Western 1, Marshall 0; Bardo to Stay at WCU

The Western community breathed a sigh of relief recently when Chancellor John W. Bardo announced that he had withdrawn his name from consideration as the next president of Marshall University, where he was among four finalists for the position.

Bardo issued the following statement to the Western community and the media:

“The Presidential Search Committee at Marshall University likely will meet this week to determine whom it will recommend to lead the university in the years ahead. I have asked that my name not be a part of the committee’s final considerations.

“Marshall is a fine institution with a bright and intriguing future, with excellent leadership and strong support at the highest levels of West Virginia’s state government. I have appreciated immensely the opportunity to explore with many of those leaders how public policy and higher education might better intersect to enhance the lives of our citizens and the economies of our states and their sub regions.

“Deborah and I have done a great deal of soul searching. We were extremely impressed with the opportunities presented by Marshall and with the direct support of that institution demonstrated by the governor and major legislative leaders. West Virginia, through legislative action taken this year, has engaged its universities in a broad-based effort to build the economy of the state and of its sub regions. That vision – and that concrete action—is what made the Marshall position very attractive.

“At the same time, we cannot walk away from our commitments to the people of North Carolina, and especially to the people of Western North Carolina. Our hearts are in North Carolina. While personal career advancement might well involve accepting the challenge of leading a complex institution with doctoral status, I do not believe that our commitment to the people of North Carolina would best be served by our accepting a position in another state at this time. Therefore, I have notified the search committee at Marshall that I am withdrawing my name so they may more appropriately consider other candidates in light of Deborah’s and my decision.

“North Carolina is currently engaged in thoughtful consideration of how our own universities might further contribute to the well-being of our citizens, in expanded access to higher education and as a catalyst to economic development. Helping North Carolina achieve those goals is at the core of Western Carolina University’s mission, and all of us at the university look forward to continued discussion of how best to achieve them.”

Summer Concert Series Provides Something for Everyone

Western continues its tradition of offering free music under the stars with the annual Summer Concert Series on the lawn of A.K. Hinds University Center.

“The concert series provides a wonderful opportunity for members of the campus and surrounding communities to come together for a summer evening of great music in the great outdoors,” said Dwaun Warmack, director of multicultural affairs at Western. “We have a wide variety of performers this year, and there should be something to suit everyone’s musical taste.”

Bass-playing singer and songwriter MC Divinity started off this year’s series, followed by a performance by country rock group Sheriff’s Daughter.

Upcoming performances will begin at 7 p.m. In case of rain, the concerts will move inside to Illusions in the University Center. The schedules includes

- Javier Mendoza; “transnational” pop-rock (June 16)
- Big Octave; modern jazz (June 21)
- Chris Cauley; pop-soul (June 30)
- Jennifer Daniels; Celtic-folk (July 7)
- The Frogtown Four; mountain blues and bluegrass (July 12)
- Michael Warren; rock, pop, R&B and country blend (July 21)
- Mystic Vibrations; traditional and original reggae (July 26)

Everyone is invited, and lawn chairs and blankets are encouraged. For additional information, call the University Center offices at (828) 227-7206.
Tom Johnson, formerly chief of police at Mississippi State University, has been selected as Western’s new director of police, effective July 1. Johnson, who visited the campus with his wife Melissa in mid-May, says he is impressed with the growth he sees at Western and excited about becoming a part of that.

He has no sweeping changes in mind for Western’s police department right away; instead, he intends to assess the department’s needs and capabilities by talking with officers and staff and listening to members of the university community.

“I have a vision for where I think the department should be in a few years,” he says, “and that requires a deliberate assessment of what needs to be done and a strategic plan with goals and objectives in order to move forward.”

Even before there’s a strategic plan in place, Johnson knows that he will work toward accreditation of Western’s police department by the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies. “To earn accreditation is a mark of professionalism. It’s all about ‘best practices’ in law enforcement,” he says. His team at Mississippi State earned CALEA accreditation, making it the only accredited university police department in the state. In North Carolina, the police departments at N.C. State and UNC-Chapel Hill are accredited.

