PIONEERS TOGETHER
A SON WITH DOWN SYNDROME INSPIRES HIS MOTHER TO BECOME A LEADER IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
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POSITIVELY BEAMING
The future home of WCU’s College of Health and Human Sciences rises from the ground as the first building on 344 acres of property obtained by the university in 2004 as part of its Millennial Initiative. When completed in 2012, the 160,000-square-foot building will be the cornerstone of a mixed-use neighborhood focusing on health, retirement and aging.

For more information, visit millennial.wcu.edu.
The evolution of Western Carolina since World War II is well-documented, but only a few observers have lived that transformation and can tell it today from firsthand experience. Stedman Mitchell turned 94 this past April and has lived nearly 70 of those years in Cullowhee, where he has witnessed the growth of the institution from a teachers college with a couple hundred students to a vibrant regional university serving nearly 10,000 students. Along the way, Mitchell has known or worked for nine of the school’s 10 presidents and chancellors, including its recognized founding father, Robert Lee Madison.

WCU has had its share of personalities—from administrators to coaches and sports heroes to students—who have made it the campus that it is today. Mitchell has watched most of them come and go as a vibrant walker, talkin’ history book of the last seven decades. Sted, as he prefers, has had several monikers and as many official titles since arriving in Cullowhee in the early 1940s. His friends, who number in the hundreds, agree that the “Sage of Buzzard Roost” has a personality makeup that includes the humor of Andy Griffith with a touch of Larry the Cable Guy, along with Mark Twain’s storytelling talent and Will Rogers’ philosophy.

Local residents witness his energy on a daily early morning basis as Sted drives himself and sidekick Robert Lanning up Cullowhee Mountain — an hour round-trip — to get to work and then purchasing agent before he was named cafeteria manager in the 1950s. That position evolved into food service director, which is the role that made Mitchell a local legend. “Mashed Potatoes,” another nickname bestowed on Mitchell by the students he served over three decades in Moore, Brown and Dodson cafeterias, recently reminisced about his WCU career following the March dedication of the Courtyard Dining Hall, the university’s $17.6 million state-of-the-art food service facility. “We had three big enrollment booms — after World War II, in the mid-1960s and now — and each time it challenged our food service operation and brought about big changes and new facilities, like Moore in the early ’50s, Brown in late ’50s, Dodson in the ’60s and now this absolutely amazing place,” he said while touring the new dining hall.

Mitchell’s staff of 120 full-time employees served 1.5 million meals a year at Brown and Dodson in the mid-1970s. Today, WCU’s food service partner, Aramark, and the franchised food venues on campus — Chick-fil-A, Papa John’s, McAlister’s, Panda Express, Freshens and Einstein’s — employ more than 300 and have approximately 7,500 transactions daily.

Katie Deitz, WCU’s food service dietician under Mitchell, remembers her former boss with fondness. “He was a very good businessman who was strict, but very fair, gave his employees an opportunity to advance and made sure everyone understood that the students were their customers,” she said. “And I am sure a lot of students would never have been able to pay their college expenses had it not been for Mr. Mitchell giving them a chance to work. He was such a great boss.”

Deitz also commended Mitchell for his interest in giving back to the community. “He tried to help our community in his hirings and in buying produce. I remember a local farmer offering to sell tomatoes for 50 cents a bushel and Mr. Mitchell giving him 85 cents a bushel and saying, ‘That’s a good deal for both of us,’ ” she said.

Garney Chambers ’81, dean emeritus of WCU’s College of Education and Allied Professions, recalls eating quality meals in Brown Cafeteria as a student from 1977 to 1981. “One of the inalienable rights of students is to complain about the food that is served on campus,” Chambers said. “Many were never satisfied, but Stedman always listened and did what he could to accommodate their tastes.” Chambers and Chuck Wooten ’73, WCU vice chancellor for administration and finance, say their mouths still water at the thought of Mitch’s famous Sunday lunch menu that included steaks, fried squash and strawberry shortcake.

Both Mitchell and Wooten agree that the “three square meals a day” concept would not fit into the lifestyle of students of the 21st century. “Today, students expect continuous dining opportunities that extend into the late-night or early morning hours,” said Wooten. Mitchell concurs. “Our younger people are growing up in a fast food society with diverse appetites and expect the same when they go to college, which is quite different from the students of 40 years ago,” he said.

When asked for his recipe for reaching 94 in good health, energetic and able to tell stories and jokes with the best of them, Mitchell says, “good genes help.” He has no magic formula to stop the aging process. “I don’t have a special diet,” he said. “I eat what I like — and a lot of it. What I do just comes natural, keep moving, staying involved with people and busy doing things I like, and something I’m really good at — laughing a lot.”

Steve White ’67, a neighbor of Stedman Mitchell, is retired director of sports information at WCU.
LEADERSHIP TRAINING

UNC Pembroke’s new chancellor is the latest in a long line of CEOs with ties to WCU
By BILL STUDENC MPA ’10

When Kyle Carter, provost and senior vice president, was selected chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke on April 9, he became the fifth senior administrator at Western Carolina named chief executive officer at another college or university since 1996.

“To have your senior administrators leave to become presidents or chancellors elsewhere is certainly something in which you can take pride,” said Merrill Schwartz, director of research with the Association of Governing Boards, a national organization for academic governing boards, campus CEOs and other senior-level administrators. “It does send the message that you are helping train the leaders of higher education of the future, and that you are successfully and intentionally developing the leadership skills of your chief academic officers.”

Betty Siegel, a member of the WCU board of trustees who is herself a former college president and past WCU administrator, said she believes Western Carolina is a training ground for future leaders because of the influence of current Chancellor John Bardo and the university’s traditional emphasis on community.

“...in the area of electrical engineering and related disciplines. The Southeastern conference includes the states of Alabama, Florida and Georgia, areas of Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, and the country of Jamaica.

Michael Malone, associate vice chancellor of academic affairs, was named president of Troy State University-Dothan (Ala.) in 1996. Malone went on to become a vice chancellor within the Troy University System, then became head of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education from 2003 to 2006.

Rosemary DePaolo, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, in 1997 became president of Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, a position she held until 2003, when she was named chancellor at the University of North Carolina-Pembroke. She became the latest in a long line of CEOs with ties to WCU.

Richard J. Collings, vice chancellor for academic affairs at WCU, left that position after eight years to become president of Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb., in 2004.

Robert VariaTebadian, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and interim vice chancellor of academic affairs, was named president of Missouri Western State University in 2008, after serving three years as vice president for academic affairs at Eastern New Mexico University (2005-08).

A student team from the Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology recently claimed first place at a robotics competition at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ Southeastern conference in Charlotte. “There is much here of which to be proud, and this is a great point of honor for us,” said Robert McMahan, dean of the Kimmel School. “This is a big deal in engineering circles and something to be celebrated.”

Competing against schools such as North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Georgia Tech and Virginia Tech, nine WCU students collaborated on a solar-powered robot. The team’s entry had to collect energy from four bright lights on the competition course, and could not have any stored energy at the start of the competition. With these constraints, the shoebox-sized robot was judged on its effectiveness in crossing the starting line, traveling a series of ramps and completing a trip around the obstacle course.

Meeting for hours upon hours during the fall and spring semesters, the students worked with their faculty mentors from engineering technology, Peter Tay and Robert Adams, to create the winning entry. “During the spring semester, there was a period when I couldn’t walk past the senior project room without seeing a member of the team working on the robot, including Saturdays,” said Tay.

The students working on the project also were supervised by Paul Yarink, assistant professor of engineering technology, and other faculty and staff of the Kimmel School. Jerry Dunton ’02 MS ’04, electronics applications engineer for the school, supervised the fabrication of the circuits for the robot. “The project was not to build a commercially available robot. Rather, we designed, implemented and tested every detail of the robot from scratch,” said Tay.

With two wheels at the front, the robot could turn in any direction. An empty soda bottle sliced lengthwise was attached on the back as a ski, which allowed the robot to skid along the ground when necessary. With this mobility, the robot was able to seek light with efficiency, Adams said. “The project was a team effort because members had roles according to their abilities, and they stuck with the project and did not give up,” he said. Using knowledge from their engineering and electricity courses, they divided the work to develop the winning robot, said Adams. “I was so impressed with the drive and perseverance of this student team,” he said. “They just keep going and going.”

IEEE consists of 300,000 members worldwide who work in the area of electrical engineering and related disciplines. The Southeastern conference includes the states of Alabama, Florida and Georgia, areas of Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, and the country of Jamaica.
With its striking rock architecture and status as WCU’s only building constructed as part of the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration, Breese Gymnasium has been a campus icon since it opened in 1939.

“The use made of the building ... has been egalized by that of scarcely any other on the campus,” wrote WCU historian and former president W. Ernest Bird ’15 in 1963. “Standing in the approximate geographic center of the college grounds, unparalleled in type and unique in historical interest, it gives promise of still many more long years of service.”

Long years may have partially run their course. In need of extensive and expensive attention, Breese Pool has been closed since summer 2009, although the remainder of the building still is in use.

The pool needs to be brought into compliance with new federal safety regulations, its filter system replaced, its mechanical equipment room overhauled and work done on its plaster basin, said Joe Walker, associate vice chancellor for facilities management. The cost estimate for repairs adds up to an uncertain amount.

Breese underwent a renovation with $1.1 million in funds from the 2000 Higher Education Bonds, and portions of the building remain in demand. The department of stage and screen use the building extensively for classes, rehearsals, auditions, workshops and recitals, and the dance program offices are housed there. “Breese has the only space on campus, the only space available, for facilities management. The cost estimate for repairs is more than $328,000,” Walker said.

Breese’s opening gave the school a new basketball court and its first swimming pool, and a 1939 golden jubilee celebration at WCU included a banquet and dance held there. It was part of a six-building expansion that also included the new Madison Hall, the McKee Building and Hoey Auditorium. While five of the buildings were part of a six-building expansion, the new Madison Hall, the McKee Building and Hoey Auditorium were included in cooperation with state and local government and of historic interest, it gives promise of still many more long years of service.”

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According to Chuck Wooten ’73, vice chancellor for administration and finance, the decision to leave Breese Pool in disrepair simply comes down to money. “There’s just no funding currently available,” Wooten said. The state has reduced its repair and renovation funds substantially over the past couple years and has failed to allocate any for 2010-11.

