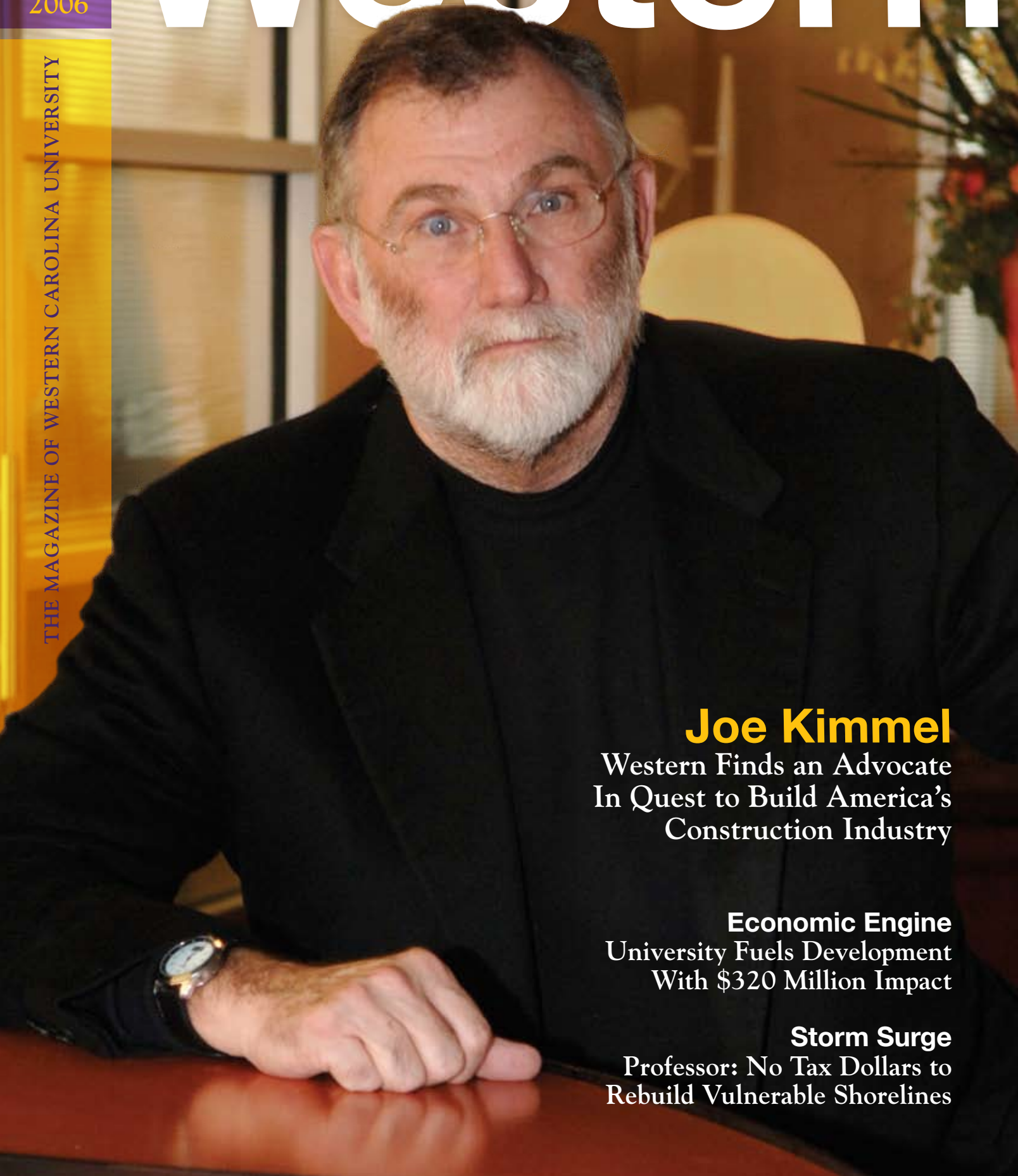


# Western

Winter  
2006

THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY



## **Joe Kimmel**

Western Finds an Advocate  
In Quest to Build America's  
Construction Industry

**Economic Engine**  
University Fuels Development  
With \$320 Million Impact

**Storm Surge**  
Professor: No Tax Dollars to  
Rebuild Vulnerable Shorelines



## From the **Chancellor**

### MAJOR GIFTS HELP BUILD ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

In meeting the challenge of preparing graduates for successful careers, ensuring their participation as leaders in their communities, and providing a broader awareness of their place in the world, Western has taken a number of important steps forward during the past year.

The university announced a new partnership with a national executive search firm that specializes in the construction industry, with the naming of The Kimmel School of Construction Management, Engineering and Technology. Joe Kimmel's generous gift, combined with other funds, will produce \$10.4 million for endowed professorships, scholarships and program support – an investment that will benefit the university, its students and the state. You can read in this publication more about this gift, its impact on Western students, and the amazing man who made it all possible.

Western celebrated the grand opening of the new \$30 million Fine and Performing Arts Center, which already is serving as a cultural destination with sold-out performances by Jay Leno and the U.S. Marine Corps Band. Look elsewhere in this edition for photographs from the opening events, and for a schedule of upcoming activities. If you already have visited the Fine and Performing Arts Center, you know what a spectacular showcase for the arts it is. If you have not seen it in person, we hope you will plan a visit soon so you can see for yourself what a truly special place it is.

As you may know, Western is experiencing the most dramatic growth in its storied history, with an enrollment of about 8,700 students this academic year. That number is expected to reach 14,000 by the year 2014, with 10,000 students on campus and another 4,000 in distance education programs. We are raising academic standards in order to remain the school of choice for well-qualified entering freshmen, and we are reaching out to welcome community college transfers and adult learners.

With all of these exciting developments and more, Western continues to move forward, building on a strong foundation of academic excellence, a growing reputation for service through engagement, and a deep commitment to economic development and prosperity for the region and the state. But we cannot do it alone. The university depends mightily on the support of alumni and friends – people such as Joe Kimmel and other benefactors you will read about here.

It is with your help that we will be able to expand the number of merit-based scholarships to ensure that the best and brightest students enroll at Western, increase the number of endowed professorships to attract the nation's top scholars to our faculty, bring world-renowned figures to campus to share their expertise with students, and provide the additional programmatic support necessary for Western to maintain its rising academic stature.

Thank you for your ongoing support. All of us in Cullowhee look forward to seeing you on campus in 2006.

# Western

THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Winter 2006  
Volume 10, No. 1

The Magazine of Western Carolina University, formerly known as Our Purple and Gold, is produced by the Office of Public Relations in the Division of Advancement and External Affairs for alumni, faculty, staff and friends of Western Carolina University.

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Special thanks to:  
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## PROFESSOR CALLS FOR RETHINKING DISASTER AID

By Bill Studenc

Hurricane impact researcher Rob Young surveys the coast after Hurricane Katrina.

Western's nationally known hurricane impact researcher Rob Young, who says the devastation wrought across the Gulf Coast by Hurricane Katrina is the worst he has encountered in nearly 20 years of post-storm coastal reconnaissance, has been making some waves of his own in the wake of one of the nation's worst natural disasters.

Young, associate professor of geology, has found himself being called upon by media from around the world for expert commentary on the devastation – and on his sometimes-controversial stance that certain areas of the shattered coastline should be abandoned permanently rather than rebuilt.

He has written opinion pieces for newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *Orlando Sentinel*, appeared twice on national PBS news programs, been interviewed by numerous radio networks including NPR, and been quoted in *National Geographic*, *USA Today*, the *Austin American-Statesman* and many more.

Young also testified before Congress in November about the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, at the invitation of U.S. Rep.

Wayne Gilchrest (R-Md.), chairman of the Congressional Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans. The act eliminates federal subsidies for flood insurance, transportation, utilities and erosion control to support any new development on barrier islands officially designated as “undeveloped.” The act is intended to shift away from the federal government the financial burden of building or rebuilding in high-risk coastal areas.

Young, who conducted two aerial surveys of the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina in September, told Congress he believes that the CBRA restrictions should be extended to include limits on disaster aid to developed, as well as undeveloped, coastal barriers and other shorelines.

“Continued federal disaster aid for rebuilding vulnerable coastal areas has cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars in the last two years,” he said. “Irresponsible development of vulnerable coastal areas is becoming a burden on an already overburdened federal budget, as well as an environmental disaster.”

Young is calling for the creation of a Shoreline Retreat Advisory Commission patterned after the federal Base Realignment and Closing Commission that

## Western Opens Doors to Evacuated Students

Two New Orleans-based students who relocated to Catamount country after Hurricane Katrina are making Western their permanent alma mater.

A third plans to return to the University of New Orleans – though happily outfitted in purple and gold.

“I went crazy shopping,” said Amanda Spilling, a University of New Orleans junior majoring in secondary education. “I’m glad I got to attend Western, though not under the circumstances.”

Spilling, Spanish major Adam Carey Pope and nursing student Natalie Louise Matthews enrolled at Western after their home schools closed for the fall semester. The University of North Carolina Board of Governors adopted a resolution to waive a semester of tuition and fees for students whose home institutions closed as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Pope originally planned to spend his fall at the University of New Orleans when his family evacuated Slidell, La.

After relocating to Maggie Valley, where his grandmother lives, he enrolled at Western.

The small class-size suited him, and Pope intends to finish his Spanish degree in the mountains.

Matthews, who attended nursing school in New Orleans, chose Western for its proximity to family in Highlands, Saluda, Chapel Hill and Virginia.

“I have had a wonderful semester,” she said. “The teachers and students have been very kind and supportive. I recently got into Western’s nursing school. I plan to continue my studies here.”

Meanwhile, Spilling said she will return with her family from Cashiers to Slidell, La., with some great experiences to go along with her Catamount clothing.

The professors really made an effort to get to know their students, Spilling said. She enjoyed her classes, particularly a course focused on author Toni Morrison. “I’ve read almost all of her books,” Spilling said, citing “Beloved” as her favorite.

“It’s been a good experience. I’ve made good friends that I’m sure I’ll keep in touch with.”



Natalie Matthews



Adam Pope

determines the fate of military bases. The ShRAC would be composed of objective scientists and coastal managers who would identify vulnerable shorelines that would be removed from future federal assistance.

“I believe that it is time to cut our ties with the most vulnerable of our nation’s coastal areas,” he said. “The highly vulnerable shorelines include places like North Topsail Island in my home state of North Carolina, Santa Rosa Island in Florida, and the west end of Dauphin Island in Alabama. The community of Waveland, Miss., has been destroyed twice in 35 years. These are all stretches of shoreline that are so unquestionably vulnerable to storm impact

that they should never again receive federal tax dollars to rebuild buildings or infrastructure.”

Young acknowledges that his recommendation is not popular with some coastal property-owners. “I don’t want to seem insensitive or callous, and I am not saying that people cannot live in these areas any longer,” he said. “I am saying when the next hurricane comes – and rest assured, another will come – that the taxpayers are not stuck with the bill for rebuilding in these particularly flood-prone, hurricane-prone areas. People who live in North Dakota should not be providing coastal welfare for developers in Florida.”



## STUDENTS, FACULTY PLAN GULF COAST RETURN TRIP TO CONTINUE CLEAN-UP

By Teresa Killian



The sights stunned. Boats on tops of houses. Century-old oak trees toppled over. Paint on houses marking the date and casualties found inside.

"They were mainly zeroes, but occasionally there was a 'one,'" said Jamie Holbrook, an English graduate student at Western who spent fall break with a group of volunteers in hurricane-damaged Biloxi, Miss.

"That was an eerie feeling."

The assistance from Holbrook and other Western students, faculty and staff truly made a difference, and they plan to go back during Spring Break.

Jimmy Bourdin, a lifelong resident of Pass Christian, Miss., said Western students were the first to come to his neighborhood.

"It was really above and beyond the call of duty," said Bourdin, who is living in a Federal Emergency Management Agency trailer. "I can't tell you how much I appreciate it. I had a ruptured disc in my neck, and their help meant a lot."

The chance to help meant a lot to the volunteers, too. They came home humbled. After living in a "tent city" distributing food and helping clean property, Dannell Moses, a visiting professor at Western, had a new appreciation for life.

Determined to downsize, Moses has donated clothes and

**"Western students  
were the first to come  
to my neighborhood."**

– Jimmy Bourdin,  
Pass Christian, Miss.

computer equipment, thrown away old magazines and joined "Freecycle.com." For Craig Buchner, an English graduate student at Western, the most difficult moment was helping an elderly couple sort through

the remains of the house where they lived for 44 years.

They found a photo album from the 1940s only to discover the ink had washed away, erasing the images. The woman said they had been pictures of her children. "What do you say to that?" Buchner said. "It's easy to lose your stereo and your refrigerator but not your memories."

Holbrook said he felt the impact particularly when they helped Fred Smith, cleaning his property and cutting wood. "He thanked us a lot," Holbrook said. "Then, as we were leaving, he began to cry."



