library.

A traditional folk art form, face jugs have become a favorite collectible item for tourists visiting the region, said Byrd. "The origins of the face jug are a matter of conjecture, but it is generally thought that the tradition originated with African-American slaves in the southern United States who enjoyed the opportunity to echo the traditions of their African homeland," she said. "There are many interpretations of these pots. Some historians believe the faces were used in the practice of voodoo, while others think that the ugly features were applied to whiskey jugs to frighten children away from the contents. Whatever their origin, face jugs are widely valued today as a unique expression of Southern culture."

The face jugs are on display in the main lobby of the H.F. Robinson Administration Building. They also will be displayed at other venues during the remainder of WCU’s 125th anniversary year, along with information on the Noble Nine, face jugs as a genre, and the story of these specific jugs.

The Noble Nine and the students who captured in clay their collective countenances are R. Hamilton Brown (Ross Byrd and Ann Suggs), J. David Coward (Krista Fitzgerald), Thomas A. Cox (Logan Brashar), Daniel D. Davies (Suzanne Rose), William A. Henson (Amanda Janes), William C. Norton (Melena Reid ’14), Lewis J. Smith (Kirby Phillips), Robert L. Watson (Ann Suggs) and William M. Wilson (Ogle Pace).

–By Bill Studenc MPA ’10
Efforts to re-establish the Cullowhee lily on the Western Carolina University campus and to cultivate additional funding for the WCU Alumni Association Scholarship Fund have taken root in this, the 125th year of the institution’s history. For the first time this past spring, Cullowhee lily bulbs, which had been planted in a campus garden during a ceremony as part of Homecoming weekend 2012, produced the distinctive white flower with six petals.

In addition, sales of Cullowhee lily bulbs and note cards, along with memberships into the Cullowhee Lily Society, have generated some $31,000 so far toward the WCU Alumni Scholarship Fund, which provides annual, need-based support to a current WCU student with close ties to Catamount alumni. “The support of our loyal WCU alumni and from members of our local community in this endeavor has been truly amazing,” said Marty Ramsey ’85, director of alumni affairs. “Although we initially thought a portion of the proceeds from this activity would support ongoing care for the plants and the lily beds, WCU grounds crew superintendent Roger Turk and his crew are maintaining the garden as part of their normal landscaping work at very little cost for us. That means that almost all of the dollars raised in this initiative are going toward the scholarship fund.”

Formally called the Zephyranthes atamasco, the Cullowhee lily once common at Western Carolina now grows in only a few spots on campus. Some speculate that the water-loving plant began to disappear from the Cullowhee area when the low valley wetlands were drained first for farm use, then later during campus construction. The proliferation of aggressive kudzu along the river banks may have been another factor in the disappearance of the lily.

Launched in 2012, the project is the brainchild of Betty Allen ’68, former Alumni Association president, and was championed by Susan Belcher, wife of Chancellor David O. Belcher. Also playing important roles are the WCU Alumni Association, the Office of the Chancellor and WCU Facilities Management grounds crews, along with many members of the surrounding community.

The Cullowhee Lily Initiative is winding down during WCU’s quasquicentennial year, said Ramsey. Lily bulbs and note cards will be sold at this September’s Mountain Heritage Day and, if any are left after that annual festival, at major campus events this fall such as Homecoming, Ramsey said.

For more information, contact Cindi Magill with the Office of Alumni Affairs at 828.227.7335 or magill@wcu.edu.

–By Bill Studenc MPA ’10

Students in Jessie Swigger’s “Introduction to Public History” class produced a historic walking trail and map of Western Carolina University points of interest as part of the university’s 125th anniversary celebration.

“The class started the project by taking a tour of campus with George Frizzell ’77 MA ’81 from Special Collections,” said Swigger, assistant professor in the Department of History at WCU. “As a class, we selected what we thought were the most important historic sites on campus,” she said.

The landmarks on the trail are Highway 106, Mount Zion AME Zion Church, Moore Building, Madison Memorial, Memorial Stadium, Breese Gymnasium, McKee Building, Cherokee Mound, Haywood Field, A.K. Hinds University Center, Alumni Tower, the Catafount, Reid Gymnasium, Ramsey Regional Activity Center, Childress Field at Hennon Stadium, Catamount Statue and Highway 107.

–By Kaitlyn Connelly

Kaitlyn Connelly, a senior majoring in English with a concentration in professional writing, was a summer 2014 intern in the Office of Communications and Public Relations.

View the brochure online by clicking the ‘history’ link at celebrate125.wcu.edu.

Students produce walking trail brochure

The Cullowhee Lily Initiative has taken root with blooming bulbs and scholarship support

Management grounds crews, along with many members of the surrounding community.

The Cullowhee Lily Initiative is winding down during WCU’s quasquicentennial year, said Ramsey. Lily bulbs and note cards will be sold at this September’s Mountain Heritage Day and, if any are left after that annual festival, at major campus events this fall such as Homecoming, Ramsey said.

For more information, contact Cindi Magill with the Office of Alumni Affairs at 828.227.7335 or magill@wcu.edu. Direct gifts to the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund also can be made online at give.wcu.edu.

–By Bill Studenc MPA ’10
2014 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE
at SOUTH FLORIDA 8/30
BREVARD 9/6
CATAWBA 9/13
at FURMAN 9/27
at PRESBYTERIAN 10/4
WOFFORD* 10/11
at MERCER* 10/18
THE CITADEL* 10/25
CHATTANOOGA* 11/1
at SAMFORD* 11/8
VMI* 11/15
at ALABAMA 11/22
Home games in bold
*Southern Conference game
ORDER YOUR SEASON TICKETS TODAY!

JOIN THE CATAMOUNT KIDS CLUB TODAY FOR AWESOME BENEFITS ALL YEAR LONG!
(AGES 3-12)
CALL 828.227.2513 OR VISIT CATAMOUNTSPORTS.COM!

PROVE YOUR PURPLE

#PROVEYOURPURPLE  CatamountSports  @Catamounts  wcu_catamounts
800.34.GOWCU | CATAMOUNTSPORTS.COM

FRATERNITY SORORITY CHALLENGE

A challenge to celebrate the bonds of sisterhood and brotherhood that cross the decades at WCU!

A challenge to build momentum and generate financial support for Catamount Athletics!

The Challenge is open to ALL members initiated in a CPC, NPHC, or IFC fraternity or sorority at Western Carolina.

The fraternity and sorority with the highest participation rate as active Catamount Club members will be announced as the winner at the Homecoming football game on October 25 through a special reveal.

JOIN THE CATAMOUNT CLUB TODAY
Go online at www.catamountsports.com/catamountclub/ and join by October 17 to be part of the challenge!

Married couples who are each a member of a fraternity/sorority from WCU will receive credit for his/her organization. All new and active Catamount Club members within timeframe will be divided by total membership to determine participation rate.

ALREADY A CATAMOUNT CLUB MEMBER?
Make sure we know your affiliation by contacting the Catamount Club office to ensure you are included in the Challenge! For more information, please contact the Catamount Club office at slconley@wcu.edu or 828.227.2013.

FACEBOOK.COM/CATAMOUNTCLUBWCUATHLETICS
To help mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of Western Carolina University, we asked Steve White ‘67, retired sports information director and official Catamount athletics historian, to compile a list of the top 10 moments in WCU athletics. White did us one better – actually, make that 10 better – and developed a list of what he considers the top 20 moments in Catamount sports history. Do you agree with his rankings? Drop us a line at magazinestories@wcu.edu and let us know.
THE ULTIMATE IMPACT PLAYER

HENRY LOGAN BROKE BASKETBALL RECORDS AS HE BROKE THE COLOR BARRIER IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS DURING THE TURBULENT 1960s

By STEVE WHITE '67

Icons create lasting impressions, and Western Carolina University has several in its athletics history who have earned that label. Names such as Art Byrd ’50, Tom Young ’52, Ronald Rogers, Dan Robinson ’51, Bob Waters, Jerry Gaines ’75, Clyde Simmons ’96, Wayne Tolle son ’78 and Brad Hoover ’00 had distinguished careers and are synonymous with WCU regionally and nationally.

However one name, from the 1960s, resonates above all others. Henry Logan spent only four years around Cullowhee and had a limited professional career, but the significance of his arrival in Cullowhee, the unparalleled attention he attracted wherever Western’s basketball team played, and the uniqueness and quality of his game evoke perhaps the clearest connection of all with WCU.

Logan’s legend began 50 years ago this past May when he became the first African-American to accept a scholarship to attend and play basketball at a predominately white college or university in America’s Southeast. The scholarship signing received virtually no media attention outside Western North Carolina, while a year earlier Gov. George Wallace blocking the admission of two black women to the University of Alabama was a national media event.

To say that Logan opened the door for African-American student-athletes in the South is an understatement. In the next five years, several other colleges and universities in North Carolina and other parts of the South recruited and granted athletics scholarships to dozens of black players. Fifty years after Logan signed, 126 of WCU’s 375 student-athletes are African-American.

The recruitment of Logan was unique in that it was virtually a secret process that produced a surprising outcome. He had led Stephens-Lee High, Asheville’s all-black high school, to two state championship games, but was openly recruited by only historically black colleges and universities in the spring of 1964. In addition, a few Big 10 Conference schools and John Wooden, UCLA’s legendary coach, had made contact but no firm commitments.

Meanwhile, Jim Gudger ’48, Western’s head basketball coach, was working in the background. He had received the blessing of Western President Paul Reid and the school’s Board of Trustees to offer Logan a scholarship. At the time, the school had two African-American undergraduates and a handful of graduate students. “We were waiting for the right time and the right player to break the athletics color line, and Henry was the right person,” Gudger told Bob Terrell ’51 of The Asheville Citizen. “Henry had as much athletics ability as anyone I had ever seen on a basketball court, plus he was from our area and was a good person that could handle the unique situation.”

Logan’s ability to “handle the unique situation” was tested in his first season with the Catamounts when he and Herb Moore, a Stephens-Lee High teammate who joined him at Western, were
Logan told the Asheville Citizen-Times in February of this year that he and Moore didn’t really think about being the only “black guys” on the team. “We had no problems there at Western,” he said. “The only problem we had was when we went out of town. We played a university in Louisiana, and we could not even dress out because of our color. Other than that, we didn’t have any problems.” He also said that he reacted to the occasional shouts from the stands and racial slurs by doing his talking on the court. “I tried to back that up by scoring more points and playing better,” he said. “When I went back the next time, they didn’t call me the names. They shut their mouths because they didn’t want me to score a lot of points.”

For the record, Logan is WCU’s all-time leading scorer as he averaged 30.7 points and shot 52 percent from the floor for his 107-game collegiate career. His 3,290 points ranked third on college basketball’s all-time scoring list and he was the NAIA’s all-time assists leader with 1,037 (9.7 per game) when he left Cullowhee in 1968. Although only 5 feet 11 inches tall, he averaged 6.3 rebounds per game and routinely was in the jump circle for the opening tip.

He was a four-time All-America selection who scored 50 or more points six times and 40 or more 20 times, and totaled a school and conference record 60 points in a 1967 game. His likeness hangs in the WCU, Western North Carolina and North Carolina sports halls of fame. In 1967, Logan was a key player on the U.S. basketball team that won the Pan American Games on the U.S. basketball team that won the Pan American Games from the stands and racial slurs by doing his talking on the court. “I tried to back that up by scoring more points and playing better,” he said. “When I went back the next time, they didn’t call me the names. They shut their mouths because they didn’t want me to score a lot of points.”

For the record, Logan is WCU’s all-time leading scorer as he averaged 30.7 points and shot 52 percent from the floor for his 107-game collegiate career. His 3,290 points ranked third on college basketball’s all-time scoring list and he was the NAIA’s all-time assists leader with 1,037 (9.7 per game) when he left Cullowhee in 1968. Although only 5 feet 11 inches tall, he averaged 6.3 rebounds per game and routinely was in the jump circle for the opening tip.

He was a four-time All-America selection who scored 50 or more points six times and 40 or more 20 times, and totaled a school and conference record 60 points in a 1967 game. His likeness hangs in the WCU, Western North Carolina and North Carolina sports halls of fame. In 1967, Logan was a key player on the U.S. basketball team that won the Pan American Games in Winnipeg, Canada.

There was no 3-point field goal in college basketball during Logan’s career. However, game shooting charts show that he made approximately 170 baskets shooting from 20 feet or longer, which would translate to more than 500 additional career points.

Logan’s impact was a financial windfall for WCU and opponents. Before Logan arrived in Cullowhee, Reid Gymnasium was a cozy 2,400-seat facility. During his second season, another 1,000 seats were added as the Catamounts’ games with the likes of Appalachian State, Lenoir-Rhyne, High Point, Catawba, Elon and Guilford were played before standing-room-only crowds of 4,000 or more. During his four seasons, more than 200,000 fans crowded into Reid Gym. Fans would line up outside App State’s Varsity Gym and offer $20 for a ticket when Logan visited. Most other conference sites were sold out and several of those games were televised locally. The Carolinas Conference moved its championship tournament to the 8,000-seat Winston-Salem Coliseum in 1968 to accommodate demand. After playing in the Quincy Holiday Classic for a second year, Logan was presented the key to the Illinois city.

Logan’s skill set was “30 years ahead of his time,” said Greg Wittman, a teammate of Logan’s for three seasons, the school’s all-time leading rebounder and a National Basketball Association draft pick who played for three teams in the now-defunct American Basketball Association. “No one in the college game at that time could match Henry’s combination of shooting, ball handling, passing and jumping, and I haven’t seen anyone since that could do all of those things on his level. His quickness, hang time, elevation and passing style were uncanny.” Wittman said.

Wittman described a pregame scouting report when he was playing with Denver of the ABA and his team was preparing to face Logan’s Washington squad in a 1970 game. “My coach and teammates agreed that we could defend everyone on Washington’s team except for one player…Henry Logan.”

“Pistol Pete” Maravich, the all-time leading scorer in NCAA Division I basketball history and three-time first team All-America selection in the 1970s, competed against Logan in summer games and once said, “Logan is the best 6-foot guard in America. I caught myself mesmerized by his passes and shot creation.”

Dave Odom, former head coach at Wake Forest, East Carolina and South Carolina, competed against Logan while at Guilford College. “I never played against a guy that could impact a game in so many ways as Henry and, as a coach, never saw anyone as exciting as he was at Western Carolina,” Odom said in 2006.

Logan’s professional career started in 1969 when he was the first guard taken in the ABA draft by the Oakland Oaks, choosing Oakland over the NBA’s Seattle SuperSonics. After a productive rookie year season and a great start to his second season when he was averaging 20-plus points a game, he suffered a crippling knee injury in December 1970 and underwent the first of six knee surgeries. Two years later, he had part of a kneecap removed, which prematurely ended his basketball career.

Bob Ray ’57, the Catamounts’ assistant basketball coach during Logan’s collegiate career, agreed that Logan was indeed the “right person” to break the school’s athletics color line. “Henry conducted himself as a gentleman despite the abusive language directed toward him and racial situations he faced,” Ray said. “He just played the game and never reacted. He opened the door, changed attitudes about race, changed basketball in the Carolinas Conference and should be held in high esteem by Western Carolina University and by others in our region and state.”

At age 68, Logan still resides in Asheville with his family. He is unofficially retired after spending most of his working days in recreation-related jobs and for Meritor in southern Buncombe County for several years. He currently spends much of his time making motivational speeches and counseling and ministering to youth while working on his autobiography.
Unlike the event that signaled the start of the American Revolution, one particular shot fired in Cullowhee was not heard around the world, but it would start a revolution in the world of college basketball.

Western Carolina University was forever etched into college basketball’s record book on Nov. 29, 1980, when the Catamounts’ Ronnie Carr ME ’07 made a 23-foot shot for the first 3-point field goal in college basketball history. The scenario for the celebrated event was a combination of timing, cooperation, strategy and a talented player.

First, a short history lesson on the origins of the 3-point field goal. The first recorded use of the shot was in a 1945 exhibition game in New York City between Fordham and Columbia where baskets made from beyond 21 feet were awarded three points. The short-lived American Basketball League and American Basketball Association employed the 3-pointer in the 1960s and 1970s from distances up to 25 feet to create interest and excitement. The National Basketball League adopted the shot in 1979 from a 23-foot-nine-inch arc that narrowed to 22 feet at the corners.

Prior to the 1980-81 basketball season, the NCAA basketball rules committee approved the Southern Conference’s use of the 3-point field goal on an experimental basis from a uniform 22-foot arc to find out if the shot deserved a place in the college game. It would be used in all conference games, plus games in which non-conference opponents agreed to participate in the experiment.

WCU had opened that season with a win over Georgia Tech in Atlanta – the school’s only victory over an ACC opponent to date – and hosted Middle Tennessee of the Ohio Valley Conference the following evening in Reid Gymnasium. MTSU agreed to the experimental rule and to a request for a change in game time from 7:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. That move would enhance the school’s only victory over an ACC opponent to date – and Western Carolina University actually own one that can never be broken.

There was no plan for me to take or make the first 3-pointer on that inbounds play. I probably would have passed the ball to Trim (Kenny Trimier) if he had been open, but I was left wide open and took, what was for me, a routine jump shot. I never looked for or saw the line,” Carr said. “I’m just blessed to be a part of something that changed college basketball so much and the opportunities that moment created for me.”

The ball Carr launched for the initial 3-pointer, along with his jersey and a video of the shot, were placed in a display at the National Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. Sports Illustrated and virtually every major sports news service chronicled the event.

Steve Cottrell, WCU’s head basketball coach during Carr’s career, says he had “no idea” in 1980 that the 3-pointer would impact college basketball like it has. “Unlike many of my fellow coaches, I liked the 3-point shot, but it was not a part of our strategy then and I never dreamed it would be as much a part of the game that it is today,” Cottrell said.

The 3-pointer, from 19 feet, 9 inches, was fully adopted by the NCAA in 1986 and revised to 20 feet, 9 inches in 2007. The shot’s impact on the college game can be found in the numbers – in that first season, SoCon teams averaged shooting less than 100 threes compared to last season’s average of more than 700 try attempts per team.

Carr led the conference in scoring as a junior (19 points per game), was a back-to-back all-conference player and was the league’s preseason player of the year heading into his senior season. In addition, he was projected as an early round NBA draft selection. However, his basketball playing career came to an end – and nearly his life – in an automobile accident during the summer of 1982 while he was working at Dean Smith’s basketball camp in Chapel Hill. He suffered multiple orthopedic and internal injuries that included a torn heart valve that had to be replaced with an artificial device. The Atlanta Hawks still drafted him, but the possibility of cardiovascular complications kept him from pursuing his lifelong dream.

Carr’s iconic shot occurred 34 years ago. An overused sports cliché is “records are made to be broken,” but Carr and Western Carolina University actually own one that can never be broken.
Our official athletics historian has ranked basketball legend Henry Logan breaking the color barrier and going on to score 60 points in a single game on Jan. 6, 1967, as the top moment in WCU sports history, with Ronnie Carr ME ’07 making the first 3-point shot ever in college basketball coming in second on that list. Here’s a look at the other 18 most outstanding moments in Catamount sports history:

#3 – March 16, 1963: Catamounts Play for NAIA Basketball National Championship – Western’s men’s team wins four games in four days before losing in the championship game to Texas-Pan American in front of 10,000 fans in Kansas City.

