Chancellor Outlines Challenges Of Coming Year and Decade

Dr. John W. Bardo, chancellor

Welcome to the Opening Assembly. In preparing this address, it became apparent that I should talk today about two thrusts. First, there are some very important activities in which we need to engage this year. These activities need to be dealt with before the longer-range issues can be managed. Second, there are many profound changes in the conditions that affect the institution over the next decade, and I think it is important that most of this morning be spent on these longer-range issues. A few of these broader issues are new; most, however, represent a “re-framing” of activities in which we have been engaged for the last several years. They are complex and involve responding to changing world and regional conditions. Let’s turn, then, to the work of this year.

CURRENT YEAR ACTIVITIES

The single most important activity of this year is to position ourselves to receive SACS reaffirmation of accreditation. No area of the institution is exempt from review, and all areas must have clear plans for quality improvement. We must do well with this accreditation review. SACS now has very high standards focusing on targeted quality enhancement. Carol Burton and her committees will be working on this issue all year, so please participate and expect to be involved in the re-accreditation process.

Of particular importance in re-accreditation is the development of effective assessment programs. From talking with the people working on SACS, there is real concern about our level of activity with regard to assessment. We must assure ourselves that we are taking every necessary action to develop and implement effective assessment plans in all areas of the institution. To help us with this effort, we will be hiring a new director of assessment.

Because SACS emphasizes planned quality improvement, it is increasingly important that we clearly link our strategic planning and budgeting processes. Therefore, this year, I am looking to restructure two important advisory committees, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Chancellor’s Budget Advisory Committee, to bring them into closer alignment.

Second, we must continue to address issues regarding enrollment. We are a focused growth institution, and increasing enrollment is the key to every other element in our future. This year, Western’s enrollment will increase, but not quite at the rate that we have seen in past years. While we have not leveled off in enrollment, this year can be seen as a time of consolidation. We are consolidating our gains and we are seeking to position ourselves for the next critical developmental phase of the institution. But, there are expectations that we will continue to grow at a reasonably rapid rate. This means there will be renewed emphasis on enrollment. I have asked Provost Carter to bring together an enrollment management team to focus on recruiting new undergraduate and graduate students, to improve student retention, and to enhance institutional student-oriented marketing.

Newt Smith, acting on behalf of the Faculty Senate, reminded me that our enrollment gains will have major implications for the surrounding community. Therefore, I will appoint a chancellor’s taskforce of appropriate university representatives to meet regularly with the community. Additionally, Dianne Lynch, my chief of staff, will continue to repre-
Whenever possible, we want to minimize any potential negative effects of growth while promoting its more positive aspects.

These issues involve the ability to repeat the freshman seminar and the extensive waivers of upper division liberal studies elective classes. Later in the talk, I will address a broader review of our general education requirements that we should consider once we conclude the SACS review. Until we have successfully completed SACS, we need not take on anything as complex as general education.

This year, we need to finish the master plan for the Millennium Campus so we can receive Board of Governors’ permission to begin developing the project. This has been a long time in coming and we need to get the project under way. It will make a huge difference in the future of this institution and this region.

We also need to revise our current master plan. Over the last six months, it has become clear that several buildings in the middle of campus need to be replaced. Specifically, Dodson Cafeteria and Helder and Leatherwood residence halls are too costly to renovate to current standards. Therefore, new facilities must be built. This will give us an opportunity to rethink the structure of the quad now taking shape in the center of campus.

There is another major transition under way that has occupied many staff hours—the migration of our computerized business systems to SCT Banner. Banner has the potential of greatly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our business practices so we can serve our people better. I urge each of you involved in this very important initiative to use the conversion to Banner as a time to improve our business processes so we are able to “work smarter, not harder.”

Last year, I appointed a budget policy advisory committee that worked most of the spring term to advise me on policies we should use to distribute new resources in this year’s budget. We are implementing those recommendations, and I want to particularly comment on one. All members of the committee were very concerned about SPA salaries. Therefore, based on their recommendations, I am placing $300,000 of our new funding into a reserve account to fund SPA promotions and in-range adjustments. Even though we do not control SPA salary policies at the local level, we must continue to make funds available within the state’s framework.

