WKU HOME COMING 2011
GEAUX TOPPERS!

College Heights Herald Homecoming Special Section
Homecoming week events

Thursday, October 20

◆ Chili and Cheese Luncheon and Pep Rally, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., First Christian Church at 1106 State St.
◆ Lady Topper soccer vs. Troy, 6 p.m., WKU Soccer Complex
◆ 2011 Summit Awards, 6 p.m. Social, 6:30 p.m. Program, Carroll Knicely Conference Center

Friday, October 21

◆ Preserving the Past, Sustaining the Future. Juried Quill Show Celebrating FACS, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Kentucky Building
◆ Hall of Distinguished Alumni Luncheon and Induction Ceremony, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Sloan Convention Center
◆ Homecoming Parade “Geaux Toppers!” 5 p.m., College Heights Boulevard to Fountain Square Park
◆ Concert in the Park, 5 to 6:30 p.m., Fountain Square Park
◆ Big Red’s Roar, 6:30 p.m., Fountain Square Park

Saturday, October 22

◆ Family and Consumer Sciences Open House, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Academic Complex 213
◆ Residence Hall Open Houses, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
◆ Imagewest Open House and Morning Mixer, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Mass Media and Technology Hall Room 331
◆ Men’s Basketball Open Practice and Tour of Refurbished E.A. Diddle Arena, 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., Diddle Arena
◆ 2011 Homecoming Step Show, 7 p.m., Diddle Arena

Sunday, October 23

◆ 15th Annual Jim Wayne Miller Celebration of Writing: Featuring poet Frederick Smock, 2 p.m., Garrett Auditorium

Cover illustration by Steven Charny. Cover photo by Jabin Botsford. Corvette provided by Becky and Paul Pearson with the help of National Corvette Museum.
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Are You Missing Any WKU Memories?

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‘Geaux Toppers!’ theme took some planning

By MELISSA HARDESTY
news@wkuherald.com

This year’s Homecoming theme caters to the visitor — and the visitor’s food.
WKU will face Louisiana-Lafayette’s Ragin’ Cajuns in the Oct. 22 football game, so the Homecoming Committee decided to “spice things up” by suggesting a ‘Geaux Toppers!’ theme — WKU’s take on the popular phrase ‘Geaux Saints!’ used by New Orleans’ Saints fans. Ginny Hensley, director of Alumni Programming and head of the Homecoming Committee, believes the theme will be familiar to alumni and students.

A lot of work goes into choosing a Homecoming theme that students, faculty, and visiting alumni can get excited about, Hensley said. Some of the planning for the following year begins as soon as Homecoming ends.

The Homecoming Committee begins by brainstorming 20 to 30 choices and narrowing them down to three or four top picks, which are then submitted to President Gary Ransdell for approval. Once approved, the choices go public and on social networking websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, where voting is open to anyone, Hensley said.

Another theme, #winning, based on actor Charlie Sheen’s Twitter rants, almost won. Geaux Toppers! narrowly beat #winning, by only 3 points, Hensley said, adding that she thought it was “probably best” that #winning didn’t win.

Activities during the week will have a Cajun theme to “incorporate the very best of Louisiana” into homecoming activities.

The Festival of Friends tailgating on Saturday will include Cajun food to give Toppers and alumni a taste of Louisiana. One fraternity is even having a Cajun themed beignet “Heauxmecoming” Breakfast, according to the WKU Alumni Association website’s schedule of events.

There will also be homecoming events at the WKU-Glasgow campus, which has the biggest enrollment of the WKU Regional Campuses. The Alumni Association has scheduled for WKU-Glasgow students to get a chance to participate in a Chili and Cheese Luncheon and a pep rally on Tuesday.

Hensley anticipates a positive reaction from everyone participating in Homecoming Week. She expects that pre-game tailgating might even be a bigger hit than the game itself.

“Homecoming’s always big,” Hensley said. “It’s a fun week for everyone. Sometimes it’s a struggle to get people away from tailgating and into the stands.”

—GINNY HENSLEY
Director of Alumni Programming and head of the Homecoming Committee

Homecoming voting results

- Geaux Toppers!: 261
- #Winning: 258
- Back to the Future: 240
- It’s All About the Spirit: 119

Source: Ginny Hensley, director of alumni programming for the Alumni Association
COLLEGE HEIGHTS HERALD - OCTOBER 17, 2011

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WKU expects around 20,000 visitors to campus during Homecoming week.