#4 – Dec. 10, 1983: Catamounts Upset Furman to Advance to NCAA Division I-AA Football National Championship Game – More than 7,000 WCU fans travel to Greenville, South Carolina, to watch the Cats beat the Paladins 14-7 in a classic rematch in the NCAA semifinals to advance to the championship game against Southern Illinois.

#5 – March 3, 1996: Catamounts Win Southern Conference Basketball Championship and Punch Ticket to First NCAA Tournament – WCU men’s team snaps Davidson’s 19-game winning streak with a 69-60 win in the SoCon Championship game in the Greensboro Coliseum.

#6 – Dec. 6, 1986: WCU Opens Ramsey Center against 18th-Ranked N.C. State – A standing-room only crowd of 8,114 watches WCU’s men’s basketball team unveil the university’s impressive new arena against Jim Valvano’s Wolfpack.

#7 – Nov. 19, 1949: Western Carolina Wins North State Conference Football Championship – The Catamounts defeat Appalachian State, East Carolina and Lenoir-Rhyne for the first time in a season and advance to first postseason game – the Smoky Mountain Bowl, held in Bristol, Virginia.

#8 – July 1, 1976: Western Carolina Admitted to Southern Conference – WCU joins the ranks of NCAA Division I schools, along with Marshall University and University of Tennessee-Chattanooga.

#9 – Jan. 30, 1957: Reid Gymnasium Is Dedicated – The No. 1-ranked UNC Tar Heels visit Cullowhee and leave with a 77-59 win over the men’s basketball team, going on to an undefeated season and the NCAA championship.

#10 – Nov. 30, 1974: WCU Plays In First NCAA Football Postseason Football Game – The Catamounts lose their season-opener and then win nine straight to advance to the NCAA Division II Playoffs against Louisiana Tech.


#12 – April 29, 1985: WCU Wins First SoCon Baseball Tournament and NCAA Bid – The Cats come back through the losers’ bracket and defeat Marshall 13-12 to advance to their first NCAA Division I Baseball Championship Tournament.

#13 – March 5, 2005: WCU Women Win First SoCon Basketball Title and Bid to NCAA Tournament – Kelli Harper’s team beats Georgia Southern in two overtimes to cap a four-wins-in-four-days championship run.


#15 – Nov. 15, 1975: Catamounts Pull off Shocking Upset of Appalachian State – A 2-7 WCU football squad stuns the 8-2 Mountaineers for the Catamounts’ fifth straight win in this storied rivalry.

#16 – Nov. 6, 2005: Women’s Soccer Upsets Furman for Southern Conference Tournament Championship and First NCAA Postseason Appearance – WCU’s seventh-year program goes on to fall to second-ranked North Carolina in the NCAA College Cup.

#17 – April 30, 2006: WCU’s Inaugural Softball Team Wins Southern Conference Regular Season Title – The Catamounts sweep College of Charleston to clinch the title in the softball program’s first season of existence, ending with a 41-20 record.

#18 – Nov. 19, 1983: Volleyball Team Plays for National Championship – The Lady Cats defeat Ball State, Southern Illinois and Iowa Wesleyan before losing to West Chester State in the CIAW National Championship Game in Boston.

#19 – April 24, 1999: WCU Completes Sweep of All Four SoCon Track and Field Championships – The men and women win both outdoor titles after bringing home both indoor trophies in February, among the 21 combined titles under Coach Danny Williamson ’84 MAEd ’86.

#20 – Sometime in 1932: On-campus Contest Held to Pick New Athletics Team Name – Thanks to the preference of C.C. Poindexter, football coach and organizer of Western’s first department of athletics, the moniker “Catamounts” is selected over another finalist, the Mountain Boomers. And Catamount fans everywhere breathe a sigh of relief that they are not reading a list of the top moments in Mountain Boomer athletics history.
Campus Services

Celebrating a proud history of service and commitment to student success

campusservices.wcu.edu
Meet Caitlin Yencha ’12.

Caitlin attended WCU as a Teaching Fellow and recipient of the Genevieve & E.J. Whitmire Scholarship, established through an endowment from the Whitmire family. After receiving the North Carolina Council of Teachers Outstanding Math Education Student award, Caitlin landed a job at East Henderson High School in East Flat Rock, where she teaches math and coaches the junior varsity softball team. Over the years, hundreds of students like Caitlin have been able to give back to our state, thanks to you, our alumni, and your dedication to supporting the next generation of successful students.

Planned Giving

By simply making the decision to include the Western Carolina University Foundation in your estate plan, your legacy can carry on for generations through endowed scholarships and other impactful gifts to your alma mater, Western Carolina. If you have already planned a gift to WCU as part of your will, contact us to be added to the Madison Society. If not, call us today to find out how you can make a significant impact on future students with only a small estate investment. Contact Herb Bailey, Director of Gift Planning.

WCUGIFTPLAN.ORG  |  828.227.3049  |  HERBBAILLEY@WCU.EDU
FROM A
ONE-ROOM
SCHOOLHOUSE
TO THE
MILLENNIAL
INITIATIVE

BY RANDALL HOLCOMBE
The original Cullowhee Academy building (left) and the Music and Art Building, added in 1890, made up the entire campus.

WCU’s long legacy of providing educational opportunity is intimately tied to its physical evolution

The little school that was the forerunner of Western Carolina University was called Cullowhee Academy, and its location is marked by a stone memorial, erected in 1934, that sits in a garden area between the university’s steam plant and Breese Gymnasium. The memorial honors Robert Lee Madison, who was 22 when he taught his first class of 18 students at the academy on Aug. 5, 1889. A native of Virginia, Madison earned his degree at the University of Chattanooga. Before coming to Cullowhee, he taught in the Qualla community in far northern Jackson County and served as editor of the Tuckaseigee Democrat newspaper and as principal of the Jackson Academy, a school in Sylva.

The book “A Mountain Heritage: The Illustrated History of Western Carolina University,” published for the university’s centennial in 1989, described the serendipitous course of events that led Madison to take over leadership at Cullowhee Academy. The book’s authors, WCU professors emeriti of history Curtis W. Wood and H. Tyler Blethen, described how a county teacher’s institute was held in Sylva in July 1889, and at that event Madison caught the attention of the superintendent of Raleigh schools, who offered him a principal’s position in that city. Madison was working on his acceptance letter for the Raleigh position when Lewis J. Smith, a prominent citizen from Cullowhee Valley, appeared at his doorstep. A young teacher who had taught at Cullowhee Academy the previous year, Thomas C. Buchanan, a native of the nearby Savannah community, had resigned his position to enter the ministry. Smith pitched the idea of Madison coming to Cullowhee to teach at Cullowhee Academy, and Madison agreed to attend a community meeting to discuss the idea.

Madison later wrote about those events for the Asheville Citizen newspaper in 1938. “That hot August afternoon, following my acceptance of the invitation to visit Cullowhee, found me seated by the side of State Senator Lewis J. Smith in a topless buggy drawn by a sturdy mule en route to the ‘Valley of the white Lilies,’” Madison wrote. The next morning, Madison met with 40 to 50 citizens of the Cullowhee area at the schoolhouse and presented a speech on education. “They followed my words closely, they exhibited keen interest, and, from time to time, at what seemed to me to be just the right places, they broke forth into generous bursts of applause…” Madison wrote. “In conclusion, I gave my ideas regarding what was requisite to building a permanent school and assured this evidently earnest group that, in case they really wished to entrust their school enterprise to me, I would stand by them in case they really wished to entrust their school enterprise to me, I would stand by them if they would stand by me; for I had abiding faith in patient, persevering cooperation in any noble undertaking.”

Hired for a salary of $40 per month by the educationally minded citizens, Madison had found a permanent home for the vision he held of opening a school to prepare teachers to serve in rural areas. Teacher training began in Cullowhee, and by 1897 enrollment had grown to 234 students. The school had no boarding facilities in its early years. Students who needed a place to live were taken in as boarders in local homes, and some rented small cabins or shacks. Madison wrote about the environment in which the little school existed: “The Cullowhee valley and adjacent territory were at that time sparsely settled; but much of the land was fertile and the owners, most of whom lived in good homes, were intelligent, progressive and public spirited.”

In 1891, Madison and his board requested a charter from the N.C General Assembly, and the institution was renamed Cullowhee High School. The school had nine trustees, most of whom had been involved since its founding, and Madison called them the “Noble Nine.” Two years later, he wrote to a local state representative to encourage funding for a statewide system of teacher training schools. That idea was rejected, but Cullowhee High School did receive a $1,500 appropriation to support a “normal” department – a department for training teachers. Teacher training began in Cullowhee, and by 1897 enrollment had grown to 234 students.
THE 20TH CENTURY

During the 1900s, the high school at Cullowhee with several hundred students slowly evolved into a comprehensive regional university with more than 6,000 students. The 10 decades included the construction of no fewer than 30 major buildings, with the first significant building boom occurring during the 1930s as the school’s facilities doubled with help from several Depression-era federal programs. Another surge of construction occurred during the 1950s as enrollment rose in the post-World War II era, followed by another active construction period in the 1960s.

In 1901, the school at Cullowhee received its first capital improvement money from the state – $5,000 for construction of a building to house its normal department. Another $2,000 was later appropriated for the project, but local contributions of money, materials and labor were required to make the Madison Building a reality. Later known as "Old Madison," the structure was completed in 1904. It was erected up the hill behind the original schoolhouse on three acres of land donated by David Rogers. The three-story structure represented a large expansion of facilities for the little school, and Old Madison remained in use until it was replaced by the new Madison Hall in 1939.

By 1905, Cullowhee High School had become a full-fledged public institution and its name had changed to Cullowhee Normal and Industrial School, with the campus consisting of three buildings and 4.1 aces. As enrollment grew, the Legislature approved $7,000 in funding for the school’s first residence hall, Davies Home. Built at the top of the hill above Old Madison, it was torn down and replaced by Reynolds Residence Hall in 1953. By 1910, enrollment at CNIS had stagnated and Madison was released from his duties and was replaced by Alonzo C. Reynolds, superintendent of Buncombe County schools.

Not long after Reynolds’ arrival in Cullowhee, a decision was made to construct a new classroom and administration building. Completed in 1913, the Joyner Building was the center of campus life for many years. The school added a two-year college curriculum to its offerings during the Reynolds administration, and after he announced his resignation at the end of the school year in 1920, Madison returned to lead CNIS once again. In 1923, the high school function of the school at Cullowhee was removed with a new state charter and the institution became Cullowhee State Normal School. Madison resigned that year, but remained as an English teacher until 1937. Hiram Hunter was hired as the next president of the institution.

One of the most significant developments for the school at Cullowhee involved no new buildings, but instead was a major land acquisition that provided room for growth in the decades that followed. Born in 1854, David Rogers was a prosperous farmer and strong supporter of the school, and he sold his 60-acre “Town House” farm to the institution in 1924. The tract included 20 acres in pasture, 32 acres of cropland and the rest was woodlands. Funding for the land purchase came from a state appropriation of $438,000 designated for capital improvements and operating expenses. The 1920s also brought the addition of two new residence halls, Moore and Robertson, to the campus.

As the 1920s were coming to a close, Cullowhee State Normal School was converted into a four-year institution granting...
bachelor’s degrees in education, and under a revised charter was renamed Western Carolina Teachers College. The college marked its 50th anniversary in 1939 with its largest building program so far. The new construction was noteworthy, also, as campus facilities expanded off the historic hill area and onto land that had once been part of the Rogers farm. Facilities were doubled as several federal programs were utilized for construction of a new Madison to replace Old Madison, a student union, Graham Infirmary, McKee Classroom Building, Breese Gymnasium and Hoey Auditorium. The buildings were completed by 1939, just before World War II caused enrollment to tumble as many of the college’s men and women left to take part in the war effort. Enrollment rebounded after the war ended, but the physical campus remained mostly unchanged until the early 1950s.

With enrollment at 610 in 1950, WCTC went through another building boom as the Legislature approved $2 million for new construction. Additions in those years included the Stillwell and Natural Science buildings, Hunter Library, Reid Gymnasium, Killian Building and Reynolds and Buchanan residence halls. After Hunter’s death in 1947, the college was guided at various times over the following two decades by W. Ernest Bird ’15 or Paul A. Reid. The institution offered its first graduate program, a master’s in education, in 1951, and it became Western Carolina College in 1953. By the mid-1950s, enrollment had risen to just over 1,100 students. The succeeding years would bring a surge in student population, with enrollment topping 4,000 by 1968, a year after the college was elevated to university status. The 1960s also was a period of significant new construction, with additions including Brown Cafeteria, Bird Building, Killian Annex, A.K. Hinds University Center, Dodson Cafeteria and Albright/Benton, Scott, Helder and Leatherwood residence halls. During a tumultuous period from 1968 to 1974, the top leadership position at the university was held at various times by four individuals – Alexander S. Pow, Frank H. Brown Jr., Jack K. Carlton and W. Hugh McEniry.

As noted by Wood and Blethen, Western Carolina’s academic programs developed dramatically in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the transition from a teachers college to a regional university was completed. The 1970s brought the addition of E. J. Whitmire Stadium, Belk Building, Walker and Harrill residence halls and H.F. Robinson Administration Building, along with a new building to house English and music programs. H. F. “Cotton” Robinson became chancellor in 1974 and held that post for 10 years, and his term leadership was followed by the administration of Myron L. Coulter, who also served for a decade. Western Carolina became a member of the consolidated University of North Carolina system in 1972, and in 1975 the university’s Cherokee Center was established in Cherokee to connect WCU to the tribal community. Campus additions during the 1980s included the Ramsey Regional Activity Center and the Alumni Tower, which was built by the WCU Alumni Association to mark the university’s 100th anniversary in 1989.

Enrollment at WCU remained mostly in the 6,000s as the university moved through the 1990s, with John W. Bardo beginning his term as chancellor in 1994. During the last 12 years of Bardo’s administration, as WCU entered the 21st century and increased standards for admission, enrollment surged upward from nearly 6,700 in the year 2000 to more than 7,500 in 2003, and then above 9,000 by 2007. Following the opening of the Ramsey Center in 1986, the university entered a dry spell for construction and the century ended without any other new buildings being erected. But things were about to change. The coming of the new millennium signaled the start of the biggest building boom in the university’s history – one that would transform the campus in a way that no other period of new construction had ever done.

1949

A $2 million state appropriation led to construction of Stillwell Building (right) and Hunter Library (left), with Memorial Stadium in the foreground.

1980

The Liston B. Ramsey Regional Activity Center, completed in 1986, includes a multipurpose arena seating about 8,000 people.
The Cullowhee Valley, as seen looking northeast toward the Plott Balsam Mountains, offered a tranquil setting in which Robert Lee Madison would pursue what he called “the Cullowhee idea” of preparing teachers to serve in rural areas.
What a difference a century makes. The Western Carolina University campus of today comprises approximately 700 acres and 91 buildings containing 3.3 million gross square feet of space with a current replacement value of $1.7 billion.
could be financed through fees and revenue generated by those facilities, he said. Special appropriations for some projects were made available through the state and federal governments.

Staff members in WCU’s Office of Facilities Management, part of the Division of Administration and Finance, had the responsibility of day-to-day oversight for projects going on around campus over those years. Wooten said the first decade of the century was a stressful one for those involved, but there was a payoff. “You saw results, and that’s where you got your energy and you put up with the hassles that went along with it,” he said.

In addition to the $30 million arts center, other major new facilities added during the first dozen years of the new century included the $21 million Central Drive Residence Hall, the $21 million Campus Recreation Center, the $18 million Courtyard Dining Hall, the $12 million Village housing complex, the $10 million Norton Road Residence Hall, the $50 million Balsam and Blue Ridge residence hall complex, and the $46 million Health and Human Sciences Building. The Stillwell Science Building was renovated at a cost of $26 million. Another $8 million from the federal government made possible the Center for Applied Technology, and more than $13 million went toward improvements for athletics facilities. Also, $12 million in infrastructure improvements included the relocation of Centennial Drive, a state road that formerly bisected the center of campus where the Central Plaza and fountain are now located.

WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW? – A VISION

Endorsed by the Board of Trustees in December 2013, Western Carolina’s new master plan is the result of a 17-month process that included numerous public forums involving members of the campus community and local residents. It is based on enrollment projections that estimate more than 11,000 students studying on the Cullowhee campus by the year 2023, and the need for an additional 486,000 square feet of space to accommodate those students. About 7,800 of WCU’s current enrollment of approximately 10,100 students now live and study in Cullowhee.

The plan focuses on a land-use scheme that emphasizes placing new academic development in the center of campus to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, enhancing programmatic efficiencies and encouraging a pedestrian-oriented community. In presenting the plan to trustees for their consideration, current WCU Chancellor David O. Belcher, who became WCU’s top leader in 2011, called it “a living document, one that is not set in stone but will be a guide to us as we go forward.”

THE BIG BOOM

On paper, the numbers are staggering. The list of major construction initiatives completed at WCU between 2000 and 2012, including new building, renovation and infrastructure projects, totals more than $327 million in improvements, along with the addition of more than 1.1 million square feet of new space.

The match that lit the dynamite setting off the transformation of WCU’s campus did not happen just in Cullowhee, but all across the state as its citizens voted overwhelmingly in November 2000 in favor of a $3.1 billion higher education bond package. The vote cleared the way for nearly $100 million in bond-funded construction projects on the WCU campus, including construction of the fine and performing arts center that has since been named in Bardo’s honor.

Chuck Wooten ’73 had a front-row seat for that building boom as the university’s vice chancellor for administration and finance from 2001 through 2010. Wooten, an undergraduate student in Cullowhee from 1969 through 1973, said he came back to WCU in 1980 to work with the business staff and found that “the campus was basically what it was when I left.” The funding that became available as a result of the 2000 bond vote was the “critical component” in the move to update WCU’s campus for the new century, he said. Also, enrollment was increasing and there was a recognized need to update and build new residence halls and other facilities such as a student recreation center that
An “illustrative plan” included in the master plan is divided into three focus areas: the revitalized academic core, the Cullowhee Creek area and recently acquired property known as the West Campus. Recommendations for the academic hub include uniting programs of the College of Arts and Sciences; building an addition to the west side of Hunter Library; enhancing pedestrian connectivity between the historic upper area and the central campus; and locating a new Center for Student Engagement building to showcase the university’s vision to be a national leader in that area and to help connect the hill section to the core. Other highlights recommended are new buildings for science and business, and consolidation of programs in the College of Fine and Performing Arts to new and existing space near the Bardo Arts Center.

The recommendations also include development of a mixed-used facility in the traditional commercial area along Centennial Drive – a concept thrust to the forefront following a November 2013 fire that destroyed several private businesses in a building owned by the university endowment. Plans now call for a four-story building to be constructed with 20,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor and room for 350 student beds on the upper floors, said Robert Edwards ’77, the university’s current vice chancellor for administration and finance. WCU is looking for a developer to build the project and anticipates that it will be ready for occupancy by fall 2016, Edwards said. Other endowment-owned structures in the commercial district that survived the fire will be demolished to make room for the new building.

Another recommendation for the revitalized core of campus includes projects in the historic hill area of campus to renovate and add onto Buchanan Residence Hall and Brown Cafeteria. WCU trustees gave their approval in March to proceed with planning and design for those projects. The Brown building will be updated for use as a modern student dining facility. Dining operations were moved out of the building in 2010 when the university opened Courtyard Dining Hall in the central campus area. An additional 25,000 square feet of space will be added and the refurbished structure also will house residential living administration, student organization offices, room for student activities and other student support units. Work on Buchanan Residence Hall is expected to include renovation of existing space, which now provides 180 beds, and an addition to provide room for 300 more beds. Both projects will be fee-supported.