Finally, I remain deeply concerned with the costs of health insurance for all of our employees. Vice Chancellor for External Affairs Clifton Metcalf, Tom McClure, and I have expressed to our legislators our concerns, especially with the costs of family coverage. Please understand we are being received well, but like all of us, the legislature is not sure how to create a viable solution. We will continue to work on this issue and see if improvements can be made.

This is a significant agenda, but it focuses on key issues that need immediate attention.

ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

I now want to turn to a more broad-ranging conversation regarding the future direction of Western. I think you will see that the roots of much of what we need to accomplish have been well-grounded in the work of the last several years. Please understand that what I am about to discuss is a multi-year focus based on current international and regional conditions. In the last five years, the world has changed a lot. We need to adjust our direction—not change directions—to account for what we now know.

I titled this talk “Creating Human Capital: An Agenda for the Decade Ahead.” This concept, creating human capital, is at the core of what is expected of a 21st-century university. I am not suggesting we move education away from our liberal arts roots; quite to the contrary. What I am suggesting is that we need to re-frame our educational enterprise to address the fundamental, core changes in the expectations of society regarding higher education. We have been working at this transformation since 1996, and we are making great progress. Moreover, we are well-positioned to take the next critical steps.

To begin, it is important to remember that Western is a regional university. We are primarily oriented to serving the needs of the people of the western third of the state. While some characteristics of this region may be unique, the problems being faced by the people of the area represent specific manifestations of classes of problems being faced by people throughout the state and nation.
Therefore, as a regional university it is appropriate for us to draw students from outside the region. We can offer them an excellent education and give them experiences that can be generalized to solving whole classes of problems. This is why in describing Western, I’ll often say our job is to “serve the region and educate the state.”

Focusing on the nature of regions, the future of economic prosperity for the United States will be based on the relationships between naturally occurring economic regions and world economic conditions. Those of us in higher education must be key participants in regional development through strong engagement, partnerships, technology transfer, education, and through direct contributions to the quality of life. Therefore, the fact that Western is a regional university is of utmost importance. It is also clear that if we are regional, we dare not be parochial. As a university, we have responsibility to link our abilities and services to the needs of the people of the region, but must do so in a manner that reflects changing world conditions.

Last year, I talked about the concept of “engagement” and how important it would be to our future. This apparently struck a chord with the campus because engagement became a strong topic of conversation, and I anticipate that engagement will become a defining concept for our university as we focus and address the requirements by SACS to create a Quality Enhancement Plan.

This summer, I spent a great deal of time reading about a number of issues related to regional development and engagement. Two reports from Michigan State University deal systematically with what they term “outreach.” The way they frame this concept, it is clearly what I mean when I speak of engagement. According to Michigan State, what we term as engagement can be defined: “…as a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions.” What is most important about this definition is that it recognizes engagement as an intellectual, scholarly approach to addressing higher education’s tri-partite mission of teaching, research, and service. That is, engagement is an approach, not a new mission for education. It combines practice and theory so that students who engage are better educated than students who do not engage. It assures that the work of faculty is scholarly and professional. It builds on academic strengths and it recognizes the importance of the nature of the discipline, profession, or area.

Engagement fits the core mission of a regional university. As a regional institution, we draw much of our meaning and institutional life from the surrounding area and its peoples and cultures. In today’s world, we also have responsibility to work with the people of the region to improve their economic future. This is the primary reason for trying to develop ways of “thinking differently” about the nature of the university. It also is why in the spring I began to talk about creating a “Millenium Initiative.” This initiative will result in developing a “Millennium Campus,” but more importantly, it is an effort to give name to a concept of a university grounded in the needs of the people it serves while focusing its education and processes on the future. If we are successful in creating a future-oriented institution that ties traditional educational quality to emerging world and regional conditions, we will have a unique institution that will represent a model of 21st-century higher education.

THE WORLD IS FLAT

In the future, economic competitiveness and prosperity will be based fundamentally on the relationship between individual regions and world economic conditions. States and nations obviously have regulatory, safety, investment, and similar functions, but the actual economic engines that will drive our future most likely will be based in naturally occurring economic regions that produce goods and services that are valued in other regions, nations, or parts of the world. Economic globalization and the need for regions to compete globally will be the most significant defining characteristic of the next 30 or more years—possibly through the remainder of this century. It will be the dominant “organizing principle” for most international relationships and, more importantly, it will fundamentally determine the quality of life for our children and grandchildren.