With numbers like that, campus cleanup and setup for events becomes critical to the week’s success.

The Campus and Community Events department begins preparations as early as four to six weeks before Homecoming week.

After the date is set, the department begins looking for events that might require special setup or equipment.

The biggest difference this year is the parade. In previous years, the parade has ended downtown in Fountain Square and students walked back to campus for Big Red’s Roar. This year, Big Red’s Roar will take place in the Square, which Jeff Younglove, director of Campus and Community Events, said makes things easier for his department.

Besides all the events going on during the week, almost every department is hosting some type of reception or dinner that requires tables, chairs, setup and cleanup crews.

For example, 300 people are expected to attend the Hall of Fame induction on Friday. Many of the events also involve WKU alumni, who will be recognized for their volunteerism and other ways they help WKU during the year.

Younglove says his department “works closely with the alumni to make sure everything gets done and everyone’s happy.”

The City of Bowling Green will have a bigger role than usual in this year’s Homecoming Parade.

The parade will start at 5 p.m. on Friday at the intersection of Avenue of Champions and College Heights Boulevard and ends downtown at Fountain Square Park. Bowling Green’s Ernie Small Blues Band will take the stage at 5 p.m. in Fountain Square Park and finish playing as the parade ends. Big Red’s Roar, a pep rally, will take the stage right after at 6:30 p.m.

Ginny Hensley, director of Alumni Programming, said she is encouraging attendees to park their lawn chairs in Fountain Square Park and wait for the parade to get downtown.

“Then you’ve got the band playing, the parade going on around you, and immediately after the parade and concert we’ll have Big Red’s Roar,” Hensley said. “So all that stays downtown this year instead of them coming back up to campus.”

Hensley said the move to keep all of the parade events downtown will make having the parade easier than last year.

“It was a little chaotic,” she said. “It was great for about 20 minutes, then students had to leave and literally do the same thing at Smith Stadium.”

Hensley said the downtown community has been welcoming to the event. She said downtown businesses are staying open later, with some offering discounts to WKU students, faculty and alumni.

Some other downtown businesses will also be opening their stores in a different way. A storefront window contest will help get downtown ready for the event.

Hensley said the businesses in the contest will get help from the department of Consumer and Family Sciences. Students in some of those classes will help decorate storefronts.

“They’ll get a grade and downtown will look very Hilltopper red,” she said.

Hensley said the parade and pep rally will help get downtown excited about WKU’s Homecoming game against Louisiana-Lafayette.

“We hope the downtown community will be able to see our students in action,” she said.
Former Homecoming Queen staying linked to WKU

Betty McGuire, crowned Homecoming Queen in 1979, has remained involved at WKU since her graduation and is building a house near campus.

By SIDNEY BLANFORD
diversions@wkuherald.com

Bowling Green alum Betty McGuire, WKU’s 1979 homecoming queen, didn’t let graduation end her involvement with the university.

McGuire is the mother of three children, all of whom attended WKU for some amount of time, and wife of Lexington alumnus Kreis McGuire.

McGuire met her husband in the fall of 1976 at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon pledge dance.

“I was introduced to her by Chuck Strader and John Perkins, who is now SAE’s chapter advisor at WKU,” he said.

While at WKU, McGuire was on scholarship as a twirler for the marching band, vice president of Chi Omega and secretary for the Student Government Association.

She said she feels that her involvement with all of these organizations played a big role in her being named homecoming queen.

“Everybody knew Betty around town and on campus,” Kreis McGuire said. “She was always friendly to everyone she came in contact with and they knew her smile was sincere.”

Since her days at WKU, McGuire has remained involved with the university through the Alumni Association, Chi Omega and SAE Alumni. She and her husband are also members of the WKU Parents’ Organization.

McGuire served on the Alumni Association’s National Board of Directors from 2009 to 2011. She says for the Board of Directors there is a three-year rotation and that one must be nominated in order to serve.

“I just went out and promoted the Alumni Association and raised enthusiasm,” she said. “That is the whole basis of it — to keep WKU connected in your area.”