Recommendations for the Cullowhee Creek area of campus include additions to several existing buildings and making use of open land for recreation programs, athletics practice fields and parking. The plan also calls for creation of a new main entrance to campus on N.C. Highway 107 that links the traditional campus to the newer West Campus on the other side of the highway, with a new visitor center and enhanced parking for visitors.

The “illustrative plan” in the master plan also addresses WCU’s West Campus, another name for the 344-acre Millennial Initiative tract on the west side of Highway 107 that the university purchased in 2004. The goal of university officials is an economic development strategy that enables WCU to engage in public-private partnerships to enhance educational opportunities for students and research options for faculty members, while also promoting regional development. The Health and Human Sciences Building, the first structure to be built on the West Campus, is designed to be the hub of a new health sciences cluster. Toward that end, officials representing WestCare Health System of Sylva announced this summer plans to open a full-time primary care clinic in the Health and Human Sciences Building. Set to begin operation in September, the clinic will occupy 2,000 square feet in the facility. WestCare previously moved its campus-based rehabilitation and sports medicine clinic to the building in December 2013.

Recommendations for the West Campus call for phased development of two new buildings for public-private partnerships adjacent to the Health and Human Sciences Building, while preserving steeply sloped land on the tract as an environmental preserve. Tony E. Johnson ’78 MBA ’80 MPA ’91 is serving as executive director of Millennial Initiatives for WCU, and in that position he has been working as the university’s liaison with prospective developers and tenants. One project that has been in the works in recent months is an agreement to allow the university to lease the 344 acres to its Endowment Fund, a move designed to allow the university to respond more quickly to development opportunities. The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system has given its approval to the lease concept, and the final detailed agreement will require one more approval by that board, said Mary Ann Lochner, university attorney. It is anticipated that the final agreement could be in place by the end of this year, Lochner said.

While the passing decades have brought profound changes to campus, in recent years the university has reaffirmed its mission to serve the citizens of the Western North Carolina region, not just by offering higher education opportunities but also through the expertise and energy of its faculty, staff and students, who are working with local businesses and organizations to boost quality of life and the region’s economic vitality. University officials hope to strengthen ties to communities in North Carolina’s far western counties as they also engage in initiatives to serve the fast-growing corridor along Interstate 26 in Buncombe and Henderson counties. This fall, WCU’s undergraduate engineering program will be expanded to the university’s instructional site at Biltmore Park Town Square in south Asheville, a move that is expected to provide a major boost to regional economic development.

Of course, with the digital revolution of the late 20th century and early years of the 21st century having a profound effect on the lives and lifestyles of humanity in general, WCU’s influence now extends far beyond walls of concrete and steel, spanning across the globe through initiatives such as distance learning. Currently, the university’s force of distance learning students includes residents of 20 U.S. states and military students from as far away as Iraq and Afghanistan. When the seeds that became WCU were first sown 125 years ago, Robert Lee Madison’s voice and influence went only as far as the ears and minds of his 18 students as he taught them that first year in Cullowhee, but the voice of the modern university extends around the world.
Signs of WCU’s link to the Cherokee people abound

BY RANDALL HOLCOMBE

It was the summer of 2003. Western Carolina University was deep into the biggest construction boom in the institution’s history, and one of the signature projects of that period, a fine and performing arts center, was well underway on a tract of land in the lower part of campus near Cullowhee Creek. Seeing earth-moving equipment on campus was commonplace in those days, when funding for new construction and renovation projects was plentiful. But in that same summer, a different kind of earth-moving project was taking place on a much smaller scale on the other side of campus. In the shadow of the Killian and Forsyth academic buildings, a small army of archaeology students and faculty members was taking a look back at WCU’s development – even its pre-development – one spoonful of soil at a time.

Working in consultation with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ tribal historic preservation officer, the WCU group was sifting through dirt from several four-foot-deep pits, journeying into the ground past the emergence of WCU and its forerunner school, and even beyond a period of decades when the land was used as a farm, to learn about the lives of the Cherokee people who inhabited Cullowhee Valley before being displaced by white settlers. Specifically, their work concentrated on the archaeological remains of a Cherokee village and mound that once existed at the site.

As the participants in the dig worked their way down, the pits revealed layers of soil easily distinguished by varying colors and textures. Beyond the topsoil, the students found layers from a 1970s construction project and a 1960s parking lot, and then fill dirt from the Cherokee mound, which was leveled by the university in 1956 to make way for the Killian Building. Another layer was formerly surface soil that was cultivated on the farm of David Rogers, a prominent local citizen, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Underneath that was the undisturbed soil of centuries past. The excavation uncovered remains of wall posts from Cherokee village dwellings, and lower levels revealed evidence of Cherokee campsites from 3,000 to 5,000 years past.

Other signs of the ancient Cherokee presence in Cullowhee Valley have been found through the years, including two sites detected by archaeologists prior to construction of WCU’s new Health and Human Sciences Building that showed evidence of thousands of years of occupation by Cherokee people and their ancestors. Although numerous such sites have been uncovered in the valley, archaeologists believe many more still lie undisturbed along the banks of the Tuckasegee River and Cullowhee Creek, an unseen reminder of the thousands of years of Native culture that existed in the valley before the development of WCU.

Meanwhile, two years after the archaeological dig at Forsyth and Killian buildings, the new arts center was revealed to the public with design elements that acknowledge the historic Cherokee presence in Cullowhee Valley. A seven-pointed star in the atrium floor design represents the seven Cherokee clans. Bilingual signage throughout the facility uses English and the Cherokee syllabary, which was developed by the legendary Cherokee figure Sequoyah in 1809 to give his people their first written language.

Pictured above: Archaeology field school students recover artifacts from the Cherokee mound site located on WCU’s campus near Forsyth and Killian buildings.
A growing university leads to changes beyond campus

By RANDALL HOLCOMBE

The little school that became Western Carolina University developed in a remote mountain valley in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, far from any large urban center, but the school was still subject to influences from the nearby community and from around the world, ranging from wars to economic trends. Likewise, the Cullowhee school has had an influence on the community that exists around it. Poorly developed and unpaved roads were a chronic problem for the school in its early years, making the 8-mile journey to downtown Sylva an adventure during wet weather and in winter. During the 1920s, male students and faculty members sometimes caught a ride to Sylva on the logging train that ran between the town and East LaPorte, and their seat was on top of a boxcar filled with lumber. The road to Sylva was finally paved in 1933. Over the decades, a thriving business district developed at Western Carolina’s east entrance along the river, but it went into decline after the building of the four-lane highway on the university’s west side in 1981.

A desire to revitalize the old Cullowhee business district was the impetus behind the 2007 formation of Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor, or CuRvE. Members of the community group want sidewalks built to connect Cullowhee to the campus and to the new Jackson County Greenway. Also, they hope an impending project to replace the aging bridge over the Tuckaseegee will spur interest in a river park.

“Our aim is to help Cullowhee become a walkable community with additional recreational amenities,” said Hunter Library’s Anna Fariello, grant writer for CuRvE. With money from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area program, the group contracted an economic impact study that concluded that such a park would add $1.2 million annually in new spending in Jackson County and support 16 local jobs each year. Last spring, CuRvE was awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to hire a consultant to create a water park design plan and a landscape architect to create a series of drawings to show what the new bridge, river park and connecting greenway would look like.

The university’s burgeoning enrollment in recent years has had a profound effect on the local housing market, with private developers building several student-focused apartment complexes in the area around campus. WCU’s existence also has spawned a new 125-acre residential development, the Cullowhee River Club, which will include 282 housing units consisting of cottages, townhomes, cabins and condominiums, and amenities such as a river lodge restaurant, swim and tennis complex, riverside pavilion and hiking and biking trails. Landscape architect Tim Newell, a native of Wilmington who now lives in Balsam, is one of two partners in the project. Newell said a prime component of the customer base for his project is the faculty and staff of WCU, plus university alumni who wish to retire or build a second home close to the university. He considers WCU to be a “tremendous amenity” for prospective buyers because it offers perks such as theatrical and athletic events and continuing education opportunities. “Western Carolina University is our primary motivation for doing this project,” Newell said. “The university opens up a very stable market for us.” While private development explodes around the periphery of campus, an advisory committee appointed by Jackson County commissioners and composed of Cullowhee-area citizens is studying growth around the university area, with the possible outcome being the implementation of zoning restrictions for the area. A community meeting was held in May to gather citizen input, and after more public discussion takes place, a zoning plan may be submitted for county commissioners’ consideration.
A gallery at the Chancellor’s Residence provides a look at the domestic lives of our institution’s first families. Shortly after David and I moved into the Chancellor’s Residence, we realized that the freshly painted and decidedly blank walls of our new home offered an empty canvas upon which we might pay homage to Western Carolina University and those people—past and present—upon whose shoulders we stand. Newly ensconced in the house that has been home to WCU first families since 1953—an abode still alive with the imprint of its former inhabitants—questions arose in my mind regarding the families of our institution’s past leaders. Who were they? Where and how did they live? What role did they play in the life of the university that they came to serve?

The questions became a quest, and the quest became a project, with its end result being the development and installation of a “Chancellors Gallery” in the residence—a unique pictorial essay chronicling our university leaders and their families, and offering a glimpse into the domestic lives they lived within the campus community they served.

By design, the gallery focuses on photos and descriptors of each man (and so far, all of the university’s leaders have possessed the Y chromosome!), his spouse, their children, their residence (the very first university-owned president’s home was a field hands’ farmhouse located across from...
present-day Albright-Benton residence halls) and their home life. It also offers a sense of institutional context by providing “snapshots” of campus life or the campus footprint during the time each was in office.

Not all of the data needed to create the gallery was readily available; dates, names and locations were missing. Through extensive research on the part of WCU Special Collections, much new information was “mined” from early documents and close inspection of photos. As a result, the gallery has served to further expand our knowledge and understanding of our institution’s past.

The gallery was unveiled during a reception in December 2012, with members of the families of four former leaders of the institution on hand for the dedication ceremony – Jim Madison, grandson of university founder Robert Lee Madison, and his wife, Sara Sutton Madison ’54 MAEd ’60; Josie Robinson Bewsey, daughter of the late H.F. “Cotton” Robinson (chancellor from 1974-1984), and her husband, Jeff Bewsey ’90 MBA ’92; Barbara Coulter, wife of the late Myron “Barney” Coulter (chancellor from 1984-1994), children Ben Coulter MS ’94 and Nan Coulter, and granddaughters Abby Coulter and Mary Coulter ’13; and Sue Wakeley, wife of the late John “Jack” Wakeley (interim chancellor from 1994-1995).

The gallery would never have come into being without the contributions of the many WCU staff and faculty members who collectively made it possible. George Frizzell ’77 MA ’81 and his assistant in Special Collections at Hunter Library, Jason Brady ’99, worked tirelessly to conduct research, locate photographs, track down the names of spouses and children of past leaders, and document historical highlights from each leader’s tenure. Thanks go to university photographers Mark Hasket ’87 and Ashley T. Evans, to creative services director Rubae Schoen and Greg McPherson MFA ’06 from the School of Art and Design and to local artist Susan Lingg for designing, printing and framing each piece so beautifully. I also thank the Office of the Chancellor for its financial support of this new university gallery.

I hope that you enjoy a selection of images from the gallery. We gratefully acknowledge our university’s previous leaders – and those family members who, often behind the scenes, provided the support and encouragement to enable them to serve this wonderful institution.

---

**Robert Lee Madison**

*President 1889-1912 and 1920-1923*

**Alonzo Carlton Reynolds**

*President 1912-1920*

Mrs. Nannie Elizabeth Woods Reynolds

The Reynolds children: Margaret Cornelia, Alphonzo Curry, Elizabeth Wilhelm, Sallie Emeline, Ruth Ferguson and Mary Woods (not pictured) Alonzo Carlton, Evelyn Katherine and Thomas Davies

**William Ernest Bird ’15**

*Acting President 1947-1949, President 1956-1957*

Mrs. Myrtle Wells Bird

The Bird children: Charles Wells, Sarah Anne and Helen Gertrude

To view all the images featured in the Chancellors Gallery, visit [magazine.wcu.edu](https://magazine.wcu.edu)
Complete your degree, from anywhere in the world. distance.wcu.edu
Army National Guard Specialist Carson Heath

was a sophomore at Western Carolina University when he decided to join the North Carolina National Guard’s 211th Military Police Company. Before he could finish his junior year, Heath was deployed to Afghanistan, where he has served for the last year. This fall, he returns to Cullowhee as a senior criminology major, having continued his classes online through support from Western Carolina’s Military Student Services and Distance Education units.

“I can say that Western Carolina takes care of military students better than any other school in North Carolina,” Heath wrote from Afghanistan. “This comes from talking to other people in the military at other schools in the state. Military Student Services is always there when I need help, and whatever the problem is it’s usually fixed immediately.”

Heath, who is originally from Charlotte, asked his mother to send him a Western Carolina flag so that he could show his purple and gold pride. It arrived just ahead of the July 4 holiday, and when all of us stateside where saluting our servicemen and veterans, Heath posted a photo returning the honor by flying the WCU flag.

Carson Heath, we salute you, for your service to our country, for your dedication to your education no matter where you are in the world, and for your love of Catamount country. You make us proud.
FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING, WCU HAS RESPONDED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MOUNTAIN REGION

Neither of her parents had gone to college when Amanda Buchanan-Gambill ’06, someone who repeatedly had brought home orphaned dogs and cats, set her heart on becoming a veterinarian. So with their support, the Andrews native participated in a Talent Search program based at Western Carolina University that guides and helps enable students, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue college education. WCU offered Buchanan-Gambill the most affordable package and a pre-vet program, and she enrolled. She participated in the Honors College, spent long hours in labs and conducted elk research at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. She became the first student from North Carolina’s westernmost county – Cherokee – to be admitted to North Carolina State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. And when she became a doctor, she and her husband, Andy Gambill ’07, seized the opportunity to come back to Western North Carolina – her to work in her hometown at Andrews Veterinary Hospital and him to teach at WCU, the university the Wilkes County native says “felt like home.”

The story of WCU in the lives of the couple – the story of an affordable, welcoming university in the mountains that helped prepare them to succeed and to serve – is one that has been told into the lives of tens of thousands in the university’s 125-year history. Cullowhee Academy, WCU’s precursor, was founded in 1889 to improve the quality of education in the region and provide higher quality training for teachers who would serve in rural communities. Through the years in response to WNC’s needs, the institution added and revised programs ranging from scientific to cultural, and has emerged as a public comprehensive regional university affiliated with the University of North Carolina system.

In the past 25 years alone, WCU has conferred 42,463 degrees to 41,686 people. Today, WCU’s Alumni Association stays in contact with 20,284 alumni who live in Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain and Transylvania counties alone, with more across the state and beyond. Teresa Williams, chair of the WCU Board of Trustees, also said alumni are involved in work that speaks to the current and future needs of the region and the state. “Our graduates are workforce ready and become contributing citizens and a dynamic force in the communities in which they become involved,” said Williams. In WNC, WCU alumni work in local governments, classrooms, ambulances, medical offices, nursing homes, research and environmental health laboratories, stores, businesses, banks, accounting firms, hotels, nonprofit organizations and other places, and many are doing so in leadership roles, from superintendent to state senator to leader of a sovereign nation – the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

“When you look almost anywhere in Western North Carolina, from businesses to school systems, you are going to find WCU graduates,” said Tony Johnson ’78 MBA ’80 MPA ’91, executive director of Millennial Initiatives at WCU, which is centered on developing partnerships with government, nonprofit and corporate entities in the region.

In addition to providing high-quality education, university faculty and staff help serve the region conducting research on topics ranging from water quality to poverty; developing publications such as the Regional Outlook Report to assist community leaders; applying for grants to address needs such as expanding WCU’s engineering program or developing mentoring and support to diversify WNC’s nursing workforce; and hosting and participating in regional conferences on
topics such as bolstering the hospitality and recreation industry in WNC or improving the mathematical skills of the region’s workforce.

Meanwhile, students join faculty in service in the region to gain hands-on experience through projects such as helping survey the needs of older adults in Swain County; helping develop historical exhibits for WNC institutions such as Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, the Thomas Wolfe Memorial and Hinton Rural Life Center; and helping business owners and community members in Dillsboro with initiatives from expanding special events to developing a mobile Web application – assistance that was welcomed after a major tourist attraction left town in the midst of a struggling economy. Students and faculty are monitoring water quality through WCU’s Hydrologic Station and conducting research in the national park that is helping protect species and guide policy development.

In addition, units on campus such as the Small Business and Technology Development Center and Center for Rapid Product Realization help engineers, entrepreneurs and others become more efficient, more productive and more successful. The Speech and Hearing Clinic works with people with communication disorders, and a family of programs hosted at Coulter Faculty Commons are focused on cultivating leadership skills in the region. Campus arts and entertainment venues and events such as Mountain Heritage Day and the annual Literary Festival increase the “cultural vibrancy” of the region, said Richard Starnes ’92 MA ’94, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. WCU’s involvement with its home region is so pervasive that the national Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has extended the Community Engagement Classification to the university.

“Founded 125 years ago to provide educational opportunities for the youth of the mountains of Western North Carolina, Western Carolina has remained true throughout its history to its foundational commitment and charge to serve the people of the region,” said Chancellor David O. Belcher. “Western Carolina is a public institution and proudly owns the obligations, responsibilities and privileges associated with its public mission.”

MEETING THE NEEDS OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN WNC

What began as a teacher training program in the summer has grown into a full College of Education and Allied Professions with educational opportunities for teachers, school counselors and administrators, and degrees at the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral levels, said Dale Carpenter, dean of the college. Under the leadership of people such as Carl Killian, who became head of the education and psychology department in 1935 and the first dean of the college, WCU gained a reputation as a high-quality institution for preparing the educators of the mountains. Students such as the late Brank Proffitt ’42, who later worked as a teacher, administrator and superintendent, had jobs through Western Carolina that included driving educational films and equipment to schools in the region. Killian also worked to make sure students had more chances to gain experience as student teachers, and supported hosting enrichment programs and classes for children on campus in which university students could be involved. In the 1950s, innovative classes and programs for children who at that time were termed “handicapped” and others labeled as “gifted” were launched, attracting state and national attention.

WCU’s innovative work in the area of special education that continues today was part of what led Carpenter to join WCU’s faculty in 1979. While on campus to interview for the job, he asked Richard Gentry, director of the Reading Center, if he was any good. “I’m damn good,” said Gentry, which drove something home for Carpenter: WCU faculty had the credentials and experience to work anywhere. “They were here because they loved this area,” said Carpenter. They also recognized that their work mattered – that many of their students would teach in WNC, and the quality of their preparation was critical to the quality of education in the area, said Carpenter.

Alisa Chapman, vice president for academic and university programs with the UNC General Administration, said WCU...
"I LOVE TO SEE PEOPLE COME IN WITH IDEAS IN THEIR HEAD OR DRAWN ON A NAPKIN FROM WHICH WE CAN PRODUCE A PHYSICAL PRODUCT AT THE END."  – PATRICK GARDNER, DIRECTOR OF THE RAPID CENTER
in business administration meet at Harrah’s Cherokee Casino Resort as well as at Biltmore Park. Developments off campus include in 1980 the opening of WCU’s Cherokee Center.