One of the more interesting works on globalization is Thomas Friedman’s “The World is Flat.” I now want to show you two slides. One is Britney Spears, the other is Bill Gates. Why would I show you these two people? Well, as Friedman notes, Bill Gates is the Britney Spears of China and Britney Spears is, well, the “Britney Spears” of the United States. That may say it all. Friedman has a single message for all of us: America’s wake up call is now. Throughout our history, our nation has been the land of opportunity. We see ourselves, and others have seen us, as a prosperous country. For most of our history we have cornered the market on prosperity. But all of that is at risk. The rest of the world is catching up. We now have a level playing field; that is, the world is flat.

The race to translate research and technology into business opportunity is hotly competitive. We are neck and neck with other countries, and some competitors are surpassing us. As Friedman says so eloquently, when we were children, our parents told us to finish our dinner because there were children starving in China and India. Today, he tells his children to finish their homework because there are children in India and China who are starving for their jobs! What a change!

According to the Wall Street Journal, China, India, Russia and Brazil could outrank the combined economic might of today’s Group of Six—the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom—by the middle of this
Globalization is not just an international trend, it has huge personal impacts on each of us every day. We will need to respond if we are to help this region develop.

THE CHANGING FACE OF WNC

It is important for us to become more aware and knowledgeable of international issues. Kyle and I are interested in increasing our focus on international programming. Over the next couple years, you will have opportunities to work on international education issues, including how to increase the number of international students at Western, how to increase the number of international experiences for our students, how to internationalize the curriculum, and how to encourage international faculty exchange.

The second major trend that clearly will represent a significant defining characteristic of our times is increasing local population diversity. We are seeing it with the rise of the Hispanic population throughout most of the United States and, most particularly, in North Carolina.

North Carolina has the fastest growing Hispanic population in the country.

Growth of the Hispanic population represents a major change for this country, and this shift is only one phase of what will become increasing diversity that may involve increases in the numbers of Asians and Eastern Europeans. We also are seeing major in-migrations of people from other regions of the United States into North Carolina—which has the potential to shift ethnic composition and religious affiliation percentages. Similarly, in-migration in Western North Carolina has great potential to change the political structure of the region—it already has done so. Because of the quality of life offered in this region, we also can expect to see continuing increases in the number of older people who choose to live in Western North Carolina.

As an institution, we have begun to respond to the aging population. We have created programs in gerontology, and through a generous gift from Wallace and Jeanette Hyde, have established a Distinguished Professorship in Gerontological Social Work. Pat Brown is developing a Senior College to promote advanced education among the region’s older residents. Our faculty in engineering and physical therapy are working toward establishing a center for adaptive device development. We’re working with MAHEC and UNCA to create a Center for Health and Aging that will be a national model.

There is another major change affecting this region. On the screen you will see a series of maps of the region that surrounds this institution. In our area of the country, state lines were developed in the early days of our nation. Much has changed and the functional boundaries of this region do not conform to state lines. The future of Western North Carolina is inextricably tied to the future of surrounding states.

Turning to the slides, what you see is the median value of housing in counties surrounding Cullowhee in 1990. White and yellow define lower median prices and blue defines higher prices. In our general region, only Atlanta had higher housing values. The rest of our region was relatively inexpensive.

Look at what happened by 2000! High median housing values have followed paths out of Atlanta, Greenville-Spartanburg, and Asheville. As this map shows, the value of housing has increased more along the U.S. 441 corridor toward Macon and Jackson counties than it has along the Interstate 75 corridor toward Chattanooga. Change in housing prices of this magnitude is an important indicator of the increasing impact our specific area of the state can expect from the Atlanta metropolitan region.