## FIRST EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GRADUATE TAKES SKILLS TO NEW ORLEANS



The first emergency management major to graduate from Western stepped forward to make sure no one gets hurt during the clean-up in New Orleans.

Brett Norton '05 works to ensure safety during debris removal in a 135-square-mile area through his job with North Carolina-based Envirosafe. Norton's responsibilities range from monitoring equipment to assessing hazards such as the presence of asbestos.

The Burlington native sees foundations without houses and a barge that damaged a levee, causing devastation and death. "It's sad to be standing right there at it," he said. "I can't convey how it feels to be standing in the middle of history."

# WESTERN ALUMNI LOSE HOME TO STORM

By Teresa Killian

Hurricane Katrina transformed the blinds of a Western couple's new Mississippi home into fangs, dangling in gaps where windows and walls used to be.

**Robin Waring Hufton '89** and **David Hufton '90** had not even made their first house payment in August when they had to evacuate with their sons, Iain and Dawson, and dog, Angus.

They lost almost everything. The Huftons escaped the storm but returned to Ocean Springs, Miss., to find vans slammed into their house and strangers' shoes, clothes, blankets and the mast of a sailboat inside.

Gone or damaged were leather sofas, pictures, baby shower presents, family antiques, photos and a week-old \$5,000 home theater system. Even their framed diplomas from Western disappeared in the surge of water. Replacements are on the way, thanks to the Registrar's Office. "We had a beautiful house, and now it's all gone," said Robin Hufton, who is a consultant for a pharmaceutical company. "It's all gone."

Despite the couple's \$3,200-a-year hurricane policy and \$1,800-a-year homeowner's policy, the damage classified as "flood damage" is not covered. "A 32-foot gigantic wave hit our house," Hufton said. "If the insurance company would just pay for the damages, then I could get over our loss much easier."

The Hufton family initially moved from Raleigh to Mississippi after David Hufton left active military duty as an intelligence analyst and took a reservist position there.

In the wake of the storm, they have called hotels home and been grateful for the help of friends also from Western.



The Huftons had stayed with **Lesley Andrew '88** and **David Andrew '83**, president-elect of Western's Alumni Association, in Georgia while traveling to Mississippi to move into the new house. The Andrews stayed in close contact, too, after the storm hit, and the Hufton family relocated temporarily to the Atlanta area. "We are trying to help them out wherever we can," David Andrew said. "No matter how long you travel, you always have a home to go back to. They don't have that anymore."

The Huftons are now relocating to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. "We are going to have to start over from scratch," Robin Hufton said. "We're not alone. There are a lot of other people in the same boat we're in, and some are worse off."



The Hufton family can be contacted at [drhufton@earthlink.net](mailto:drhufton@earthlink.net).

Norton enrolled at Western to study emergency care but ultimately pursued an interest in emergency management. Western offered the first four-year degree program in emergency management in the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky. The program helps students master skills that enable them to help prevent, mitigate, respond to or recover from a disaster.

"Brett is working hard, and I am extremely proud of his performance," said Robert T. Berry, associate professor with the emergency management program.

Norton said the work in New Orleans has involved 12-hour days working seven days a week. He feels certain that this disaster will not be the last, and he is even more convinced of the importance of planning emergency responses. "There will be another time," he said. "Nobody knows where it will be or how, but we need to prepare."





“Ten million dollars? What was I thinking?” Joe Kimmel elicits a laugh from Chancellor Bardo as Kimmel light-heartedly recounts waking up in the middle of the night suddenly realizing the size of his gift to Western.

# Gift to Grow on

## Contribution Yields \$10.4 Million Investment in Western’s Construction Management Program

By Bill Studenc

Western is on its way to building what university and industry officials believe will become one of the top construction management programs in the United States, thanks to \$10.4 million in support from private and public sources made possible by a gift from one of the nation’s largest personnel recruiting firms. Kimmel & Associates, a leading construction industry executive search company based in Asheville, announced in December a pledge of \$6.92 million, which will enable Western to obtain an additional \$3.495 million in matching state money and other support. In recognition of the contributions, the university announced the naming of The Kimmel School of Construction Management, Engineering and Technology.

The Kimmel contributions will create \$9 million in permanent endowments, including \$3 million in faculty support that qualifies the

university for another \$3 million in matching money from the North Carolina Distinguished Professorship Endowment Fund. The gifts also provide a \$2 million endowment to supplement programmatic operations and activities; and a \$1 million endowment for scholarship support.

“The incredible gift from Joe Kimmel, his family and his associates will provide much-needed support to an academic program that is near and dear to Joe’s heart,” Chancellor John W. Bardo said. “We view this gift as among the most important events in this university’s long and storied history. We expect this pledge, combined with additional private and public support, will result in a school that will place Western on par with the nation’s finest institutions of higher education in preparing students for careers in construction management and related fields that are critical to the emerging economy of the state and the nation.”

“This very generous gift is outstanding news for Western Carolina University as well as the construction industry. I have been very impressed with Western Carolina University’s construction management, engineering and technology program – and this gift will enhance that excellent education program.”

— Dave Simpson,  
Director, Building Division,  
Carolinas Associated  
General Contractors





Kimmel & Associates' pledge benefits students such as the Western students pictured here at a construction site on campus.

Kimmel said he is pleased to be able to make the gift to Western on behalf of the company he founded in 1981. "Everyone at Kimmel & Associates is fortunate to have the opportunity to give back to the industry that has treated us so well for decades and to do it through Western Carolina University," he said. "What better blessing could there be?"

Industry experts say Kimmel's gift couldn't come at a better time, as a rapidly growing number of projects, a shortfall of construction management graduates and the aging-out of current professionals are creating a shortage of construction managers nationally. The Associated General Contractors of America estimates that the United States is facing \$3.3 trillion in infrastructure construction and repair over the next 10

years, and the U.S. Department of Labor reports that construction is the only goods-producing sector in which employment is projected to grow.

"It's an amazingly generous gift, but also an investment in the future," said Christine Beaudoin of Gilbert Southern, a construction company based in Atlanta that has an active recruiting relationship with Western. "Thanks to the significant commitment that Kimmel & Associates has made, an already good construction management program has the opportunity to become one of the nation's finest."

Ken Bullock, a partner in the Charlotte-based design consulting firm Woolpert Inc., also applauded the contribution. "I can tell you this gift is going to present a wonderful opportunity for the university to enhance its programs in

construction management, engineering and technology," Bullock said. "It will help Western develop its buildings and facilities, improve the quality of instruction, and create an endowment for scholarship assistance for students. We, the professionals in the construction industry, depend on the universities to produce the high-quality graduates we need, and this contribution will help Western do just that."

Students studying construction management at Western say they are excited about the future of their program. "I am proud to be part of a program that caught Mr. Kimmel's attention," said Kevin Kirk, a senior from Durham, who also is studying business administration and law. "The name Kimmel & Associates is nationally renowned as one of the best in the field. When they've got their eye on Western Carolina, that says a lot. There's great opportunity at Western. I've got a job with one of the top five contractors in the world, and I haven't even graduated yet." Julia Tew, a junior from Zebulon, said a childhood fascination with

Lego building blocks followed by an architecture class in high school guided her academic and career choices. "When it came time for college, I was interested in construction management and visited several schools

before deciding on Western. Everyone at Western is so friendly and enthusiastic. They are committed to quality. It has lived up to my expectations, and this gift will be an opportunity for the program to progress."

Western's construction management program already has made substantial progress. Established in the fall of 2002 with 26 students, the program has grown to 240 undergraduates this fall. Enrollment projections indicate the program will grow to as many as 665 undergraduates by 2010, said Bradford Sims, director of the construction management program. "We're off to a great start in building our construction management program to the highest levels of academic excellence," Sims said.

"An already good construction management program has the opportunity to become one of the nation's finest."

—Christine Beaudoin



"This major investment and commitment to quality construction education will help to tell the community – the parents, school counselors and others in North Carolina, perhaps across the country – that a career in construction management is one that provides a professional career that cannot be exported, contributes to the community in building major elements for the local economy, and results in an increased quality of life for the users of the final product."

—Michael M. Holland,  
Executive Vice President  
and Chief Executive Officer,  
American Council for  
Construction Education



# PORTRAIT OF GENEROSITY

By Teresa Killian

Not far from artwork of Elvis and a bookcase of Bibles hangs a painted portrait of Joe Kimmel at Asheville-based Kimmel & Associates, a leading executive search firm. Kimmel, founder of the company, says the rendering – a gift from the staff – makes him look like such a nice guy that he keeps it up as evidence that he is, well, a nice guy. Friends and co-workers say he doesn't need the painting.

"Joe is probably the most giving individual you will ever meet," said Chuck Landers, a consultant with Kimmel & Associates for nearly a decade. When Kimmel hears about a need, he wants to help whether it means donating basketballs for a youth team or pledging nearly \$7 million for Western's construction management program.

Genuine. Visionary. Empowering. Creative. Fun. Compassionate. A Renaissance man. That's how Kimmel's family and "the Kimmelites," which is what employees call themselves, describe the man with a white beard and round glasses.

"I've had the most extraordinary life – unusual life," said Kimmel.

## THE STORYTELLER

The Las Vegas native tells gripping stories – the kind family legends are made of. In one of the family favorites, Kimmel sets the scene in Nevada when he was a young man in his early 20s. A brother who was taking flying lessons talked him into a trip in a small, new Piper.

Kimmel's terror grew as the bouncing aircraft tilted sideways and made sharp turns through a canyon before approaching Mount Potosi – the same region where actress Carole Lombard died in a plane crash in 1942. They couldn't climb high enough, fast enough.

"I guess this is it," Kimmel says he told his brother.

"Yep," he heard in response.

The wings ripped off as the craft tumbled onto a plateau, but the cockpit stayed intact. Kimmel says he moved one finger at a time, testing to see if he was still alive, and then congratulated his brother for great flying.

"It's a miracle that we lived," said Kimmel, who remembers riding back on a truck to safety. "I'm always amazed that I've taken off one more time than I landed."

## THE BUSINESSMAN

Despite a deep interest in art, Kimmel decided to study nuclear engineering at the University of Nevada at Reno. He didn't know exactly what nuclear engineers did; he just thought it looked like the toughest course of study, he said. His academic success and landing a job at Westinghouse proved to him that he could accomplish anything, he said.

In 1981, Kimmel helped establish a small New Orleans-based executive search firm centered on the growing construction industry.

The firm relocated to Asheville three years after opening its doors. After fire destroyed the area of the initial business, the firm moved into an old furniture building in downtown Asheville. The décor features eclectic art and art deco furniture including a table made of piano keys, an apple vending

machine, lamps galore and a jukebox that plays "Mr. Sandman" and "Great Balls of Fire." In surrounding offices, the Kimmelites make telephone calls to interview potential job candidates for companies across the nation.

Today, Kimmel & Associates has grown to more than 100 employees with virtually no turnover. The firm specializes in specific fields to help place hundreds of executives a year in top-dollar positions. The staff's tenacity and commitment yield the company millions in revenue. "Joe leads by example," said Debbie Eckart, a consultant with Kimmel & Associates. "Executive search is not an easy job, and he sets a high bar."

