

LIFE@ WESTERN CAROLINA

2020 Spring Schedule – Biltmore Park Classes

28 Schenck Pkwy, Asheville, NC 28803

Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

01/16/2020

Jay Erskine Leutze, “Land Conservation / Grassroots Advocacy”

Jay Erskine Leutze was raised in Chapel Hill, NC, and lives in the Southern Appalachian Mountains on the North Carolina-Tennessee border. Trained as an attorney, he has become a leading voice for state and federal conservation funding for investment in public lands. He is the board president of Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, one of the nation's most established land trusts. He is the author of *Stand Up that Mountain: The Battle to Save One Small Community in the Wilderness Along the Appalachian Trail* (Simon & Schuster, 2012). In the tradition of *A Civil Action*, it's the compelling true story of a North Carolina outdoorsman who teams up with his Appalachian "mountain people" neighbors to save a treasured landscape from being destroyed.

He is a national spokesman for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition and has testified before Congress on the need for increased funding for public land conservation. In 2012, he was awarded North Carolina's highest civilian honor, The Order of the Longleaf Pine, for his contribution to the conservation of land and water in his home state. He was the winner of the 2013 North Carolina Governor's Conservation Communicator of the Year Award and was named Outstanding Conservation Advocate by the Roosevelt-Ashe Society.

Presentation Outline:

Planet earth faces a biodiversity and extinction crisis that threatens the web of life. Local, regional, and global land and water conservation will play a critical role in solving the problems created by unplanned growth, overpopulation, and rampant consumption of wildlife and habitat. The lecture will focus on the tools conservationists use to analyze landscape-scale challenges and opportunities.

01/23/2020

Rebecca Caldwell, “Indomitable Women of Western North Carolina”

Rebecca Caldwell is a writer and educator who serves as the Adult Education Programs Manager at The North Carolina Arboretum. She has taught literature and writing at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Clemson University and Western Carolina University. She is also trained as a counselor specializing in expressive arts and ecopsychology. While working in Student Affairs at Western Carolina University, she started the Women's Center, a resource, advising and advocacy center open to all students. Her doctoral coursework and research at the University of Virginia focused on creativity, intrinsic motivation, and the adult learner.

Presentation Outline:

To be *indomitable* is to be impossible to subdue or defeat. This illustrated talk will consider the lasting legacies of indomitable women who set a course for change in their mountain communities and would not be deterred: Lucy Morgan, Olive Dame Campbell, Gertrude Dills McKee, Wilma Dykeman, Amanda Swimmer, Marie Colton, and more come to mind. If you don't know of them yet, it's my hope that you'll want to know more than what fits on a roadside historical marker and that you, too, will be inspired by their lives, their art, and the places they strove to protect.

1/30/2020

Darin Waters, "A Personal Odyssey: Uncovering the history of African Americans in WNC and Southern Appalachia"

Dr. Darin J. Waters—is an Associate Professor of History and Executive Director of the Office for Community Engagement at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Dr. Waters teaches courses in American history, North Carolina History, Appalachian History, African American and Brazilian History. He also specializes in the history of race relations in both the United States and Latin America.

Dr. Waters received his doctorate from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2012. Dr. Waters' research focuses on the history of African Americans in Asheville and Western North Carolina. More recently, Dr. Waters has written about issues surrounding the construction of the nation's collective historical memory, exploring the impact of that memory on the present. He has successfully organized 6 major conferences on the history of African Americans in Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia. Dr. Waters is the creator and co-host and Executive Producer of The Waters and Harvey Show, a weekly radio program that airs on Blue Ridge Public Radio, the local NPR/Public radio station. In 2018 he was awarded *The Old North State Award* by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper. Additionally, Governor Cooper recently appointed him to serve as a member of the North Carolina Historical Commission. Dr. Waters is also serving as a member of a special commission for the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Presentation Outline:

This lecture will explore examine the long, ignored history of African Americans western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia, by examining the efforts that African Americans made to build community in the aftermath of the Civil War. The lecture will also explore the work that is being done to more widely disseminate new research and findings to the general public.