The second set of maps is also very telling. On the screen is the map of the 1990 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) surrounding this region. The MSA is the most widely used federal definition of an urban area and it accounts for economic interdependencies among counties as well as population characteristics. The arrows indicate some growth trajectories in these regions that affect our area. Recently, the Bureau of the Census has added a new urban form to its definitions to reflect changes in American settlement patterns: the “Micropolitan Area.” A Micropolitan Area consists of a smaller city and its surrounding economically inte-
The only questions involve the quality of that growth and the role Western will play. The evidence is increasingly clear that the sciences will have significant impact on the future of this university and on the ability of this region to compete. We have been in lengthy discussions with various key science policy specialists, including Russ Lea, vice president of the UNC system, and Bob McMahan, the governor’s science adviser. There is agreement that molecular bioscience as it relates to our specific location could be the most significant area for development for the institution. Suggestions have been made to me that we should, for instance, dramatically increase our ability to do research in such issues as eliminating invasive plants, finding ways to prevent tick-borne diseases, and developing mechanisms to help commercialize native plant products. Because of the importance of this issue, I have asked Kyle Carter and Dianne Lynch to organize a day-long conference involving Dr. Lea, Dr. McMahan, and key faculty from the sciences.

We also have great potential in the field of forensics. We have begun to establish ourselves in forensic anthropol-
ogy, but we have the potential to broaden this specialization into forensic science. We need to continue that development and assure that all relevant departments are engaged. This is an area where departments in Arts and Sciences and Applied Sciences need to work together to create a strong program. Once we have a clear definition of how we will build a strong program in this field, we need to determine how we can become certified as an FBI laboratory in forensic science. This will create a necessary condition for allowing Western to become a national leader in applied forensic science. I am asking Tom McClure to take the lead in developing the process for applying for FBI recognition.

Globalization has brought with it clear concerns for the safety of people in the United States. Homeland security is a core issue. Our rural location, our Internet capacity, and development of programs in computer science, forensic science and engineering create opportunities to link with businesses and federal agencies looking for less populace research sites, back-up data sites, and emergency operating facilities. Moreover, some of the finest minds in homeland security are locating in this area because of the quality of life. We have many natural advantages in this regard, and I am asking Paul Evans to take the lead in putting together a Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Homeland Security so that we can develop a better understanding of how these issues can affect us.

One critical element in developing our science capacities is the rapid enhancements we have been able to make in scientific measurement. We need to complete the process and create a Center for Scientific Measurement. Through the good offices of Congressman Charles Taylor, we have obtained a confocal microscope, a research grade mass spectrometer, and funding for a tunnelling-scanning electron microscope. In conjunction with Harris Regional Hospital, we also will receive funding for an Oxford laser, which will allow our engineers to create products in very fine scale. This is a key to many areas of development—especially rapid prototyping of both medical and scientific equipment.

We will need additional equipment, but we must also fulfill our obligation to make as much of this equipment available to other higher education institutions as possible. We need to Web-enable several of these instruments and we need to develop policies to allow sister institutions in the region—public and private, two- and four-year—to use our facilities at cost to provide better educational opportunities for all students in the area. This is a promise we have made to the congressman and we need to fulfill it. I am asking Rich Kucharski and Kyle Carter to take the lead on developing these policies and David Butcher to take the lead in implementing Web-enabled control of these instruments.

It also is clear that sciences need to expand significantly if we are to effectively serve this region. This means that, even with the renovations to Stillwell, we will not have enough space for the sciences. I am asking Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Chuck Wooten to work with the dean and the faculty to examine the space needs for the sciences and to develop the justifiation and request to the Board of Governors to expand our science facilities. Because of the presence of the Highlands Biological Station, the North Carolina Arboretum, and the Coweeta Laboratory, I am asking Kyle to call together a meeting of key players to see how we can establish strong working partnerships with these important entities. Mountain science can possibly mean as much to Western as marine science does to UNC-Wilmington.

To shift to another area, one of the great delights of the last several years has been the discovery of how many accomplished people are willing to relocate to this area of the country. Ron Rash, Bruce Frazier, Jack Sholder, and Terry Curtis Fox are but a few examples of the people we have been able to attract. We also have among the finest sound recording and television recording capacities in higher education. We must now take advantage of these capacities and develop strong international class programs in various media arts and sciences. Of particular note are such areas as interactive broadband, commercial video, and electronic gaming. If we aim at the right niches, we can create both highly educated students and support spin-off businesses in a variety of fields associated with electronic media. We also can develop our own production capacity to a level of being able to create educational programming such as one might find on “Masterpiece Theater.” Because of his understanding of the field, I am asking Jack Sholder to take the lead in working with Kyle Carter and Robert Kehrberg to create a working plan for electronic media.