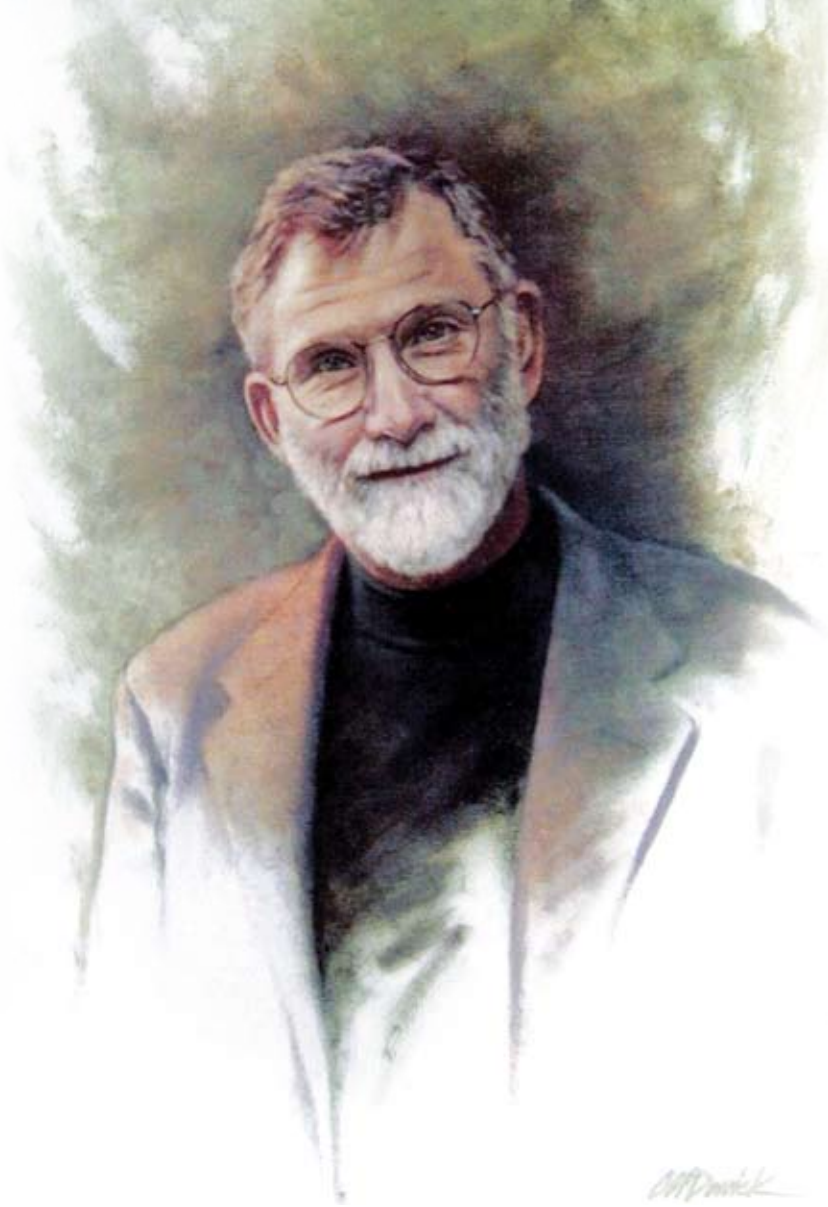
## THE FAMILY GUY

The 63-year-old businessman is trying to slow down some these days. He's taking more time for reading the books he didn't have time to in college – from Russian authors to true-life Arctic exploration. Kimmel tries to be more of a regular morning person than an early morning person, he says, glancing at his wife, Cynthia, during a celebration of the Kimmel gift to Western.

The couple met in Alabama when each was a parent of two, and they discovered a lot to laugh about together. They built a family and brought three more children into the world. Today, framed family pictures line shelves near his desk. "We moved here to Asheville for our family – for a different way of raising our family," said Kimmel.

Meeting the Kimmels helped convince Jim Vockley to join Kimmel & Associates in 1987. Instead of wining and dining Vockley during his visit from Pittsburgh, Kimmel treated him to a meal in the town of Fletcher at a restaurant called the Royal Steakhouse. Vockley spent part of the weekend with Kimmel – a chronic comedian – greeting his children and their friends as they got off a school bus. "I thought, 'I have to work here,'" said Vockley, now an executive vice president at the firm.





## THE CHRONIC COMEDIAN

The atmosphere Vockley found at Kimmel & Associates reflected Kimmel – productive yet fun. Humor is a large part of Kimmel’s life – a necessary part. He’d rather put on a puppet show about productivity than single an employee out with criticism. “When I can see the humor, I know I have the right perspective,” he said. “I’m not taking myself too seriously.”

Kimmel developed comic ideas that were drawn into cartoons now published in a Kimmel & Associates calendar. The businessman has gone so far as to get a body piercing and carry snakes in his pockets as part of costumes for company parties. “He will do anything to amuse people,” Cynthia Kimmel said. “That’s the real Joe.”

## THE ARTISTIC INVENTOR

He’s also a passionate collector – gathering everything from 50s kitsch to mechanical watches. “All watches are different,” Kimmel said. “They are all a little off – a second one way or the other.” Setting the one-of-a-kind pieces to the same time and checking later whether they “clink” simultaneously intrigues him.

He finds fascinating artwork such as the whimsical painting by Jean Miro of a dark-yet-bright figure, a piece that now hangs in his office. Kimmel is drawn to smooth geometric patterns associated with art deco, such as the oval-within-an-oval necklace Cynthia wears. The piece is one of hundreds he designed.

Kimmel compares his interest to the Richard Dreyfuss character in the 1977 movie “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.” When Dreyfuss’ character builds an alien design in his mind out of materials such as mashed potatoes, the character gets a feeling of accomplishment. “Simple geometric within geometric looks give me a good feeling,” Kimmel said. “It’s a wonderful treat to see the designs that have been in my head built in 24-karat gold.”

## THE SERVANT

His greatest treasure, though, lies in his faith. Kimmel hosts weekly Bible study on Wednesdays at his office. He said the experiences that helped him rebuild and re-evaluate his life after violating income tax laws changed him. Touched by many people, he says he made a decision to truly let God into his life. “It’s a long, wonderful, miraculous story that took place when I was given an education in a microsecond about the unbelievable phenomena of giving,” Kimmel said. “All of a sudden, I understood.”

The financial pledge to Western is just one of many gifts he and his family have given. The money will enable the university to grow the construction management program into one of the best in the country. “Not enough young people are going into construction management,” Kimmel said. With industry leaders predicting a worldwide shortage of the professionals who guide projects from building hospitals to houses, Kimmel wondered, “Why not have us help develop a school over the next 10 years?”

Kimmel & Associates chose Western for its quality and location in the region they love – the mountains of Western North Carolina. “Cynthia and I are very thankful,” Kimmel said. “We are honored to finally give back to the industry and community that’s given to us.”

# \$320 Million Impact Drives Regional Economy

By Jim Rowell '72 and Bill Studenc

Western Carolina University's economic impact on the western region of the state exceeds \$320 million annually, according to a recent study commissioned by the university's Division of Advancement and External Affairs.

The \$320 million figure includes spending by the university and its students, faculty and staff on goods and services; off-campus purchases by visitors attending university activities such as athletics events and cultural arts programs and expenditures for university renovation and construction projects. It also includes the spin-off impact of hundreds of new jobs that have sprung up in response to the university community's growing need for goods and services, from hamburgers and haircuts to housing and clothing.

While that dollar amount may seem staggering to the casual observer, it comes as no surprise to those in the business of regional development.

"As an economic developer, I'm excited not only about the jobs that WCU directly creates through its own workforce, but also the jobs that the university helps to indirectly create," said Dale Carroll, president and chief executive officer of AdvantageWest, a regional economic development commission serving 23 WNC counties. "In addition to helping spur new jobs for the businesses that supply products and services to the university, Western also helps create jobs through programs such as its new engineering degree offerings, its master's degree in entrepreneurship, and through the new Millennial Initiative. WCU is truly an economic engine for all of Western North Carolina."

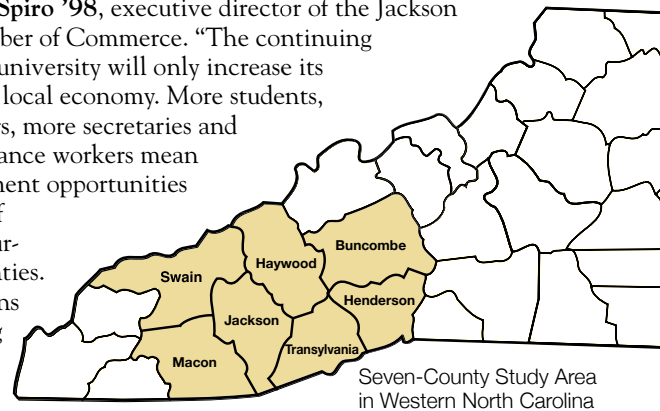
The study was prepared by three Western faculty members – sociologist Kathleen Brennan, political scientist Christopher Cooper and economist Inhyuck "Steve" Ha – with assistance from staff members **Jay Denton '78 MPA '05** and Chester Pankowski.

In the study, the authors analyzed data related to Western's operating expenditures, capital projects, employee and student spending, and university-related visitor spending.

Because so many factors have changed since the university's last impact study was released in 1997, the time is right for a close assessment of Western's expanding role in the economic development of the region it serves, said Cooper, who directs Western's Master of Public Affairs Program.

Approximately 50 percent of Western's growth over the last three decades has occurred in the last two years. Student enrollment increased 26 percent in a decade – climbing from 6,891 in 1995 to an all-time high of 8,665 for the 2005 fall semester. Along with all those students come new faculty and staff members. The university has added more than 100 new faculty positions in the past two years, with another 100-plus new non-teaching staff members joining Western's workforce during that same period.

"We have long regarded Western as a good neighbor and a valuable ally in our economic development efforts," said **Julie Hooper Spiro '98**, executive director of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. "The continuing growth of the university will only increase its impact on our local economy. More students, more professors, more secretaries and more maintenance workers mean more employment opportunities for residents of Jackson and surrounding counties. And that means more spending in our local businesses."



## Some details of the study:

- During the 2003-04 fiscal year study period, Western spent more than \$116.5 million on operational expenses, employing a total workforce of nearly 2,800 full-time and part-time faculty, staff and students.
- Capital projects, which represent long-term investments for the acquisition of land, construction and renovation of buildings, roads, and infrastructure, had a total economic impact of more than \$58 million and created 837 jobs, according to the study that focused on spending in a seven-county area—Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Swain and Transylvania counties—and particularly on spending in Jackson County.
- Western students spent \$15.5 million per month in the seven counties, not including tuition payments, and university faculty and staff household spending added another \$6.58 million per month.
- Events at Western drew about 300,000 visitors to venues such as the Ramsey Regional Activity Center, athletics facilities, auditoriums and performance halls. Estimated total visitor spending was \$13.1 million in Jackson County, and when the "ripple effect" of those dollars was factored, the total economic impact was \$16.4 million in the county.
- The study does not factor in the impact of the new Fine and Performing Arts Center at Western.



Students get to know area businesses at booths during Valley Ballyhoo.



# Making Sales Calls Not a “Crummy” Job

By Bill Studenc

While helping a Hendersonville bakery generate leads that could mean more “dough” for the company, students in a business class also are learning that in the world of sales and marketing, a negative response to a sales call is, well, sometimes just the way the cookie crumbles.

Working out of the recently opened professional sales and marketing facility in Western’s Center for Applied Technology, students are making sales calls on behalf of Immaculate Baking Company to new and inactive business customers, said Julie Johnson, associate professor of marketing.

The project, part of a consultative selling class taught by Johnson, is designed both to provide assistance to a small business and to provide relevant, real-world training. “We wanted to implement the university’s focus on engagement with the region by providing student assistance to a small business from Western North Carolina and, at the same time, giving our students a valuable learning experience,” she said.

Johnson learned of Immaculate Baking through the university’s Small Business and Technology Development Center, which provides assistance to small-business owners and those interested in starting a new venture. The company, which manufactures natural cookies and sells them primarily to health and natural food stores, is known for its “cookies with a cause,” donating a portion of its proceeds to the American Folk Artist Foundation.

The company was seeking a way to increase its sales in the independent health food store segment of the market, and, at the suggestion of small business consultants with the SBTDC, teamed up with Johnson and her students.

“It has been a phenomenal experience,” said A.J. Nidek, specialty sales manager for Immaculate Baking. “When we first got the phone call, we were thinking, ‘What’s the catch? You’ll have students making thousands of sales calls for us? There’s got to be a catch.’”

The project has proven to be a positive experience both for the students, who are learning business sales skills, and the company, which has seen a noticeable increase in the number of cookie orders and requests for catalogs, Nidek said. The students have made dozens of sales, moving more than 100 cases of cookies while making more than 2,500 business calls. “I think it’s wonderful that the university is doing more to be an active part of the community of Western North Carolina,” Nidek said.

During the five-week project, students receive advance training in the classroom before moving to the calling center. There, they are using the newly installed Voice over Internet Protocol system, enabling them to make their calls over broadband Internet while Johnson monitors their calls using a system called “Bright Arrow,” providing constructive quality control and real-time training.

“One of the most difficult things to learn in sales is how to pick up on the customer’s ‘verbal nuances.’ This ability comes with experience and by having someone point out the missed verbal cues,” Johnson said. “I work to help students develop an understanding of what the client ‘means’ versus what the client ‘says.’ Students also learn from each other, and rapidly determine which approach will be more effective.”

Students are “learning by doing” by completing the initial client contact, identifying the decision maker, establishing rapport, identifying needs and closing the sale by obtaining an order.

“This is the first time that students have been able to complete the entire business-to-business sales process in the context of a class,” Johnson said. “One of the big benefits to the students is that this experience provides them with a decisive edge when they enter the job market over other traditional students.”

In addition to class credit, hands-on training, and an advantage over other graduates in the job markets, the students also are getting some, ahem, “dough” for their efforts – cookie dough, that is. Immaculate Baking sent several cases of cookies for the student callers to enjoy.

“I think it’s wonderful that the university is doing more to be an active part of the community. . . .”

—A.J.Nidek



Julie Johnson guides students in the professional sales center.

# THE PULSE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

## Realistic Simulated Patient Laboratory Breathes Life into Nursing Education Program By Leila Tvedt

The infant is breathing softly, eyes closed. The top of its head is soft to the touch, throbbing gently. Suddenly the little one wails with an urgent cry. Its chest begins to heave, its limbs are tense, and its blood pressure is rising rapidly. The heart is racing out of control. What is a health care professional to do? One option is to shut down the program.