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In the meantime, Breese Pool hangs in limbo. While there are no plans to repair it, Wooten said, “A decision has not been made to abandon it.” Such a decision, most likely with a recommendation from the university’s Executive Council, ultimately would come from the Office of the Chancellor.

When incoming chief executives arrive on a college campus, they face the daunting task of learning about their new universities from the ground up and need the advice of others, says Myron L. Coulter, WCU chancellor from 1984 through 1994, who now holds the title of chancellor emeritus.

“Early on in my administration, I met Doug Reed and quickly realized he was one person I really needed to get to know,” Coulter said. Before he retired, Reed served as director of WCU’s Office of Public Information (now Public Relations) from 1966 to 1996. Coulter said he discovered that Reed was gifted with an “uncanny insight” into the inner workings of the university, local community, region and state. “Doug possesses a rare wisdom that is the result of an amalgam of knowledge and experience – wisdom of a higher order,” Coulter said.

Reed was a trusted advisor for 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. A Tennessee native who was raised in Weaverville, Reed was a newspaper reporter and editor for 17 years before coming to WCU. When he arrived in Cullowhee, Reed assumed the dual roles of public information director and associate professor of English, in charge of starting WCU’s new concentration in journalism and teaching all the journalism courses.

On one of Reed’s students was Jim Buchanan ’83, a Jackson County native, 27-year veteran of the Asheville Citizen-Times. “I was quickly in awe of Doug as a person,” Buchanan said. “In Doug’s class, I think there was a point that it dawned on everyone that he had been around the block and that he was smarter than we were. Doug exhibited grace, intelligence, good humor and a down-to-earth wisdom I have always admired.”

It was that wisdom that Chancellor John W. Bardo referred to as he presented an honorary doctor of letters degree to Reed at a May commencement. “The 30-year span that corresponded with your exceptional service was a critical period of growth and transition for WCU, and you helped shape the university with wisdom and loyalty, becoming what can only be described as ‘the Sage of WCU,’” Bardo quoted from the degree citation.

Accepting the honor, Reed noted changes that occurred at WCU during his tenure, including the institution’s transition from a teacher’s college to regional university, and the emergence of a “wider concept of its place” in North Carolina. “This institution has a great and good history,” Reed said. “Western Carolina University has been generously good to me. I thank you from a full heart.”

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BEST BUYS

Online programs in criminal justice and project management earn high marks for affordability and quality

From staff reports

Two of Western Carolina’s online programs once again have been recognized with No. 1 national rankings in affordability and quality by the distance education information clearinghouse GetEducated.com. WCU’s Internet-based bachelor’s degree program in criminal justice is listed first among a group of 17 “best buys.” The rankings are based on a fall 2009 survey of regionally accredited universities that offer bachelor’s degree programs in criminal justice through distance education. The university’s online master’s degree program in project management is listed first among a group of top 34 “best buys.” Those rankings are based on a survey of 56 regionally accredited business schools that offer 96 different distance education programs, said WCU’s Gibbs Knotts is a top teacher in the UNC system

By Bill Studenc MPA ’10

From helping students earn co-author bylines on editorial columns in newspapers across North Carolina to guiding a classroom in designing a residents satisfaction survey for a neighboring municipality, Gibbs Knotts, associate professor of political science and public affairs, has earned a reputation as one of Western Carolina’s top teachers since his arrival on campus in 2004. Ten years later, Knotts is recognized as one of the best professors in the entire state after being named a recipient of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching. “Dr. Knotts’ excitement for teaching is not only contagious, but also inspiring,” Chancellor John W. Bardo said. “He motivates students to become engaged individuals who are active participants in their learning. Gibbs also moves student growth and learning beyond the classroom by utilizing service-learning projects.” In one project, Knotts’ students designed, implemented and analyzed a survey for the Downtown Sylva Association. “This hands-on experience gave students a chance to better understand the course’s learning objectives while at the same time assisting a local community organization,” Bardo said.

Former student Wade Livingston ’04 MAEd ’06 said Knotts’ personality makes him stand out. “His demeanor was special – it encouraged students to speak up in class, and his courses took on more of a seminar feel, as opposed to a series of lectures. Dr. Knotts infused humor into his courses and, most importantly, was always encouraging,” said Livingston, who earned his doctorate at Clemson University, where he is associate director of community and ethical standards. “I have witnessed professors scold students for not understanding a concept – not Dr. Knotts. He understood the root purpose of the college classroom: to foster student learning. With Dr. Knotts, it was never about ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ – it was about the cognitive journey students embarked upon as ‘citizens’ within his class.” Abrahm Saunders ’06 said choosing to take Knotts’ popular class in Southern politics was one of the best decisions he made in college. “A professor’s combination of knowledge and passion for the subject matter is the recipe for making the classroom experience special. Dr. Knotts definitely possessed this combination. I admire how dynamic he was in the classroom. He facilitated productive classroom discussions, shared interesting stories and encounters with politicians to underline a point, and used other methods of teaching – like the use of technology – that made it possible for students with various learning styles to be able to learn in his class. Finally, his good-natured, nonjudgmental personality created an environment where all points of view were welcomed,” said Saunders, a student success specialist at Ohio Dominican University.

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Gibbs Knotts, recipient of the UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, rooted with political science and public affairs students.

A POLITICAL MACHINE

WCU’s Gibbs Knotts is a top teacher in the UNC system

By Bill Studenc MPA ’10

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FUNDRED FACE

Western Carolina student Nate Stephensson stands in front of an armored truck that stopped on campus in April to collect thousands of bills created by members of campus and the surrounding community in support of the Fundred Dollar Bill Project. Organizers of the nationwide effort to address lead-polluted soils in New Orleans plan to deliver bills from around the country to the U.S. Congress this summer, requesting an even exchange of mock currency for funding and in-kind support. Teachers throughout the United States incorporated elements of the project into lesson plans, and schoolchildren and communities, with the help of local organizations, contributed to the cause by creating individual works of art on Fundred templates. “We asked participants to create a valuable commodity with their drawings and the messages written on their bills,” said Marie Cochran, a faculty member in the WCU School of Art and Design and a local Fundred organizer.
Members of the Smoky Mountain Brass Quintet received the red-carpet treatment during a May visit to China, the third international concert tour for the quintet-in-residence at Western Carolina. The group performed eight concerts over eight nights, including recitals at WCU’s sister institutions in Xi’an, Guilin and Chongqing. In addition to serving as musical ambassadors promoting a message of cultural exchange, the quintet also helped recruit three Chinese students. Clockwise from top left of facing page, SMBQ members (from left) Michael Schallock, Bradley Ulrich, David Ginn, Dan Cherry and Travis Bennett pose at the Great Wall of China; the group enjoys a playful moment at a city park in Ningbo; the musicians visit an ancient wall in Xi’an; quintet co-founder Ulrich allows a young fan an up-close inspection of his trumpet; Will Peebles, director of the WCU School of Music who accompanied the SMBQ on its trip, speaks to a man in “The English Corner” in Hangzhou; and Ginn finds himself feeling like a rock star after being surrounded by autograph-seekers following a concert in Chongqing.
Seeking Direction

Born in Atlanta and raised in Charlotte, Denning was already in love with road cycling when he began his studies at WCU in fall 2005, and he quickly immersed himself in the Cullowhee cycling culture. His academic life as a sport management major, however, wasn’t nearly as fulfilling. His first two years at WCU were marred by academic probation and suspension, and Denning reflects that his life then had “no direction, and no sense to find that direction.”

Over the last weekend in July 2007, Denning was a cyclist riding high. Training with friends, he participated in a benefit cycling event in Charlotte and helped raise more than $1,000 for cancer research and treatment, riding 150 miles over a 24-hour period. Nine days later, Denning was taking part in the local cycling community’s Tuesday night Sylva-to-Balsam group ride, and the cyclists were on a side road near Balsam. “I was pushing to catch riders who were more experienced and faster than I was,” he said. He skidded into the path of the pickup truck, took the impact on the left side of his body and was instantly knocked unconscious.

He was airlifted to Mission Hospital in Asheville and admitted immediately into the neuro-intensive care unit. Denning’s inventory of injuries included a broken left forearm, fractured pelvis, multiple broken ribs and two collapsed lungs, but doctors were most concerned about his traumatic brain injury. He was in a coma for 10 days. After three weeks in Mission Hospital, with his parents by his side and a steady stream of friends and supporters coming through to visit, Denning was transferred to the Shepherd Center rehabilitation hospital in Atlanta. “Rehab helped me relearn essential everyday tasks such as walking, communication, balance and other abilities that were taught to me growing up, but were no longer connecting in my brain,” he said.

Denning remained a patient at the Shepherd Center for about a month. “My therapists couldn’t get me back to walking until my pelvis had been cleared to bear the weight,” he said. “Once I began walking again, I couldn’t wait to be back on a bike saddle. Finally my therapists allowed me to try an exercise bike, as long as I had no pain or discomfort. That was probably the greatest ride of my life.”

Road To Recovery

Denning was released from the Shepherd Center on Oct. 1, 2007, but continued to receive therapy at Shepherd Pathways, the center’s outpatient facility, until early January 2008. “Toward the end of my therapy, I realized how lucky I was, and I felt the need to ‘pay it forward’ to others who were in situations like the one I had gone through,” he said. "I like to think I have fully recovered, and that I’ve gone far beyond where I was before,” Denning said. “I’ve been able to turn my life completely around, and I’ve found ways to open new doors for myself. I’m very grateful for having the experience as part of my life. I get to wake up each morning and just be happy for a new day.”

Armed with his newfound desire to help others and reach academic goals, Denning still enjoys his same passion for cycling. He was back on a bike seven months after sustaining his injuries. He has now cycled past the scene of his accident many times while participating in the Tuesday night group ride to Balsam. “I don’t feel any anxiety or fear,” he said. “I am as excited to ride as I have ever been.”

Student Ted Denning recovered from a bicycling accident and is looking forward to a career of helping others

By RANDALL HOLCOMBE

It’s a cyclist’s nightmare, to do what Ted Denning did. You’re riding down a narrow two-lane road much too fast, and when the pavement bends to the right you can’t hold the curve, and your momentum carries you toward the other lane. If you’re lucky, there’s nothing coming from the other direction. If you’re unlucky, as Denning was, you throw on the brakes and skid into the front end of a Dodge Dakota. But he remembers nothing of what happened. He can only try an exercise bike, as long as I had no pain or discomfort. That was probably the greatest ride of my life.”

