Mountain Heritage Awards – 2026 Call for Nominations

Are you proud of your mountain heritage? Is there someone in your life who inspired you? Do you know a person or organization whose research or service makes a difference in the community? If you answered yes, consider submitting a Mountain Heritage Awards nomination to recognize their outstanding contributions to the preservation or interpretation of the history of Southern Appalachia.

Since 1974, Western Carolina University has recognized regional artists, nonprofit leaders, and an array of organizations for their commitment to our Appalachian culture. A committee of community and campus representatives choose award winners. The deadline for 2026 nominations is **Wednesday, August 5 by 5 p.m.** Winners receive an engraved commemorative plaque in a public ceremony at the festival, held this year on Saturday, September 26.

For more information about the history of the festival and the award visit mountainheritageday.com Please submit nominations electronically.

About Mountain Heritage Days 2026

Western Carolina University has proudly hosted the Mountain Heritage Day festival on the last Saturday in September for over 50 years! This cherished tradition has been the university's gift to the community, preserving Appalachian culture and traditions through education. Starting this year, the festival is getting an exciting, fresh, new look!

The festival will now span an entire week, featuring newly added programming such as evening faculty-led lectures with hands-on involvement, heritage demonstrators on the plaza, and a Friday night concert at Bridge Park in Sylva. As such, the event will now be called Mountain Heritage Days. We will continue to offer an array of family-friendly activities on Saturday from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, including cultural demonstrations, music, clogging, mule and tractor rides, traditional arts and crafts vendors, festival food, and much more!

Mountain Heritage Awards 2026 Nomination Form

Since 1974 Western Carolina University has recognized those who make outstanding contributions to the preservation or interpretation of the history and culture of Southern Appalachia through the **Mountain Heritage Day Awards.** Nominations may also include those who research contemporary regional issues.

What should the nomination include? *(In less than 5 printed pages, excluding photos)*

1. Outline the nominee's accomplishments
2. Describe the nominee's impact on their field, such as crafts, music, or a social or environmental cause
3. Explain the nominee's role as a teacher, advocate, leader or preserver of mountain culture and heritage
4. List the nominee's awards or other recognitions
5. Provide links to online support materials (optional)

How to submit the nomination? Please email your nomination including this form to mhd@wcu.edu with "Award 24" in the subject line no later than **Wednesday August 5, 2026, by 5PM.**

Then what? You will receive a confirmation receipt via email. A panel of five volunteer cultural leaders and academics will review all nominations. Award winners will be announced on Saturday September 26, 2026, during Mountain Heritage Day at Western Carolina University. See mountainheritageday.com for more details.

Nominator *(That's you)* contact information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Nominee *(shhhh it's a secret)* contact information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Which award? *(Only one)* Individual __ Organization __