

*Catalyst Profile*  
**Janine Keever**

Back in 2013, Janine Keever, who graduated in 1996, broke ground on a \$2.7 million, 10,000-square foot medical facility for her practice, Smoky Mountain Obstetrics and Gynecology. Though the new center in Sylva was clearly an upgrade from the former two-employee office with worn furniture, the past few years have dealt the WCU alumna an unexpected hand.

Only a year after the new location opened its doors, Duke LifePoint bought Harris Regional. Though the buyout will allow for improvement projects, pumping \$43 million into the local hospital, much of Keever's staff left when the new owners stepped in.

Soon enough, stakeholders began pushing the former Catamount to sell her 11-year-old practice. At wits' end, she decided to stop seeing patients, handing over the rights to the center that once served four counties.

"I will greatly miss the relationships that I have built with my patients over the last decade," Keever wrote in a letter dated August 14, 2015. "I would like to thank you for trusting me to care for you over the years."

As medical records were transferred and desks cleared, Smoky Mountain Obstetrics and Gynecology became Harris Women's Care, an extension of Duke LifePoint. Keever and her family then pushed up the East Coast to Amherst, New Hampshire, where she currently works at Foundation Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Still, decades before her practice even came to fruition, she was a student in WCU's biology program. Despite fears about being accepted to medical school, professor Roger Lumb and the late Jerry West offered mentorship and, most importantly, faith.

"There were some hurdles with going to med school from Western because it's not thought of as a traditional school for training pre-medical students," said Keever.

Determined to attend the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, Keever invited the admissions dean to tour the Cullowhee campus, even scheduling meet-and-greets with faculty and staff. In 1996, thanks to a bit of legwork and encouragement, the New Hampshire native was accepted.

Four years later, she began her residency in Baltimore at the University of Maryland Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences. Soon enough, Keever returned to Sylva, joining a preexisting practice. A difference in "style," however, motivated her to "hang her own shingle" in January of 2006.

While she was briefly called up to Kentucky to serve in the United States Army Reserves, this mother of one brought new life into the world for over a decade. Though she now

continues her profession beyond Jackson County lines, her heart will forever be in the Whee.

“My professors made me what I am today,” said Keever. “I would not change anything about my education or time at WCU.”