Ted Denning speeds across campus (top) as an avid cyclist prior to his 2007 accident. After emerging from a coma (below left), Denning undergoes rehabilitation (above), setting him on the road to recovery – not on a new academic path.
Students build and repair bicycles for use on campus after launching a community bike project

By TERESA KILLIAN TATE

Students set eight yellow bicycles free on Western Carolina's campus last year, trusting that community members would ride the bikes to their campus destinations and then leave them for someone else to ride. Nine months later, a few of the community bicycles disappeared and some were intentionally damaged, but WCU Bike Club members persisted. They repeatedly repaired the original Yellow Bike Project bicycles and cobbled together 15 new ones from donated and used parts.

"We just realized to get this program established that we have to persevere even in the face of bikes going astray," said Holden. "Chopper," a yellow bicycle crafted from a donated Schwinn with a step-through frame and mismatched wheels, went missing earlier this year for about a month before reappearing, said Nathan Wilson, a sophomore construction management major from Asheville. Nicknamed for its resemblance to a chopper motorcycle, the bicycle was put together by Wilson from available parts. "I just love bikes, and anything to do with bikes, I will do," said Wilson. "When I was little, I just wanted to learn more and be able to control the bike. Now, it's such a stress reliever for me to ride or work on them."

What really keeps club members motivated is hearing fellow students say they rode a yellow bicycle for fun or because they needed to get across campus in a hurry. "A lot of people say, 'I really appreciate the yellow bike. I got to class on time,'" said Holden. "I am all for people getting into riding, and the Yellow Bike Project is a good way to introduce people to the sport."

To keep the project going, the club continues to accept donations of any bicycle and has been applying for funding to help purchase tires, chains, stickers and other items. They printed "Ride Yellow" T-shirts as a fundraiser, and still have a few for sale. In addition, they have been considering naming all of the bikes as a way to help track and personalize the bicycles, and then leave them for someone else to ride. Nine months later, a few of the community bicycles disappeared and some went missing earlier this year for about a month before reappearing, said Nathan Wilson, a sophomore construction management major from Asheville. Nicknamed for its resemblance to a chopper motorcycle, the bicycle was put together by Wilson from available parts. "I just love bikes, and anything to do with bikes, I will do," said Wilson. "When I was little, I just wanted to learn more and be able to control the bike. Now, it's such a stress reliever for me to ride or work on them."

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Curtain Call

WCU’s director of choral activities will retire after more than 30 years
By KRISTEN COOPER ’10

Although Robert Holquist decided to stop taking piano lessons at age 11, he could not stop playing the piano. And although Holquist retires next year as professor of music and director of choral activities at Western Carolina, music will continue to fill his life. The Wisconsin native plans not only to continue serving as minister of music at First Baptist Church in Sylva, but also may teach classes at WCU part time, judge music festivals and work at choral clinics.

“The two favorite things in my life have been working with people and making music,” said Holquist, honored for his service in April at a concert featuring more than 200 vocalists, most of them former students. “I’ve had a career that has combined those two things since 1967.”

A WCU faculty member since 1970, he teaches applied voice, choral methods and conducting, and conducts the Concert Choir, University Chorus and Early Music Ensemble, an a capella chorus of about a dozen members that performs at the annual Madrigal Dinners in December. What students say they appreciate about Holquist is the way he reaches out to them on a personal level. Courtney Allen, a senior music education major from Salisbury, said she was moved when Holquist shared with the Concert Choir that his brother, Neil, was dying after a four-year battle with cancer. As he conducted, his students could see that he was crying. “It was one of the most heartwrenching things I have ever seen, but I felt that he cared enough about us personally to tell us about his life,” said Allen.

She also admires how Holquist performs alongside his students. At last year’s Christmas concert in the Fine and Performing Arts Center, the audience became silent as he took his place in line to sing with his students, who were dressed in Elizabethan costumes. “You'll feel it’s a sign of respect,” Allen said. “When someone is just standing in front of you, telling you what to do, it can be intimidating. But if that person who has so much more experience than you thinks you are good enough to sing with, that’s pretty awesome.”

Holquist says his first love may be conducting, especially large works with choruses, orchestras and soloists, but that he also enjoys being part of the “formative musicianship” of junior and high school students. He has served as a clinician throughout the Southeast, a judge at choral and vocal festivals, a judging coordinator for the state Honors Chorus program and director of the 1992 N.C. All-State Chorus. Holquist also has been a leader with a state music educators association and was the North Carolina president for the American Choral Directors Association from 1987 to 1989.

In recognition of his contributions, a group of WCU students in May 2000 established the Robert A. Holquist Vocalist Scholarship Fund to assist the School of Music in maintaining a tradition of excellence in choral and vocal music. The scholarship goes to a student who is active in choral groups, in good academic standing and whose “whole heart is in the choral and vocal program,” said Holquist.

Robert Kehrberg, founding dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, described Holquist as a dedicated musician, great citizen and above all, an exciting teacher and mentor for students. “It has been a pleasure to work with him for the past 23 years,” said Kehrberg. “When I needed help, I could always count on Bob to be there and assist in whatever capacity asked. In fact, I do not remember him ever turning down a request. It is faculty and musicians with this attitude that Western Carolina’s reputation in the arts is built on. His presence is always welcoming, and his love of music and teaching continues to inspire me.”

Robert Holquist directed a concert in April to celebrate his retirement of more than 30 years with WCU (top left). Holquist, a regular performer at WCU’s seasonal Madrigal events (top right), directs the University Chorus, Early Music Ensemble and Concert Choir, pictured in 1991 (bottom right).

On Another Note

Through the years, Robert Holquist – or “Doc,” as his former singers call him – has had an indelible impact on his musical students and surrounding community. Here’s a sample of what some of his students have to say, compiled by Lynn Hotaling ’72 MAEd ’80, editor of The Sylva Herald.

“Doc was one of the most influential mentors I had. His zest for life is encouraging, and his smile is contagious. His passion for music is great but is surpassed by his passion to invest in the lives of his students.”

- Sarah Endley Gilbert ’83

“He’s the reason I started singing and why I teach choir today. I was in college as an instrumental major, and Doc kept pushing me to come and sing for him to audition for concert choir. I sang with Doc for two years, and when I graduated and a choral position was open, I knew I was ready for it. He is still willing to come over each year to help get my kids ready for state festival, and I’m still learning from him today.”

- Robert Jessup ’05, choral director, Franklin High School

“He was the very first person I ever spoke to from the school and is a big reason why I even came to Western Carolina in the first place. His warm, friendly approach and mannerisms sealed the deal. Doc is an amazing and gifted director who can take the most random group of people and turn them into a work of art.”

- Ashley Setzer ’10

“There was no time to waste in the 50 minutes of the class period. There was no skipping over pieces, as I’d experienced in other choirs. Dad would stop us time and again to correct phrasing, draw our attention to volume changes or correct wrong notes. Mind you, there are all things that should be paid attention to when making music, but it’s not the case with every conductor. Many of Dad’s former students are still in contact with him and consider him a friend and one of their most beloved teachers, and I am proud of the example he has set for his students.”

- Amber Holquist Barber, Holquist’s daughter, who transferred to N.C. State
A son with Down syndrome inspires his mother to become a groundbreaking professor in special education

By TERESA KILLIAN TATE

When Billy Schulz asked, “Mom, how long you know me?” his mother had to think. “Of course, I’ve known him all of his life, but it seems as if I’ve known him all of mine,” said Jane B. Schulz, a retired professor of special education from Western Carolina University and pioneer in the field. “So much of who I am came from knowing him.”

Jane was a working mother of four in the 1960s when she was told her son Billy, who has Down syndrome, was not eligible to start school until he was 8, although his sister could enroll at age 5. “That made no sense to me, so I decided to teach,” said Jane. Without a college degree, she was hired to teach kindergarten at a school that allowed Billy to come to work with her. In a neighboring kindergarten class, Billy had fun and learned such skills as taking turns, waiting in line and going to the bathroom during scheduled times. The experience was one of their first in what would become known as “mainstreaming” – integrating a child with special needs into a conventional classroom, and the inclusive concept would become Jane’s mission. “We were pioneers together,” said Jane, co-author of a landmark book in the field titled “Mainstreaming Exceptional Students: A Guide for Classroom Teachers.” “All of us have to take chances, and it is scary. But you have to be proactive. It starts with attitude.”

On A Mission

After discovering she loved teaching, Jane went back to school herself so she could work in special education. As she earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees, she gained experience not only with teaching but also with conducting intelligence assessments and research, and coordinating special education programs. At times, she was surprised to realize she knew more than her professors. One said there were no girls with Down syndrome; Jane knew several who were in school with Billy. Another said children with mental disabilities had no creativity; Jane came home to find Billy riding a horse made from an upside-down chair and blanket.

At Western Carolina, Jane helped implement Special Olympics on campus. One year after joining the faculty, she was appointed to develop a statewide program to train teachers of students who had mental disabilities and were assessed as “trainable.” In addition to co-authoring the book about mainstreaming, which is now in its fourth edition, Jane was co-editor of “Bridging the Family-Professional Gap” and author of “Parents and Professionals in Special Education.” “I’m a level of authenticity, quality, and sensitivity that is rare. Her students adored her, as I do,” said Ann Turnbull, a distinguished professor of special education at the University of Kansas and director of the Beach Center on Disability. “I am confident that the legacy she left continues to not just survive but thrive.” Jane Schulz’s latest book, “Grown Man Now,” is a memoir that explores the challenges and the victories the family faced, how they took care of Billy and how Billy has gone on to take care of them. She continues writing today with weekly installments on her blog, grownmannow.blogspot.com.
“Grown man now” (cover shown opposite page, top left) after a Billy Schulz signs copies of are blue, Sharon is so sweet and Mary is too.” “We always miss him. They could hear him sing and recite poetry as he members Shirley Beck, Mary Hill and Sharon McLaurin still miss him. They could hear him sing and recite poetry as he worked at his desk, rhymes such as, “Roses are red, violets are blue, Sharon is so sweet and Mary is too.” “We always

Finding a Niche

Months later, Billy moved into a trailer close enough to his parents for safety and companionship and far enough for independence. He was excited to land a job at WCU’s Hunter Library, processing books and inserting security strips into public affairs – a job he held for 21 years. Hunter Library staff members Shirley Beck, Mary Hill and Sharon McLaurin still miss him. They could hear him sing and recite poetry as he worked at his desk, rhymes such as, “Roses are red, violets are blue, Sharon is so sweet and Mary is too.” “We always

Inspiring Others

After Jane, retired from full-time teaching at WCU, and after her husband’s death, she, Billy and her mother moved together to Kingsport, Tenn., to be closer to Billy’s sister, Mary, and her family. Billy works three days a week at Food City bagging groceries and is active in his church. Billy and Jane return to WCU on occasion and have presented together at the invitation of David Westling, the WCU Adelaide Worth Daniels Distinguished Professor of Special Education.