N.C. Sen. Tom Apodaca ’80 said WCU’s location at Biltmore Park near the intersection of two interstates is at the epicenter for business development in the region. “It’s crucial that Western plays a part in the development of business in Western North Carolina, even more so than they have in the past,” said Apodaca.

Scott Hamilton, president and CEO of AdvantageWest Economic Development Group, concurred, noting that in 1999 there were about 110,000 people employed in manufacturing in the 23-county region AdvantageWest serves – a region that includes rural and urban parts of WNC. In 2013, there were far fewer manufacturing jobs – about 50,000 – and as jobs are coming back, they are requiring more advanced skills. “Having a university that’s there to help with workforce development and workforce training is going to become critical for those communities to be able to grow and expand, and create the jobs that enhance the economic well-being of their citizens,” said Hamilton.

John F.A.V. Cecil, president of Biltmore Farms, vice chairman of the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, and past vice chair of the UNC Board of Governors, said WCU is uniquely positioned to assist WNC businesses with becoming economically viable and sustaining their economic viability. “Our region, once isolated and dependent upon extractive industries, has become entwined with the global economy, and its success is dependent upon having a knowledgeable and well-educated workforce capable of producing quality services and products that are globally competitive,” said Cecil.

Phil Drake, CEO of Drake Enterprises in Franklin and a member of the WCU Board of Trustees, said his company grew from nothing into developing software that serves more than 45,000 tax preparers and certified public accountants across the country and helping file more than 12 million federal and 9 million state tax returns annually. “We would not have been able to grow the way that we have without some of the folks that we have been able to hire from WCU,” said Drake.

Meanwhile, seniors in the College of Business work in concert with the WCU Small Business and Technology Development Center to develop working business plans, marketing plans and product feasibility studies for companies in WNC, said Darrell Parker, dean of the College of Business. The SBTDC also works with WCU’s Center for Rapid Product Realization, which helps clients – about 80 percent of whom are from a 17-county area west of Hickory – refine or develop new products and improve business practices. Students work in high-tech labs with equipment including three-dimensional printers and scanning electron microscopes under the direction of faculty on projects for inventors, entrepreneurs, small and large businesses, other universities and not-for-profit companies. Projects have ranged from students spending days each week on a WNC company’s factory floor to help improve the efficiency of a manufacturing process to developing an affordable quality-assurance test for a WNC manufacturing company.

“I love to see people come in with ideas in their head or drawn on a napkin from which we can produce a physical product at the end,” said Patrick Gardner, director of the Rapid Center. “Our students get to help solve problems for our clients, and they learn to communicate and work as a team just as they will need to be able to do on-the-job after they graduate.”

Robert Adams, past interim head of the Department of Engineering and Technology, said in response to regional needs WCU launched an engineering degree with a concentration in mechanical engineering last year and will be offering a general engineering concentration at Biltmore Park this fall. In addition, WCU is developing a power engineering concentration and exploring development of a manufacturing engineering concentration. Supporting the growth was Apodaca and the N.C. General Assembly, which last year
budgeted more than $1.4 million for expansion of WCU’s undergraduate engineering program to Biltmore Park. WCU also has won two grants totaling more than $1 million to expand engineering education. Wes Stone, the incoming interim department head, said the department has seen undergraduate enrollment increase 31 percent during the past four years.

WNC companies with a need for engineers – from Eaton Corp. to Duke Energy – say WCU graduates have been valuable members of their teams. Lisa Leatherman, the Duke Energy Carolinas Nantahala Area district manager for government and community relations, also said the quality of the engineering and technology program helps retain industry while making the region more attractive to potential businesses and entrepreneurs. Michael Meguiar, Asheville plant leader for GE Aviation, said it is critical for advanced manufacturing businesses to have a university that provides engineering talent to leverage. “When there is a pipeline of technical talent in the region, it not only facilitates business growth, but also is critical in the site-selection process,” said Meguiar.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Although he had planned on seeking a job as a park director, Steve Morse, director of WCU’s Hospitality and Tourism Program, said at one time the large quantity of federally protected lands in WNC seemed a challenge for economic development, but in the last decade, those lands have become an asset in the region’s vital outdoor adventure industry. When the partial federal shutdown forced closure last fall of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Morse presented findings that suggested the closure in its first 10 days cost $33 million in lost visitor spending in the 18 North Carolina and Tennessee counties located within 60 miles of the park. He also showed that the closure resulted in more than $12 million in lost wages for workers, $1.8 million in lost state taxes and $1 million in lost local taxes for municipalities and counties. His study was widely reported, and in less than a week government leaders including N.C. Gov. Pat McCrory and Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam had worked together to find a way to reopen the park.

Morse also organized the first “Tourism Works in Western North Carolina” conference at which all participants from 26 WNC counties received a customized “Tourism Economic Fact Sheet” for their specific county outlining jobs, payroll, local and state taxes generated by tourist spending in each county – data that students helped gather. Tabitha M. Myler, director of travel and tourism in Graham County, said the information as well as subsequent presentation Morse made for the Graham Revitalization Economic Action Team, also known as GREAT, helped community members realize that one in every six jobs in the county was tourism related. “Tourism is bringing needed dollars into our community and helping offset our tax burden,” said Myler. Sharing that information is important to further cultivating a service-focused, welcoming culture in the community to help enhance tourism, she said.

With the recent closure of a manufacturing plant in Graham County, Rick Davis ’75 MAED ’79 EdS ’88, executive director of GREAT and retired superintendent of Graham County Schools, said he particularly welcomes partnerships from WCU. The group worked with WCU’s SBDC to develop its first strategic plan, and Morse has assisted as the group begins work on a comprehensive tourism plan for the county. “There is so much expertise and knowledge at WCU with the faculty and others that can be shared,” said Davis. “The university needs to reach out to different counties, especially the ones in the far west.”

Brooks Robinson, senior vice president and general manager of Harrah’s Cherokee Casino Resort, said the business has benefited from partnerships with WCU, including a program in which a cohort of WCU’s MBA program meets on site, and from alumni who work in leadership roles across all of the operations departments. “We work in an entertainment business with food, beverage, table games, slots, hotel operations and other areas, and what they bring is a high degree of analytical rigor and a clear understanding of what is needed to be successful,” said Robinson.

Charles Conner MBA ’12, marketing director for Nantahala Outdoor Center, said the center, one of the biggest outfitters in the world, also benefits from working with WCU. His studies at WCU helped him develop business skills to enhance the work he does. In addition, NOC has partnered with faculty including Steve Ha, associate professor of economics and director of the MBA program, who assisted with an economic impact study that helped NOC win a grant to bring an international championship to the region. Meanwhile, students in hospitality and tourism, sport marketing and parks and recreation management are able to get hands-on experience through work and internships at NOC. “There’s so much we can offer each other,” said Conner.

PROMOTING PUBLIC POLICY

WCU’s Department of Political Science and Public Affairs and the master’s degree program in public affairs are unmatched in WNC, said Chris Cooper, head of the department. “If you look for the movers and shakers in this region in the areas of public and nonprofit management, you’ll find that the vast majority have some connection to WCU,” said Cooper.

MPA alums working in WNC include Seth Hendler-Voss MPA ’13, Canton town manager. Hendler-Voss enrolled in the program while a parks and recreation employee in Asheville. Although he had planned on seeking a job as a park director,
“YOU CAN CARE ABOUT THE REGION FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE, BUT YOU HAVE A STAKE IN IT WHEN YOU ARE HERE.”

—MICHAEL E. SMITH, THE JOE W. KIMMEL DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

he changed course when he began to see how much town managers could do to help transform people’s lives. “Towns not only provide basic core services to survive but also those value-added services to expand people’s horizons and help them develop to reach their potential – to develop into productive citizens,” said Hendler-Voss.

Mars Hill native Danna Stansbury ’95 MPA ’98, deputy executive director of the Land of Sky Regional Council, works with public and private stakeholders to create regional solutions for issues that don’t begin or end at county or municipal boundaries such as economic, community and workforce development and regional transportation planning. “My time at WCU prepared me well for the challenges of public servanthood,” said Stansbury. “I’ve now been involved with all levels of government – local, state, federal and now regional government – which encompasses all three and merges them together.”

Brenda G. Mills MPA ’09, an economic development specialist with the city of Asheville, said her experience broadened her knowledge, made her more aware of research and best practices, and led her to incorporate more tools into her work from social media to Skype. Other regional leaders such as Jessica Cooper, Fontana Dam town administrator, say the workshops and classes at WCU through the Local Government Training Program have been close enough to enable her to participate, and the ability to call someone when she has a question has been invaluable. “We are the newest town in North Carolina, and we are unique in that we sit almost entirely on federal land so we don’t have much of a tax base,” she said. “We have a lot of questions that don’t fall under the norm, and it means a lot to get a return phone call when challenges come up.”

WCU faculty members also conduct research and participate in discussions related to public policy in WNC. Michael E. Smith, the Joe W. Kimmel Distinguished Professor of Construction Management, served on the regional coordinating council for Opt-In, a 15-month effort to better understand and inform the choices facing local governments, businesses and families in westernmost North Carolina. Smith, who has expertise in supply-chain management, also has worked on projects such as an inland port feasibility study. He gets so involved that he has lost sleep worrying about WNC’s transportation infrastructure.

“We live here, and we care about our neighbors and friends,” said Smith. “You can care about the region from somewhere else, but you have a stake in it when you are here. I think that could be said for the university as well. The university has a stake in this being a good place to live, to grow up and to have families.”

HELPING HEALTH SERVICES

About 80 percent of WCU’s nursing graduates work in facilities west of Hickory, and new programs within WCU’s School of Nursing have been created in direct response to needs from the community, said Judy Neubrander, director of the School of Nursing. Area hospitals and health care providers needed more family nurse practitioners, and, with their support and funding assistance, WCU launched a family nurse practitioner program in 1999. Later, WCU stepped forward to help prepare students to serve as nursing faculty at community colleges through the 2003 establishment of a nurse educator program. After area hospitals reported spending $2 million to pay temporary nurse anesthetists, WCU launched a nurse anesthesia program in 2006 so WNC could hire permanent professionals who wanted to work in WNC, said Neubrander. The story of ask-and-answer repeated itself with the 2008 addition of a graduate nurse administrator program to prepare nurses for administrative and leadership roles, which was supported by an $825,000 federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant.

Then in response to national recommendations to increase the number of baccalaureate-trained nurses in the workforce, WCU partnered with Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College and the Foundation for Nursing Excellence in 2010 to develop the Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses Program, or RBIN. The program, which has now expanded statewide, allows students to be dually accepted and enrolled in the university and the community college, and this spring celebrated its first six graduates. “This program enables students to complete the high-quality and affordable associate’s degree programs in our region while also working toward graduating in four years with a bachelor of science in nursing degree,” said Neubrander.

In addition, last fall WCU started a doctorate of nursing practice program in collaboration with UNC Charlotte, and also launched a new program supported by a $1 million workforce diversity grant designed to help students of ethnic diversity and underprivileged backgrounds become competitive candidates to enter and succeed in nursing programs. Participants in Nursing simulation labs at WCU’s Health and Human Sciences Building and at its Biltmore Park instructional site help prepare many of Western North Carolina’s health care professionals.
the project receive monthly stipends that help with such expenses as child care and gas, mentoring support, tutoring and scholarships. HRSA recently awarded WCU a second $1 million federal workforce diversity grant to enable the university to partner with Mission Health to further improve the diversity and quality of nursing professionals in the region—particularly in rural settings.

“The bottom line is that everything nursing has done has been to meet the needs of the community,” said Neubrander.

Many students from WCU’s College of Health and Human Sciences work with the nonprofit Vecinos Farmworker Health Program, which provides free health care services to farmworkers in WNC and, through a Millennial Initiative partnership with WCU, is based in the Health and Human Sciences Building. Through similar partnerships, WestCare’s Carolina West Sports Medicine clinic also is based in the building and a primary care practice is scheduled to open this fall.

“WestCare has been fortunate to develop a very integrated relationship with WCU, and we are now expanding that relationship by collaborating on a number of initiatives to expand access to health care in the communities we mutually serve, while at the same time enhancing the educational opportunities for WCU students,” said Steve Heatherly MBA ’99, CEO of WestCare Health, which has health care facilities including hospitals in Jackson and Swain counties. Becky Wilkes, chief human resources officer for WestCare, also said the health system hires WCU alumni and particularly benefits from the high level of clinical education that those staff members bring to the job. In addition, WestCare benefits when students gain clinical experience at WestCare. In 2013, 63 nursing students, five physical therapy students, one nursing master’s degree student, 11 athletic training students, 47 EMT students, three social work students and three marketing interns worked with the system.

Mission Health, which employs more than 10,000 people and serves WNC with an array of health care facilities including hospitals in Asheville as well as in Franklin, Spruce Pine, Highlands, Marion and Brevard, also has partnered with WCU on initiatives including giving $250,000 to support a scholarship program at WCU in 2011 and working with WCU in 2012 to offer a new graduate certificate program in health care innovation management to employees of Mission Health.

“Western Carolina University produces graduates who can work in the highly complex world of today’s health care,” said Ronald A. Paulus, president and CEO of Mission Health. “We appreciate that because a highly skilled workforce is crucial to Mission’s success and to Western North Carolina’s health.”

The educational experience gained at WCU has been valuable for health care employees who do not work directly with patient care, too, such as Heath Nettles MBA ’12, who works with digital and social marketing at Mission Health. Under his stewardship, the organization’s Facebook page has been “liked” by more than 10,000 people, and Nettles said he uses everything he learned at WCU, where he also had worked in admissions and advising, in the work he does to help Mission Health be part of the conversations that take place online about health care in WNC.

“Working at a university or in health care is not just about improving the quality of education or improving the quality of health care,” said Nettles. “It is about improving the quality of life in the region, and being part of that work is something that feels meaningful to me.”

ADVOCATING ARTS, PRESERVING CULTURE

Participating in a community production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat” and learning to hear the music as well as the lyrics opened the door to a new part of her life, said Lynda Hull Sossamon ’69, a Sylva business owner and town commissioner, explaining her passion for the WCU Friend of the Arts organization. “Being involved in the arts has taught me to see, to touch, to listen and then to feel emotions that the art produces,” said Sossaman, who eagerly accepted the chance to be part of and then chair the organization’s advancement council. “I want to help others realize how much the arts could really enrich their lives.”

As part of WCU’s programs in the arts, students not only master skills to pursue careers but also share their work with the community in exhibits and performances. In addition,
more than 30,000 people attended more than 100 shows at the John W. Bardo Fine and Performing Arts Center during the 2013-14 season. Among the notes that Paul Lormand, the center’s director, has received is a message thanking WCU for making it possible for nearly two dozen foster children and parents to “experience the wonder of the performing arts.” Meanwhile, the WCU Fine Art Museum’s changing exhibitions and programs host up to 10,000 visitors annually that include not only students, faculty and staff but visitors from as far away as New Zealand.

“Our charge is to really introduce our immediate community to some of the contemporary work taking place throughout the country,” said David Brown, director of the Fine Art Museum. A recent exhibit, “Remote Sites of War,” featured works such as portraits of Afghan people in order to delve into the “peripheries of war,” and the museum’s collection includes pieces by artists such as art glass pioneer Harvey Littleton and Cherokee potter Joel Queen ’05 MFA ’09. For Queen, his work also is about cultural preservation. He would dig 6 feet into muddy, soggy earth near a pond to mine for the scarce, mica-rich blue clay with which nine generations of his family have worked.

WCU also has a commitment to supporting regional cultural preservation efforts. The Cherokee studies program and the Cherokee language program and language revitalization efforts have been instrumental in helping members of the tribe preserve their culture, said Annette Clapsdale, executive director of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, noting that the level of scholarship that faculty and students have brought specifically to the Cherokee language revitalization effort has added a new dimension to the work they do. Yolanda Saunooke ’12 said she believes her experience in the Cherokee studies program has helped her do a better job in her work with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, which is committed to protecting archaeological and cultural resources and ensuring historic preservation of significant Cherokee sites. Catece Tiger MA ’14 concentrated in Cherokee studies as part of his master’s degree in history because cultural and historic preservation is necessary to help people more strongly connect with their identity – with who they are.

Hunter Library’s digital collections also are helping not only preserve but also safely and conveniently share fragile and rare items connected to WNC’s heritage, and thousands of people come every fall to WCU’s free Mountain Heritage Day festival on the last Saturday of every September to connect with their roots and experience a taste of an old-fashioned mountain fair. The event is organized through the Mountain Heritage Center, which celebrates the natural and cultural heritage of the Southern Appalachian region. Scott Philyaw ’83, director of the center and associate professor of history, said the center annually logs about 20,000 visits to exhibits and programs from people across the Southeast as well as tour groups from places such as Northern Ireland. “Almost everything in the center’s collection is a donation, and when someone donates, whether it is their great grandfather’s tools or a great-great grandmother’s quilt, they are entrusting the Mountain Heritage Center to be a steward of part of their family legacy,” said Philyaw.

For him, the Mountain Heritage Center and Mountain Heritage Day hearken back to what WCU was in the beginning – a group of families in the Cullowhee Valley who wanted something better for their children, for their community and for other mountain communities. Philyaw was working in a factory when a friend said he should go to college, specifically Western Carolina. At WCU, he felt accepted and challenged, as faculty members trusted him with responsibilities such as traveling abroad to conduct research and negotiate the loan of museum artifacts. He went on to earn his doctorate and then return to WCU. “I am the son of a cashier at a grocery store and a furniture factory worker, and WCU faculty members said, ‘Yes, you can do this work. We have confidence in you,’” said Philyaw. “And it’s not just my story. Engaged learning is what this school is about. That’s in our DNA.”

Tom Ross, president of the UNC system, said WCU has been a beacon of opportunity for the western part of the state for the past 125 years. “Western Carolina University’s early focus on preparing teachers for rural mountain classrooms established WCU as the region’s best hope for economic growth and prosperity,” said Ross. “Its academic offerings and outreach have grown and evolved over many generations to meet the changing needs of the people of Western North Carolina and beyond. Today, WCU continues to provide the essential knowledge and skills needed to meet the new challenges facing our state, and to help improve our communities and quality of life. WCU remains a shining light in the west and is the linchpin for sustainable economic development in that region of our state.”
FEATURING YOUR HOSTS:
Chancellor David and Susan Belcher

Tuesday, September 2, 2014
7:30PM | BARDO ARTS CENTER

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION - SEATING LIMITED

PERFORMANCES BY:
WCU students and faculty with special appearances by David and Susan Belcher,
The Catamount Singers and Electric Soul. Members of the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band and WCU Dancers.

LOVE THE ARTS

Our membership goal for 2014-2015 is to raise more than $200 per arts major at WCU. Your gift changes lives; Invest in the future now!

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 24, 2015
FRIENDS OF THE ARTS LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION GALA

Experiencing the arts will change your perspective.
Supporting the arts will change your life.