2/6/2020

Adam Bigelow, "Wildflowers of Southern Appalachia"

Adam Bigelow is the Garden Manager for both The Cullowhee Community Garden, and the Sylva Community Garden. . He holds an Associate's Degree in Horticulture from Haywood Community College and a B.S. Degree in Environmental Science from Western Carolina University. Adam has been gardening organically for over a 15 years. He is a member of the Steering Committee for the Cullowhee Native Plants Conference, a

advisory member of the North Carolina Community Garden Partners, a member of the Gardens That Give of WNC organization, on the board of Vecinos which provides health care and advocacy to our Farmworker Communities, and a planning committee member of a local development group called the Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor. Adam has a passion for community gardening and organic gardening, sustainability and environmental education, and especially for the native wildflowers and plants of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Adam is the owner and operator of an eco-tourism business called Bigelow's Botanical Excursions

2/13/2020

Dan Pierce, "Moonshine in NC"

Dan Pierce earned his Ph.D. in History from the University of Tennessee in 1995. His research interests include environmentalism and the environment in the Southern Appalachian Region, Southern Appalachian culture as well as race relations in the south. Dan currently serves as a professor of History at the University of North Carolina in Asheville. He has written numerous publications about the history of the south ranging from topics on NASCAR/stock car racing to Moonshining in the Smoky Mountains.

Presentation Outline:

Mountain moonshining began in the early 19th century and still continues today in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. In its prime, Moonshining was not just about fast cars, quick cash and deadly gun play – but also about farmers living in remote areas of the mountains trying to make a living for their family.

2/20/2020

PARI, "PARI: What is it? From Spy to Research"

In 1963 NASA dedicated a facility (the known as the Rosman Tracking Station) in the Pisgah National Forest that would end up playing a critical role in the early days of the US space effort. During this time the Rosman Station focused on weather satellites, GPS and transmissions of color TV signals. Today PARI serves as a learning center for all ages to provide inspiration for the next generation of thinkers.

2/27/2020

Brett Riggs, "Cherokee and the Trail of Tears"

Dr. Riggs is a research archeologist specializing in Cherokee studies and has worked in Western North Carolina for more than 20 years studying the lives of Cherokee families during the removal era of the 1830s. Riggs earned his doctorate and master's degree in anthropology from the University of Tennessee and his bachelor's degree in anthropology from Wake Forest University. In 2015 Dr. Riggs was appointed the Sequoyah Distinguished Professor of Cherokee Studies at Western Carolina University after previously working as a research archeologist at UNC Chapel Hill since 2001. Prior to Chapel Hill he worked as deputy tribal historical preservation officer for the Eastern Band. A board member for Friends of Junaluska and the Junaluska Museum, he also

serves as executive board member for the National Trail of Tears Association in Little Rock, Arkansas, and was Native Affairs Liaison Committee chair for the southeastern Archaeological Conference.

Presentation Outline:

The Trail of Tears was a series of forced removals of Native Americans from their ancestral homelands in the southeast to the west. Dr. Riggs will speak about the impact of these removals on the lives of Native people.

3/5/2020

Bob Rietz, “Gerrymandering in North Carolina”

- Retired consulting actuary
- Chief Pension Actuary for Deloitte in 2000s
- Finished a third term as Director on Board of American Academy of Actuaries
- Served two terms on Actuarial Board for Counseling and Discipline, including Chair
- Appointed by two Michigan Governors to serve on Board of
 - Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System
 - Detroit General Employees Retirement System
- Author of several peer-reviewed articles
- Author of “Reforming Social Security by Aligning Retirement Age With Income”

Presentation Outline:

The May 15, 2014 Washington Post declared, “North Carolina is home to 3 out of the top 10 most gerrymandered districts.” Learn how we’ve been gerrymandered, and how easily legislators can do it with today’s technology. We’ll review pertinent court cases and a potential solution to future gerrymandering – House Bill 69.