“Jane was very committed to the idea that Billy would have a very normal and typical family life,” said Westling. “As much as she could provide that and make sure that happened, she did. I want to make sure the students I have who are going to be teachers can see that if they and others do really good work, and work well with families and support families, that this is the kind of outcome that is possible.”

Before a packed classroom, Billy clicked from slide to slide, from images of him as a toddler pulling toilet paper off the roll to him dressed up for prom. “My life is down syndrome and my mom’s upstairs,” said Billy of the apartment in his mother’s home. “Every Thursday, I take the trash up driveway.” he says of one of his chores. When Jane talked about a good friend of Billy’s who developed Alzheimer’s, Billy said he was sad that his friend Steve wasn’t known anymore. “It breaks my heart,” he said. “It hurts me a lot.”

Perrie Ramey, a WCU student in Westling’s class, said Jane was very committed to the idea that Billy would have a very normal and typical family life, and that she knew that Billy was going to be a teacher. “As much as she could provide that and make sure that happened, she did. I want to make sure the students I have who are going to be teachers can see that if they and others do really good work, and work well with families and support families, that this is the kind of outcome that is possible.”

Presenting ... Billy!

With the remote control of the projector, he shows slides of his home, his workplace, his church, and his family. “We always know how to play them – pause for laughs, times his punch lines.

“This is me at Weight Watchers. An’ I loss 30 pounds!”

The audience cheers. Lowering his gaze and his voice, Billy adds: “An’ this I gain it all back.”

The crowd laughs uproariously, identifying with his struggle.

“If we get uneasy when you are coming,” said Ramey. “The audience is so intimidating, and hearing her story encouraged us to be in this place, speaking to all these people?”

A tremendous influence on me and the entire family, Billy inspires sensitivity and determination in his siblings. The desire to obtain the best life possible for him sent me back to college to learn and to teach. Billy enhanced my career at every step.

Billy is not all sunshine and light. He has fears and anxieties that present him with overwhelming challenges; he has many weird and puzzling behaviors. But far outweighing those behaviors are his goodness, his genuineness and his talent for loving unconditionally.

Billy and I are like beans and corn planted together in an open field – one supplying the nutrient, the other providing the support. We believe that if you want to bring about change you have to be that change.
Serving the Forgotten Children

By TERESA KILLIAN TATE

When Carl Dan Killian Sr. became head of the education and psychology department in 1935, Western Carolina had no special education program. That changed as Killian became increasingly concerned with underachieving students at public schools across Western North Carolina. Some had the ability to do well in school but were not. Some labeled “intellectually retarded” were working “far below their level,” wrote Killian in a retrospective of his 33 years at WCU. He called them the “forgotten children.” As Western Carolina programs for intellectually gifted children and children with learning and intellectual disabilities developed under his leadership, so did the university’s curriculum in special education. “We try to develop good work habits and study habits, and to challenge each student to do his best,” wrote Killian, who colleague Jay Hickes called “Mr. Special Education.”

Such was the spirit in which Western Carolina’s program designed to prepare special education teachers developed – a service-oriented, hands-on program that director Lisa Bloom says continues to grow rapidly today. In response to the critical need at the state and national level for special education teachers, WCU’s program has gone from an average enrollment of 30 undergraduate and 15 graduate students in the last 20 years.

“We have an innovative program that helps teachers not only bring what has been learned from years of research in education to life in the classroom, but also be innovators and researchers themselves for the benefit of children and youth with disabilities,” said Bloom. “For a large number of students in public schools, for various reasons, learning is a sometimes painful, often unsuccessful process. Special educators offer these students persistence, hard work and a philosophy that all children can learn. They are the masters of making accommodations and modifications in classroom practices so that children and youth can be successful academically as well as socially.”

The special education program at Western Carolina is one of the oldest in the state and has a distinguished reputation. In 1951, the college began offering summer courses for elementary and high school students with intellectual disabilities or difficulty with reading. In 1958, the program expanded to serve gifted students. In the mid-1960s, Western Carolina won grants to institute a day program for children with intellectual disabilities. “With an unrelenting sense of mission, Dr. Killian awakened an awareness throughout the educational systems of the state and nation of the special academic needs of exceptional children, and from these efforts stemmed the development of new techniques for the training of those who teach the gifted and the mentally retarded,” wrote the WCU board of trustees in a resolution passed in 1970, after Killian’s death.

The WCU special education program continued to grow in both size and stature, attracting faculty who were leaders in the field and who led state and regional special education organizations and efforts. In 1996, WCU’s program became the first at the institution to gain funding for an endowed distinguished professorship. A gift of $668,000 from businesswoman and philanthropist Adelaide Daniels Key, matched by $334,000 in state funds, established the Adelaide Worth Daniels Distinguished Professorship in Special Education. Key said the professorship was important to her because of her experience as a child. She could not sit still and was labeled “bad” or “stupid” because no one yet had heard of attention deficit disorder, she said. “I still turn words around when I get tired,” said Key at the professorship announcement. “I count on my fingers every day. I’m glad I’ve got fingers to count, but I proudly say I am not stupid. It hurts to be called stupid. It is my hope that this professorship will create teachers who will come away from WCU understanding that different isn’t stupid.”

David Westling, one of the nation’s foremost special education authorities, joined the faculty in 1997 as the first distinguished professor of special education. In addition to teaching at WCU, Westling founded the Teacher Support Program to assist special education teachers throughout the region; the Office of Special Education in the U.S. Department of Education identified it as a “program of national distinction.” He has helped win more than $3 million in grants for WCU’s special education programs, ranging from the TSP to providing financial assistance to students pursuing degrees in special education. His recent publications include a second edition of “Special Education for Today’s Teachers: An Introduction” and “Inclusion: Effective Practices for All Students.” Program alumni such as Kathy Norris MAEd ’00, who works for Cherokee Central Schools, say they apply what they learned at WCU about creating community in the classroom to their work. Jennifer A. Dilberto ’96, now an assistant professor of special education at Greensboro College, says earning her degree at Western Carolina helped her fulfill a childhood dream. Dilberto was diagnosed in third grade with dyslexia, a learning disability, and struggled with reading and writing. Although she had some outstanding teachers, she had others who did not understand her needs and struggles. “I knew at that point that I wanted to be a teacher who would provide students with disabilities the education they needed to be successful,” said Dilberto. What she valued most from her experience at WCU was the variety of hands-on and service opportunities with children of all ages and a range of disabilities. “The highlights of my educational experiences at Western Carolina were the fieldwork placements,” said Dilberto. “I believe this was a real strength of the program.”
GETTING THE GAME
Female faculty members led the evolution of women’s athletics at WCU
By JILL INGRAM MA ’08

These days, when Western Carolina’s women’s athletics teams regularly win Southern Conference championships, it’s difficult to imagine that not so long ago, competitive sports for females were loosely organized and depended on the desire of coaches and players to compete.

Faculty member Betty Peele arrived in Cullowhee in 1963, fresh from her own student experience at East Carolina University. “I wanted so badly to play when I was in college, and there was nothing for us,” said Peele.

Female students could participate in “play days,” one-day events hosted at various schools in different sports. When Floyd Siewert, then head of the department of health, physical education and recreation, asked Peele to take a team of volleyball players to East Tennessee State University for a play day, she said yes. Peele ultimately went on to coach WCU’s first female teams in volleyball, tennis, field hockey, softball and golf.

Peele was one of a core group of female faculty members determined to provide more athletic opportunities for female students. Another was Helen Hartshorn ’44, who directed the women’s intramural program for 21 years and officiated women’s basketball. Helen Hartshorn for involving WCU players from that era achieved lasting success in women’s athletic. “I point to multiple state championships. She played volleyball, basketball and softball at WCU and began coaching as an assistant in the university’s volleyball program.

Nora Lynn Finch ’70 MAEd ’71 was a four-sport athlete inducted into WCU’s Hall of Fame in 1991. She spent 31 years with N.C. State University athletics, leaving to become associate commissioner for women’s basketball operations and senior woman administrator for the Atlantic Coast Conference. “My time at Western Carolina definitely put me on a path,” Finch said. Her first job was with Wake Forest University coaching the same four sports she lettered in: basketball, field hockey, tennis and volleyball.

Peele and Finch were among the initiators of the women’s basketball tournament, a position she maintained through seven tournaments, effectively laying the groundwork for the highest level of women’s collegiate basketball. “I point directly to Western Carolina and credit Betty Peele, Betty Westmoreland Suhre and Helen Hartshorn for involving me. It was key,” she said.

The founding coaches also established themselves in women’s athletics. In 1971, Suhre and Peele helped organize the 16-team National Women’s Invitational Basketball Tournament in Cullowhee. Neither coach ever experienced a losing season. In 1984, Peele, who held numerous committee positions affiliated with women’s athletics, was named WCU’s assistant athletics director for women’s sports.

Suhre vigorously promoted basketball. She served as president of the state chapter of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, which began governing U.S. women’s athletics in 1971, and she led the selection of players and coaches in women’s basketball for the 1975 World Games in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Persons’ gymnastics teams won four straight state championships in the 1970s. She served with state and national female athletics associations and was active in the selection of gymnastics coaches and athletes for the 1977 World Games in Sofia, Bulgaria. As AIAW state chapter president, Persons represented North Carolina in Washington to help pass the 1972 legislation known as Title IX, forbidding discrimination of any person based on sex from participating in programs or activities that receive federal funding.

Hartshorn pursued a passion for recreation and education for individuals with special needs, organizing a summer day camp and directing the Special Olympics regional games. She was the founding director of WCU’s community health education program.