JOIN TODAY
828.227.7028

FRIENDSOFTHEARTS.WCU.EDU
FACEBOOK.COM/ARTSATWCU

TICKETS Join or renew your membership now to the WCU Friends of the Arts at the $50 level or higher and you may request TWO PREMIUM RESERVED seats. For membership and reservations, call the Bardo Arts Center box office at 828.227.2479. Remaining seats will be released to non-FOA members on August 22.
In Their Own Words

Four uniquely gifted members of the Western Carolina University community describe from their rich personal experience the importance of history, diversity, language and a sense of place in the formation of the Cullowhee culture. In the pages that follow, the granddaughter-in-law of WCU founder Robert L. Madison, the university’s Cherokee language coordinator, a pioneer of desegregation and an award-winning novelist and poet share their perspectives on facets of WCU history.
It should come as no great surprise that the vast majority of my writing is grounded in this place we call the Southern Appalachian Mountains. As someone whose family roots run deep into the mountains, particularly Buncombe and Watauga counties, going all the way back to the mid-1700s, I know the mountains of Western North Carolina extremely well. The mountains are in my blood; it’s only natural they also would be in my writing.

So, it is true that I have centered most of my work in the mountains of North or South Carolina. That’s the landscape I am the most familiar with, but it also seems to be the landscape that I cannot exhaust. The characters and the stories from this place are endless. Eudora Welty, who is one of my favorite writers, once said, “One place understood helps us understand all other places.” I do not see writing about one specific region as any kind of limitation, because ultimately what I am going after is revealing the human condition. My focus on the mountains is more than simply showing what makes this area distinctive. It is ultimately to show how, at the core, all people are more alike than they are different, no matter what the culture, no matter what the country.

That is why I haven’t strayed very far from the mountains for settings for my books. However, in “The Cove” I did have some scenes set in New York City, and I have, in some short stories, had characters who were from outside the region. Perhaps one day I’ll even write a novel set outside of the region, but for right now I just have too many stories that are here, that are of this place and the people of this place. Knowing a landscape intimately allows the writer to really get into the particulars. It’s out of those particulars that a reader comes to believe the big lie that a novel is.

I am far from alone. I have found that Appalachian writers tend to ground their work in a particular place; that’s one aspect of the genre noted by critics. I think in some ways that it is part of a larger Southern tradition of a strong sense of place. But for me, place is very often a character. I want the reader to feel as if he or she were in that landscape. I want that landscape to be a dominant feature of the book, sometimes even a sense of human destiny being controlled by the landscape. The characters are almost caught within the landscape or the place, particularly in the mountains, with a sense of the mountains brooding over them or limiting them. Sometimes, it is in a more positive way, as if the mountains are protecting them, almost womblike. I find that very fascinating, because I am quite interested in the way landscape affects human psychology. I am absolutely convinced that people who grew up in the mountains have a different sense of being than people who have grown up on an island, on the coastline or in an urban environment.

For those of us at Western Carolina University, we are fortunate enough to find ourselves working and studying in a place our chancellor often refers to as “a little slice of heaven.” I’m reminded of an old bumper sticker from back in the 1970s that read “Cullowhee is not a place, but a state of mind.” And while that sentiment was viewed by many as a back-handed compliment referring to the fact that WCU is located in an unincorporated area, I prefer to embrace the positive nature of that saying. Cullowhee is a special place. Since WCU’s founding in 1889, Cullowhee is a place where the sons and daughters of the people of Western North Carolina have come to get an education. It’s a place from which those sons and daughters, armed with their university diplomas, have become contributing members of society and leaders in the region. And today, those sons and daughters come from beyond the region as well.

I think a lot of people – including students, faculty and staff – have fallen in love with this area when they come here. I certainly have. And yes, part of it is the sheer physical beauty of this place. After all, how wonderful is it to have a campus with a trout stream flowing through it? I don’t know of many universities that have that. But there’s more here than physical beauty alone. There also is an innate sense of community that I think one gets in this place called Cullowhee. Much of that sense of community comes from the people here, more like neighbors in a small town than colleagues on a college campus. But such a feeling is a direct result of being located in the mountains. Some have referred to Cullowhee as isolated, but I tend to view that more positively. The mountains shelter us from some of the outside noise and give us more of a chance to learn and to live, to reflect and to grow. It gives us that different sense of being.

We should all be grateful for Robert Lee Madison, whose vision 125 years ago has given us Western Carolina University.
It has been 60 years since the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, which ordered an end to racial segregation in public schools. In 1954, I was a sophomore at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) majoring in speech correction. Three years later, I was the first Negro student to enroll at Western Carolina College. This was the summer of 1957.

In the spring of 1956, I had been hired by the Mecklenburg County School System as a speech correctionist. After graduation and a summer of preparation, I moved to Charlotte in the fall. Teacher certification requirements in the state of Virginia, where Hampton is located, were different from the requirements for North Carolina. To gain permanent status as a speech correctionist, one had to be certified in special education. I had not taken any special education courses. I was living near Johnson C. Smith College, but they did not have a special education department. I wrote the State Board of Education seeking schools I might attend. I received a list of courses at several colleges and universities. Western was the only one with the courses I needed for certification. I applied. After the administration and the Board of Trustees satisfied themselves with the fact that I represented no one but myself, I was accepted. Probably, I was a test case to see if the college and the community would accept this change – for it was a big one.

In 1954, the city of Greensboro announced it would carry out the Supreme Court’s decision. In 1955, Washington, D.C., integrated its school system. Public education, as I knew it, had changed. School systems were challenged. In many Southern states there was a swift and negative approach to integration. A climate of “massive resistance” in Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi prevailed. Yet, there I was on this June day in 1957, about to register for the summer session at Western Carolina College.

It is difficult to describe my first day. I left my home in Roanoke, Virginia, very early and arrived at Western about 3 p.m. It was a very hot day. My Chevy did not have air. I was tired, sweaty and had cramps in my feet and legs from the long drive. There was a lump from my throat down to my stomach from the thoughts of what might happen. I persevered. I had no thoughts of turning back. I went directly to the office of the director of summer session, registered for three classes and paid my fees. I drove up the hill to Robertson Hall. My single room was large and comfortable and directly above the resident manager – the Brown family. I did not spend much time with them but knew they were there for my safety. There were rumors that a Negro was scheduled to enroll for the summer session. Neither the town’s people nor the press knew that I would arrive the day following registration. The director of public relations was in charge as well as in control. Her name was Lillian Hirt ‘69. She interviewed me. All photographs were taken at her direction. She released one photograph to the local paper along with her article. She was my lifeline to this very different world.

Every effort was made by everyone to make me comfortable. My professors seemed eager to have me as a student and other students welcomed me. Mrs. Hirt’s son, who was about 7, asked “Why is your skin so dark?” Before I could answer she seized the opportunity to talk with him about different races. An African-American family with a daughter about my age called to offer assistance if I needed it. We became friends. I felt very comfortable with them and would ask the difficult questions like, “Where can I get my hair done?” They took me to Cherokee to see “Unto These Hills.” It was their home where I had dinner each Sunday night.

Cullowhee is located in the mountains about 50 miles south of Asheville. Western is Cullowhee. Most of my needs were satisfied on campus except banking. I drove to Sylva to cash a check. While standing before the teller, I realized that everyone in the area, not just on campus, knew who I was. She was very cordial. She did not ask for identification and called me by name. There might have been some who feared change, but it appeared to me that most had resigned themselves to the fact that change had arrived.

Thirty years later in 1987, I was invited to a weekend celebration at Western as a guest of the Ebony Club. My story was well-received. A few months later, Chancellor Myron L. Coulter asked me to serve on the Board of Trustees. My mother had passed, but my dad was very proud. He pulled out the article that had been published in the Asheville newspaper to relive my story. He remembered how he and my mother did not sleep very well until I returned home. I served for two terms on the board, I was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

As we celebrate Western’s 125 years, allow me to say thank you for making my life richer. We each took a risk and we both won.
Tom Belt

Renewing ties to Cherokee, supporting language revitalization

Tom Belt, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, is the Cherokee language coordinator at WCU, which offers one of two university Cherokee language programs in the country. A new law requires the University of North Carolina system to have a plan for Cherokee language instruction.

When you stand on parts of the main campus at Western Carolina University, you are in the downtown of a Cherokee village that existed here for thousands of years and, according to Cherokee legend, the home of a giant. The giant’s responsibility was keeping vigilance over the animals and plants of the area before and during the emergence of the Cherokee people as a tribe. The entity’s name, in the phonetic style of the Cherokee syllabary, was “Tsu-tla-ka-la” or, in simpler phonetic form, “joolth-cullah.” The giant was believed to be responsible for the petroglyphs on a rock – Judaculla Rock – and the name of the giant’s home and surrounding area would have been pronounced “joolth-cullah-ween.” With more non-Cherokee speakers populating the region and the unaccented first syllable dropped, the name evolved to “cullah-whee” – Cullowhee.

My job here at WCU in Cullowhee is to teach Cherokee language. When you come from an oral-tradition-based culture, language is very, very important. How we think, how we interpret the world and how we understand who we are, are embedded in our language. We have a verb-based language as opposed to English, a noun-based language. A verb in our language is a whole sentence. If we say “A-gi-yo-si,” it means three words in English, “I am hungry.” We use verbs to make the most precise interpretations of what we see happening.

I remember sitting outside the student union at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, talking with other students when it occurred to me we were talking Cherokee and the world we lived in spoke English. I asked, “Has it ever occurred to you that we, here, right now, those of us our age, may be the last speakers of our language? Because I don’t think the other kids are speaking it.” It stopped everybody cold, and then we laughed and went back to drinking coffee. We grew up in families where everyone spoke Cherokee, and it never occurred to us the language would go away. But today, less than 200 of the 13,000 members of the Eastern Band (near campus) are fluent Cherokee speakers and almost all are over the age of 55.

Language death in Native Americans can be attributed to a lot of factors. In the 1800s, the government opened boarding schools across the country – hundreds of schools – and forced tribes to send kids to these schools to integrate, to socialize and to make them “Americans.” Their Native languages were forbidden there. I didn’t really begin to learn the English language until I entered public school in Oklahoma at age 6. I did not understand anything. I remember at recess sitting on the steps and watching. No one talked to me. When my parents realized I would have to repeat first grade, they began a conscientious effort to expose me to more English. Then, much like anyone who starts to pick up another language, I had an accent, and I realized the way I spoke English was a point of humor among the teachers. I thought, “Well, OK then, I am going to learn to speak better than they can,” which I laugh about now because I never did. I think they regarded my speaking Cherokee as unique but unimportant.

Now, more and more members of our tribe and educators are increasingly aware that speaking Cherokee is important – critical. In 1991, I came to North Carolina to Cherokee. This being our homeland, Cherokees in Oklahoma want to come here and see what it’s like. I was 40, and I was one of the younger people here who still spoke Cherokee. That seemed odd to me. If no one is speaking the language, the language is lost. If you take away language, you take away culture.

Half of the people who were sitting outside that student union in Oklahoma speaking Cherokee in 1971 or 1972 are involved today in language revitalization. I became the Cherokee language coordinator at WCU in 2006 after Tom Hatley helped make Cherokee language courses part of the Cherokee Studies Program. We have full capacity in the “Cherokee 101” class every fall – at least 26 students, and, under a law passed last year, all universities in the University of North Carolina system recognizes the Cherokee language as “a language for which a student may satisfy a foreign language course requirement for degree completion.” It shows after all these years it has become important to the university system to recognize its connection with Native tribes – the historical connections and the need to offer educational services that serve the needs of Native people, too.

My director, Hartwell Francis, and I also work with Cherokee language classes at high schools, and are directly involved in the Cherokee language immersion school in helping develop curriculum. The very first certified teacher at the immersion school was a product of WCU. What drove this student was not just her ability and her desire to teach. She realizes the importance of trying to save a language, and she is not the only teacher at the immersion school who studied at WCU. When the older Cherokee speakers are gone, the only ones left able to speak fluently may be these teachers and the children that WCU is working with in the immersion school. The hope of the tribe rests on them.
Never would I forget that Jackson County had local culture before Western was founded – the ballads; the musical talent, particularly singing and playing instruments; the telling of stories and acting out of plays. Many homes prided themselves in setting a pretty spread and using manners at the table. The Mountain Heritage Center seeks to save this culture.

Quite a few natives had traveled afar and brought back with them cultural practices of those who had had more opportunities to learn and practice ideas from other people and places. Thankfully, my mother thought we should visit these people, which included the Davies and Coxes (mining engineers from Wales, whose children went to Ivy Schools); the David H. Browns, the Frank H. Browns, the Halls, the McKees and many others. My grandmother had come from both the Shelton and Shook families, and my grandfather was a descendant of the Zachary and Norton families.

It was when Professor R.L. Madison came to Cullowhee and established Cullowhee High School that outside culture began to be important. Mr. Madison’s original plans included the teaching of music and art, Latin, declamation and literature. He advertised for a music and art teacher, and fortunately one of the Davies’ daughters was at the same finishing school in New York as Ella Richards of Galveston, Texas. So Ella came to Cullowhee to teach, and she married Mr. Madison. She was both an artist and a musician, and continued to teach both subjects. They eventually lived in Webster, and Joe Rhinehart honors the two of them with his Sunday nights in Webster, when Mr. Madison would come out on his porch and play his flute for the whole community.

When I lived on the campus of Western Carolina Teachers College, it was magical. We were the recipients of all kinds of culture by the students and faculty, and we had the really good fortune to have Mrs. Lilian Buchanan ’34 on the faculty. She had been a person to go to Mr. C.J. Harris and tell him Sylva needed a library, which they got; and she had been the one to start a women’s organization called The Twentieth Century Club, which supported programs of culture, serving members with their best silver, china, crystal and linen. They also did a good cultural deed in the county each year and bought a piece of art by a WCU student to put in the art museum. When she came to Western, Mrs. Buchanan was determined to add culturally to the college. She played classical music each night from the library in Joyner as the students came from Moore and dinner.

She instituted the Lyceum Programs at Western. Each year she went to Columbia University in the summer and each year she set up programs for the next year at Western. Some of the people who came for programs were Charles Laughton; Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy; Ted Shawn, the protégée of Martha Graham; Walter Carringer; Margaret Truman; and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. In the archives, there is even correspondence with the New York Symphony as to the possibility of their appearance.

Since she lived next door to us, I was often invited into her apartment to see her beautiful art books, her Metropolitan framed prints and autographed pictures of important people such as Thomas Wolfe. She played opera day and night at the highest decibel. I was fascinated, and we called her “Cannie,” my brother’s choice. When we were ill, she brought us vegetable soup filled with cabbage.

The arts were well-represented at Western. My friend Dorothy Dodson ’53 MAEd ’56 and I both had parts in “Carmen” and “Faust.” I played in the orchestra taught by Miss Rachel Rosenberger, who left to play in the Kansas City Symphony. Mrs. Inez Gulley ’37 did triple duty – the high school chorus, the college chorus and the May Day program, in addition to individual lessons. Miss Winnie Murphy (Killian), Miss Maybel Tyree (Crum) and Mr. Deans were in charge of the drama productions. At one time, the North Carolina High School drama competitions came to Cullowhee for state finals. I remember that “Riders to the Sea” and “Juno and the Paycock” won the competition.

I heard my first opera and saw my first ballet, my first modern dance and my first stage productions in Cullowhee. It wasn’t until later that I analyzed how absolutely magical it was to grow up on the campus of WCU.

Culture has flourished and still is flourishing at WCU, not only with the Broadway-caliber productions and plays, but also the opportunity to watch wonderful students learn and practice their arts until they are highly sought after for internships and positions all over the U.S.A.

We are now being led and entertained by our highly educated chancellor and his wife. Dr. David Belcher is a performing pianist and his wife, Susan, is a former member of the Chicago Lyric Opera.

How fortunate we are.
How the inaugural graduating class inspired an early emphasis on teacher training

By GEORGE FRIZZELL ’77 MA ’81

In May 1893, a 26-year-old Robert L. Madison helped direct the annual commencement of Cullowhee High School, the forerunner institution of WCU. Madison had accepted the position of principal at the school in August 1889 and, over the following four years, sought to expand its offerings.

The 1893 commencement was the first one in which students had finished the school’s classical curriculum and were to be awarded their high school diplomas. Four women and one man constituted the graduating class. Ida Smith 1893, Beulah Smith 1893 and Lena Smith 1893 were daughters of Lewis J. Smith, who served on the school’s Board of Trustees. The other two graduates were Frances “Fannie” Rogers 1893 of Cullowhee and Welch Galloway 1893 of Transylvania County. The students were all between the ages of 18 and 22, barely younger than Madison. Also, the Smith sisters had been among the first 18 students to greet Madison on his first day of opening class in 1889.

Commencement exercises at Cullowhee in the 1890s were elaborate occasions that extended over two to three days. The ceremonies included sermons, addresses, music, debates and meetings of the school’s trustees. Accounts of these programs in the Tuckasegee Democrat newspaper report that they continued into the evening hours and were typically accompanied by a “bountiful dinner” provided by the Cullowhee community. On the 1893 occasion, held May 18, the program noted that the “Graduating Exercises” would be held at 2 p.m. and were to be followed by the “Organization of an Alumni Association.”

Forty-five years later, Madison reminisced about the importance of this class for both his goal of establishing a permanent school in Cullowhee and for the development of education in Western North Carolina. He noted that “this small number (only about 3 percent of the student-body) indicates how hard it was in those days to induce students to continue in school long enough to finish a thorough high school course.”

During his years of working to establish a school, Madison had observed that receiving a high school degree was often a difficult endeavor in Western North Carolina in the 1880s and 1890s. There was a lack of teachers with experience, short school sessions of only three to four months, and low pay for rural teachers that discouraged them from attending one of the state’s more prestigious, but expensive, Piedmont schools.

W.E. Bird ’15, a colleague and friend of Madison, commented in his book “The History of Western Carolina College” that Madison had recognized the potential of these first impending graduates as well as those of future classes in the making. In January 1893, he seized upon the idea to write Walter E. Moore, his state representative, requesting assistance in establishing a normal department with the intent to train teachers specifically for rural and small town schools.

Excited by the prospect of his proposal of a teacher training department, Madison later related how he woke his wife late at night so he could read to her his letter to Moore. He then set out from his house at midnight to walk by lantern light almost a mile to the nearest post office.

Madison later recalled: “I shall never forget my thoughts and feelings that night as, sleepy and tired, I dragged my feet over the frozen ground. All of Cullowhee was under the spell of slumber. There was no light in any dwelling; there was no sound save the rush of waters over the antiquated mill-dam. And I dared to hope that there might result from that lonely midnight trip something that would forever bless this goodly region whose interests I had been commissioned to serve.”

Moore declined to support Madison’s proposed financial request, but did submit a bill at a far lower funding, which passed. Madison later wrote a series of polite, but insistent, letters to the state superintendent of public instruction requesting updates on the department’s establishment in order to publish a school catalogue and, perhaps, to confirm the department’s establishment, which occurred for the next academic year.

And what of those first five?

Sisters Lena and Ida Smith along with Fannie Rogers were among the first 12 students to graduate in 1894 from the new Normal Department that Madison had envisioned. Beulah Smith unfortunately died of an unspecified illness less than three months after graduation in 1893. As Madison had hoped, many of the students – including the surviving Smith sisters and Rogers – went on to become teachers. For a time, Ida Smith also operated a general store. Lena Smith married Cassius Wallace 1894, who had also attended the Cullowhee High School. Wallace was the adviser of the Columbian Literary Society, one of the two literary societies organized by Madison in 1894 to encourage debate and recitation and as a means to build community spirit. Welch Galloway became a lawyer and practiced in several WNC counties. In the summer of 1934 a memorial was dedicated to Madison on the site of the original Academy building. Fittingly, Galloway also was invited as the principal speaker of the occasion.