This, after all, is only a pretend patient – a complex, computerized, little body in diapers, designed to help health care professionals throughout Western North Carolina prepare for the challenges of real-world medical situations. Instructors manning the controls can adjust each scenario to the learning level of individual caregivers, with easier problems for beginners and more complex challenges for advanced students.

The infant SimMan (or simulated man) and seven adult mannequins with their computer controls will be housed in an Enka laboratory being developed by Western in partnership with Mission Hospitals of Asheville and Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. The lab, made possible by a Duke Endowment grant of nearly \$400,000, is scheduled to open this year.

The lifelike models, which cost approximately \$30,000 apiece, can realistically simulate breathing problems and more than 2,500 cardiac rhythms. “They are as realistic as we can get without working on actual, live human beings,” said **Vincent Hall ’83 MS ’89**, head of Western’s nursing department. “That will be quite valuable as we train students for the situations they will face in the real world.”

Laboratory sessions will feature challenging case scenarios for registered nurses, regional nursing students and interdisciplinary emergency care providers.

“This is an opportunity to provide health care students in our region with a unique experience, incorporating technology and virtual simulation in their education,” said **Ned Fowler ’92 MAEd ’97**, dean of allied health and public service education at A-B Tech. “It will enable us to enhance critical thinking skills and provide patient care experience that may not be available through clinical and classroom instruction.”



Photo by Blake Madden

A-B Tech President **K. Ray Bailey MAEd ’70** (right) prepares to listen to the heartbeat of an infant SimMan with (right to left) **Joseph F. Damore**, president of Mission Hospitals; **Kyle Carter**, provost at Western; **John Barbo**, chancellor at Western; **Joe Huse** of Laerdal, the firm that makes the SimMan; and **Mary Piepenbring** of Duke Endowment’s health care division.

## Just What the 21st-Century Doctor Ordered: Hand-Held Technology for Nursing Students By Leila Tvedt



Nursing students practice using hand-held personal digital assistants.

Nursing students at Western are among the first in the nation who are learning how to use personal digital assistants, commonly known as PDAs, in their classes and clinical settings.

Western acquired 30 of the small, handheld devices through a grant in spring 2004. The results of that trial were so good that the university acquired 30 more and now requires nursing students to buy their own software, which is loaded with as much information as can be found in several textbooks and reference works, said **Judy Mallory**, coordinator of the nurse educator track at Western, who obtained the grant.

When **Justin Queen**, a junior nursing student from Polkville, goes to the bedside of a patient to administer medication, he carries a cup of pills in one hand and a PDA in the other. With this new technology, Queen is learning to collect data from a barcode on the patient’s





## Physical Therapy on the Move With New Human Movement Diagnostic Equipment By Bill Studenc

Students in Western's department of physical therapy are making tremendous strides in their educations and careers, thanks to a new human movement science laboratory. The high-tech training and diagnostic facility is made possible by a grant of nearly \$200,000 from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

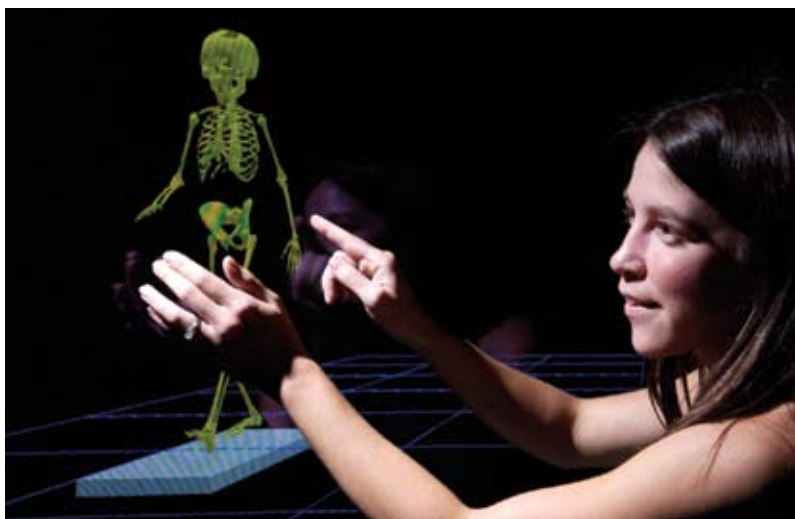
The laboratory includes eight video cameras mounted on four walls and pressure-sensitive plates set into the floor that can digitally capture a person's every movement. Data captured by the state-of-the-art equipment are computer analyzed, allowing three-dimensional video reproduction of the movement and comprehensive analysis by students, professors and professionals.

The laboratory is designed to train students in the analysis of human movement and to provide diagnostic resources for health care professionals across Western North Carolina – and their patients. It is of special benefit to the region's growing population of elderly residents, who can suffer loss of mobility due to arthritis, diabetes, stroke and injury.

"Until now, the closest laboratories with these capabilities were in Knoxville, Atlanta and Winston-Salem," said Karen Lunnen, head of the physical therapy department. "Not only is it difficult for many residents of Western North Carolina to get to those sites, but they tend to focus more on research. The lab at Western provides diagnostic services that help prevent or lessen disability resulting from movement disorders."

The laboratory offers hands-on training for students majoring in physical therapy and other health care and human performance fields – not just from Western, but from other area colleges and universities.

"Having a movement science lab is a huge bonus for a student in physical therapy," said Thomas Burns, a second-year graduate



New diagnostic equipment enables physical therapy students to analyze a three-dimensional video reproduction of movement.

student from Atlanta. "So much of what we do is studying how the body moves and making adjustments when we see movement impairments. The images and information we see in the lab make it much more clear exactly what is going on, whether it be how much a runner's pelvis moves during his stride or measuring how much sway there is with someone who has balance deficits."

Getting hands-on experience in the lab will give Burns and other students a leg up when it comes time to search for jobs. "I am very much into running and cycling, and there are clinics out there that specialize in evaluating the mechanics of runners and cyclists to treat their problems," he said. "They use similar equipment to what is in our lab, and being able to run that equipment is one more thing in favor of those clinics hiring me."

wristband and read it on the PDA's small gray screen. Comparing that information with the patient's chart, Queen is able to check that the medication he has brought to the patient is exactly what the doctor ordered.

"You can also compare the patient's lab results with standards stored in the PDA and see what's not right," Queen said. "The PDA shows the 'panic' range, so you know when to call for help if the physician is not right there."

Checking pharmacological data helps student nurses avoid medication errors, but that is not the only advantage of using PDAs, said Mallory. "It's obviously more convenient to use the PDA than to go somewhere to document patient care and cross-reference medications. As a result, students are more likely to check their work and learn more," she said.

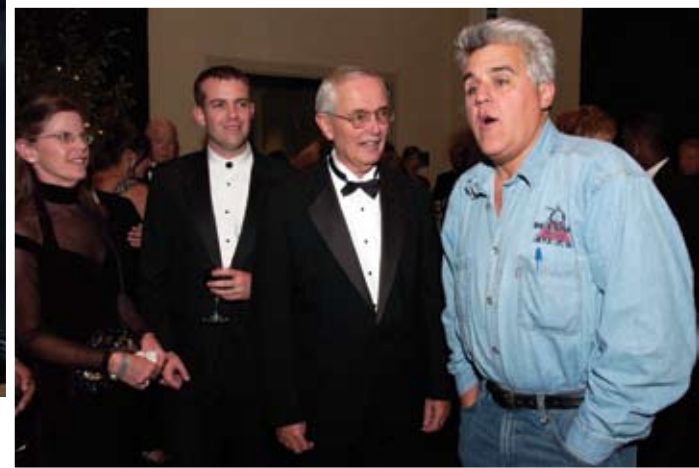
Students also use the devices to track details such as what hours they worked, what medications they handled, how many injections and tube feedings they performed, and more. Not only does this give students a more complete record for their resumes, but it allows the teaching staff to see what level of hands-on experience the students are getting, Mallory said.

"Not all clinical settings are the same," she said. "We need to know if students are missing a chance to practice any of the skills they have learned in class. Those are the skills they will need when they are caring for patients."

# THE STAGE IS Set



Western celebrated the grand opening of the long-awaited Fine and Performing Arts Center in style with a black-tie gala featuring the comedy of Jay Leno, the music of Asheville-based blues singer Kat Williams, and five concurrent art exhibits. Above, cutting the ribbon are **A.J. Rowell '05**, who helped campaign for the bond issue that paid for the facility; Principal Chief **Michell Hicks '87** of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians; Chancellor John Bardo; **Steve Warren '80**, chairman of Western's board of trustees; and Jack Wakeley, former interim chancellor.



Clockwise from above right, guests in tuxedos and evening gowns make a red-carpet entrance; Leno chats with Chancellor Bardo and family; patrons enjoy the art galleries while museum director Martin DeWitt (lower right) takes a momentary break.

## Art Exhibit Schedule

### Exhibits through March 25, 2006

Worldviews: Selections from the Collection and New Acquisitions

Pivot Points: Six Painters Six Poets

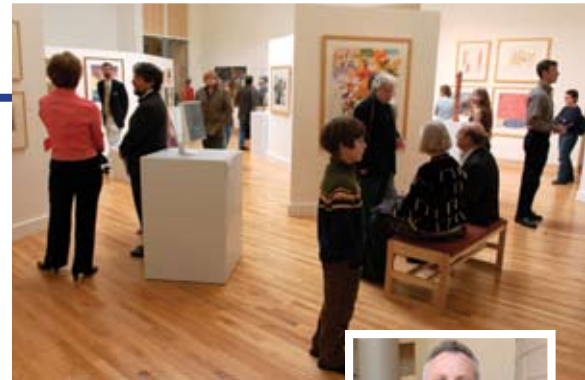
Jeff Oestreich: New Ceramics

Creative Transportation Design  
April 6 – May 5

Natalie M. Smith: The Hive\*  
March 10 – May 5

Annual Art Student Competition  
April 6 – May 5

Department of Art  
Visiting Artists and Lectures:  
February – Davy Arch, Jed Perl  
March – Joe Norman, Goerge Shuba  
Roni Gower, Josh Poteat  
April – Lois Dodd, Steve Thunder McGuire  
\*Programs funded in part by a grant from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation



### Museum

Hours: Tue-Sat 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.  
For more information contact Martin DeWitt, director, at 828-227-3591 or email at mdewitt@wcu.edu







From left, **Robert Failing '51** and Nancyann Failing welcome Chancellor Emeritus Myron Coulter and wife Barbara to the Chancellor's Box.



## Gifts Provide Arts Support

As an accomplished mountain-climber, **Dr. Robert Failing '51** has experienced the rarified air and long-range vistas of such exotic locales as Mount Kilimanjaro

in Africa and Vinson Massif, the highest peak in Antarctica.

Now, he and his wife, veteran volunteer Nancyann Failing, are helping provide elevated views of a different nature.

The California couple combined their interests – his in his alma mater, hers in the arts – and agreed to donate \$25,000 to support Western's new \$30 million, 122,000-square-foot Fine and Performing Arts Center.

The university honored their gift, the first of its kind, with an opportunity to name a private seating area in the balcony high above the performance hall. The Failings decided on "The Chancellor's Box."

"We thought it was very appropriate to name some part of the Fine and Performing Arts Center in honor of the past leaders of Western Carolina University," Dr. Failing said. Plaques recognize the couple, as well as list the past presidents and chancellors who served the university on a permanent basis.

The university recognized a similar gift from Western supporters Jo Carol Law and Henry Durham of Brooksville, Fla., by naming the adjacent seating area "The Carolina Box."

Such contributions will help operate and continually improve programs in the center's state-of-the-art studios, lecture room, galleries, museum and performance hall.

Judy Dowell, a retired professor and assistant to the chancellor at Western who serves on the university's Council

for the Fine and Performing Arts, said the contributions will fund improvements or close gaps left when revenue for arts programs falls short.

"The day-to-day expenses are very real," Dowell said. "These gifts will truly enhance the programs."

An endowment of \$150,000 to support a ceramics studio, for instance, could yield \$7,500 in annual revenue that would help purchase expensive but necessary equipment. A kiln on the ceramics program wish list costs more than \$12,000.

"We hope to have graduate students working in the studio in the future, and a larger kiln would be very helpful," said Joan Byrd, professor of art.

Jim Miller, associate vice chancellor for development, said the university would be delighted to recognize significant gifts on space used to provide educational opportunities for students, such as a lecture hall or a contemporary art gallery.

Contributions such as gifts given through the \$1,000 adopt-a-seat program are honored on a name plaque to hang on the lobby wall.

The center has drawn large standing-room only crowds to shows featuring comedian Jay Leno and the Atlanta Ballet, and exhibits with artwork such as a John Heliker painting.

"Art in all its shapes, sizes and sounds gives a community a sense of who they are," Robert Kehrberg, interim dean of Western's College of Arts and Sciences, said at the center's official opening ceremony in October. "This facility, both with the gallery and performance hall, provides the backdrop and stage for the showcase of who we are and what we can be."