The AIAW disbanded in the early 1980s, with the NCAA assuming governance of most collegiate-level women’s athletics programs. WCU joined the Southern Conference in 1976. The first SoCon championship for women, in basketball, was in 1984.

Both women’s and men’s athletics experienced change upon joining the Southern Conference, when WCU and other schools began shedding programs for which there were no conference-sponsored championships, such as gymnastics, field hockey and swimming. But WCU’s pioneers in women’s athletics appreciate the advances and recognize the significance of their roles. “At church, we talk a lot about pioneering things,” said Suhre, an associate pastor at New Covenant Church in Clyde. “Looking back at what happened at WCU, I think it’s the same thing. I think I was a pioneer.”
Track athlete Cordell Livingston impresses fans and competitors alike by fighting through pain

By TYLER NORRIS GOODE

By the time Western Carolina photographer Mark Hackett ’87 started reviewing images he’d just shot of the men’s 400-meter hurdles, all racers had crossed the finish line at the Southern Conference outdoor track and field championships April 25.

“Oh had they!”

“All of a sudden, I heard someone shout: ‘Don’t take down those hurdles yet; there’s still a competitor on the track,” Hackett said. Standing near the finish line, he looked past the overeager equipment mover who had prematurely snagged a hurdle to see a lone figure slowly making his way around Appalachian State’s track.

The athlete with a heavily bandaged upper right arm was WCU’s Cordell Livingston, a freshman whose shoulder popped out of place during the triple jump finals earlier Sunday and again on his first leap of the 400 hurdles. Badly as it hurt, Livingston knew the Catamounts needed every point if they had any hope of catching ASU for the team title.

So the freshman slowly navigated the track, tears streaming down his face as fans chanted encouragement. He stopped to gingerly step over each obstacle in his path to earn a single point by finishing eighth. “God get me through this,” Livingston said he prayed silently as he rounded the curve.

He described the pain as “by far the worst” of his life. During his last triple jump, the shoulder dislocated, not to mention it rotated out of the socket, he said. “They put my shoulder back in place and they wrapped me because the point where it rotated out of the socket, he said. “They said, ‘You know I would want you to be there,’ and I would expect you to be there.”

“Then I was watching the Olympics and the young lady from Canada [bronze-medalist Joannie Rochette] who was doing figure-skating. Her mother had just passed away of a heart attack. I saw an interview with her, and they asked her why she decided to do it. She said, ‘Because my mother wanted me to do it.’

“That made me think: ‘My dad wanted me to do that. So I’m going to go do that for him.’”

His arrival in Clemson inspired the Catamounts.

One day before the track team coached by Danny Williamson ’84 MAEd ’86 was to compete at the Southern Conference indoor meet in late February in Clemson, S.C., his father Roy died at the age of 74. The elder Williamson, diagnosed with stage 4 bone cancer, was on life support, but he’d made it clear he did not want his son to miss the meet. Still, in the hours after his father’s death, WCU’s longtime track coach wrestled with whether to go.

“Or had they?”

Regardless of the team’s final outcome, coach Danny Williamson “84 MAEd ’86 sounded proud describing Livingston’s perseverance.

“That’s just Cordell. He’s willing to do anything for his team, and that was just him being himself,” Williamson said. “He’s a competitor, and he wants to do anything he can to help his team win. I’m pretty sure he had listened to what we’ve always said: ‘If something goes wrong, just get up and finish.”

FATHER KNOWS BEST

Danny Williamson weathers the loss of his dad to inspire his track teams at the conference championships

By TYLER NORRIS GOODE

“We knew what was going on from the beginning because he tells us mostly everything that goes on with him,” said sprinter Jane’t Carothers. “He put his whole heart and soul into us and developing and winning. The fact he still came to conference and still had to get ready for his father’s funeral, he deserved it. So we put everything we had into making him happy and giving him something to be proud of.”

Led by Carothers’ two first-place finishes (200 and 400 meters), the Catamounts scored 174.5 points for a convincing first-place finish ahead of second-place Appalachian (122). The men exceeded expectations and came within two points of eventual-champion Appalachian (209-207). Williamson was named Women’s Coach of the Year and Men’s Co-Coach of the Year.

“It is a good feeling to know that I went, that my dad wanted me to be there, and then that we were able to get those kinds of results on top of it,” said Williamson, whose teams have won a combined 18 championships in his 25 years.

Roy Williamson’s funeral was one day after the indoor meet ended. Afterward, Danny Williamson credited his father with teaching him the formula for success. “He always worked so hard,” Williamson said. “He would be away all week long, then he’d come home on the weekends and work hard at home, too. He just taught me that the way you’re successful — by hard work. There are no shortcuts.”

FAther KnoWs Best

Dannyp Williamson ’84 MAEd ’86 puts his heart and soul into coaching, his team says.

Reprinted in edited format with permission of the Asheville Citizen-Times.
Season tickets are on sale now for the Catamounts' five Saturday home football games this year at E.J. Whitmire Stadium. WCU opens the season with Tusculum on Sept. 11. The Catamounts host their first Southern Conference home game of the year with Chattanooga on Sept. 25 (Family Weekend and Mountain Heritage Day). The Sanford Bulldogs come to town Oct. 9 (Homecoming) before rival Appalachian State returns for the annual Battle of the Old Mountain Jug on Oct. 23 (Senior Day and the WCU Halftime of Fame ceremony will be Nov. 13, when the Catamounts host Georgia Southern.

Season ticket prices for “chair-back reserved” seats are $92 for adults, $52 for youth (ages 3-12). The “purple reserved” seats are $82 for adults, $47 for youth. Also available are “Lowe's Home Improvement Family Zone” season tickets for $168, which includes admission for two adults and two youth. As in the past, Catamount Club members receive priority seating, admission into the “Purple Zone” tailgating and priority parking. For more information about the Catamount Club, call 828-227-3047 or log onto catamountsports.com.

Single-game tickets will be available for purchase Monday, Aug. 2, with the exception of the Appalachian State game. Tickets to the game with the Mountaineers go on sale to the general public Sept. 26. Purchasing a season ticket is the only way to guarantee a seat to each scheduled game this season at E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field.

Sports Authority
Southern Conference honors longtime athletics administrator Steve White
By DANIEL HOOKER ‘01

Former Western Carolina athletics administrator Steve White ’67 is among 12 recipients of the Southern Conference’s Distinguished Service Award for 2010. Each member institution selects an honoree based on that person’s contribution to the institution, and winners were recognized at the Southern Conference Honors Dinner in Hilton Head Island, S.C., in June.

White has nearly a half-century of involvement with and service to Western Carolina University in a variety of capacities ranging from undergraduate student assistant to sports information director and department historian, from associate athletics director to radio network personality, and finally to director of the school’s letter-winner’s club. White served more than four decades in the athletics department. He officially took over as sports information director in 1970, a position he held until 1998. White wrote millions of words publicizing WCU student-athletes, coaches and teams, helping 35 football, basketball and baseball players to attain All-America honors; hundreds to become All-Southern Conference; and several football and baseball teams to achieve national rankings.

During his storied career, White witnessed more than 400 consecutive Catamount football games, one of the longest consecutive-games streaks in the profession. He also was an eight-time recipient of the Football Writers Association of America’s Outstanding Press Box Service Award.

White initially retired from full-time duty at Western Carolina in 1998 but remained active with the Catamount Sports Network, providing color commentary on football, men’s basketball and baseball broadcasts until 2007. He then took over as the director of the Cat’s “W” Club, an association for former Western Carolina student-athletes and letter-winners, a position he held until April 2010. The Distinguished Service Award program was started in 2002 as a way for the Southern Conference to recognize those individuals from its member institutions who have contributed to all aspects of the university.

Steve White ’67, shown at a recent baseball game, is retired director of sports information at WCU, where he is known as a “walkin’, talkin’ history book” about Catamount athletics.

Late, Great LeClair
The inspirational life of former Western Carolina baseball player and coach Keith LeClair ’89, the subject of a newly published book, was celebrated in April at Childress Field/Hennon Stadium. Journalist Bethany Bradsher spent more than a year writing “Coaching Third: The Keith LeClair Story,” which chronicles LeClair’s battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease). Bradsher spoke with more than 60 people about LeClair’s childhood in New Hampshire, his college years in Cullowhee, and his triumphs and trials in Greenville and at East Carolina University.

“While Keith’s story is marked by sadness, it is also characterized by laughter in the most surprising places, and lives that will forever be more generous, less petty and more focused on faith because they intersected the journey of Keith LeClair,” wrote Bradsher, who signed copies of her book (below) prior to the Catamounts’ 8-2 win over Wofford. LeClair’s son, J.D., threw out the first pitch before the game (left).
The Pride of the Mountains Marching Band is seeking support to help fund its trip to the 2011 Rose Parade

By BILL STUDENCMPA'10

2,303. That is the number of miles between Cullowhee and Pasadena, Calif., the destination for WCU’s Pride of the Mountains Marching Band and home to the annual Tournament of Roses Parade. To help the nearly 400 members of the band make the journey to the other side of the North American continent in late December, the university has launched a series of fundraising activities that are under way this summer.

Each marching band member who plans to participate in the five-day trip to California is being asked to contribute $945 to cover a portion of his or her expenses. That’s more than half of the estimated cost of $1,700 per student, said Bob Buckner ’87, director of the Pride of the Mountains.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience not only for our band members, but also for our university,” Buckner said. “The Rose Parade is seen by millions of people from around the world, and the Pride of the Mountains will be serving as marching musical ambassadors for Western Carolina. It’s a role we accept as a high honor, and we are ready to take on the challenges – both logistical and financial – of transporting our students, their instruments and other equipment to California.”

As part of the band’s efforts, with the theme “Help Send the Pride to Pasadena,” band members are mailing postcards to family members, friends and neighbors seeking contributions to help them meet their individual fundraising targets. “Each dollar contributed will get a Pride of the Mountains Marching Band member two miles closer to Pasadena,” said Matt Henley ’93 MAEd ’95, assistant band director. “Like the old saying goes, a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. In this case, a journey of 2,303 miles begins as our band members fan out across their home communities seeking support this summer.”