Alumni and future graduates alike should remember that midnight walk of Robert Madison in 1893 and of the hopes he rested upon the first graduates of Cullowhee.

George Frizzell ’77 MA ’81 is head of special collections at Western Carolina University’s Hunter Library.

“I dared to hope that there might result from that lonely midnight trip something that would forever bless this goodly region whose interests I had been commissioned to serve.”

—Robert L. Madison

The institution’s inaugural graduating class consisted of (top row, from left) sisters Ida, Beulah and Lena Smith; and (bottom row, from left) Frances Rogers and Welch Galloway.
Alumni, cast your ballots!

The WCU Alumni Association has announced the slate of nominees running for open positions on its board of directors. The association’s more than 60,000 members have been divided into five geographical districts. Vote for one candidate in each district. The top vote recipient in each district will serve a three-year term ending in 2016. Complete biographical information about each candidate can be found online at alumni.wcu.edu, which is where you will cast your ballot. The deadline to vote is Friday, Aug. 29.

N.C. DISTRICT 1

K. HEATHER ALLEN ’00 MAED ’02 EDD ’13, Waynesville; career development coordinator for Swain County Schools; at WCU, she was a Teaching Fellow, Honors College student and Phi Mu sorority member.

KENDRA PENLAND ’04 MPA ’06, Asheville; principal of Real Property Consultants LLC; at WCU, she was a member of the Phi Sigma Iota National Honor Society, a dean’s list student and recipient of the Jake Wicker Scholarship.

RICK QUEEN ’86, Asheville; attorney, Griffin Wells & Queen PA; at WCU, he was an all-Southern Conference member of the track and field team before going on to earn his law degree at Wake Forest University.

N.C. DISTRICT 2

DANA LEE AYERS MSA ’08, Lincolnton; principal, Lincolnton Middle School; at WCU, earned a master’s degree online and joined the Catamount Club after receiving a bachelor’s degree at Belmont Abbey College and went on to receive a doctorate in education at UNC Charlotte.

JAIME HAWKINS FRIDAY ’99, Gastonia; practice administrator, Carolina Center for Counseling & Clinical Services Inc.; at WCU, she was a member of the Baptist Student Union and treasurer of the Parks and Recreation Management Club.

JENNIFER DAVIS JACKSON ’94, Gastonia; clinical counselor and supervisor, McLeod Addictive Disease Center; at WCU, she was a resident assistant and head resident, and member of the Criminal Justice and Political Science clubs before earning her master’s degree at Lenoir-Rhyne College.

N.C. DISTRICT 3

ANTHONY P. DOWLING ’85, Raleigh; executive director, Eno River Media Production; at WCU, he was secretary and president of Pi Lambda Phi fraternity, Student Government Association senator, and founding member of the Pre-Law Society.

DOUG PALMER ’99, Clayton; veterinary practice consultant, animal health division of Abbott Laboratories; at WCU, he was captain of the cheerleading team, served as “Paws” the mascot and was a member of Theta Xi fraternity.

CAMILLE HARWOOD STEPHENS ’01, Raleigh; homemaker/domestic engineer; at WCU, she was vice president and president of the National Panhellenic Council, president of the Order of Omega and Rho Lambda, and member of the Public Relations Student Society of America.

N.C. DISTRICT 4

MICHAEL MCLAMB ’12, Wilmington; financial adviser, Edward Jones; at WCU, he was president of the Finance and Investment clubs, and member of the Business Student Leadership Council and Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award committee.

KATE MURPHY ’06, Wilmington; public information specialist, CoastalCare; at WCU, she was a member of the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band and Sigma Alpha Iota women’s music fraternity.

OUT-OF-STATE DISTRICT 5

JAMES “JIM” BEDDINGFIELD ’67, Cumming, Georgia; U.S. Department of Labor retiree and attorney, private practice; at WCU, he was a resident assistant, treasurer of Men’s House Government and vice president of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

JANINE ROLISON BRYAN ’83, Columbia, South Carolina; licensed professional counselor; at WCU, she was standards and ethics chair for Phi Mu sorority and a member of the Catsamount Club, and has gone on to earn a master’s degree at Columbia International University.

VAN C. WILSON ’83 MPA ’89, Richmond, Virginia; assistant vice chancellor, academic and student services, Virginia Community College System; at WCU, he was a resident assistant, member of Pi Gamma Mu honor society and co-founder of Project C.A.R.E. before earning his doctorate in education at Appalachian State.

Vote online at alumni.wcu.edu
Western Carolina President Hiram T. Hunter recalled that the “shock of World War II invaded the campus and affected every phase of college life.” About 500 men and women from what was then Western Carolina Teachers College – students, faculty, staff and alumni – served in the armed forces during the Second World War. Those who remained at home faced disrupted lives and an uncertain future. Whether they served or stayed in school, the war defined the lives of all who lived through it.

Almost immediately following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the war came home to Cullowhee, just two years after WCTC had marked its 50th anniversary. In January 1942, the Western Carolinian newspaper reported that at least 20 students had left Western for military service or for jobs in defense plants. Later that year, yearbook business manager Johnny Wilson ’42 appeared on the opening page of The Catamount annual in his Army uniform, and the senior class honored the students “who are now performing their patriotic duty in the armed forces of our great nation.”

The yearbook took a more somber tone the next year, including a “WCTC Roll of Honor” to remember former students killed or missing in action. Their stories reflected America’s tumultuous first months of combat. Hayesville’s Samuel Johnston Bristol, a ship fitter aboard the cruiser USS Quincy, perished with 369 of his shipmates in the Battle of Savo Island near Guadalcanal on Aug. 9, 1942. Charles Woodfin McLaughlin and Robert Gray Hampton, both Army Air Corps pilots, died in plane crashes, as did Navy flier Lyndon Lea White. Two former students were reported as missing in action, Willard Lovingood in North Africa and John O. Lovedahl in the Pacific. In later editions, the “Roll of Honor” grew longer and would include Wilford C. Love, who lost his life on a submarine patrol off Ceylon while serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force two years to the day after Pearl Harbor.

The college was not immune to changes wrought by the war. Geology professor W. Newton Turner, mathematics professor A.K. Hinds, and several other faculty and staff members donned the nation’s uniform. Maintenance worker Jesse Cline died while serving in the European theater. Enrollment dropped from 522 in 1939 to 298 in 1945, and the only men in the student body were those deemed ineligible for military service. Budgets shrank and students took over landscaping and other tasks to help keep the campus open.

The end of the war in 1945 brought its own challenges. In 1946, President Hunter reported that Western “has simply tried to do its bit amid the welter of special demands brought on by the war” and had begun “preparing to adapt its curricula to the conditions of peace.” Such preparations included programs to serve the 277 veterans in the first postwar student body and finding ways to remember those who would never return to Cullowhee. Three years later, Western’s new Memorial Stadium – located between where Hunter Library and the Natural Science Building stand today – included a plaque with the names of 26 Catamounts who, in the Second World War, gave what Abraham Lincoln called “the last full measure of devotion.”

Today, Western Carolina University prides itself on being a campus that is both veteran-friendly and military-friendly, regularly winning recognition from national publications for its academic offerings for current and former servicemen and servicewomen. As the university commemorates the 125th anniversary of its founding, the institution also pauses to honor those Catamounts who served in the conflict that defined the 20th century.

We remember.
A TOWERING ACHIEVEMENT
The Alumni Association’s centennial year gift to the university remains a campus focal point

By JIM ROWELL ’72

Approaching Western Carolina’s centennial year in 1989, the university was in transition and transformation. Following the powerful years of former Chancellor H.F. “Cotton” Robinson’s administration, when the state’s political stars aligned in WCU’s favor, Chancellor Myron L. “Barney” Coulter took the helm of an institution with changing campus agendas and renewed energy to enhance its teaching and bolster its academic programs.

A seasoned leader, having served for a decade as chancellor at Idaho State University, Coulter realized the importance of significant focal points, perhaps even one that might become a campus icon. Construction of the Liston B. Ramsey Regional Activity Center was underway and to be completed during his tenure. Coulter suggested that the arena have such a focal point – a huge American flag that would dramatically drop from the ceiling or be lowered, to serve as a striking backdrop at events. That flag is still making a lasting impression at a university commencements.

In March 1987, two years before the centennial year, Coulter brought up the idea of a tower/carillon, which might become a campus landmark. He described his vision as something distinctive, dignified and collegiate. Would the Alumni Association be interested in taking it on? Two colleagues in that 1987 meeting – James E. Dooley, vice chancellor for development and special services, and Jim Manring ’74, alumni director – took it from there.

The Alumni Association not only embraced the idea wholeheartedly, but set forth to make the creation of the Alumni Tower the organization’s centennial gift to the university. It was the biggest project the association had ever undertaken.

Manring recalls an early outing with then-Alumni Association President George Hood ’69. “He took me on personal visits to 10 of his Delta Sigma Phi fraternity brothers, and each and every one of them contributed $1,000,” Manring said. It was a heartening start to raising the nearly $360,000 that would be required.

Max Hopper ’69 chaired an Alumni Tower committee and alums near and far contributed. Ten gave $5,000 or more, another 13 provided gifts over $3,000, and 50 contributed at least $1,000, and more than 300 others made donations. The names of major contributors are inscribed inside the tower’s passageway.

At the tower’s dedication Oct. 28, 1989, Alumni Association President Bill Dodgen ’70 presented the structure to the university at a Homecoming event. Special thanks went to Ed Allman ’49, Dodgen, Hood, Hopper, Arnold Issacs ’59 (president of the company that constructed the tower) and Charlie McConnell ’66 for their efforts to create an accompanying memorial to Coach Jim Gudger as part of the tower project.

So idea became brick and mortar. The Alumni Tower incorporated a place for the institution’s Victory Bell, walkways that intersected from six directions, a clock, a carillon, and a time capsule. But most of all, it carried the hopes, as Manring said in 1987, that it would become a tie that binds all alumni, meaning as much as older buildings and campus places did to earlier generations.

Today, the Alumni Tower has undeniably become the icon of a sparkling, vibrant and impressive central campus. The new fountain, the brick walkways and Central Plaza, the renovated A.K. Hinds University Center, the Courtyard Dining Hall, Campus Recreation Center, Blue Ridge and Balsam residence halls, and the Alumni Tower fit together to give the university a place of pride.

Orientation groups meet there on their first visits to campus, seniors gather there with their parents for photos at graduation, and alumni visit at Homecoming and throughout the year. In between, countless students, faculty and staff pass through and pass by daily. Groups congregate – some organized, some unorganized – to enjoy its warmth and the setting. It has become a gathering place and has claimed its place in the memories of thousands.

The Alumni Tower has, indeed, become a tie that binds.

Jim Rowell ’72, retired director of public information at WCU, was associate director for news services during the university’s centennial year.
MEET
MICHAEL
MCLAMB ’12.

MICHAEL RECEIVED THREE SCHOLARSHIPS AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY. AFTER EARNING HIS BACHELOR’S IN BUSINESS, MICHAEL IS RUNNING HIS OWN PRACTICE AS A FINANCIAL ADVISOR WITH EDWARD JONES IN WILMINGTON. HE RECENTLY RECEIVED THREE AWARDS TO RECOGNIZE HIS DEDICATION TO HIS CLIENTS.

OVER THE YEARS, HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS LIKE MICHAEL HAVE GONE ON TO SUCCESS THANKS TO YOU, OUR ALUMNI, AND YOUR DEDICATION TO GIVING BACK.

ANNUAL GIVING
Your annual gift to the Loyalty Fund supports student scholarships and other university priorities. If you have already given this year, thank you. If not, there is no better time to give than as we celebrate Western Carolina’s 125th anniversary. Help us reach our goal of adding more than 300 new donors. Use the enclosed envelope to make a gift, today.

MAKEAGIFT.WCU.EDU | 800.492.8496 | ANNUALGIVING@WCU.EDU
# Homecoming 2014 October 23-26

## Thursday, October 23

**The Last Lecture**  
4:00-5:00pm  
Lisa Thomas Briggs ’87 MPA ’89 (Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice) will discuss “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall—Please Help Guide Us Through It All.” A.K. Hinds University Center Theater. Information: Laura Cruz, director of Coulter Faculty Commons, 828.227.7196 or lcruz@wcu.edu.

**Spirit Night Pep Rally**  
8:00pm  
Alumni, friends, students, faculty and staff are invited to enjoy music and food on Central Plaza, adjacent to the Alumni Tower.

## Friday, October 24

**Alumni Scholarship Homecoming Golf Tournament**  
11:00am  
A homecoming tradition tees off with a shotgun start at Sequoyah National Golf Club in Whittier, N.C. Cost: $85 per person, includes fees and cart. Four-person “captains choice” format. Refreshments available during play. BBQ dinner following the tournament. RSVP is required by Friday, October 17. Call the Office of Alumni Affairs at 877.440.9990 or 828.227.7335 or email llbusby@wcu.edu.

**Homecoming Parade**  
6:15pm  
Cheer as community and student floats, WCU cheerleaders, the 2014 Homecoming Court and the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band parade down Main Street in downtown Sylva.

## Saturday, October 25

**Chancellor’s Brunch and Alumni Awards**  
9:30-11:30am  
Honoring the Alumni Association award recipients and the university’s Distinguished Service Award recipient in the A.K. Hinds University Center Grandroom. Honorees are Robert Edwards ’77, Distinguished Service Award; Martha Powell ’69, Academic Achievement Award; Bob Thomas ’70, Professional Achievement Award; Jarrett Frazier ’12, Young Alumnus Award. Cost is $15 per person, business attire. RSVP by Friday, October 17. Information/RSVP: Office of Alumni Affairs at 877.440.9990, 828.227.7335 or magill@wcu.edu.

**Tailgating**  
10:30am-2:00pm  
Enjoy food, friends and games prior to kickoff in the parking lots around Whitmire Stadium.

See the complete Homecoming schedule online at [homecoming.wcu.edu](http://homecoming.wcu.edu).
WCU vs The Citadel
2:00pm
Shut down the grill and suspend the tailgating fun to go inside the gates for Purple and Gold football as the Catamounts take on the Bulldogs at Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. Tickets: 1.800.344.6928.

African-American Alumni Postgame Reception
5:00-6:30pm
Relive the game and catch up with old friends in the Ramsey Center Peele, Westmoreland Suhre, Hartshorn Hospitality Room. RSVP by Friday, October 17. Information/RSVP: Office of Alumni Affairs at 877.440.9990, 828.227.7335 or magill@wcu.edu.

WCU vs ETSU Soccer
2:00pm
Come cheer on the Catamounts as they take on new Southern Conference member ETSU at the Catamount Athletic Complex.

Inspirational Choir Concert
3:00pm
Close out homecoming weekend with a perennially crowd-pleasing performance in the A.K. Hinds University Center Grandroom. Information: Department of Intercultural Affairs at 828.227.2276 or ica@wcu.edu.
1958

Dottie Bradley Sherrill MA ’70 EDS ’84 was elected mayor of the town of Weaverville in November 2013. Sherrill has been a member of the town council for 24 years and was vice mayor for the past 18 years. A retired counselor for Asheville City and Buncombe County schools, she is married to Dwight “Rabbit” Sherrill ’57 MA ’59.

1961

The PianoArts North American Piano Competition of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a performance competition that attracts some of today’s most talented young pianists, was founded by Sue West Medford, who grew up in Asheville and has played the piano all her life. Medford, who was the Milwaukee Symphony’s director of education for 24 years, came up with the idea for the competition in 1994.

1966

Charles Boswell and Mary Jo Boswell ’64, MAEd ’66 of Wentworth celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 8. The Boswells met as students at the Wesley Foundation on campus in 1962.

1968

“Binding Force,” a story in the fall 2013 issue about campus traditions, brought back memories for Eric Brady MAEd ’76. Brady had graduated with a degree in psychology and was working in the Cullowhee area in 1970 when the alumni office asked for his help with a campus dilemma. The victory bell at the old Student Union building was a frequent target for unauthorized ringing. Sometimes it vanished altogether. The bell was slated to be moved to the new University Center, but officials felt it should be ensconced first in a prankster-proof enclosure. Brady designed a sculpture-like structure to house the bell, which industrial education and technology students and the WCU maintenance staff helped construct and assemble out of redwood. The finished enclosure, which Brady jokingly named the “Dixie Cup monument,” because it was both temporary and inexpensive, graced the building’s lawn for more than a decade, protecting the bell until it was mounted in the new Alumni Tower.

1975

Mitchell Crisp is retiring after serving for 38 years as a certified public accountant in North Carolina. Crisp is a founding member of Dixon Hughes Goodman of Asheville, where he has served as partner since 1976. He is a member of the board of advisers of WCU’s accounting department.

1977

Robert T. Edwards, WCU’s vice chancellor for administration and finance, received the Paul A. Reid Award for Administrative Staff in May. Edwards, who will have 37 years of service to the University, was honored for his exemplary work in helping WCU’s administrative staff move forward.

A purple sweatshirt said it all when Maxie Wright Duke (right) met Tommy Peck ’09 last spring. Peck, who works at Franklin Insurance Agency, is a server on weekends in a Highlands restaurant. One day, while seating Duke, whom he didn’t know, Peck spotted the familiar indicia she was wearing. After learning that they were both alumni, the two compared stories about their college experiences, which were strikingly different considering the decades between graduations.

FAMILY TRADITION

Some six decades after they received their degrees at Western Carolina, Pfafftown residents Robert R. “Bob” Moore ’54 and Doris Wells Moore ’55 returned to Cullowhee to watch their granddaughter, Catherine Elaine Stiers ’14 (center), participate in commencement on May 10. The family’s ties to WCU run even deeper, as Doris Moore is a niece of the late W. Ernest Bird ’15, Western Carolina’s president in 1956-57 and acting president in 1947-49, and a sister of the late Dan B. Wells ’53, a longtime WCU mathematics faculty member. Stiers, a Fuquay Varina resident who earned bachelor’s degrees in English and international studies as a member of WCU’s Honors College, is part of a spring class that totaled approximately 1,370 students, the largest in university history. Boosted by surging enrollments, the size of WCU’s spring classes has doubled over the past 11 years.

NOTES

Some six decades after they received their degrees at Western Carolina, Pfafftown residents Robert R. “Bob” Moore ’54 and Doris Wells Moore ’55 returned to Cullowhee to watch their granddaughter, Catherine Elaine Stiers ’14 (center), participate in commencement on May 10. The family’s ties to WCU run even deeper, as Doris Moore is a niece of the late W. Ernest Bird ’15, Western Carolina’s president in 1956-57 and acting president in 1947-49, and a sister of the late Dan B. Wells ’53, a longtime WCU mathematics faculty member. Stiers, a Fuquay Varina resident who earned bachelor’s degrees in English and international studies as a member of WCU’s Honors College, is part of a spring class that totaled approximately 1,370 students, the largest in university history. Boosted by surging enrollments, the size of WCU’s spring classes has doubled over the past 11 years.