Johnson served as chief of police for nearly eight years at Mississippi State, a leading research university, where he also has completed all but his dissertation for a doctorate in technology with a concentration on instructional systems and student development. He holds a master’s degree in psychology from the University of West Florida and a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Troy State University. Before taking the post in Mississippi, he worked as chief of police at Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va., and police lieutenant at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. He has a total of 30 years in law enforcement and extensive experience teaching criminal justice and psychology classes at the junior college, police academy, and university level.

A motorcycle enthusiast, Johnson says he and his wife are familiar with the mountains of Western North Carolina because his brother owns property in Haywood County and they have visited there. They expect to live in or near Jackson County.

Ask Gene McAbee how he feels about his decision to retire as director of police at Western and there is a short silence. Then he says, “I have a lot of mixed emotions. There is a lot about Western I’m going to miss, particularly the people. And I’ll miss the opportunity to be involved with students and to help everybody with problems that come up.” With a burst of laughter, he adds, “I will not miss parking and traffic whatsoever.”

For McAbee, the problems that have come up during his 18 years at Western have been memorable – fires, floods, fatalities and more. But he tends to focus on the positive. “This type of service,” he says, referring to university policing, “is a continuous thing. You don’t have much time to celebrate the victories and not much time to be concerned about the defeats because there’s always something else that demands attention.”

McAbee, a native of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., came to Western in 1986 with bachelor’s and master’s degrees from East Carolina University, four years of experience in public safety at ECU and Queens College in Charlotte, and seven years of military and civilian police work before that. He’s leaving on July 1 with 18 years of experience as top cop in Cullowhee and plenty to be proud of.

Highest on McAbee’s list of high points is his relationship with the Division of Student Affairs and with hundreds of students through the years. There have been countless times when McAbee has worked with students and their families on situations ranging from serious crimes to minor offences. It’s both embarrassing and gratifying, he says, to be recognized at Homecoming and other events by many alumni who thank him for his past help. It’s embarrassing because he can’t remember all their names or the specifics of each case. It’s gratifying to know that he has had a positive impact on hundreds of lives.

McAbee sums up his experience at Western saying, “I have been blessed to work with strong leaders. In fact, working in Cullowhee has been a blessing. I didn’t come with the idea of staying so long. But, when Kathy and I started a family we realized that Cullowhee is the ‘village’ that people talk about. People here know you and they help you raise your kids. The local schools are wonderful because the teachers are wonderful. The opportunities for growth through programs offered by the university (athletic events, music programs, theatrical productions, art exhibits, outdoor programs, recreational programs and facilities) are great for parents and children who have a variety of interests.”
June

Monday, June 13–Tuesday, June 14
Thursday, June 16–Friday, June 17
Monday, June 20–Tuesday, June 21
Thursday, June 23–Friday, June 24
Monday, June 27–Tuesday, June 28
Thursday, June 30–Friday, July 1
Freshman orientation—required program to introduce freshmen and their parents or guardians to the academic world and provide a glimpse into campus life. Registration required. (227-7087, orientation@email.wcu.edu, or www.wcu.edu/orientation)

Tuesday, June 21
Summer Concert Series—Big Octave, ensemble dedicated to playing modern jazz compositions. Lawn chairs and blankets recommended. 7 p.m. Lawn, A.K. Hinds University Center. Rain location, Illusions at the University Center. (227-7206)

Thursday, June 23
Old-time Music and Bluegrass Jam—local musicians share tunes and techniques while enjoying old-time and bluegrass music. Open to pickers and singers of all ages and experience levels and also to those who want to just watch and listen. 7–9 p.m. Lawn, A.K. Hinds University Center. Rain location, Grandroom, University Center. (227-7129)

Friday, June 24–Saturday, June 25
Summer Movies at the UC—Coach Carter. Admission: $2 with Western identification; $4 general. Cost includes small popcorn and small drink. 7 p.m. Theater, A.K. Hinds University Center. (www.wcu.edu/univcenter/theatre.shtml or 227-7206)