In addition, the students of the Pride of the Mountains are selling specially designed, limited edition lapel pins emblazoned with the official Rose Parade and Catamount logos, and purple rubber wristbands adorned with the phrase “Pride to Pasadena.” Lapel pins are available from band members through Sept. 1, at a cost of $7. The wristbands, similar to the Livestrong bands made famous by cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong, are available only from band members through Sept. 1, at a cost of $7. The wristbands, similar to the Livestrong bands made famous by cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong, are available only from band members, at a cost of $3, as long as supplies last.

Also in the works are multiple designs for T-shirts and golf shirts, including a limited edition design available only from Pride of the Mountains members. The campus Clothing and Gift Shop will be selling selected Rose Parade items, with 50 percent of net profit going to the “Pride to Pasadena” campaign.

Band members say they will be working hard over the summer to help raise the necessary dollars. “Fundraising is so important for this trip because without it several members would have trouble providing for the full cost,” said Kevin Kimbrough, a trombone player from Marietta, Ga. “Also, considering that we are college students, money is pretty tight for all of us. With the way the economy has been lately, it is essential for friends and family to chip in, and with all of the assorted fundraising opportunities, there is likely to be one that would interest anyone.”

Billie Jeanne Curns, clarinet player and staff coordinator, said the band’s selection for the Rose Parade represents the culmination of years of hard work and dedication by band members past and present. “I am so proud to be part of an organization that has been chosen to be ambassadors for WCU,” said Curns, a music education major from Hayesville.

“I believe that the Pride of the Mountains will highlight to the world how great Western Carolina University is. I remember the first time I saw the Pride of the Mountains marching band when I was in the seventh grade. I knew from that day that I would graduate high school, go to WCU and join this band. Words cannot express how much this band has given to me throughout my collegiate career, and I cannot wait to march in front of billions of people wearing the purple and gold that I love.”

Kimbrough, a senior music education major, said participating in the parade will be an incredible capstone before he begins student-teaching in the spring. “Playing as a part of this marching band for half of the world to watch is really a great feeling. I know that our band will represent Western Carolina very well in the parade next year, and that is really a great feeling. I know that our band will represent Western Carolina very well in the parade next year, and that is really a great feeling. I know that our band will represent Western Carolina very well in the parade next year, and that is really a great feeling.”
Glenn Marlow Elementary students and staff have always known they have the best principal in the state. So the only one surprised when Jan King ‘92 was chosen as the 2010 Wachovia North Carolina Principal of the Year was King herself. “We knew she was great,” said Natalie Stiles ‘85 MAEd ‘00, Glenn Marlow special education teacher. “And now everyone else does too.”

King was named Henderson County Principal of the Year and then was chosen for the regional title. The eight regional principals of the year were honored during an April ceremony in Cary, ending with the selection of King as the best principal in the state. “I was very surprised, to put it mildly,” King said hours later as she headed home. “It’s exciting, but it will be a fun and exciting challenge to play a part in some of the exciting things going on in our state,” King said.

Superintendent Stephen Page ’68 MA ’73 EdS ’75 said he knew King would take the title. “I was not surprised. The minute they chose her and she became Region 8 Principal of the Year, I said this gal can win it all,” he said. “I say that not just because I wanted her to win, but because I really think she has those kind of attributes that make her a good candidate, and I think they recognized that.”

Page said he called the school to share the news, but Marlow staff had already seen the press release posted by the state Department of Public Instruction. They told students and sent a phone message to parents. At Glenn Marlow, the news brought a smile and cheers to students and staff.

“This is recognition of Western North Carolina. We’ve never been recognized. It means so much because she worked so hard,” said Janice Goode, a fourth-grade teacher. “One of the things I’ve heard other people say, and I totally agree with, is whenever she’s talking to you, she makes you feel like you’re the best teacher at the school,” said Teresa Lancaster, a resource teacher. “She makes everyone feel special.”

“We’re very excited,” said Jessica Hudgins, a fifth-grade teacher. “We think she’s going to represent our area. It’s quite an accomplishment for a principal. We’re proud of her.”

Her fellow school personnel aren’t the only ones who think King is a worthy recipient of the honor – so do those with children who attend Glen Marlow. “I’ve known her for a few years, and I think it’s wonderful she got it,” said Laura Chalfin, a grandparent with a first-grade grandchild at the school. “She deserved it.”

King said the award is really for her students, staff and parents. There are many administrators who wake up every morning excited about going to work, she said, and it will be an honor to represent them as well. King said the selection process, which includes creating a portfolio and a school visit, was very reflective. “It forces you to take a second look at your teaching philosophy and really your school philosophy,” she said.

King has been principal at Glenn Marlow for the past three years, her first position as principal. For the past 17 years, she has worked in the Henderson County school system. She attended Peace College and Western Carolina, where she received a bachelor’s degree in social science education. Her student teaching was done in Henderson County, and she has never wanted to leave.

King has taught at all levels, from elementary to high school. In Henderson County, she’s taught at Dana Elementary, Apple Valley Middle, West Henderson High, Hendersonville Middle, Bruce Drysdale Elementary and Edneyville Elementary. She also served as a high school instructional coach for the four high schools and Balfour Education Center. She was an assistant principal at Hendersonville High.

As principal of the year, King receives $3,000 for her school and $3,000 for personal use.

By JESSICA GOODMAN

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By JESSICA GOODMAN
Frustration with local forecasts became the kernel of an ever-expanding idea now known as Local Yokel Weather, a weather information and forecasting service for Cullowhee, Sylva and Cashiers that Preston Jacobsen ’09 began developing when he was a Western Carolina student.

“During winter months, I took a lot of interest in the snowfall in the area and began to do some friendly betting with my friends on how much snow we might get with each upcoming storm,” said Jacobsen, who recently graduated from WCU with a degree in environmental science and now is a student in an atmospheric sciences program at the University of North Carolina at Asheville while working as a sustainability technician at Haywood Community College. “Our friendly game soon turned into a hobby and fueled my passion for weather.”

In 2007, Jacobsen purchased his first weather station – equipment that monitors rain, humidity, temperatures, wind gusts and other data – and installed it in Sylva. Within a year, Jacobsen bought a station for Cashiers. Jacobsen soon decided to create a website to share the weather data he was gathering and his localized weather predictions. He worked with a computer science student at WCU, and the website was up and running by June 2008. He then purchased a third weather station for a Cullowhee site.

The name for the service, Local Yokel Weather, came to Jacobsen while he was driving to a summer job in Cashiers.

“I kept thinking about how I wanted the site to be a tool for local residents,” he said. “I was listening to bluegrass, and I heard the word ‘yokel.’ As soon as I got to work, I looked up the definition, and ‘yokel’ means a local musician. From there, it all just seemed to click.”

Local Yokel Weather became an official business in 2009 and today offers not only weather updates for Cullowhee, Sylva and Cashiers at locallyokelweather.com but also weather-related explanations such as why the leaves change color, an e-mail address to submit weather-related questions and videos documenting interesting weather activity. Visitors also can sign up to receive a text message each morning with Local Yokel Weather’s daily forecast. In addition, the service recently began to share information on Facebook and Twitter, and Jacobsen is exploring the possibility of creating a network of weather stations across Jackson, Macon and Swain counties. His next steps will be to construct weather stations in Dillsboro and Tuckasegee.

“His commitment and drive have resulted in the formation of his own niche as one of Western North Carolina’s great cultural icons and as a beloved son of the mountains.”

Marc Pruett ’74 addresses the commencement crowd (above) after being presented with an honorary doctorate in recognition of his prowess on the banjo, as seen at WCU’s annual Mountain Heritage Day (below).

Joni Bugden-Storie, assistant professor of natural resource conservation and management, said she was impressed with Jacobsen’s passion for weather and climate.

“His commitment and drive have resulted in the formation and management of Local Yokel. This is a good example to share with students to emphasize the power of an individual to have a significant impact in his or her community,” Bugden-Storie said.

For more information about Local Yokel Weather, check out locallyokelweather.com or e-mail Jacobsen at locallyokelweather@yahoo.com.
Roy Tharpe ‘64 estimates he has witnessed or assisted with more than 2,500 launches, everything from communications satellites to space shuttles. “I still get butterflies,” said Tharpe, who began his nearly 50 years of service to the space program in 1963 as a data analyst. Probably none were as intense, though, as the near-miss with a rocket that inspired him to work for NASA. As a Western Carolina student on summer break, he had a job with a surveying team working on a launchpad. “At that point in time, we were allowed to be within four miles of the launchpad,” said Tharpe. “We were taking grade elevations when they launched a Titan rocket. When it lifted off, I noticed the pointy end wasn’t going up. It was going sideways, straight at me. It was no more than a mile and a half from us when it exploded. The heat wave hit me and almost knocked me over. Stuff was flying everywhere. That’s when I decided I needed to continue to do well in math so I could help these guys.”

Tharpe returned in the fall to Western Carolina, where he and his brother, Danny Tharpe ‘64, were on the basketball team. Danny played point guard, starting for four years, leading the Catamounts to three 20-win seasons and the championship game in a national tournament. Roy played benchwarmer, he said lightheartedly. “I was more studious than athletic,” said Tharpe, who double majored in psychology and mathematics. As a psychology major, he conducted experiments including whether images such as concentric circles or centerfolds stayed longer on a person’s retina after different amounts of exposure. As a mathematics major, he used Western Carolina’s brand new IBM computer to process the data from his psychology research. The experience prepared him for his first job at NASA assessing the psychology of astronauts. “We did not realize then how the accomplishments of the Apollo program would affect the quality of life on Earth,” said Tharpe. “The focus was how to live off the moon so that one day we can colonize on the moon or go to Mars,” he said.

In 2007, he became director of space and science at Northrop Grumman, where he was later appointed president of Space Gateway Support. The company is charged with providing protective services at Kennedy Space Center, from around-the-clock security guards to SWAT teams ready to respond in the event of an aborted launch.

In honor of his many achievements with the space program, he was recently bestowed the National Space Club’s Dr. Kurt H. Debus award, named for Kennedy Space Center’s first director to honor significant contributions in Florida to American aerospace efforts. U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida said it was prestigious award that “could not have a more outstanding and fitting recipient.”