1948

A purple sweatshirt said it all when Maxie Wright Duke (right) met Tommy Peck ’09 last spring. Peck, who works at Franklin Insurance Agency, is a server on weekends in a Highlands restaurant. One day, while seating Duke, whom he didn’t know, Peck spotted the familiar indicia she was wearing. After learning that they were both alumni, the two compared stories about their college experiences, which were strikingly different considering the decades between graduations.
1984

Jennifer H. Gentry has been elected president of the board of directors of the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association, a national organization with more than 11,000 members and 50 chapters. A clinician in both the acute and long-term care settings for 30 years, Gentry is a palliative care nurse practitioner and nursing leader for Duke University Hospital’s department of advanced clinical practice. She also serves on the faculty of the Duke School of Nursing and as a member of the hospital’s ethics committee.

1985

After retiring, Mike Nixon started a new career as a consultant and instructor with Sungard Public Sector in High Point. Nixon teaches software programs to police officers in departments around the country and says he hopes to meet other Catamounts in his travels. He retired from the High Point Police Department with more than 28 years of service.

1987

Lisa T. Briggs MPA ’89, associate professor of criminology and criminal justice, is the winner of the 2014 Last Lecture Award. The honor is based on votes by students, who describe Briggs as exceptionally enthusiastic, passionate about her teaching and devoted to helping them inside and outside the classroom. Briggs will present a special “Last Lecture” address in the fall.

1988

Mike Doerner first learned to ride motorcycles when he was a student, circling WCU’s parking lots and winding up and down the curvy Airport Road. Years later, after an accident that left him uninjured but demolished his Yamaha, Doerner enrolled in a Basic Motorcycle Safety Foundation class. He wrote about the benefits of taking a basic course, even for an experienced street rider like himself, in a cover story that was featured in the April 2013 issue of American Motorcycle magazine. Doerner owns a cabinet and furniture-making company and lives near Kennesaw, Georgia.

1990

Sharon Kimble MAEd ’94 retired in June from Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon, where she has been teaching for the past 14 years. Kimble moved to Eugene in 1999 with son Adam and husband Floyd T. “Tom” King after he retired as maintenance superintendent in the WCU physical plant.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP ENDO雯MENTS CREATED

Western Carolina University alumni and friends continue to meet the challenge issued by Chancellor David O. Belcher to increase the size and number of endowed scholarships that provide financial assistance to deserving students, with nine new endowed funds added to the books in recent months.

In his March 2012 installation address, Belcher identified pursuing additional endowed scholarships as the university’s No. 1 philanthropic priority, and more than 70 new funds have been created since then. Through endowments of at least $10,000, scholarship assistance can be awarded on an annual and ongoing basis. New endowed scholarship funds established between Feb. 15 and May 31 are:

- Delta Zeta Endowed Scholarship Fund, for active or legacy members of Delta Zeta sorority; donors Delta Zeta members represented by Charlotte Ray Eckard ’69.
- Beta Lambda Sorority Endowed Teaching Scholarship Fund, for teacher education majors; donors Beta Lambda members represented by Vyanne Fisher ’02.
- Van and Alan Stayton Football Scholarship, for student-athletes on the WCU football team; donors Van Stayton ’65 and Alan Stayton ’07.
- Arthur Anderson Endowed Scholarship Fund, for students obtaining a degree in the performing arts; donor Arthur Anderson.
- Dr. Mark and Katherine Whitehead Honors College Scholarship, for pre-professional program students planning to go to medical school or pre-nursing/nursing majors admitted and in good standing with the Honors College; donors Mark and Katherine Whitehead.
- Pediatric Developmental Therapy Endowed Scholarship Fund, for communication sciences and disorders majors; donor Haden Boliek MS ’94.
- John S. and Frances D. Hudson Endowed Scholarship Fund, for incoming freshmen who demonstrate involvement in their communities; donor Jack Hudson ’82.
- Jerry Johnson Endowed Scholarship Fund, for Honors College students; donor Jerry Johnson ’78.
- C.J. Cody Jr. Memorial Track and Field/Cross Country Scholarship, for student-athletes on the track and field and/or cross country teams; donors Brooke Roberts MA ’10 and Jason Roberts.

For information on how to establish an endowed scholarship, visit the website give.wcu.edu.
San Cristobal de la Casas

visit a language school in languages in that region.

Luzene Hill. She was in Mexico to help develop an artist exchange and was art exploration for a trip to the Maya site of Palenque, Mexico, of revitalizing indigenous that is preserving and of silk (prayer ribbons) in pinks, reds and silver representing transformation of the night sky to become the Pleiades star cluster. The figures are tied with strips from human to star.

Hill describes “Becoming” on her Facebook page: “Native American myths about the constellations are richly descriptive and varied, but have common themes and structure,” she writes. “The Pleiades constellation has inspired many myths and was important to agrarian societies. It was observed most clearly in the spring at planting time and in the fall at harvest. Star stories created familial connections to a higher power.”

Since 2010, Hill has begun to focus on work that “explores silence, being silenced: in the context of endangered Native American culture and language, as well as the profound impact of silence that surrounds the issue of violence against women,” she said. “My goal is to provoke an ongoing dialogue about violence against women that outlasts my ephemeral work, in the hope this crime is not tacitly condoned by our collective silence,” she said.

In addition to being a sculptor and installation artist, Hill also is an illustrator. Three children’s books published for WCU’s Cherokee Studies Language Revitalization Project, “The Grouchy Old Lady,” “Spearfinger” and “Bear Man,” feature her illustrations.

A trip to the Maya site of Palenque, Mexico, was art exploration for Luzene Hill. She was in Mexico to help develop an artist exchange and visit a language school in San Cristobal de la Casas that is preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages in that region.

1991

Marianne Leek MAT ’01, a member of the WCU Alumni Association board of directors, teaches honors English at Hayesville High School. In February, Leek brought her junior and sophomore students to campus to meet prize-winning author Ron Rash, Parris Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Culture. Her students had started a book club earlier in the school year, and Rash’s book “Serena” was their first selection.

1992

ADOMANI, a green initiative vehicle technology company founded by Edward R. Monfort, teamed up with a California school district in the spring to convert a 2007 Blue Bird school bus into an all-electric vehicle. Replacing the diesel engine with a patented electric conversion kit, Monfort and his company returned a bus with zero-emission status to the Gilroy Unified School District. The bus was approved for transportation by the California Highway Patrol shortly after it was unveiled. Monfort and his award-winning conversion kits recently were featured on Driver Talk Radio. ADOMANI is headquartered in Los Altos, California, and has research and development operations in Bradenton, Florida.

1993

In Melbourne, Florida, the students of Jason Whitworth, who has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, developed an experiment on behalf of the beloved coach and teacher that was tested on board the International Space Station in January. The students’ experiment, which won a research spot on the space shuttle through the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program, was designed to test the effect of a microgravity environment on glutamate. In ALS patients, glutamate is no longer broken down by enzymes, causing it to build to toxic levels. Whitworth’s students at West Shore High School also are involved in activities to raise public awareness about the debilitating disease. Whitworth ran track and cross country during his years at WCU and taught for 16 years. He was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, in 2011. The disease claimed the life of former WCU football coach Bob Waters in 1989.

1994

Radio producer Jimmy Holt and his colleagues Andy Ritchie and Alison West of the “Andy and Alison and the Morning Crew” at 107.7 WIVK-FM radio station in Knoxville, Tennessee, won a 2013 best broadcast personality award from the Country Music Association. The selection was based on their market size, an air check, ratings, community involvement and their biographical information. While at WCU, Holt was general manager of the campus radio station WWCU, an experience that he says helped fuel his enthusiasm for radio.

1996

Among the baseball fans who braved the cold and snow to support the Catamounts in Washington last February were David Morton and wife Tara.
Former police officer is now creating special effects for film, TV, video games

By KAITLYN CONNELLY

Some say a specific college major does not matter, and Tom Wright ’94 would have to agree. Wright graduated from Western Carolina University with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, but he is currently a senior lighting artist for DICE, a video game developer located in Los Angeles and Sweden. “Staying in college and getting a degree is more meaningful than what you major in,” he said. “It shows that you can start something and stay with it until it’s finished.”

Even though Wright majored in criminal justice, his college career was very much linked to computers. Wright worked for WCU’s Division of Information Technology during his undergraduate years. He wrote his senior paper about Internet crime and began doing computer rendering and digital sculpting on his personal computer, a Commodore Amiga, for fun. When he graduated, he worked as a police officer in Waynesville – but not for long.

As a police officer, Wright did security work for “My Fellow Americans,” a movie filmed partly in Waynesville. He met the art director of the film, who acknowledged Wright’s digital talent and encouraged him to pursue his dreams in digital art. After serving as a police officer in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, for a year, Wright went to school in Orlando, Florida, to learn more about digital animation and visual effects.

Wright had his big break as a lighting artist with “The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius,” a computer-animated children’s television show. Since then, he has developed visual effects for big company names including Sony Imageworks, PDI/DreamWorks and Walt Disney Feature Animation. He worked on films such as “Green Lantern,” “Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa,” “Meet the Robinsons,” “The Ant Bully” and “The Golden Compass.” He developed lighting for video games including “Call of Duty: Ghosts,” “The Last of Us,” “Uncharted 2: Among Thieves” and “Uncharted 3: Drake’s Deception.” He also was the lighting artist for the television show “Auto-B-Good,” a five-time Emmy Award-winning series. In 2007, Wright worked for the visual effects and animation company Rhythm & Hues as a lighting and composition artist on “The Golden Compass,” and his team won the Academy Award for “Best Visual Effects.”

With more than 12 years of experience in television, film and video games, Wright said it takes 10 months to a year to design the lighting for an animated feature. “We have giant projects in this business that take a long time,” he said. “I strive to always be in a state of learning. It is my goal to consistently push the envelope of what computer graphics can visually achieve.”

Wright has been working for DICE in Los Angeles since October of 2013. His current project involves the “Battlefield” franchise. The company is developing a new version of the video game “Star Wars: Battlefront” and a sequel to the “Mirror’s Edge” video game. DICE also recently released its next downloadable content pack for “Battlefield 4,” which is called “Dragon’s Teeth.”

For Wright’s work, visit the website tomwrightlighting.weebly.com.

2000

Landmark Learning, a Cullowhee-based school for outdoor education and training founded by Justin “Padj” Padgett MAEd and his wife Mairi Padgett MAEd, received accreditation from the U.S. Department of Education. It is the first training school of its kind in the nation to be accredited. Established in 1996, Landmark Learning provides training that ranges from intensive “Emergency Medical Technician” classes to safety, rescue and instructor certification courses associated with the American Canoe Association, American Heart Association, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and the National Outdoor Leadership School Wilderness Medicine Institute. The school also offers a six-week course in which participants gain multiple certifications and college credit through a partnership with WCU. The school was profiled in a recent story in this magazine: landmark.wcu.edu.

1999

Angela Littke, director of nursing at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community in Asheville, received the nurse administrator of the year award for 2014 from the National Association of Directors of Nursing Long Term Care Inc. Littke was recognized during award ceremonies held in Anaheim, California, in June.

Morton ’97. The Mortons were on hand to cheer for the Cats in the WCU-Washington State baseball series held in Pullman, Washington. WCU won the first two games of the nonconference road series; two were canceled because of the snow. The Mortons and daughter Cierra live nearby in Cheney, Washington. Tara is a recreational therapist at Lakeland Village and David is employed at Eastern Washington University’s recreation center.

The Orlando Regional Medical Center selected Valerie Zoppi (right) as winner of the 2014 nursing excellence award. The award was presented to Zoppi by Jayne Willis, chief nursing officer at Orlando Regional, Orlando’s level-one trauma center.
Longtime musician is passing on the tradition

By KAITLYN CONNELLY

Playing traditional country music for the world since the age of 14, Buddy Davis ’70 still enjoys his long and varied music career as a bass player to this day. In 1967, Davis, a seventh-generation descendent of the original settlers from Shelton Laurel in Madison County, began performing in the annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville. Since then, Davis has performed with many respected musicians, such as David Holt, Sam Bush, Doc and Merle Watson, Roy Clark, Chubby Wise, Jethro Burns, Grandpa Jones, Doug Dillard, Marc Pruett ’74 and Billy Edd Wheeler.

Davis played bass in Doc Watson’s band and was nominated for a Grammy. He also has been the recipient of various honors, including the Bascom Lamar Lunsford Award. He has performed his classic country and bluegrass music at the Lunsford Festival at Mars Hill University since 1969, and he played in The Bailey Mountain Trio from Mars Hill.

Davis is a widely respected musician in Western North Carolina, said Ted Whisnant ’70, who performed with Davis in a campus folk music band with other friends long ago. “In those days, we were known as the New Salem Singers, and we performed at many campus parties and local restaurants. For a time, we had a standing engagement at the Jarrett House in Dillsboro. Our pay was supper for each player,” said Whisnant. “Only Buddy stayed in music.”

An Arden resident, Davis is listed in the Online Blue Ridge Heritage roster of true traditional musicians. Currently, he fronts his own band and performs at major folk festivals with his daughters and granddaughter. “It is a great thing to be on stage with my daughters and granddaughter, having the seventh, eighth and ninth generations of an original Madison County family all on stage at one time,” said Davis. “To me, passing the tradition on is what it’s all about.”

Kaitlyn Connelly, a senior majoring in English with a concentration in professional writing, was a summer 2014 intern in the Office of Communications and Public Relations.
Parents want their children to be well educated,” he said.

With the start-up, they need more schools in Qatar and the Persian Gulf. It’s the first year for the school and exciting to be involved with the students of all ages, teachers, coaches and administrators to open a new school, Vision International School, in Doha, Qatar, across the Persian Gulf from Iran. His time he will be in a far corner of the globe.

Former baseball standout’s education career leads to Persian Gulf

A career in public education has taken Greg Johnson ‘83 MAEd ’92 to a lot of places. In almost 30 years of working with students of all ages, teachers, coaches and administrators, he’s lived and worked in North Carolina, Ohio, Maine and Washington, D.C. From time to time, he wondered what would happen if his career headed in a new direction, took an international route. But the right opportunity never arose.

And then it did. This school year, Johnson returns to a setting he’s familiar with – a middle school – the same type of environment where he began his career in 1985. But this time he will be in a far corner of the globe.

An Academic All-American as a member of the WCU baseball team in 1983, Johnson is joining a team of teachers and administrators to open a new school, Vision International School, in Doha, Qatar, across the Persian Gulf from Iran. His two-year appointment runs through the 2015-16 school year. “It’s the first year for the school and exciting to be involved with the start-up. They need more schools in Qatar and the parents want their children to be well educated,” he said.

Qatar, an oil-rich Arab country, is more than 7,000 miles from the small town of Midland in Cabarrus County, where Johnson grew up. “This will be a new challenge for me and I’m eager to see what develops. I believe in taking risks and chances in life, and accepting a new job is part of that process. It seemed a perfect time to try,” he said.

Through the years, Johnson has held a variety of education positions at many levels. He served as a teacher, coach and assistant principal in Cabarrus County schools; an admissions recruiter at WCU; a fellow at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching; the multicultural enrollment director at Colby College in Waterville, Maine; a senior policy analyst at the National Education Association in Washington, D.C.; and consultant for special projects at The Ohio State University.

In Qatar, he will be a full-time curriculum coach for the faculty, helping teachers develop effective strategies for instructing a largely international student population. “Qatar is an international country and certainly we’ll have students from all over the world,” he said.

“I’ve always been interested in cultural differences and enjoy meeting persons who have a different world view from my own, who think differently from me, and who have had a different experience,” he said. “This is going to be a great learning opportunity.”

A traveling professional production of “The Fantasticks” staged at the John W. Bardo Fine and Performing Arts Center in April featured Peter O’Neal (center) in a starring role. O’Neal played young Matt in the production, which was the final performance of a 64-city national tour. “The Fantasticks” was produced by the Nebraska Theatre Caravan.

Ashley Shemery was accepted into the neurosciences doctoral program in the biomedical sciences department of Kent State University. Shemery earned her master’s degree in experimental psychology at James Madison University, where her research focused on sleep deprivation. At Kent State, she is studying circadian rhythms and the effect of cocaine. The goal of her research is an increased understanding of the genetic basis for drug addiction.

Lauren Woodard MSW, social worker at Park Ridge Cancer Services in Hendersonville, has earned certification in oncology social work. Woodard began her career in 2010 at the George Washington Cancer Institute in Washington, D.C.

2012

Like many of the runners in last year’s Boston Marathon, Morgan Turner Fox returned to the city on April 21 to compete in the 2014 race. The former top cross-country runner at WCU was nearing the 26-mile marker in 2013 when the terrorists’ bombs exploded, killing three and injuring more than 150. Fox told the Lincoln County Times recently that returning to the race with other competitors not only reclaimed the race for the runners but for “all that is good in the world.” Fox, a physical education teacher at S. Ray Lowder Elementary School in Lincolnton, finished the race in four hours and 23 minutes.

2013

The digital storytelling research that Monica Gatti did in graduate school at WCU took her to Andrews Elementary School last spring. She worked with first-graders to help them in the development of writing, speech and technology skills. Gatti used a free software program, Movie Maker 2.6, in her work with the students, who wrote and produced a movie to show their friends and families.

Alisha Lambert is the new associate director of annual giving in the Office of Development at WCU.
ALUMNI DEATHS

Geneva T. Abernathy '39, April 26, 2014; Gastonia.

William Grady Anderson '49, April 11, 2014; Murphy.

Katherine Brown Barrow '66, March 27, 2014; Old Fort.

Mary Virginia Brown '43, May 28, 2014; Asheville.

Freda Hall Bryant '49, March 2, 2014; Asheville.

Glenn F. Carson '95, May 6, 2014; Murphy.

L.C. “Bud” Case MAEd ’67, May 1, 2014; Lake Toxaway.

Ima Jean Garland Crisp ’58, March 6, 2014; Robbinsville.

Walter Davis ’60, March 17, 2014; Alexander.

Alice Remsburg Deitz MAEd ’63, Dec. 31, 2013; Williamsport, Maryland.

Max Anthony Garner ’64, March 1, 2014; Metter, Georgia.

George R. Garrett ’58, March 9, 2014; Wilmington.

Benjamin Robert Gilliatt ’65, Feb. 26, 2014; Shelby.

P.O. Goff MAEd ’68, Jan. 22, 2014; Avon Park, Florida.

Cara Dianne Gordon ’72 MAEd ’76, March 28, 2014; Mount Airy.

Herbert Dean Gouge EDS ’83, March 23, 2014; Old Fort.

Carroll Dale Haney ’69, April 28, 2014; Canton.

Reagan Lee Hartley ’14, April 3, 2014; Willow Spring.


Nicole Anne Herman ’13, March 27, 2014; Franklin.


Susan Ellen Holt MHS ’06, April 15, 2014; Swannanoa.

Charles J. “Jim” Hornbuckle ’73, May 19, 2014; Cherokee.

Lawrence Carl Howard Jr. ’54 MAEd ’63, Feb. 10, 2014; Franklin.

Joan A. Hyatt ’62, March 8, 2014; Swannanoa.

Shirley Talbert Janoska ’71, April 5, 2014; Delray Beach, Florida.

Dorothy Payseur Justus ’60, March 8, 2014; Hendersonville.

Patricia L. Knox ’72 MAEd ’91, Feb. 6, 2014; Fletcher.

Charles Nathaniel Lloyd ’76, May 23, 2014; Hickory.

Max O. Marsh ’75, April 17, 2014; Monroe.

Susan Hicks Millar ’70, May 16, 2014; Murrells Inlet, South Carolina.

