Mars Hill College Receives Mountain Heritage Award
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Western Carolina University presented its 1988 Mountain Heritage Award to Mars Hill College for the institution's "unique place in the education, civic and spiritual life of Western North Carolina."

"In a unique ways, Mars Hill College is of these mountains, by these mountains and for these mountains, and we gladly and proudly give to it our 1988 Mountain Heritage Award." said WCU Chancellor Myron L. Coulter at the presentation Saturday, Sept. 24, during WCU's 14th annual Mountain Heritage day celebration.

Western has presented the Mountain Heritage Award since 1976 to individuals and organizations that have helped preserve and interpret the history and culture of Western North Carolina. Dr. Donald D. Schmeltekopf, Mars Hill College provost, accepted this year's award for President Fred Bentley.

"We recognize Mars Hill for its role in helping to found the Appalachian Consortium," Coulter said. "We recognize it for its Southern Appalachian Center, its Rural Life Museum, its Appalachian Room, its Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival, and its Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre. All of these are part of what Mars Hill College does to record and present our heritage.

There is a special splendor in the combination of service and leadership that is found at Mars Hill," Coulter said. "This role of servant-leader does not come by accident," he said. "It comes from determined dedication to serve and to lead."

Since its founding in 1856, Mars Hill College has provided educational opportunities to regional students without regard to financial ability. Special educational assistance grants are offered students from Madison, Mitchell and Yancey counties and working adults are provided half-tuition scholarships to help make a college education affordable.

Mars Hill pioneered early efforts to provide community-based educational opportunities through continuing education programs, its Outdoor World of Learning, and Elderhostel and Summer Alternative Vacation programs.

The newly created Hester Center for Peace and Justice offers workshops, retreats and conferences on topics designed to foster deeper spirituality and international concern.

Affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mars Hill College sponsors special study weeks and programs at its Center for Christian Education Ministries.

It has made the appreciation of the region's history and natural environment a focus over the years, specifically through its regional studies program and activities of the Appalachian Consortium, Southern Appalachian Center and repertory theatre, and the holdings of the Appalachian Room and Rural Life Museum.