*For information about how you can contribute, contact Terri McDermot, director of major gifts, at (828) 227-3052.*



### Performance Hall

For more information about performances at the Fine and Performing Arts Center, visit [fapac.wcu.edu](http://fapac.wcu.edu). or call 828-227-2479

## Performance Schedule

**Craig Karges:** Extraordinist  
Thursday, March 2, 7:30 p.m.

*"Experience the Extraordinary!" Craig Karges energizes, entertains and motivates. His use of audience participation guarantees that you don't just watch this presentation, you experience it! Nothing is impossible in the uncanny world of Craig Karges.*

**The Piano Men:** A Musical Journey  
Featuring the Songs of Billy Joel & Elton John  
Friday, March 31, 7:30 p.m.

*The Piano Men is a musical celebration of a decade that we all remember – the 1970's. Musician Jim Witter and company take the stage to evoke the music of Billy Joel and Elton John. Here's your chance to climb aboard a musical time machine for a rockin' trip full of songs and images.*

**Luma 'Techno Circus'**  
Sunday, April 30, 3 p.m.  
School matinee:  
Monday, May 1, 10 a.m.

*Blending various physical disciplines with high-tech illuminated objects, Luma creates a 'Techno Circus' that is born in the shadows and has audiences sitting on the edge of their seats.*



# Athletics

## Soccer Stars 'Comeback' with Happy Feat

By Teresa Killian

Eight starters and five veteran players return to the Lady Catamount soccer team next year – a championship squad that refused to let deficits defeat it. In the first two games of the 2005 season, the Catamounts came from behind to win the Niagara Soccer Classic. In the Southern Conference

Davis, a senior communication major from Marietta, Ga., said they won because they had a lot of heart. “Either we could grasp it all – the respect, the title, the joy, the greatest moments of our lives – or we could prove the critics right and come up short,” Davis said.

The Lady Catamounts soccer team returned to Cullowhee as the 2005 Southern Conference Champions.



Championship semifinals, they orchestrated a comeback to conquer College of Charleston.

Despite a history of two losing seasons and going into the conference championship seeded fourth, the Lady Catamounts came back to Cullowhee with the title and a bid to the NCAA Tournament. They finished the season 18-6, holding the top-ranked Tar Heels to only two goals in the first round of the national tournament. “We’re not a team of superstars,” said defender Emily Lena Pierce, a senior biology major from Chattanooga, Tenn. “We work hard and together. That’s where our success has come from.”

First-year Head Coach Tammy DeCesare said they trained hard, even running on dark mornings in 18-degree weather. “They never complained,” DeCesare said. “They just showed up and got it done.” She watched them improve as the season went on and saw determination bring them together.

During a disappointing performance against Charleston, senior midfielder Casey Davis called the players together on the field, DeCesare said. “I don’t know what she said, but they came out with a possessed look in their eyes,” she said. “From that point on, I never thought we were going to lose.”



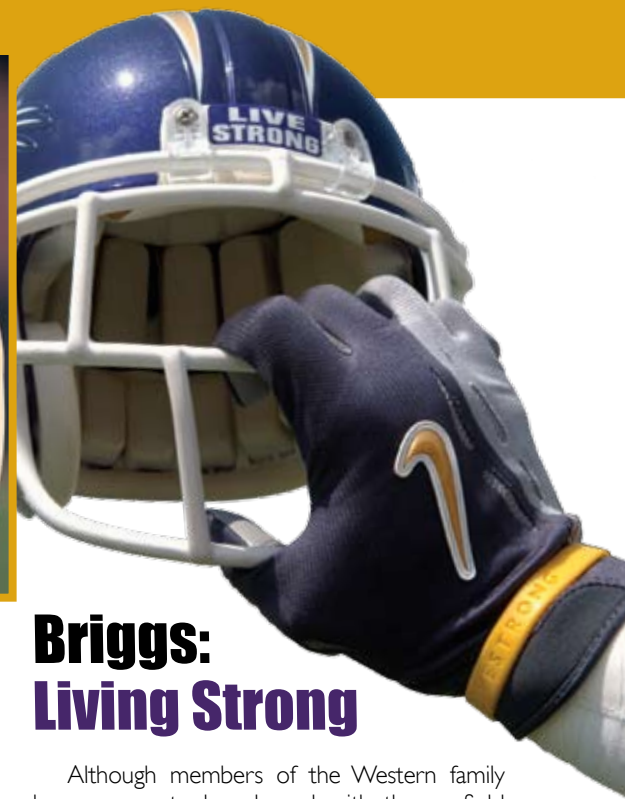
For the first time, Western made an appearance on polls such as the Soccer Buzz Southeast regional rankings. And the future looks good with 13 players returning and 14 committed from as far away as Colorado and Texas to join them.

Junior goalkeeper Alesha Row, a criminal justice major from Fargo, N.D., keeps a plaque on her nightstand that reminds her of the victories, so it is the last thing she sees before she goes to sleep and the first things she sees when she wakes up.

“It’s a constant reminder that nothing comes for free,” Row said. “I have that much more hard work to put in to ensure the same, if not more, success next season.”



Coach Kent Briggs '79 MAEd '81 never missed a beat with the hectic preseason practice schedule.



## Briggs: Living Strong

### After Winning 2005 Season, Football Cats Ready for Next Step

Coming off the first winning football season since 2001, a season marked by an upset of No. 2-ranked Furman University, Coach **Kent Briggs '79 MAEd '81** and the Catamounts are ready to take the next step – a Southern Conference title.

“We are turning the corner, and we need the ongoing support of Catamount fans to continue to improve,” said Chip Smith, director of athletics.

“To compete for the SoCon championship next fall, our program needs to accomplish two major objectives,” said Bill Richter, executive director of the Catamount Club. “We must complete the renovation of our locker room, and we must increase funding for our summer school scholarship program.”

The university is ready to proceed with the locker room expansion, recently accepting a bid to complete the work for \$205,000 from H & M Contractors, the company that erected the West Side Stands in 2003.

Gifts of more than \$65,000 from **Dale Hollifield '65** and **Dianne Hollifield '66** helped jump-start the fund-raising effort. “Thanks to significant contributions from Dale, who played on the offensive line for the Cats, and Dianne, and with the sale of nameplates on individual lockers to former football players at \$500 apiece, we have approximately \$125,000 in hand,” Richter said. “That leaves us with a shortfall of approximately \$80,000, and we are asking other Catamount Club members to contribute now that we know the cost of renovations.”

In addition to completing the locker room renovation, the athletics program also is seeking financial support for a new scholarship fund designed to help student-athletes to train while taking additional classes during the summer months. The fund is named in honor of former Catamount Club director **Marty Ramsey '85**, who is now Western's director of alumni affairs.

“We have made very good progress with this initiative,” Richter said. “Last year, we raised more than \$30,000, which enabled 20 football players to attend summer school to focus on academic class work and participate in off-season conditioning. But some of our Southern Conference competitors have as many as 70 student-athletes working out and doing course work during the summer.”

Although members of the Western family have reason to be pleased with the on-field performance of the Catamounts in 2005, they are even more enthusiastic about the performance of Football Coach Kent Briggs '79 MAEd '81 in a much more vital competition – his personal fight against cancer. Doctors have declared Briggs, who battled head-and-neck cancer while guiding the Catamounts to their first winning record in several years, 100 percent cancer-free.

“I'm very thankful, and I feel very blessed,” said Briggs, who underwent surgery and seven weeks of radiation and chemotherapy before the season. “I thank the doctors and my family for supporting me. The good Lord took care of me.”

Briggs also received support from the university administration, which granted the coach a one-year contract extension to enable him to focus on recovery. His players wore the yellow “LiveStrong” bracelets developed by cancer survivor and champion cyclist Lance Armstrong and put the slogan on the front of their football helmets.

In recognition of Briggs' battle with cancer, the American Cancer Society selected him to serve as honorary chairman of Western's Relay for Life, the national organization's signature activity to raise funds and awareness for cancer research. The campus event is set for April 7-8.

“When Coach Kent Briggs was diagnosed with cancer, he made no secret about it. In fact, he made it a point to get as much information out about his condition as he could. He wanted everyone to know he intended to continue in his coaching position and fight this disease,” said Lisa Majors-Duff '91, income manager for the American Cancer Society in Jackson and Haywood counties.

*For more information about the Catamount Club or how you can contribute, contact Bill Richter at (828) 227-2530 or via e-mail at [brichter@wcu.edu](mailto:brichter@wcu.edu).*



Young athletes have the chance to train with championship Catamount players this summer. Western Carolina Athletics hosts summer camps in sports from women's soccer to football. For more information, call (828) 227-7338 or check out [catamountsports.com](http://catamountsports.com).



## Lady Catamounts Step Up to the Plate

Throwing the first pitch of a Catamount softball game in Western's new stadium will be a player who can throw nearly 60 mph.

"Sometimes the idea of making history hits us," said Mollie Fowler, a freshman shortstop from King majoring in elementary education. "We can't wait for some things to go down in the record books. We'll say, 'that was the first homerun ever hit here,' or 'that was the first time that happened.'"

The team of 12 freshmen, three sophomores and two juniors is excited to bring fast-pitch softball to Western, which hosted a slow-pitch softball program from 1978 to 1985. During the early part of the pre-season, they have focused on conditioning with running, weights and chemistry – team chemistry.

First-year Head Coach Megan Smith has led them through group-building activities to help the team create cohesion and cultivate leadership. On a squad camping trip, they played a version of the TV show "Survivor." The Lady Catamounts guided blindfolded teammates through a field of obstacles and designed flags for their squads. "They are working extremely hard," Smith said. "We have a talented team."

The roster includes freshman pitcher Mendy McKenzie from Clemmons, a four-time All-Central Piedmont Conference selection and two-time conference Player of the Year. McKenzie, who plans to major in education, said the chance to work with Smith was a key part of her decision to play at Western. She remembered Smith helping her learn to pitch years ago when she attended camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Smith was a four-year starter and former assistant there. "She knows the game, and she cares about the athletes," McKenzie said.

The Lady Catamounts' official season opener was Feb. 11 against Tennessee Tech, and the home opener was Feb. 19 against South Carolina State. Those who come to watch the remaining games will get to see fast pitches and a game that Fowler finds exciting for its unpredictability – where the ball will go and what kind of pitch will come next.

"Our fans are going to see a lot of firsts. We are going to set a lot of records this year since they will all be new records," Smith said. "Seeing the players embrace and take ownership in starting a tradition is exciting. They are creating Catamount softball."

Photos counter-clockwise from top:  
- New facility will host Lady Catamounts  
- Shortstop Mollie Fowler practices batting  
- Pitcher Mendy McKenzie has clocked nearly 60-mph pitches

## Jonathan Jorstad Spearheads an Evolving Catamount Auction

**Jonathan K. Jorstad '97**, vice president of Carolina First Securities in Asheville, is serving as chairman of the Catamount Club committee planning the 2006 Athletics Scholarship Auction.

"On behalf of the more than 3,000 members of the Catamount Club, let me say we are delighted that Jonathan is spearheading this important and highly visible fund-raising gala, and we are looking forward to working with him to make the 2006 event even more successful," said **Paul Jones '69**, past president of the Catamount Club.

The 2006 event is set for Saturday, June 17, at the Renaissance Hotel in Charlotte. Last year's auction, held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Charlotte, attracted more than 550 attendees and grossed more than \$100,000 in revenues.

Jorstad already is hard at work on planning the '06 auction, and is seeking as many as 15 club members to form the committees necessary to take this annual event to the next level. "We need to obtain sponsorships for the event and enlist Catamount Club members to take a much more active role in securing donated items to auction off and raise additional dollars to support athletic scholarships," he said. "By doing so, I'm confident we will substantially increase the net revenues of the event."

Catamount Club President **Tobe Childers '61**, whose tenure began Jan. 1, speaks highly of Jorstad's abilities. "Jonathan's business background, his love of Western, and enthusiasm for this project is infectious. I look forward to working with him to make the event even more successful," said Childers.