Barry Hamilton Nation ’72, May 2, 2014; Garner.

Dennis Raymond Ollis ’03, May 7, 2014; Marion.

Joyce Justus Parris MAEd ’76, May 25, 2014; Swannanoa.


Elliot C. Pratt ’90, March 20, 2014; New Orleans, Louisiana.

Martha Louise Reeves ’69, May 2, 2014; Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Max Steve Rhodes ’55, March 5, 2014; Raleigh.

Rebecca Staton Rhodes ’75, April 23, 2014; Tryon.

Genevieve Coggins Rice ’62 MAEd ’76, March 30, 2014; Clyde.

Christine F. Shuler ’47, March 7, 2014; Darrington, Washington.


Marjorie Ann Stockton ’49, April 2, 2014; Fairview.

Student teacher awarded posthumous degree

Reagan Lee Hartley ’14 was about a month away from graduating with her degree in elementary education when her sedan was struck by the vehicle of a wrong-way driver fleeing police in Greensboro on April 3. Police said Hartley died on the way to the hospital. She was 22 years old.

The senior from Willow Spring and 2010 graduate of West Johnston High School was a dean’s list student for several semesters of her college career. At a May 10 commencement exercise, she was awarded her degree, and members of her family accepted it on her behalf.

Hartley had served as a student teacher at Cherokee Elementary School, where her second-grade pupils honored her with a page in their yearbook, with a remembrance wall near their classroom and by presenting books of their artwork and writing to her family. After the presentation, they released red, white and blue balloons, and then planted a tree in her memory.

Faculty and community members have established a memorial scholarship fund. Gifts may be made to the Reagan Lee Hartley Endowed Scholarship Fund online at give.wcu.edu. Checks, with “Hartley Fund” in the memo line, may be mailed to the WCU Foundation, 201 H.F. Robinson Building, Cullowhee, N.C. 28723. ■
Catamount Sports Network loses longtime broadcast partner

By DANIEL HOOKER ’01

One of the legendary voices of the Western North Carolina radio airwaves and a longtime supporter of Western Carolina University athletics fell silent on March 14 with the passing of James B. “Uncle Jimmy” Childress at Mission Hospital in Asheville. Childress and the Sylva radio station that he helped found – WRGC-AM – have been a staple of the Catamount Sports Network and pioneered radio broadcasts of Catamount baseball games.

The Catamounts’ home baseball facility – Childress Field at Hennon Stadium – bears the Childress family name. The playing surface was named and dedicated in April 1978 in honor of Jimmy’s son, Ronnie G. Childress, who was an avid supporter of WCU Athletics and a special friend of the baseball program through the radio station until his death in an electrical accident in 1975. Another son, Tony, was behind the play-by-play microphone for several seasons of Catamount baseball. The Childress family established the Ronnie Childress Memorial Scholarship Fund in 1975 to benefit WCU’s baseball program.

The elder Childress was regularly seen – and was a crowd favorite – attending games at Childress Field/Hennon Stadium. Not long before his passing, he wooed the home baseball crowd by singing a song he had written – inspired by WCU’s new leadership team of Chancellor David Belcher and wife Susan Belcher – titled “Cullowhee.” Childress received the Patron Award from the WCU Athletics Hall of Fame Committee in 1999. The Patron Award is presented periodically to individuals who have made a positive impact on the WCU athletics program through their contributions of leadership and/or unique support off the playing field and courts.

Childress also received the university’s Distinguished Service Award in 1987. Additionally, he was selected as a Rotary Club International Paul Harris Fellow. In 1992, he was inducted into the North Carolina Broadcasters Hall of Fame and was previously named the Jackson County Citizen of the Year. Childress found particular satisfaction in doing community service. Among the many community affiliations, he was a member of the Sylva Rotary Club and First United Methodist Church of Sylva. He served previously as board member and president of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce; a charter board member of Southwestern Community College; president and board member of the Western Carolina University Foundation Board; and board member of the Community Table.

Childress, who would have been 90 in June 2014, along with Harold Thomas of Asheville, started the Sylva radio station, which began broadcasting on Nov. 8, 1957, using the call letters WMSJ. The station took the responsibility of being Jackson County’s only full-service radio station seriously. The station’s call letters changed from WMSJ to WRGC in the 1970s to reflect the initials of son Ronnie. Childress sold the station rights to Georgia-Carolina Radiocasting Co. in January 2002 after a 44-year run as the man behind the locally owned and operated community radio station.

Memorial donations in Jimmy Childress’ honor may be made to the Ronnie G. Childress Memorial Scholarship Fund online at give.wcu.edu. Checks should be mailed to the WCU Foundation, 201 H.F. Robinson Building, Cullowhee, N.C. 28723.
Riders In The Sky
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2014  |  3 P.M.
The best in Western music since 1977, the group features award-winning harmonies, wacky Western wit and high-yodeling adventures — the only exclusively Western artists to have won a Grammy Award. A return engagement by popular demand.

Broadway’s Next HIT Musical
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2014  |  7:30 P.M.
It’s all improvised and it’s all funny! The hysterical Broadway’s Next HIT Musical is the only unscripted theatrical awards show. Master improvisers gather made up, hit song suggestions from the audience and create a spontaneous evening of music, humor and laughter.

Cinnamon Grits The Musical: “Christmas in the South”
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2014  |  7:30 P.M.
This companion piece to the popular “Girls Raised in the South” provides a Southern look at all things Christmas! Food, family fun, friends and CHAOS!

Travis Ledoyt a.k.a. “The World’s Best Young Elvis”
SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2015  |  7:30 P.M.
Come and celebrate Elvis’ 80th birthday in this tribute to the man who shaped a generation. Ledoyt flawlessly captures the essence of Elvis in his prime — the hits and ambience of 1954-59.

MAN 1 BANK 0
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2015  |  7:30 P.M.
A true story of luck, danger, dilemma and one man’s epic, $95,000 battle with his bank. Patrick Combs tells the amazing-but-true story of how he deposited a junk-mail check marked ‘non-negotiable’ – hoping to spread a little banking cheer to tellers – and how it erupted into a staggering and funny David vs Goliath-like adventure that still continues today.

Ventriloquist Lynn Trefzger & Comedian Glenn Singer
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2015  |  7:30 P.M.
Audiences treated to Trefzger’s vocal illusion talents may meet a drunken and lovable camel, a grumpy old man, or a feisty little girl, and be brought into the action! Featuring Comedian Glenn Singer: A Man Who Rides A Horse-Of-A-Different-Color On Stage.

We’ve Only Just Begun: Carpenters Remembered
SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2015  |  3 P.M.
A concert celebrating the music of one of the most successful recording acts of all time. Long ago and, oh, so far away...the world fell in love with the Carpenters and their era-defining repertoire. Led by Michelle Berting Brett and accompanied by a seven-piece Nashville band, the show re-creates the Carpenters’ original sound.

Season Tickets on Sale Now through September 12, 2014

828.227.2479 | fapac.wcu.edu
A PRESENTATION OF THE COLLEGE OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS
Sponsored in part by Friends of the Arts
**CALENDAR EVENTS**

**SEPTEMBER**

TUESDAY, SEPT. 2
“Arts Alive @ 125: Celebrating 125 Years of the Arts at WCU” – Chancellor David Belcher and wife Susan host an evening of entertainment. 7:30 p.m. Bardo Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6
Catamount football – vs. Brevard. Catamount Club Day. 3:30 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6
Catamount football – vs. Catawba. Family Weekend. 3:30 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium. 800.34.GOWCU

**AUGUST**

TUESDAY, AUG. 26
125th Anniversary “Big Birthday Bash” – A picnic on the lawn, old-fashioned games, music, dance and fun for everyone. 4-7 p.m. A.K. Hinds University Center lawn, Central Plaza. 828.227.3033 | celebrate125.wcu.edu

**OCTOBER**

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1 – SATURDAY, OCT. 4
“Elemeno-Pea” – Two working sisters, an eccentric boyfriend and a billionaire trophy wife collide at an estate guesthouse of his artful “found” photographs in “Other People’s Pictures” while Eric Oglander, who has been collecting images of mirrors for sale on the popular classified ad website, presents “Craigslist Mirrors.” Together, these two shows merge the everyday and the overlooked with the highest aspirations of what “art” can offer. Oct. 3-Jan. 9.

MFA Thesis Exhibition: Emiko Suzuki, a mixed-media artist, mines the ceremonial and culturally significant alcoves witnessed in Japanese tea houses. Nov. 17-Dec. 5.

Senior Portfolio Exhibition. The best of WCU seniors’ semester work, in all kinds of media, finds its way into the museum. Nov. 17-Dec. 5.

**EXHIBITS**

**FINE ART MUSEUM**

828.227.3591 | fineartmuseum.wcu.edu


**MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER**

828.227.7129 | mhc.wcu.edu

“Y’all Come, the Best Kind of Get-Together: 40 years of Mountain Heritage Day.” From its beginnings in 1974 as “Founders Day” through this year’s milestone observance, this annual community festival is exhibited. Gallery B. Through December.

“The Dearest Spot of All: Western Carolina University’s 125th Anniversary.” Photographs and artifacts illustrate WCU’s history. Gallery C. Through December.

“Migration of the Scotch-Irish People.” Focused on early settlers to the mountains and explores the tension between religion and law. Gallery A. Ongoing.


Mountain Heritage Day celebrates its 40 years and WCU’s 125

By KEITH BRENTON

Thousands gather in Cullowhee each year on the last Saturday in September to be a part of the region’s rich history of mountain culture at Mountain Heritage Day, but in many ways this year’s festival will be exceptional as it marks both the 40th anniversary of its founding and the 125th year of existence of the university that hosts it.

The event began as Founders Day on Oct. 26, 1974, at the inauguration ceremony of Chancellor H.F. Robinson. “The festival filled a need and yearning for a local exposition,” said Scott Philyaw ’83, director of the Mountain Heritage Center. “It became known as the annual Mountain Heritage Day the following year.”

This year, multiple Grammy Award-winner David Holt – who performed on numerous occasions during the festival’s early years – will be making a return appearance, sharing the stage with Will McIntyre ’76. Holt has recorded with mentors whose listed names read like a “Who’s Who” of bluegrass, folk, country and blues artists. He and McIntyre, once a student photographer with WCU’s public relations office and now a professional photographer, have performed together in several countries. Local favorites Mountain Faith, Jeff Little Trio, Whitewater Bluegrass Company, the Deitz Family, the Queen Family and many more also will perform bluegrass, country, gospel and mountain music on two stages. A dance floor will be available for clogging teams or audience dancing.

While many festival activities take place on intramural fields adjacent to WCU’s Cordelia Camp Building, two exhibits in the free-admission Mountain Heritage Center, located in the nearby H.F. Robinson Building, celebrate 125 years of university history and 40 years of Mountain Heritage Day. (See the related article on page 6.)

As always, there will be more than 100 booths offering handmade arts and crafts, also in juried competition; living history and craft demonstrations; Cherokee stickball; shape-note singing; cooking, canning and baking contests; chainsaw and antique auto rivalries; tractor and horse/mule-drawn wagon rides; plus a tent featuring children’s activities all day. Plenty of varieties of festival food and soft drinks – from traditional to historic to ethnic – also will be available for purchase.

Other good traditions that won’t change include free admission and free parking. Visitors are encouraged to bring a blanket or chair, and an umbrella or parasol to shed unwanted sunshine or rain. Though service animals are welcome, guests are asked to leave pets at home. The most current information about the festival can be found at www.mountainheritageday.com.

“This year’s Mountain Heritage Day will be a special celebration as we recognize both the 40th anniversary of the festival and the 125th anniversary of Western Carolina University. Please join us in Cullowhee for the time of your life,” said Philyaw. □
Western Carolina University is opening the academic year by throwing itself a party in honor of the 125th anniversary of its founding, and all alumni, friends, students, faculty, staff and members of the surrounding community are invited to take part in the festivities.

Christened the Big Birthday Bash, the event is scheduled from 4 until 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 26, on the A.K. Hinds University Center lawn and the adjoining Central Plaza. The afternoon will include a picnic on the lawn featuring barbecue, hamburgers, veggie burgers, hotdogs, watermelon, funnel cakes, deep-fried goodies, lemonade and tea. In addition, Tim Chapman ’02, assistant director for facilities in the Department of Residential Living, will be wheeling out “Grillzilla,” the mammoth smoker grill that has become a popular attraction for students tailgating at WCU home football games.

And what is a birthday party without birthday cake? Also on tap will be a variety of old-fashioned games and photo opportunities with props representative of 125 years of WCU history. The tentative schedule includes musical entertainment provided by the Dirty Gv’nahs, and party-goers will be eligible to win a variety of door prizes. Student hosts will be giving guided tours of a walking trail featuring university landmarks and points of historical interest as part of a project by a WCU history class.

The university’s Cat-Tran shuttle service will be available to assist in transporting off-campus guests from designated parking areas to the site of the Big Birthday Bash. No pets are allowed, although service animals are welcome.

“We want to invite everyone to come out and join us for what we hope will be a very enjoyable afternoon with good food, good music, interesting activities and a time to relax and socialize with other members of the Western Carolina University family,” said Zeta Smith, director of special events who is co-chair of the events committee planning the bash. “It should be fun for everyone of all ages.”

The yearlong observance of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the institution began back in January as hundreds of people crowded into the Grandroom of the University Center for a kickoff event highlighted by a fashion show of clothing from throughout the university’s history, modeled by students, faculty, staff and community members. The majority of the year’s celebration is being designed around traditional highlights of WCU’s annual calendar, such as spring commencement ceremonies, Mountain Heritage Day, the Spring Literary Festival, Homecoming, alumni receptions across the state and the Southeast, and a variety of events in communities across Western North Carolina.

The final quasquicentennial event is set for Friday, Dec. 5, in the Ramsey Center, with music from the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band (which will have just returned from its appearance in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade), refreshments, remarks from the chancellor and special recognition for those who will graduate during the December 2014 commencement (the last graduating class of WCU’s 125th year).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUG. 26 BIG BIRTHDAY BASH, CALL 828.227.3033. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER 125TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS, VISIT THE WEBSITE CELEBRATE125.WCU.EDU.
THE VIEW FROM HERE

Doug Reed served as director of public information at WCU from 1966 until his retirement in 1996, working with six WCU presidents and chancellors during his three decades at the university – a period that saw WCU become a member of the University of North Carolina system and its enrollment more than double. Reed was a tenured associate professor in the Department of English and started the university’s journalism program.

Today’s innovators and innovations will become tomorrow’s cherished memories

Western Carolina University is building a new roster of programs and people these days – and occasionally looking back, as it currently is doing in this quasquicentennial year. Many of the oldest of us still around are engaging in spasms of collections and recollections.

We all do it. Those who today are the new, bright, brilliant and challenging leaders of the institution will do the same. One certainty is that all things bright, new, wonderfully conceived and carried out in the service of students and the state of North Carolina will not too long hereafter become the cherished memories of a changing generation of students, faculty and staff.

What comes most to my mind in today’s hard-pressed economy is the recollection of how much the personal hardship and sacrifice of the early years is part of the life’s blood of the 21st-century WCU. Those circumstances are far more than illusions softened by the passage of the years.

Selective memory is not a wholly bad thing, and when the time of Professor Madison comes to mind, we need to acquaint ourselves with exactly what he monumentally did, rather than attempt to glorify it in ways he would reject. He was trying to resuscitate a little hardscrabble school and steer it toward producing students to teach in other little schools scattered amongst hills and coves of mountain communities.

When all else is said, what he did was to build that grand foundation for the future. How fortunate for the future!

When Alonzo Reynolds took over the president’s work, one of the things most wanted for this little institution was a better building. Not just any building, but one that would house, all together and in time, a library, a gymnasium basketball court, offices for the bosses, a post office, classrooms and other odds and ends. Reynolds wanted to build it right then, but the state didn’t share his sense of urgency. He didn’t wait on the state; he and others borrowed the money from a local bank. That wasn’t the usual process.

They wanted the building to be made of brick, but there were no bricks. So they decided to make them. Operating on guts and determination, they started digging for clay in a field near the Tuckasegee River and made the bricks. To speed things up before school opened for another session, they started building from both ends at once. When things didn’t meet exactly in the middle, they just offset the walls by a couple of feet.

The state eventually moneymed up, just as Reynolds had counted on.

Another heroic figure emerged in the person of Hiram Tyram Hunter, and in the 1920s the school began to change again. It was an idyllic time – until 1929. But before the national collapse, and afterward, Hunter’s reports to the Board of Trustees in those days should be required reading for each new leadership team if they want to know how to make an annual report truly interesting.

I found his journals, many filled with accounts of despairing conditions, discarded on the floor of a closet in what was then the official board room in Bird Building. (I had been unceremoniously moved, with staff, into the room and told to make an office out of it).

It was, for me, with a deep interest in history, a providential action. These journals constituted a treasure no closet should conceal. Cleaned and preserved, they went to the early origins of historic collections in Hunter Library. I suppose they are still there. For all concerned about the hardships of underfunding today, Hunter’s journals make instructive reading. Faculty faced having food provided in lieu of wages, and the assembly of teachers and administrators was an association of the equally unpaid. Despite the hardships on everyone at Western because of the Great Depression, they made it through under Hunter’s leadership.

Triumph had occurred. And then the tragedy of President Hunter’s death, which thrust upon Ernest Bird ’15 the suddenly, sad, but demanding role of acting president at a time when the postwar institution had been preparing for its most expansive program of new buildings and new curricula. He proved his mettle even as the trustees organized a search for a new president. And the postwar building surge added many new structures to the campus, and better, new programs to be carried out in them.

The inevitable intrusion of politics resulted in a sudden replacement of all of the trustees by Gov. Kerr Scott and the appointment of trustees that he preferred. If it was viewed by some as a calamity, it resulted in placing yet another heroic figure at Western in the person of a very young E.J. Whitmire of Franklin, new to the board and immediately catapulted into the chairman’s chair.

E.J. would remind some of Alonzo Reynolds. He didn’t always wait for the slow processes of government – as when, later on, he changed the bed of Cullowhee Creek to make more room for a stadium. That’s about when things began to sort of cut loose. E.J. was close to the governor, knew how to ask and, even better, how to demand. And he spearheaded the appointment of Paul Apperson Reid as the next president.

In the panoply of people who built Western, E.J. stands tall. From there the parade of leadership changed, and in relatively rapid succession. Alexander S. Pow became president, followed by Frank Brown (in the first of two acting presidencies), Jack Carlton, Hugh McEniry, Cotton Robinson, Barney Coulter, Jack Wakeley, John Bardo and David Belcher.

More of the story 25 years from now.
LIFE@WESTERN CAROLINA
A lifelong learning institute at WCU

Enrich your life – Join a community of learners to discover and discuss topics that matter. Life@WesternCarolina is a series of non-credit lectures and discussions designed for people age 50 and over who have chosen to make North Carolina’s westernmost region their home. Discussion topics will include politics, history, music, media and more led by talent from the community as well as present and former WCU faculty and staff. Become a member and attend one or all of 24 sessions taking place in the coming year.

Life@WesternCarolina begins this September with two separate series:
Cullowhee: 10 a.m.-Noon Tuesdays beginning Sept. 9
Biltmore Park: 10 a.m.-Noon Wednesdays beginning Sept. 10

To become a member, go to life.wcu.edu.