A final note, we are moving to greatly increase the organization, scope and quality of our formal university outreach program. To promote thought leadership in this field, we created the Institute for the Economy and the Future to replace the Center for Regional Development. The institute is a direct outcome of our participation in the vision plan for the AdvantageWest region. As a result of the vision plan, Western agreed to build a regionally “think tank” with capacities for rigorous research, economic base analysis, issue polling, and employment trends analysis. The desire is to create data-driven analytics that can be used in crafting policy at the state and regional levels to support growth and innovation in industries with high economic multipliers. We aim to make IEF a place where scholarly engagement is at the forefront. The institute’s executive director will be Paul Evans.

I have covered a lot of ground, but one fact remains constant. Our core business is education. Our responses to these trends must be primarily manifested in our curricula. Our core direction is not changing. We must continue to improve quality. We must continue to increase enrollment. We must support the development of this region – if not for ourselves, for our children and grandchildren.

We have to create the human capital to assure that our state and region are inter- nationally competitive, that our people understand the responsibility of citizenship, and that they are active leaders in the global culture. We can make this happen. We must.

Mountain science can possibly mean as much to Western as marine science does to UNC-Wilmington.

We must support the development of this region — if not for ourselves, for our children and grandchildren.

This edition contains an edited version of Chancellor Bardo’s Opening Assembly address. The entire speech appears on the Chancellor’s Web page. Opening remarks at the Aug. 18 Faculty Senate meeting by Chair Newton Smith and by Mary Adams, representative to the UNC Faculty Assembly, appear on the Faculty Senate Web page.
Tuesday, August 30
Workshop—van safety, required for all employees who will be driving 15-passenger vans. Registration required; limited seating. Also offered September 8. 9 a.m. Room 203, Field House. (http://www.wcu.edu/hr.training/personal.asp)

Catamount Concert Series—Bradley Martin, Western music faculty, piano, featuring Mussorgsky’s “Pictures at an Exhibition.” 8 p.m. Recital Hall, Coulter Building. (227-7242)

Wednesday, August 31
Kayak trip—exploring local whitewater. Cost: $10 WCU students; $15 non-WCU students; cost includes transportation and equipment. Pre-registration required. 3:30 p.m. A.K. Hinds University Center. (227-3466 or www.wcu.edu/univcenter/outdoors/)

Thursday, September 1
Films That Matter—“The Man Who Knew Too Much,” a great early Alfred Hitchcock film that he later remade with Cary Grant and Doris Day. 6 p.m. Room 130, Fine and Performing Arts Center. (227-2324)

Catamount football—vs. Mars Hill. 7 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. (227-7338)

Friday, September 2
Meeting—board of trustees quarterly meeting. 9:30 a.m. Board Room, Robinson Administration Building. (227-7100)

Lady Catamount soccer—vs. Campbell. 6 p.m. Catamount Athletic Complex. (227-7338)

Saturday, September 3
Rafting—enjoy the Nantahala River class II and III rapids with Base Camp Cullowhee. No experience necessary. Cost: $20 WCU students; $25 non-WCU students. Pre-registration required. 1 p.m. A.K. Hinds University Center. (227-3466 or www.wcu.edu/univcenter/outdoors/)

Monday, September 5
Labor Day holiday—no classes; all offices closed.

Tuesday, September 6
All classes resume.

Lady Catamount volleyball—vs. Gardner-Webb. 7 p.m. Ramsey Regional Activity Center. (227-7338)

Catamount Concert Series—Shannon Thompson, Western music faculty, clarinet, with pianist Lillian Buss Pearson, performing works by Bach, Debussy, Gerswin, and Copland. 8 p.m. Recital Hall, Coulter Building. (227-7242)

Wednesday, September 7
Meeting—Faculty Senate planning team. Noon. Mary Will Mitchell Room, Brown Cafeteria. (227-3966)

Kayak trip—exploring local whitewater. Cost: $10 WCU students; $15 non-WCU students; cost includes transportation and equipment. Pre-registration required. 3:30 p.m. A.K. Hinds University Center. (227-3466 or www.wcu.edu/univcenter/outdoors/)

Thursday, September 8
Meeting—Staff Forum. 8:30 a.m. Cardinal Room, A.K. Hinds University Center. (227-7321)