"As part of its efforts to keep costs low and enhance the



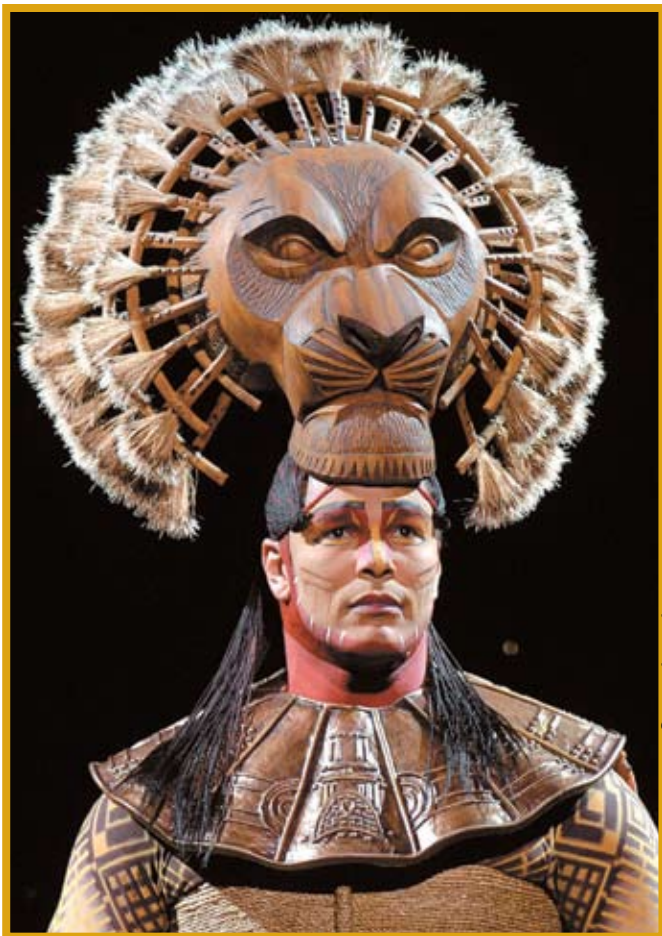
# Former Catamount Roars in Australian “Lion King”

By Cam Ward

You don't need to hear **Geno Segers '92** sing to know he is cast perfectly for “The Lion King.” You don't need him to get into costume, work through a scene, or even rehearse his lines. You just need to hear him speak.

Anything out of the mouth of this youthful-looking 38-year-old resonates a mellifluous bass voice that envelops the listener like a bear hug.

It's the kind of voice that instantly commands attention, making Segers the perfect choice for the role of



Photos by Tony Kerrigan



Mufasa, the titular patriarch of Pride Rock, in a production of “The Lion King” in Melbourne, Australia.

But his path to stardom was anything but obvious. Segers was an All-American defensive end while studying at Western. He also represented his country in rugby. He even won a New Zealand national wrestling title. But no where was there singing. Or acting. Or music, apart from a stint on the saxophone in high school. He didn't even have his first singing lessons until after he auditioned for “The Lion King.”

And yet here he is now, taking on his first principal role, after his first ensemble part, in the first show he auditioned for. Ever. He didn't even get to see the whole show until after he'd been a cast member for maybe 160 shows. An ensemble member, he had been an understudy to the characters of Mufasa and Pumba – until taking over the role this past summer.

It was football or, rather, his disillusionment with the game that prompted Segers' quantum leap in careers. He was a first-team All-American and first-team All-Southern Conference player in 1988. He was captain of the defense, and still ranks among West-

ern's all-time leaders in tackles for loss and quarterback sacks.

But after one season of minor league football after college, he was through. “I decided I was tired of the politics of the American gridiron,” Segers says.

His interest in rugby was piqued when he saw a cable television replay of a game and an accompanying advertisement for rugby tryouts in New York. His background made him a standout among his fellow raw recruits, and made for a rapid rise through rugby's ranks.

He was soon packing his bags for what he thought was a tournament in Austria – only to learn on a stopover in Los Angeles that Australia was his destination. He landed in Australia for the 1994 World Sevens and, after that, figured he needed to play rugby league for a year to get a better feel for the sport. So he moved to New Zealand and represented America in the developing nations' World Cup in 1997, but, by then, thought he was getting too old for the sport.

He settled back in New Zealand, and started working with the industrial engineering technology degree he earned at Western. It was only then that someone suggested he do something with his voice that everyone tells him sounds like James Earl Jones (Mufasa in Disney's original animated version of “The Lion King”). That led to “The Lion King” auditions.

“I would have never guessed in a million years that I'd be in front of 2,000 people every night singing and doing something that I only did in the shower with no one home, and in the car with the windows up, thinking that no one would actually hear,” Segers says in his rich, deep voice.

But hindsight has a marvelous ability to point out life's signposts. His archrivals in high school were the Bobcats, his college team was the Catamounts and, for a while, he worked as a bouncer at a club called the Safari Lounge. “Now I'm working in ‘The Lion King’ as a big cat,” he says, grinning.

amount of money that goes toward scholarship assistance for student-athletes, the club is seeking more donations of auction items this year,” said Catamount Club Executive Director Bill Richter.

“We need to engage the Catamount Club membership to help us with this year's auction as never before” said Richter. “We need to challenge each member to donate an item to be auctioned off at the event. By having our items donated, rather than purchased on consignment, we can substantially increase the profitability of the event.”

Anyone interested in serving on the auction committee should contact Jonathan Jorstad at (828) 254-4290, or via e-mail [jonathan.jorstad@carolinafirst.com](mailto:jonathan.jorstad@carolinafirst.com).

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# Contribution to Gerontological Social Work Honors Jeanette Hyde and University



Jeanette Hyde

A gift from Sarasota, Fla., resident **Wallace Hyde '49 MA '53**, former chairman of Western's board of trustees and longtime university benefactor, is enabling the university to establish an endowed professorship in gerontological social work in honor of Jeanette Hyde, his wife and current board vice chair.

Through a program initiated by the General Assembly to encourage private support for public universities, Western will receive \$250,000 in funds to match the Hyde gift of \$250,000, creating the \$500,000 professorship in gerontological social work.

Jeanette Hyde is a successful businesswoman and banking executive who is perhaps best known as U.S. ambassador to the seven Eastern Caribbean nations of Barbados, Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Antigua, Grenada and St. Kitts-Nevis from 1994 until 1998. But she always has called social work her "true calling."

"As a former social worker, I have seen first hand the contributions social work professionals are making to our society each and every day," she said. "The increasing number of senior citizens in our nation's population will require social workers with enhanced levels of education and training, and I hope this endowed professorship can enable Western to bring in a nationally recognized expert in gerontology who can help address those needs."

"Although I have been away from the profession for many years, I still have an incredible passion for social work. The social work training I received prepared me well for many other endeavors, in business, politics and diplomacy. It helped me learn to better understand situations from others' perspectives," she said. "And I believe that we all, as human beings, have an obligation to do whatever is in our power to help our fellow human beings."

After attending Western on scholarships for football and basketball, Wallace Hyde earned his doctorate at New York University in 1959. Hyde was a member of Western's board of trustees for 16 years, including a record 11 years as chairman. He headed Gov. Bob Scott's statewide committee to restructure the N.C. higher education system, from which the 16-campus University of North Carolina system evolved in 1971. He was elected to the first Board of Governors in the new UNC system in 1972 and received the WCU Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award that year. Western presented him an honorary doctorate in 2002.

"In making this gift, I wanted to help the university I love the most in its efforts to achieve excellence, and I wanted to honor the woman I love the most," Hyde said. "I feel very strongly that everyone should help his or her university. Too many people go away after getting their degrees and never give anything back to the university."

## Endowed Professorship in Nurse Anesthesia Established as Demand Grows for Surgical Services

Western's department of nursing is joining a very short list of schools that train nurse anesthetists, thanks to a grant from a dozen health care organizations in Western North Carolina.

Together, they contributed a combined total of \$250,000 toward the creation of an endowment for a new nurse anesthesia professorship at Western. The university is using the gift, along with state matching funds, to create the new \$500,000 Western North Carolina Health Organizations Endowed Professorship in Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia. It marks the 13th distinguished professorship established at Western since 1996.

The professorship is designed to help meet the need for more certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) as Western North Carolina faces increased demand for surgical services, especially given the increasing number of aging adults in the region. This funding will help recruit a professor with national-level expertise who can ensure successful development and operation of Western's master's degree program in nurse anesthesia. Once established, it will be one of fewer than 100 such programs in the nation.

"This endowment focuses attention on the importance of nurses who are trained and certified in the safe administration of anesthesia," said Noelle Kehrberg, dean of Western's College of Applied Sciences. "According to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, CRNAs are the sole anesthesia providers in approximately two-thirds of all rural hospitals in the United States. We want to make sure that our graduate students are fully prepared for that level of responsibility, and this endowment will help to make that possible."

CRNAs work in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered, including hospital surgical suites and delivery rooms; critical access

hospitals; and the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, plastic surgeons and pain management specialists.

Mary Karlet is helping to develop curricula, create evaluation tools, and establish clinical practice sites for nurses who will participate in Western's program.

"It is heartwarming to find that there is such a solid base of support to fill the critical need for CRNAs in this region," Karlet said. "Contributions to the endowment were pivotal."



Western North Carolina has a critical need for certified nurse anesthetists, who are the sole anesthesia providers in approximately two-thirds of rural hospitals nationwide.





Sue Ellen Bridgers '76

## Alumna Author Has the “Write” Stuff



By Teresa Killian

Writer **Sue Ellen Bridgers '76** never met Sara Will or Charlotte, but she knows them. Sara dwells in the past, clinging to worry and regret. Charlotte tries to protect her niece from an alcoholic father and abusive husband. They are characters in Bridgers' award-winning books for young adults – inventions of her imagination that readers find very real. "I feel like I know them," said Elizabeth Addison, head of Western's English department.

Bridgers' latest book is so powerful that an article in *The Alan Review* said "All We Know of Heaven" should be required high school reading. In August, Western honored Bridgers for her achievements with an honorary doctorate. "I was speechless, which is rare," said Bridgers, who hung the citation in her study near her 1976 diploma and 1991 Distinguished Service Award, which also are from Western.

The Winterville native grew up on a tobacco farm and got her first typewriter at age 15. She began her studies at what is now East Carolina University. There, she met her husband, Ben. The couple moved to Mississippi, where he was stationed in the Air Force, and started a family that would grow to three children, seven "absolutely perfect" grandchildren and one very old dog. They ultimately settled in Sylva, where Ben joined a law firm.

When their youngest went to school, so did Bridgers – at Western. For class, she used some of the work that would become her first book. "Home Before Dark" was published in 1976 – the same year she graduated.

Bridgers felt a kinship with other Western students who, like her, were not attending college immediately after high school. "Returning students are usually serious, and we hung together," Bridgers said. "I enjoyed my friendships with the faculty, too, and those friendships have lasted over the years." They include Marilyn Jody, professor emeritus of English and a former department head at Western. Jody has known Bridgers as a student, colleague and friend. "She is not only a superbly gifted writer, but also she has insight into the human experience. Her work has substance – weight," Jody said. "It's real."

Upcoming events for Sue Ellen Bridgers include facilitating a writing workshop at the John C. Campbell Folk School this winter and a residency at an artist colony in Ireland. Check out [sueellenbridgers.com](http://sueellenbridgers.com) for more information. The Sue Ellen Bridgers Collection at Western Carolina University's Hunter Library includes drafts, revised manuscripts, proof copies, correspondence and other materials relating to Bridgers' novels.

Check out [www.wcu.edu/library/specialcoll/manuscripts/bridgers.htm](http://www.wcu.edu/library/specialcoll/manuscripts/bridgers.htm) for more information about the collection.

# Phillip Walker Still Banks on Western

The Western Carolina University that helped prepare **Phillip D. Walker '71** for a career in banking is not the same as it used to be. It's even better, said Walker, a senior vice president for BB&T.

"We have come so far," said the former member of Western's board of trustees and board chairman from 2003 to 2005. "It's just a different university than it was 10 years ago."

The university honored Walker in October with the Distinguished Service Award, and he plans to continue helping Western move forward however he can.

Chancellor John Bardo said Walker is the only person who talks about Western more than he does.

"Phil is a good friend of mine, and he is a good friend of the university," Bardo said. "I can't tell you what it means to the university to have a friend, a colleague and an alumnus like Phil Walker."

On the board of trustees, Walker served during a period of dramatic expansion at the university, including unprecedented construction and renovation projects, and historic growth in enrollment.

Walker said highlights for him included the development of the Honors College, the designation as an official college spon-

sor of National Merit Scholars and the addition of endowed professorships.

"Those initiatives have been the greatest keys to putting Western on the map academically," Walker said. "They have positioned Western to a level where we are competing with universities we did not compete with before."

Serving on the board was a joy and a challenge, he said. "We always have some things we need to do in academics as well as in athletics," Walker said. "It all comes down to money to support scholarships and programs."

In 1999, the trustees supported a nearly \$8 million initiative to improve athletic facilities and support scholarships and coaching salaries that benefit women's sports.

During the past year, Walker took great pride in watching the women's basketball and soccer teams earn Southern Conference championship titles.

Outside of his role as a trustee, Walker and his wife, **Joan Walker '71**, spearheaded the creation of the Catawba County Christian Business and Professional Scholarship Fund, an endowed scholarship fund established by a group of Hickory-area Western alumni and friends. He's glad that he's now in a position to help students the way he



Phillip Walker '71

was helped years ago.

"If it hadn't been for scholarship assistance, I probably would have never gone to college," Walker said.

At Western, he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and took part in activities such as student government.

"That really prepared me for a great banking career – the relationship skills and interaction," he said.