“The Soviets shocked us with Sputnik, and they shocked us again in ’61 by putting up (Soviet cosmonaut Yuri) Gagarin,” said Nelson. “The great space race was on, and Roy became a part of it right here in his native Brevard County. I’m so proud of him.”
The magazine of Western Carolina University Summer 2010

Class Notes

HAPPY RETURNS

It’s reunion season at Western Carolina. More than 100 people attended April’s African-American Alumni and Friends Reunion, an event open to all WCU alumni and friends and anyone who wants to celebrate diversity at WCU. Joe Cocker, former chair of the WCU board of trustees, delivers a welcoming address (top left). At bottom left, Marty Ramsey ’85 (center), director of alumni relations, welcomes reunion chair and Alumni Associated board of directors member Ed Holland ’75 (far left) and former Judge James Beaty ‘71. The Office of Alumni Affairs is gearing up for the July 23-25 Purple and Gold Reunion (top right and bottom right), with all alumni who graduated between 1930 and 1979 invited. For information on alumni reunions, visit alumni.wcu.edu or call 877.440.9990.

1985

Thomas Lane Calhoun, a colonel in the Army Reserve, deployed to Iraq in 2006 with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, as part of a team advising Iraqi soldiers. In April 2007, Calhoun led a convoy through a series of battles in the streets of Baghdad that resulted in the rescue of 10 Iraq soldiers who were trapped under heavy enemy fire in an abandoned building. Calhoun said that without intervention, the Iraqi battalion would have been overrun. “I'm about the only one who could do that happen,” said Calhoun, who earned a Bronze Star with Valor for combat bravery.

1987

Dr. Richard Rogers has played basketball with the Adult Basketball League in Destin, Fla., for 19 years, and more than 15 years for the same team. Rogers, who played basketball for the Catamounts before graduating from Wake Forest University, won the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools’ Excellence in Mentoring Prize. A 35-year veteran of education, Schram has taught a range of courses in Appalachian State University’s Reich College of Education, has received a UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, a recognition that carries a $7,500 cash prize. A 20-year veteran of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) stationed at Fort Bragg, Civil Affairs soldiers identify critical requirements of local citizens in war or disaster situations, while Psychological Operations soldiers convince foreign audiences to take action favorable to the United States and its allies. The command’s mission is to organize, train and equip Army Reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces. “Civil Affairs is the direction I feel the Army should be going,” Kasun said. “The Army is no longer involved in strictly kinetic operations.” Kasun deployed to Baghdad in 2005 and Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2006.

Electoral college

Alumni board winners are announced

The polls have closed, and the pundits at The Magazine of Western Carolina University are ready to project the winners of the 2010 Alumni Association board of directors election.

Elected to serve terms expiring in 2012 are:


From District 2: Jeffery A. Davis ’92 of Cornelius. District 2 consists of the N.C. counties of Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Randolph, Richmond, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Union and Yadkin.


From District 4: Dana Jones ’99 of Ocean Isle Beach. District 4 consists of the N.C. counties of Beaufort, Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Dare, Duplin, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington and Wayne.

From District 5: Robin Farson Pate ’97 of Knoxville, Tenn. District 5 consists of all states except North Carolina.

1962

Paul Morrow has initiated Computers for Kids, a program through Allatoona United Methodist Church in Georgia, that collects computers and recycles them, frees of charge, for students to use to accelerate their reading habits.

1976

Rick Fulen has joined Catawba athletics as the business officer. Fulen played two years of minor league baseball with the Detroit Tigers organization and then taught psychology at Tuscola High School and coached football, basketball and baseball. He has more than 20 years of experience in the banking industry.

Original photos that accompanied a television advertisement by Visa that ran during the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. People magazine sent McIntyre to Jamaica in December 1987 to photograph that iconic inaugural bobsled team. The advertisement, with voiceover by actor Morgan Freeman, is available for viewing on YouTube. McIntyre operates Will and Dani McIntyre Photography in Winston-Salem with his wife, Dani, who attended WCU before graduating from Wake Forest University.

1978

Wayne Tolison was inducted into the South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame. Tolison spent 10 years in the major leagues at second and third base and shortstop with the Texas Rangers (1981-85), Chicago White Sox (1986) and New York Yankees (1986-1990). At WCU, he was named Southern Conference baseball player of the year in 1971, and as a wide receiver on the football team led the nation in 1978 with 73 catches for 1,103 yards and seven touchdowns.

Gary Walker MS, professor of biology at Appalachian State University, won the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools’ 2010 Award for Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Graduates Students. Walker has been the graduate program director in Appalachian’s department of biology for almost 20 years. Under his guidance, 125 students have completed master’s degrees.

1979

Bing, San, Katherine P. Kasun (right) pictured with Chancellor John Bardo during a campus visit (far left) has been named the deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) stationed at Fort Bragg. Civil Affairs soldiers identify critical requirements of local citizens in war or disaster situations, while Psychological Operations soldiers convince foreign audiences to take action favorable to the United States and its allies.

1980

Pam Schram MAEd, a professor in the department of curriculum and instruction in Appalachian State University’s Reich College of Education, has received a UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, a recognition that carries a $7,500 cash prize. A 35-year veteran of education, Schram has taught a range of courses in Appalachian State University’s Reich College of Education, has received a UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, a recognition that carries a $7,500 cash prize. A 35-year veteran of education, Schram has taught a range of courses in Appalachian State University’s Reich College of Education, has received a UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, a recognition that carries a $7,500 cash prize.
1989
Tara Candler Larson MAE is deputy director of operations with Medicaid of North Carolina, administered through the state Division of Medical Assistance.

1990
Rosemary Cook Allen is married and lives in Shilton, Con., where she teaches piano and takes her two young sons.

1994
Heath Kinisland is a new member of WCU’s College of Business Advisory Board. Kinisland is a private financial services group director of BB&T in Asheville.

1996
Catherine “Kit” Cosgrove MPA is new executive director of the Asheville Area Hospice (now Community CarePartners Hospice and Palliative Care) in Asheville for 17 years.

1997
Donna Cox Gibbs MS is a director of A Clear Way Counseling Center at Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville. Gibbs has been with the church since 1996 and recently wrote a book titled “Kiss & Tell: Truths That Will Transform Your Marriage.”

1998
Adam Myers is a detective assigned to the homicide unit in the Criminal Investigations Division of the West Palm Beach (Fla.) Police Department. The homicide unit is responsible for the investigation of murders and suspicious deaths, including all police-involved shootings and in-custody deaths.

1999
Stephen Everson MPA completed the inaugural Florida in Panama City, Fla., in November. He completed the Ironman Florida in Panama City, Fla., in November. It was Everson’s first Ironman, a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run.

2000
Janet Pearson was named the first superintendent of Carvers Creek State Park in Cumberland County. Pearson, formerly a captain at Pilot Mountain State Park, oversees training, law enforcement, visitor services, natural-resource protection and environmental education.

2003
Eric Wehmeir MA ’06 is proprietor of Eric’s Fresh Fish Market on Mill Street in Sylva. The shop is open Wednesday through Saturday with deliveries twice a week from Atlanta. “The goal is to constantly provide fresh fish in the mountains,” Wehmeir said.

Jennifer Thomas MAE ’02 and her husband, James Thomas ’02, welcomed their second son, Landon, in April. The couple, of Jackson County, has an older son, Matthew.

2006
Angela DePoi married Michael Anthony Boone in May 2009 at Moss Chapel Baptist Church in Sylva City.

2007
John Bush is head of strategic business development for Rigglt inc., a global communications provider for the oil and gas industry based in Houston. Bush pursues long-range business development projects, particularly in overseas markets where Rigglt has little or no presence.

Brenda Salvis is serving a one-year term with Operation Mobilization as a writer/journalist onboard its ministry ship Doulos. She records the ship’s ministry and individual stories in each port for Web and magazine publication. Operation Mobilization is a missionary organization that works around the world and onboard two oceangoing ships.

2008
Kimberly Lightsey PMP has earned the Project Management Institute designation of project management professional, or PMP, the field’s most recognized and respected credential. Lightsey is a member of the Piedmont Triad Chapter of PMI and is a senior project analyst with the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro.

2009
Krissy Green will be performing mission work with the Maasai tribe as a member of Unite 4 Africa, an Arizona-based Christian ministry. The Maasai live in Kenya and northern Tanzania. “I will be working with orphans and on water projects, leadership trainings and helping programs in these villages,” Green said.

2010
Janet Mason Edd is superintendent of Rutherford County Schools. Mason began her career in the Rutherford schools in 1986 as a teacher before moving into administrative positions. She lives in Forest City with her husband, Rick, and daughter, Meredith.
A MAN TO COUNT ON
The late John Beegle was many things to many people

By JILL INGRAM MA’08

John A. Beegle, who died May 6, arrived in Cullowhee in 1972 as an accounting professor. Friends agree that doesn’t say nearly enough about him.

Larry Kauffman, head of the accounting, finance, information systems and economics department at WCU, worked alongside Beegle for more than 10 years and called him “the consummate professional accountant.” But what most impressed Kauffman was Beegle’s commitment to the Cullowhee Fire Department. “If the fire radio went off during class, I would of course grab up class immediately and he was gone,” Kauffman recalled.

Volunteer firefighter, small plane pilot, motorcycle enthusiast, church member, Mason, Shriners, teacher, husband, father and grandfather – Beegle’s energy and contributions were limitless. “It was really interesting at his funeral for a lot of people to see a list of Dad that they didn’t know,” said Jan Beegle Showalter ‘94 MPM ’03, an employee in WCU’s accounts payable office. She has memories of “the plane and of the plane if anything happened.”

True of his Scottish heritage (he was a member of the Clan MacNaughton), Beegle was beloved coordinator of the overnight camping at MacRae Meadows for the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games for more than 25 years. Nicknamed “Mayor of the Meadow,” Beegle was “a master at getting everyone in,” said Frank Vance, general manager of the games and Beegle’s friend. “He remembered year to year who was RVing.”

Ever the accountant, Beegle turned the camping from a $5,000-per-year venture into one of the biggest moneymakers in WCU’s accounts payable office. She has memories of watching planes go “so she could land the plane if anything happened.”

Bill MacDuff, longtime coordinator of overnight camping, said it left a “friend for life” the way Beegle had worked alongside Beegle for more than 10 years and called him “the consummate professional accountant.” But what most impressed Kauffman was Beegle’s commitment to the Cullowhee Fire Department. “If the fire radio went off during class, I would of course grab up class immediately and he was gone,” Kauffman recalled.

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Bill MacDuff, longtime coordinator of overnight camping, said it left a “friend for life” the way Beegle had worked alongside. 