Workshop—van safety, required for all employees who will be driving 15-passenger vans. Registration required; limited seating. 9 a.m. Room 203, Field House. (http://www.wcu.edu/hr.training/personal.asp)

Open House—Women’s Center. Light refreshments. 1–4 p.m. Room 344, A.K. Hinds University Center. (227-2324)

Old-time Music and Bluegrass Jam—local musicians share tunes and techniques while enjoying old-time and bluegrass music. 7 p.m. Mountain Heritage Center, Robinson Administration Building. (227-7129)

Friday, September 9
Lady Catamount soccer—vs. Longwood. 6 p.m. Catamount Athletic Complex. (227-7338)

Saturday, September 10
Catamount football—vs. Furman. Southern Conference game. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. 6 p.m. (227-7338)

Sunday, September 11
Crafts at the Center—presentation about Preservation North Carolina, Ted Alexander. 2 p.m. Lobby, Mountain Heritage Center, Robinson Administration Building. (227-7129)

EXHIBITIONS

Mountain Heritage Center
hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday; and 2–5 p.m. Sunday, June–October. (227-7129 or www.wcu.edu/mhc)

Gallery A: “Migration of the Scotch-Irish People” (permanent exhibition).

OPENING SEPTEMBER 14—“Vanishing Pollinators,” the miniature world of moths, bees, and other pollinators and their symbiotic relationships with the plant kingdom.


Fine Arts Museum
(all exhibits open October 23)
Closed on Mondays and university holidays. (227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

Worldviews. Selections from Western Carolina University’s art collection. Through December 16.


Strange Beauty: Showcasing Western Carolina University art alumni works. Through December 16.

Submissions:
Send news items and calendar notices to WCU Calendar, 1601 Ramsey Center, Western Carolina University Cullowhee, NC 28723 or e-mail to: Reporter@email.wcu.edu. Submit items for the university’s online calendar at least one week prior to the event.
Loughlin Recognized For Three Decades Of Service To International Education

Malcolm J. Loughlin, Western’s longtime associate dean of distance and continuing education, received recognition from the governor general of Jamaica and the U.S. Department of State for his three decades of service to international education.

Acknowledgment of Loughlin’s contributions came as part of the university’s summer commencement exercises Friday, Aug. 5.

Since 1970, a collaboration between Western and the Caribbean country of Jamaica has allowed more than 2,000 Jamaicans to upgrade their teaching skills by earning degrees from Western.

The August graduating class of approximately 500 includes 140 students from Jamaica. About 115 of those students expect to be awarded bachelor’s degrees in middle grades education, while another 25 students will be receiving master’s degrees in educational supervision.

Burton Fox, director of Latin American and Caribbean programs for the university, presented a plaque to Loughlin on behalf of Sir Howard Cooke, governor general of Jamaica. Western has had an active international program for 35 years and “there is one person who has been an essential part of this program, Malcolm J. Loughlin, who has contributed continuously to make this program so successful,” Fox said.

“For over 30 years, you have served as teacher, mentor and guide,” Fox said. “You have set a standard to be followed through your spirit, humor and candor, which have endeared you to your fellow professionals in Jamaica.”

William H. Scotti, regional education officer for the U.S. State Department’s Office of Overseas Schools, presented a certificate of appreciation to Loughlin on behalf of office director Keith D. Miller in recognition of “more than 30 years of exemplary service to the American-sponsored overseas schools in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Loughlin said he was “completely taken by surprise” at the honors. “This must be the year for my family to receive recognition,” he said after the ceremony. “My cousin, just retired after 28 years in Hong Kong, is to receive an Order of the British Empire in the recently announced honors list from Buckingham Palace for services to education in Hong Kong.”

As part of the commencement exercises held in the Ramsey Regional Activity Center, award-winning writer Sue Ellen Bridgers of Sylva and business icon Raymond E. Kinsland of Cherokee received honorary doctorates.

Bridgers is the author of seven novels, including the most recent “All We Know of Heaven,” and has been the recipient of numerous awards for her writing for young adults. She has traveled extensively across the United States to promote the importance of literature and reading in the lives of young people and adults.

As general manager of the Cherokee Boys Club since 1964, Kinsland oversees an organization that provides a vast array of services on the Qualla Boundary, home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, including vocational education and leadership training, bus and food services for tribal schools, and a children’s home and shelter.

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