# Professor's Book Examines Tourism Industry

A new book by a Western history professor tells the story of the rise of the tourism industry in Western North Carolina, from the early 1800s when low-country planters escaped the summer heat by heading to higher elevations to the arrival of casino gambling in Cherokee.

In "Creating the Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina," published by the University of Alabama Press, Asheville native **Richard D. Starnes '92 MA '94** contends that tourism has exploded from modest roots in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to emerge as the defining economic and social force in Western North Carolina.

"The effects of tourism in terms of employment, economic development and local tax revenue are indisputable," said Starnes, an assistant professor of history. "Of course, not all residents are pleased with the roles tourism plays within theregion. Even today, native-born residents sometimes resent outsiders, whom they feel view mountain people as backward and ignorant."

Residents have other concerns about tourism, he said, including inflated property values resulting from rampant second-home construction, air and water quality issues associated



Richard D. Starnes '92 MA '94

with an influx of tourists, and the loss of forestland for recreation and timber to real estate development.

"These local effects mirror the issues facing many tourist communities across the South," Starnes said. "The book seeks to understand how a region develops as a tourist destination and how that process shapes the lives of the people who live there."

A member of the Western history department faculty since 2000, Starnes earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Western and his doctorate from Auburn University. He is a senior research associate at Western's Mountain Heritage Center, which promotes the natural and cultural heritage of the Southern Appalachian region through exhibitions, publications, educational programs and demonstrations.

Starnes also directs the Western North Carolina Oral History Project, and his research interests focus on the social and economic history of the American South since the Civil War.

He previously served as co-editor of "Southern Journeys: Tourism, History and Culture in the Modern South," also published by the University of Alabama Press. "Creating the Land of the Sky" is part of "The Modern South" series.



# Demand for Fast, Accurate Medical Data Drives Graduate



Emily Anne Melton Spangler '02

It stung, the news that doctors delivered to **Emily Anne Melton Spangler '02** during her junior year. Her mother had cancer.

With her mother's permission, the health information administration major pored over the medical records with the program's director, Irene Mueller, an assistant professor of health sciences at Western. "I

would take them to her office," Spangler said. "Irene sat with me and went over what the conditions were." Together, they interpreted how codes correlated to her mother's diagnosis, which ultimately became terminal.

The experience would deepen Spangler's commitment to the field of health information management. "It drove me to be better at what I do," said Spangler, who was presented with Western's Young Alumnus Award.

Mueller said the health information management field changes rapidly and needs people who have the positive, helpful, focused, hard-working and proactive approach that Spangler offers.

"There's a constant learning curve," Mueller said. After graduation, Spangler worked as an assistant coordinator for medical records at a Charlotte eye, ear, nose and throat practice with nearly 50 physicians. Her duties involved converting tangible, paper charts into an electronic format to give physicians quicker access to medical documents. Spangler implemented a new electronic medical records system including software,

policies, procedure and training. The reorganization yielded a 75 percent improvement in access to charts.

At her current job as a data analyst at Premier Inc. in Charlotte, she collects patient data from hospitals across the country. She checks for accuracy and compiles information in a way that allows similar facilities to compare how they treat patients and identify possible areas of improvement. "They can benchmark themselves against like hospitals," Spangler said.

Part of her work has meant introducing change, and change is never easy. She credits her experience at Western for teaching her how to be innovative. "It's thinking outside the box," Spangler said. "There are areas for improvement everywhere."

The health information management field appealed to Spangler because she wanted to help patients, but was not drawn to hands-on professions such as nursing. Spangler entered the health information administration program at Western – one of fewer than 50 accredited programs in the country.

The American Health Information Management Association reports that, in the next five years, nearly 6,000 health information management professionals will be needed each year to fill positions, but currently only 2,000 new graduates enter the field annually. They are met with competitive salaries ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000, according to the association.

The job suits Spangler, a woman with an eye for organization. Her family's bills and tax information are filed in order of month and day paid. As a child growing up in Monroe, she kept her notebooks neat. "I would write things over and over in pretty handwriting," said Spangler, and in health information management, legible and readable documentation is critical.

"You have to want to help people," said Spangler, of what it takes to be successful. "No matter what area of the health care field you work in, you are ultimately participating in patient care."

## Alumni Association SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Western Carolina University Alumni Association Scholarship Fund has raised nearly \$40,000 that will benefit children and grandchildren of Western alumni and employees.

Members who contribute \$100 or more will be honored with their names on a bronze, silver, gold or platinum nameplate to be displayed in the Alumni House.

"We wanted to do something to help students who need financial assistance stay at Western, and we wanted to help the children or relatives of alumni any way we can."

**David Andrew '83**, president-elect of Western's Alumni Association

For more information, contact

**Brett Woods**, director of annual funds and special gifts,  
at (828) 227-7124 or [bwoods@wcu.edu](mailto:bwoods@wcu.edu).

# •CLASS NOTES•



Joining Jim Rowell '72 to show off their Purple Pride were Ed Phillips '85 and A.J. Rowell '05 during a climb of Washington's Mount Rainier. Here they mugged in the morning sunshine of Camp Muir at 10,080 feet, after A.J. had summited the 14,410-foot peak. Blessed with a clear day, they enjoyed seeing volcanoes Mount Adams (background, right), Mount Hood, and Mount St. Helens, which rewarded the trio with a plume of steam and ash.

## •CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•

The Class Notes section features news about personal or professional accomplishments of Western alumni. Alumni are listed in the year in which they earned their first degree at Western. City and county names not otherwise identified are in North Carolina.

1968

Last July, Betty Allen spent 18 days in Armenia with a Western N.C. Conference Building Team of the United Methodist Church. Her team spent three days in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, before traveling to Karabakh where they remodeled a storage room at an orphanage in Lachin. The team cleaned out the storage room; knocked down shelves; spackled, sanded and painted the walls; and put down a laminate floor. In addition, they worked and played with the children at the orphanage, as well as children from the area Christian Education Center; teaching them English words and songs.

1975

In June, after 33 years with N.C. public schools, Paula Lavendar Norton MAEd retired from Watauga County Schools as associate superintendent. In August, she began a second career in education, this one in Tennessee as Safe Schools/Healthy Students Project administrator for Johnson County Schools in Mountain City.

Jim Mallinson MAEd, director of student health services at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, won the E. Dean Lovett Award at the 2005 annual meeting of the American College Health Association. The award honors an association member for making significant contributions to a college health program. Mallinson helped UNCC's health center expand to a full-service facility and earn

accreditation. He is an advocate on statewide issues such as the need for mandatory health insurance for all students in the UNC system.

1979

As fate would have it, five graduates of Western Carolina University are stationed together in Baghdad, Iraq, overseeing military operations. These headquarters are located in the Al-Faw Palace, where this picture was taken. The five officers are (left to right, front to back): Lt. Col. Don Myers '84; Col. Kathy Peterson Kasun '79; Col. Robert Mayr '80; Col. Kirk L. Foster '80; and Lt. Col. Mark Childress '82. All five officers attended Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) classes at Western.



## •CLASS NOTES•



# Alumnus an *"Inspiration"* to Gospel Musicians

By Lynn Gaines Hotaling '72 MAEd '80

It's been a good year for **Martin Cook '57 MAEd '62** and the gospel group he founded more than 40 years ago.

Cook, a former Swain County teacher, was named in September to the Piano Roll of Honor in Greenville, S.C., while The Inspirations, the quartet he organized in 1964, was voted Favorite Gospel Male Quartet at the Singing News Fan Awards in Louisville, Ky.

Organized in 1996, the Southern Gospel Piano Roll of Honor is equivalent to a Southern Gospel pianists' Hall of Fame. Inductees are selected by a committee that includes a cross-section of legendary pianists and other noted contributors to the gospel music profession. The Piano Roll of Honor currently has 36 members, including Cook and this year's other three inductees.

Cook is one of the all-time longevity leaders among Southern Gospel pianists, and his piano-playing style is one of the most recognized and distinctive. He became the first pianist for the Kingsmen Quartet in 1957 and played piano for the Silvertones, a regional quartet from North Carolina, before forming The Inspirations while teaching high school chemistry in Bryson City. Cook has served as the group's manager, pianist and emcee for the past 41 years.

"I'm deeply honored with induction into the Southern Gospel Piano Roll of Honor," Cook said. "I'm as proud of this accomplishment as any I've ever had bestowed upon me. I praise God for giving me the ability to play a piano."

The Inspirations grew out of singing sessions that Martin Cook organized for his students in his Bryson City basement. Led by his efforts, The Inspirations have developed the nation's largest gospel singing festival, the "Singing in the Smokies," which is held in three sessions each year at Inspirations Park on a mountainside near Bryson City.

Yet when you talk to him about his success, Cook always downplays his own role and builds up those who have helped him along the way. One he never fails to mention is the late



Martin Cook '57 MAEd '62

Carl Killian, who was one of Cook's teachers at Western some 50 years ago.

"I feel like my experience at WCU is a major factor in my way of doing things. I had teachers like Dr. Killian, who influenced me and made me want to do better," Cook said. "That's what I try to do. I try to get the people that work with me to do better. Everybody has a good side and a bad side. My job is to keep the good side turned up."

Cook said he is proud to be a product of Cullowhee's Caney Fork community, where he was raised and still lives, and that the values he learned as a child on the farm, in school and in church are what formed his character and gave him the ability and drive to scale the heights of gospel music.

He also calls Western "a tremendous asset." He and his wife, Ora, who also is from Caney Fork, support the New Century Scholars Program as their way of encouraging other mountain children to get an education and see where it takes them.

## •CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•CLASS NOTES•

1981

Last summer, Lt. Col. David White retired from the Army after 23 years of service. He and wife Marcy Belohlavek '85 live in Harker Heights, Texas.

1982

After more than 21 years as a military police officer, Edward M. Levy retired from the Army in October 2003 at the rank of lieutenant colonel. A graduate of the 210<sup>th</sup> Session of the FBI National Academy, Levy is an assistant director in the Global Security Division of Pfizer Inc in New York City.

Living in a small apartment that had supplemental wood heating in 1987, Paul Marley began thinking about how nice it would be to have a tool to recover live embers and speed the process of restarting a fire.

Many years later, Marley and his wife started a small business, Endless Embers, L.L.C., to manufacture and market the invention he finally developed. After four years of very hard work, last June they licensed their patent for the KoalKeeper Live Ember Recovery Tool to a large manufacturer in St. Louis, Mo., who will make and sell it at various venues, including Plow and Hearth and Lehman's catalogs. Marley's other job is computer support for the art department at Wake Forest University. He and wife Karen live in Tobaccoville with their two children, ages 7 and 4.

1983

In December, Mike O'Day MAEd was one of eight athletic administrators selected nationwide to be honored by the National Federation of State High School Associations

in Orlando, Fla. Director of athletics at South Burlington High School in Vermont, his alma mater, since 1984, he was recognized for more than 20 years of service during the 36<sup>th</sup> annual National Conference of High School Athletic Directors.

1984

A past recipient of NASA's Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center Certificate of Commendation, the center's highest honorary award, Michael Soots was recently promoted to manager of the cost estimating and assessment office at the center. He attended the Maxwell School of Public Administration, Syracuse University, on a NASA fellowship. Residents of League City, Texas, Soots and wife Rebecca recently celebrated their 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.



Steve Warren '80

## Alumnus Chairs Board of Trustees

Asheville attorney **Steve Warren '80** is the new chairman of the board of trustees at Western. Election of officers and administration of the oath of office for two new board members – former state Sens. Teena S. Little of Southern Pines and Stephen M. Metcalf of Weaverville – came at the board's first meeting of the 2005-06 academic year.

An economics major at Western, Warren went on to earn his law degree at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He is a partner with the law firm of Long, Parker, Warren and Jones, and is president of the board of directors of the N.C. Governor's Western Residence.

"I want to thank the members of the board for giving me what I consider to be the highest honor in my life," Warren said after being elected chair. "I have had the privilege of sitting among 12 people who are, by any definition imaginable, among the most successful people to be found anywhere. It means so very much to me to have received your nomination and your trust."

The board also elected Joan MacNeill, a community leader and entrepreneur from Webster, to serve as vice chair of the board, and re-elected retired Mars Hill entrepreneur Genevieve Whitmire Burda as secretary.

MacNeill is co-founder and former president and chief operations officer for the Great Smoky Mountains Railway. A former nurse, she previously served on Western's Foundation Board and the Garden Club of Sylva. Burda is former co-owner of Mars Hill Hardware and Building Supply. She is a former chemist and researcher in Texas, and a past member of the board of directors for the Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to the election of officers, District Court Judge **Danny Davis '75** administered the oath of office to new board members Little and Metcalf.

A retired public school teacher in Hoke and Moore counties, Little is a former member of the UNC Board of Governors, including a term as vice chair of the board beginning in 2002. A graduate of Austin Peay State University in Tennessee, she is a former member of the N.C. State Board of Education and the board of advisers for the University of North Carolina-Wilmington Watson School of Education. Little and husband George W. Little, a 2004 candidate for N.C. governor, played significant roles in winning support for the N.C. Higher Education Improvement Bonds in 2000.