Friday, June 24
Golf—football program golf tournament. Captain’s choice. Entry fee: $125 per person; Silver hole sponsor, $150; Gold hole sponsor, $250; Team sponsor, $400; Silver team sponsor $500; Gold team sponsor, $600. 10 a.m. shotgun start. Broadmoor Golf Links, Fletcher. (227-7395)

July

Thursday, July 7
Summer Concert Series—Jennifer Daniels, performing Celtic-folk music. Lawn chairs and blankets recommended. 7 p.m. Lawn, A.K. Hinds University Center. Rain location, Illusions at the University Center. (227-7206)

Friday, July 8–Saturday, July 9
Summer Movies at the UC—The Pacifier. Admission: $2 with Western identification; $4 general. Cost includes small popcorn and small drink. 7 p.m. Theater, A.K. Hinds University Center. (www.wcu.edu/univcenter/theatre.shtml or 227-7206)

Sunday, July 10
Crafts at the Center—Maney Family. 2–4 p.m. Mountain Heritage Center, Robinson Administration Building. (227-7129)

Tuesday, July 12
Summer Concert Series—Frogtown Four, mountain blues and bluegrass music. Lawn chairs and blankets recommended. 7 p.m. Lawn, A.K. Hinds University Center. Rain location, Illusions at the University Center. (227-7206)

Thursday, July 14
Old-time Music and Bluegrass Jam—local musicians share tunes and techniques while enjoying old-time and bluegrass music. Open to pickers and singers of all ages and experience levels and also to those who want to just watch and listen. 7–9 p.m. Lawn, A.K. Hinds University Center. Rain location, Grandroom, University Center. (227-7129)

Friday, July 15–Saturday, July 16
Summer Movies at the UC—Beauty Shop. Admission: $2 with Western identification; $4 general. Cost includes small popcorn and small drink. 7 p.m. Theater, A.K. Hinds University Center. (www.wcu.edu/univcenter/theatre.shtml or 227-7206)

Mountain Dulcimer Week—sixth annual event featuring sessions for seven levels of dulcimer playing, from beginner to experienced musician, and classes on many different styles of dulcimer music, including Appalachian ballads, hymns, classical music, blues, Celtic, bluegrass and Cajun; a class on finding old music; and a course in building a traditional dulcimer. Some evening concerts included. Online registration available. (828) 227-7397, (800) 928-4968, or http://edoutreach.wcu.edu/dulcimer)

Monday, June 20–Wednesday, June 22
Youth football camp—instruction for players entering grades 3 through 8 on all aspects of offensive and defensive fundamentals in non-contact setting. Each camper will receive daily football instruction, camp T-shirt, lunch and snacks, and ticket to a 2005 Western Carolina home game. Cost: $110 for three days; $40 for one day; sibling discount available. (227-2038 or rhule@email.wcu.edu)
Some 60 individuals representing 21 universities gathered in Cullowhee on Thursday, June 9, for Western’s inaugural Service Learning Symposium.

A form of experiential education that integrates community service and classroom instruction, service learning enhances students’ academic development while fostering social and civic responsibility, said Glenn Bowen, director of service learning at Western.

Western Provost Kyle Carter and Robert Caruso, vice chancellor of student affairs, opened the symposium by speaking on “Stewardship and Scholarship as Goals of Higher Education.”

Caruso said the symposium addressed one of the central tenets of Western’s Division of Student Affairs – community service and engagement.

“Specifically, we endorse the value of stewardship – that is, helping others and taking responsibility for the welfare of individuals, groups and the environment in the local and global community,” Caruso said. “Through the collaborative efforts of student affairs and academic affairs, service learning is, in my view, the quintessential educational vehicle for engaging students in the world beyond the campus.”

Carter told the attendees, who came from five Southeastern states, that Western is revising its strategic plan and mission to better reflect engagement as a responsibility and educational strategy.

“We must remember that service learning is not a goal in and of itself,” Carter said. “It is a means to an end. We are attempting to re-engage students so that they become better citizens.”

Penny Pasque, research director at the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good at the University of Michigan, was the lead presenter at the symposium, which covered a variety of service learning topics.