**In memoriam**

Bill A. Sutton ’52, retired professor of marketing and former dean of the College of Business, died March 19. A native of South Carolina and a 1944 graduate of Wofford College, Sutton served as director of the Wofford Institute of Government and was an assistant professor of business administration and marketing at the University of Miami. He wrote an introduction for the book “Marketing: A Managerial Approach,” which remains in print today.

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**ALUMNI DEATHS**

Billie Barnes Archen ’63, Feb. 28; Satelkoi, N.Y.

David W. Ballard ’83, March 24; Mount Ula.

Patricia Patterson Bischof ’60, Feb. 22; Brentwood.

Margaret Boyd Blackwood ’66, Feb. 2; Waynesville.

Debra Stewart Blackstock ’80, April 6; Andrews.

Joe Turner Boyd ’62, Feb. 20; Pacolet Mills, S.C.

Sandi Ingleth Brown ’85, April 17; Asheville.

Michael G. Leip ’68, Jan. 30; Canton, S.C.

Kay Collins Duvax ’58, Dec. 5; Greensville.

Trudy Allen Ennis ’73 MA’76, Feb. 9; Greensboro.

Kenneth Edward Everett ’72, April 17; Statesville.

Sandra Whittemores Grove ’79, Nov. 29; Waynesville.

Charles R. Harman ’63, May 6; Indian Lake, Ohio.

Billy Ray Hayes ’65, March 13; Forest City.

Samuel Perry Hyatt ’39 MA’58, March 14; Arden.

David Eugene Kiszena ’73, March 9; Winterville.

Henry J. Kraus Sr. ’57 MA’60, March 2; Moravian, Miss.

Amelia Bradley Leatherwood ’37 MA’55, Feb. 6; Waynesville.

Cheryl A. Loward ’69, April 11; Greensboro.

Adam Wesley Little ’97, March 17; Mount Pleasant, S.C.

Mary Elizabeth “Liz” Bennett Livett ’43, Jan. 28; Arden.

Francis Kendall Martin ’65, April 20; Martinsville, Va.

Winston W. Martin Jr. ’57, Jan. 15; Robbinsville.

Susan Gates Moody Maul ’04, March 24; Sydney.

James Roland Muir ’72, Nov. 23; Hendersonville.

James Allen Myers ’74, April 22; Raleigh.

Ernest H. Nihous MA’67, April 14; Columbus, S.C.

Elaine Moss Norton ’40, April 3; Sydney.

Charles Edward Parker MA’57, Jan. 21; Florence, S.C.

Mama Bryson Pecik ’91, Feb. 23; Franklin.


Theodore Edson Perkins Jr. ’40, Apr. 14; Greensboro.

Frank E. Reed ’75, Jan. 11; Hendersonville.

Glenn Marion Rhodes ’74, March 19; Mill Spring.

Delia Foster Richey ’59, March 7; Spartanburg, S.C.

Ernest H. Nivens MA ‘67, Dec. 3; Gaughan, S.C.

James R. Sanborn MA’76, Feb. 5; Arden.

William “Bill” Frederick Schuck III ’05, Feb. 7; Rutan Gap, Ga.

Barbara Smith Shytle ’62, Feb. 16; Greenville.

Morgan Money Spratt MA ’52 MA ’55, April 27; Kings Mountain.

Douglas H. Sturgill MA ’74, Jan. 21; Asheville.

Bill A. Sutton ’52, Feb. 9; Sydney.

Betty Miller Van Story MA ’69, April 36; Awawenka.

Chrisarrison “Chevy” G. Vaughan-Lloyd ’82, March 17; Winston-Salem.

Harry D. Wessman MA ’68, Feb. 27; Hendersonville.

**INQUIRING MINDS**

True crime memoir is attracting national attention

From staff reports

Angel Dove MA ’00 had no idea she was going to appear in a recent edition of The National Enquirer. A friend of mine sent me an early morning e-mail congratulating me,” Dove said. “I e-mailed her back and said, “Thanks, but I think you’re mistaken.”

She wasn’t. Dove, whose true crime memoir “No Room for Doubt: A True Story of the Reverberations of Murder” was published by Penguin Group last year, brought her book to town and thumbed through the national tabloid. “I found the article and stared at it. Then the cashier and I stood there reading it together,” she said.

The article, titled “Justice is Served,” recap’s the story of Dove’s stepmother, Debi Whitlock, murdered in 2001.

“Debi was a very, very nice person,” Dove said. “We all go through hard times,” she said. “If my experiences can somehow help others, then I feel that’s a worthwhile pursuit.”


They were friends. Friends and alumni established an endowed scholarship given annually to a graduating senior who is entering the university’s master of accountancy program. His family – wife Marion, two sons, two daughters, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren – requested that memorial contributions go toward the John Beegle Scholarship or the Cullowhee Fire Department.

Beegle’s funeral was held at Cullowhee Presbyterian Church, where he was a past elder. At the funeral’s conclusion, the pianist played “The Entertainer.” “I thought, ‘How appropriate for John,’” Vance said. “He was an entertainer, bigger than life.”

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Homecoming Weekend 2010

JULY 2010

THURSDAY, JULY 1
Mountain Courtyard Concert. 7:30 p.m. Recital hall, Coulter Building.

FRIDAY, JULY 2-3
Summer Musical Theater Revue. "I Love a Piano," featuring the music of Irving Berlin. 7:30 p.m. Friday. "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." 8 p.m. Outdoor Pavilion, Marion. 252-475-1500

SATURDAY, JULY 3
Mountain Arts Council Summer Arts and Crafts Show. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Ramsey Center. 828.524.3405

SUNDAY, JULY 4-5
Roanoke Island Festival Park Performance Series. Western Carolina musical theater program presents "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Manteo. 252.475.1500

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Ramsey Center. 828.524.3405

FRIDAY, JULY 8
Summer Concert Series – Lionel of Zen, metal guitar, tinky tarsk and roots rhythm original music. 7 p.m. A.K. Hinds University Center lawn. 828.227.3622

SATURDAY, JULY 9-11
Roanoke Island Festival Park Performance Series. Western Carolina musical theater program presents "You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown." 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Manteo. 252.475.1500

THURSDAY, JULY 15
Summer Concert Series – The Bills (left), indie rock slu. 7 p.m. A.K. Hinds University Center lawn. 828.227.3622

FRIDAY, JULY 16
Theatre Summer Camp performance. 6 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. 828.227.2479

THURSDAY, JULY 22
Mountain Dulcimer Concert. 7 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. 828.227.2479

SATURDAY, JULY 24
Fokmout USA – International performers demonstrate their cultural heritage through costumes, dance and traditional music. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. 828.227.2479

REMEMBERING MISS NIGGLI

Friends and students of the late teacher to gather in July

Students, friends and fans of the late Josefina Niggli will gather for a reunion and celebration at Western Carolina from Friday, July 9, to Sunday, July 11 – nearly 100 years to the day after her birth July 13, 1910, in Monterey, Mexico.

Niggli wrote novels, poetry, screenplays and radio shows. Also an actress, she spent the latter part of her career at WCU as an instructor and was key in establishing the drama department. To date, the Josefina Niggli Scholarship has awarded more than $126,000 to 128 theater arts students.

Two of Niggli’s former students, Luther Jones ’74 M.A.Ed. ’82, technical director for the stage and screen department at WCU, and Steve Carlisle ’73, associate dean of the WCU Honors College, are co-chairs of the committee planning the reunion. Events will include a student-created production; screening of the movie “Somewhere,” which is based on portions of Niggli’s book of short stories “Mexican Village”; a mixer; and a tour of WCU’s theater arts venues.

The celebration follows a yearlong series of events in recognition of Niggli’s life and career accomplishments. Among those events was a student portrait contest won by Michael Dodson, a student in WCU’s School of Art and Design, for his large-scale, mixed-media portrait featuring Niggli’s likeness on black-and-white oil paint over pages from “Mexican Village.”

Dodson received a $500 purchase award from the College of Fine and Performing Arts, and his portrait becomes a part of that college’s permanent collection. After the July reunion, it will be installed permanently in the Niggli Theatre lobby.

Another new addition at WCU in Niggli’s honor is a collection of original illustrations by the late Marian Fitz-Simons. The artist’s son and daughter-in-law, Sean and Ann Fitz-Simons ’65, recently donated the artwork to the Niggli archive in Hunter Library’s Special Collections.

“Every time I walk through the facility or attend events there, I am always amazed at the elegance of the building and its functionality. It works,” said Kehrberg. “The performances are always special given the breadth but closeness of the auditorium. One feels like he or she is almost on stage in any of the seats.”

Michael Dodson (top) won a campuswide competition with his portrait (left) of the late Josefina Niggli. A Niggli menorah will be on display on campus July 9-11.

Fine and Performing Arts Center to celebrate five years of operations

Fans of the campus cultural arts scene are urged to mark their calendars now for a semiformal gala featuring red carpets, bright lights, gallery openings and a Gershwin musical to be held this fall to salute five years of culture and entertainment at the Fine and Performing Arts Center.

“It is time to celebrate and reaffirm the magic of this facility,” said Robert Kehrberg, founding dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts and founding member of the committee that began the planning process for the facility. “The gala will take place Friday, Oct. 22, exactly five years after comedian Jay Leno appeared onstage at the center’s grand opening. Receptions will be held before and after a touring Gershwin musical titled “’S Wonderful” takes the stage at 7:30 p.m. The show is a singing, dancing musical revue that celebrates the genius of George and Ira Gershwin.

Since its opening in 2005, more than 100,000 visitors have come to the Fine and Performing Arts Center, which is home to WCU’s Fine Art Museum and has hosted events ranging from sellout shows to Western North Carolina schoolchildren’s visual arts, music and dance festivals.

“Every time I walk through the facility or attend events there, I am always amazed at the elegance of the building and its functionality. It works,” said Kehrberg. “The visual arts wing is always alive with art in the halls. The studios are always beckoning for a second look and desire to walk in to appreciate the art. It truly is a visual feast. The performances are always special given the breadth but closeness of the auditorium. One feels like he or she is almost on stage in any of the seats.”
Tucker Horne, a communication major from Huntersville and a founding member of the WCU Fly Fishing Club, enjoys a break from his studies by wading into the nearby waters of the Tuckasegee River in search of the elusive mountain trout. The river, which borders the Western Carolina campus, attracts thousands of anglers annually.