Metcalf, who stepped down from the N.C. Senate in February 2004, is a former manager for Buncombe County and former director of the city of Asheville's Bele Chere festival. He previously served as assistant to Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., and as deputy secretary for the N.C. Department of Administration and N.C. Department of Transportation. Metcalf was a partner in MGT of America, a national management research and consulting firm serving public sector clients, and was director of Western's local government relations program in 2002-03. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Appalachian State University and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Tennessee.

1985

In December, Jeffrey D. McKay MPA '91 became the executive director of the North East Strategic Alliance, an association that promotes the joint development of the historic Pee Dee and Waccamaw regions of South Carolina. "Jeff McKay is a top-notch economic development practitioner. He brings a wealth of experience to this position," the chairman of NESAs executive committee said. With nearly 20 years of experience in economic development in several North Carolina settings, from the county to the state level, McKay served as executive director of the Greater Statesville Development Corp. from 1992 until taking the position with NESAs. He and wife Carrie have two children – Zach, 9, and Claire, 5.



1986

John Boyd MAEd has joined First Citizens Bank as a business banker in Hendersonville.

1987

One of about 80 nominees from school districts around the United States, Joni Setzer received Kelly Educational Staffing's national Substitute Teacher of the Year award for 2005. Last year, Kelly employed 15,000 substitute teachers nationwide. About half the time, Setzer books an assignment in advance; the rest of the time she is up at 6 a.m. every weekday checking the computer to see which Rock Hill, S.C., elementary schools need substitute teachers. A Kelly spokesperson said Setzer "was selected for her level of commitment and the exceptional feedback we get on her. She is willing to work any day and is committed to educating the students. She has done a phenomenal job in a difficult situation." Setzer and husband Curt have two sons – Will, 9, and Steven, 5.

1988

Phil McManus MBA '91 is department head and assistant professor of culinary arts/hospitality management for Dabney Lancaster Community College. He and wife, Julia '90, live in Eagle Rock, Va., and are happy to be back in the South!



1989

Kelly Johnson is a financial services manager and assistant vice president at First Citizens Bank, Bladenboro. A resident of Nakina, he serves as committee chairman for Boy Scout Pack 516.



Billy Cooper took the helm as president of the Western Carolina University Alumni Association in July. Cooper graduated from Western with a bachelor of science in business and works as a Northwestern Mutual Financial Network representative. He lives in Fairview with his wife, Tabitha, and children, Riley and Olivia.

1991

In July, the SunTrust Gold Star Middle School Teacher of the Year award recognized J. Todd Cayton. The eighth-grade language arts teacher at Guilford Middle School inspires students to learn through inviting them to help teach lessons and encouraging interaction in literary discussions.

1994

Mckenna Rae, first child of R. Parrish Ezell and wife Aimee, was born in January 2005. The family lives in Waynesville, and Parrish works at Merrill Lynch in Asheville.

1995

Last February, Chadwick Sands created and opened the ticket office at the critically acclaimed new Music Center, the centerpiece of Strathmore, an established destination and presenter of performing and visual arts in the greater Washington, D.C., area. As ticket office manager, he oversees a staff of 20 and manages ticketing through the state-of-the-art Tessitura ticketing system for more than 150 events during the year. After moving to the Washington, D.C., area in 1998, Sands was manager of ticket services for the Washington Performing Arts Society and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts before joining Strathmore. In addition to his full-time job, Sands was invited to the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Winter Games to manage the ticketing of men's and women's ice hockey at the Peaks Ice Arena in Provo, Utah.

1996

"Sum of All Parts," a group exhibition of new works featuring all artists of the Bridgette Mayer Gallery in Philadelphia, includes works by Allen Bentley and Chris Lyon. Bentley paints the small conflicts and reconciliations of human interaction with a palette of vibrant colors and images of lively dancers. Lyon's work in the show is a large charcoal drawing flickering with the suggestion of human bodies and interactions. Dates for the exhibition were Nov. 30, 2005–Jan. 14, 2006.





**Lee Phoenix '40**  
and grandson,  
current student Evan Agee.



Last May, Brian Woodell joined First Citizens Bank in Research Triangle Park. He is a commercial banker and assistant vice president.

## Proud to be a Catamount – 65 years later

By Leila Tvedt

Lee C. Phoenix '40 remembers his first meeting as a student at Western with the Future Teachers of America in what was then the new Student Union. The university's first president, Robert Lee Madison, was there. That was in 1939, when Phoenix transferred to Western from Mars Hill College to earn his four-year degree in education.

After a long and distinguished career as a teacher and school administrator, Phoenix recently returned to Western with his wife, daughter and son-in-law to see his grandson, Evan Agee, perform with the university's renowned, 330-member Pride of the Mountains marching band.

The visit prompted a series of very vivid memories for the 87-year-old alum – Phoenix remembers leaving his home in Burnsville with just \$12.40 in his pocket; working as a groundskeeper and custodian at Western to pay his way; ringing the bell for classes in Joyner Hall; the beginning of construction on Madison Hall to supplement just four other buildings on campus; the “girls” who were housed in Moore Hall; one of the students in the class ahead of his, H.F. “Cotton” Robinson, who went on to become chancellor of Western in 1974; and returning for a reunion in 1980, the year before Joyner burned to the ground.

With a strong interest in science, Phoenix had intended to go to medical school, and he served for four years as a chief pharmacist's mate in the Navy during World War II. He turned, instead, to education, earning his master's degree in school administration and adding post-graduate studies in public school law.

In the years that followed, he went on to serve in about a half dozen city and county schools throughout central North Carolina, working through integration,

bond issues, school mergers and more. He ended his career as superintendent of schools in Asheboro, where he says friends talked him into serving also as mayor pro tem.

His advice to education majors these days is simple: “The big thing you have to have is a love of children, no matter what area of education you're going into, from pre-school through secondary school,” he said. “Of course, you'll also need a strong knowledge of your subject matter.”

On a familiar topic for educators, he says, “I tried to be a strict disciplinarian, but still have fun. Where you have no discipline, you have no teaching and no learning.” He does admit that his experience taught him that there are no easy answers to getting that balance just right. “If I knew the answer to that, I would be the most popular guy in the United States,” he said with a laugh.

Meeting with Michael Dougherty, dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions, Phoenix is pleased to see that there is still a strong emphasis on teacher education at Western. At the same time, he is delighted that the university has expanded into other academic fields.

“There's no question. We're on the right track,” Phoenix said after talking with Chancellor John Bardo. “I was really impressed with everyone with whom I spoke, with the tremendous dedication of the staff, and with what they're planning to do. What's going on at Western now is very, very impressive.”

Spoken like a true Catamount.

And what about Evan and the Pride of the Mountains? “The band performed for one side of the field, and then came to the other side. It was tremendous,” Phoenix says. That's the proud grandpa speaking.

1997

In July, Transylvania County teacher Lystra Keever MAEd was promoted to lead teacher at Rosman Elementary School. The first National Board Certified teacher at the school, she has worked at the kindergarten level for the past 14 years.

2001

Jordana K. Nelson recently joined the commercial transactions and real estate



practice area at the Knoxville office of Bass, Berry and Sims, a law firm of 190 attorneys in four Tennessee offices. In 2005, she received her law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law.

2002

Navy Seaman Kelley A. Ryan recently completed the eight-week U.S. Navy basic training in Great Lakes, Ill., which included classroom study and practical instruction on naval customs, first aid, firefighting, water safety and survival, and shipboard and aircraft safety.

2003

Last February, after working in the office of retired Congressman Cass Ballenger, Mary-Margaret Smith accepted a position at the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. She serves as the congressional assistant for the secretary in the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

2005

Currently a student in Western's Master of Arts in Teaching Program, Patrick Willis MA has been hired as part-time director of the Canton Area Historical Museum. As an intern at the museum in Canton while working on his graduate degree, he helped assess the damage to artifacts soaked by floodwaters from Hurricane Ivan and created designs for new exhibits.

Weddings

Josh Langley '03 and Layna Stoetzel '05, Sept. 3; Boiling Springs.

Shannon Paige Turner '98 and Matt Schneider, Oct. 1; Charlotte.

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Tabitha Alston

Hope Mills, N.C.

Communication Disorders Senior

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## ● CLASS NOTES ● CLASS NOTES ● CLASS NOTES ● CLASS NOTES ●

### Deaths

William Howard Brown Jr. '49, former president, Alumni Association ('83-'84), Aug. 9; Gastonia.

Kathleen J. Brummond '94, July 12; Asheville.

Robert Paul Buchanan '34, April 16; Sylva.

Virginia Reed Carlton '45 MA '76, April 11; Weaverville.

James Ralph Cole '58 MA '61, June 2; Milford, N.J.

Jeffrey Ralph Davies '67, July 5; Villa Rica, Ga.

Thomas C. Halgrim '67 MAEd '69, May 20; Fort Myers, Fla.

Sherry Ann Hall '91, June 11; Asheville.

Joe Geisler Henry '48, April 24; Sylva.

Mary Faye Martin Hull '62, June 10; Athens, Ga.

Malcolm J. Loughlin MAEd '79, associate dean of distance and continuing education, Jan. 4, Cullowhee.

Donald Scott Peterkin Jr. '76, April 12; Cashiers.

Richard (Rick) Preston Maas MS '76, Dec. 12; Asheville.

Hugh Rich Sizemore '49, June 17; Arden.

Marvin B. Smith '57 MAEd '67 EdS '72, March 23; Hendersonville.

George Robert Wallace '85 MA '86, Aug. 30; South River.

James Michael Ward '84, April 25; Vancouver, Wash.

### Faculty Death

Hubert L. Youmans, professor emeritus of chemistry, Aug. 12; Cullowhee.

### CORRECTION

Due to an editing error, a story in the summer 2005 edition of The Magazine of Western Carolina University contained a factual error. The article titled "Teacher Partnership a Finalist for Christa McAuliffe Award" article incorrectly stated that Christa McAuliffe died in the explosion of the space shuttle Columbia. The school teacher actually perished in the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger. Thanks to sharp-eyed reader Josh Roper '00 for bringing the mistake to our attention.

## SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH YOUR CLASSMATES!

Do you enjoy reading about friends and classmates in Class Notes?

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Drop us a line at:

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or visit the Alumni Association Web site, <http://alumni.wcu.edu/>



# CALENDAR of Events

## MARCH

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series—"Let Your Children Tell," theatrical documentary about the Holocaust, performed by the Touring Theatre Ensemble of North Carolina. 7:30 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-7206

THURSDAY, MARCH 2-SUNDAY, MARCH 5

Tournament—Southern Conference Basketball. North Charleston, S.C. (828) 227-7338

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

Performance—Craig Karges, illusionist/extraordinist. 7:30 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479



FRIDAY, MARCH 17

Open House—for prospective students and their families. 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (828) 227-3168

THURSDAY, MARCH 23-SUNDAY, MARCH 26

Theatre—The University Players and Western's Program in Musical Theatre present "Oklahoma!" Thursday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; matinee Saturday and Sunday, 2 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479 or theatre.wcu.edu

MONDAY, MARCH 27-THURSDAY, MARCH 30

Spring Literary Festival—fourth annual event, featuring Anthony Abbott, Dorothy Allison, Rick Bragg, Kathryn Stripling Byer, Ayun Halliday, Silas House, Mark Smith-Soto, Maydo del Valle, Randall Watson and Crystal Wilkinson. (828) 227-7264



Ivy-covered Barn, Whittier, N.C. by Joseph Meigs



TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series—"Much Ado About Nothing," performed by the Shenandoah Shakespeare Company. 7:30 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

FRIDAY, MARCH 31

Performance—"The Piano Men," the music of Billy Joel and Elton John, performed by Jim Witter. 7:30 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

## APRIL

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series—pianist Joe Chapman performing popular piano classics from Chopin to Gershwin. 7:30 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

Catamount baseball—vs. Clemson. Annual visit of former coach Jack Leggett. 1:30 p.m. Childress Field/Hennon Stadium. (828) 227-7338

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

Open House—for prospective students and their families. 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (828) 227-3168

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

Performance—Luma, a techno-circus that uses the dark as a canvas and light as the brush to paint a story of how light occurs to humanity. 3 p.m., Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

## MAY

SATURDAY, MAY 6

Spring Commencement. 2 p.m. Ramsey Regional Activity Center. (828) 227-7495

# Artistic License



The Fine Art Museum at Western Carolina University continues its inaugural season of exhibits. Among the works on display through spring are, clockwise from top left, Rosemarie Beck's oil painting "Orpheus in the Underworld," Guillermo Silva's print "La Busca Del Tiempo" and William T. Wiley's etching "...Where did Gabby Go...?" For more about the new Fine and Performing Arts Center, see pages 16 and 17.

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