3/12/2020

Lori Oxford, “Spanish Experience & Study Abroad: Valencia, Spain”

Dr. Lori Oxford specializes in contemporary Latin American cultural production with a concentration in contemporary Cuban narrative. Her research interests include cultural studies and gender studies in Latin America and Latinx communities in the USA. Her recent work has focused on Cuban-American fiction, Cuban film, and Latinx popular music. Along with her husband, Dr. Alberto Centeno-Pulido, she has taken sixteen groups to experience Valencia, Spain and Havana, Cuba.

Presentation Outline:

Valencia, Spain’s third-largest city, is a fascinating blend of everything from ancient to contemporary. Every summer for the past ten years, two WCU professors have taken groups to the Valencian region to experience the history, art, food, architecture, and everyday culture that make the city such a dynamic destination for visitors from all over the world. Lori Oxford will discuss those experiences as well as opportunities to take part in upcoming trips.

3/19/2020

David Easterling, “Climate Change”

David Easterling is a Supervisory Physical Scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Centers for Environmental Information (NOAA/NCEI) in Asheville, North Carolina. He is currently Director of the Technical Support Unit (TSU) for the U.S. National Climate Assessment. The TSU provides scientific, editorial, graphical, and software support to the U.S. National Climate Assessment and sustained assessment process of the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

David received his Ph.D. in 1988 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and served as an Assistant Professor in the Atmospheric Sciences Program, Department of Geography, Indiana University-Bloomington from 1987 to 1990. In 1990 he moved to NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center as a climate scientist, was appointed Principal Scientist in 1999, Chief of the Global Climate Applications Division in 2002, and Director of the Technical Support Unit in 2013.

David was a Lead Author on the Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report, the IPCC Special Report on Climate Extremes, the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, a Convening Lead Author for the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) Synthesis and Assessment Product (SAP) 3.3 on Climate Extremes, and a Convening Lead Author on the Fourth National Climate Assessment. He has been awarded four NOAA Administrator’s Awards, four NOAA Bronze Medals, and one Department of Commerce Silver Medal.

Presentation outline:

My talk will discuss the scientific evidence for climate change, both past and future climate change. Also I will briefly touch on our Center and what we do.

3/26/2020

Barbara McRae, “Nikwasi Mound in Franklin, NC”

The daughter of an Air Force officer, Barbara Sears McRae spent her youth moving around. After her marriage to the artist Jim McRae in 1972, she put down roots with him in Franklin, N.C., and began avidly learning all she could about the region. Since 1976, when she joined The Franklin Press as a reporter, she has written a weekly column, “Know Your County,” which allowed her to further explore the history of the county and region. Her career has included seven years as a systems engineer with IBM, 20 years in corporate communications with Nantahala Power and Light/Duke Energy, and, finally, 10 years as editor of The Franklin Press. Retired since 2012, she serves on the Town Council and as Vice-Mayor of Franklin and is active in several organizations, including Nikwasi Initiative and the Women’s History Trail. As a Town Council member, she led a successful campaign to transfer Nikwasi Mound to Nikwasi Initiative, a nonprofit Community Development Organization in which the Town of Franklin, Macon County, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Mainspring Conservation Trust are partners.

Presentation Outline:

The best-preserved Mound in Western North Carolina, Nikwasi occupies a special place in the region. It is a sacred site to the Cherokee and a place steeped in mystery and history for the people of Macon County. This presentation will cover these topics:

- The prehistory, history, and cultural significance of Nikwasi Mound in the Cherokee Nation.
- The Mound's role during the tumultuous contact period and the time of early settlement.
- How the Mound came to be preserved, why its return to the Cherokee became controversial, and current plans to create a Nikwasi Park surrounding it, with a tie to the developing Cherokee Heritage Corridor.

3/31/2020

Annual Luncheon