McGuire started a new student picnic in the Lexington area after her first year with the Alumni Association. She said it was a way for all the new students to meet other people going to WKU before they got to campus.

After living in Lexington for several years, McGuire and her family are currently building a house on Chestnut Street in Bowling Green.

Her oldest son, Parker, who now lives in Nashville, attended WKU both his freshman and sophomore year.

“I guess she loves (WKU) so much that her and my dad are building a house right on campus,” Parker McGuire said. “I’d say that’s dedication.”

Reis McGuire’s said his wife is just happy to be back in Bowling Green with her old friends.

While living in Lexington, the McGuire’s come back for Homecoming when they don’t have prior obligations.

“Homecoming was just fun, you got to do the floats and go to all the different parties and activities,” McGuire said. “I guess I just miss being with all my friends and the people that were so special to me.”

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Step show has ‘old school v. new school’ theme

Amongst crimson canes, gold boots, “skee-wees” and “oo-ops,” spectators have been crowding into Diddle Arena each homecoming for the National PanHellenic Council (NPHC) step show.

Members of the NPHC sororities and fraternities, also called the “Divine Nine,” anticipate the event to showcase uniformity, precision and creativity.

Cincinnati junior Keion Tillman, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, will perform for the first time in the show in Diddle Arena at 7 p.m. on Oct. 22. Tillman said he can’t wait to be in front of the crowd.

“I look forward to anything that’s got me performing,” he said.

Being new to the show, Tillman and his fraternity brothers put in long hours and lots of energy to create a good routine.

Most teams start preparing in the summer. Kappa Alpha Psi started practicing in mid-June.

“This is everybody’s first year stepping so we didn’t know the difficulties,” he said. “It’s a big show and the first time people have seen Kappa step in about two years.”

Louisville senior Regina Garr is looking forward to the show for a totally different reason than she was last year.

Garr, a member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, served as the chairperson for the step show committee this year.

This year’s theme is “Old School v. New School: Confessions of Dangerous Steppers.” Garr said the group chose the theme because there will be more alumni here to celebrate their organizations’ anniversaries and they believed everyone has a good chance of winning.

“WKU has one of the biggest step shows in Kentucky,” she said.

The committee picked Ron G from Last Comic Standing to host the show after watching numerous comedians on YouTube.

They wanted a host that would keep people laughing and get the crowd involved.

Garr said the committee has a few different surprises in store this year.

“Everyone will just have to come to see what new and exciting things will be done in this year’s show,” she said.

The winning sorority and fraternity will take home a trophy, cash prize and the most-coveted bragging rights.

Louisville junior Italy Hester, a member of Zeta Phi Beta sorority, said her sorority is determined to win the show.

“We set the bar high at the yard show, so we have to come hard during the step show,” Hester said.

The yard show, held at the beginning of the fall semester, served as a preview for the homecoming step show.

Tillman said his fraternity will try not to break any canes during this year’s show.

“People look forward to that because we’re the only ones that step with canes,” he said.

Although Garr isn’t stepping with her sorority sisters this year, she said it will mean a lot if they win.

Last year, it was a close call between Delta Sigma Theta sorority and Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority for the throne.

“Since we lost by one point last year, it’ll mean that we still have our fire behind us as divas,” Garr said. “I’m going to celebrate and be extremely happy.”

Tickets are $10 in advance and $15 at the door. Doors open at 6 p.m.
LEFT: Louisville senior Kristopher Williams, Cincinnati junior Keion Tillman and Chicago senior Henry McCormick practice Oct. 3 in the parking lot of the Russell Sims Aquatic Center for the step show.

RIGHT: From left, Mt. Sterling senior Tristan Jones, Louisville junior Josh Miller and Hopkinsville senior Michael Warren Jr represent Alpha Phi Alpha on Sept. 9 in the Skee-Phi Yard Show in Garrett Ballroom.

LEFT: Hopkinsville senior Michael Warren Jr stands back stage Sept. 9 before representing Alpha Phi Alpha in the Skee-Phi Yard Show in the Garrett Ballroom.

RIGHT: Ladies of Middle Tennessee and Tennessee State's chapters of Sigma Gamma Rho dance Sept. 9 at a Kappa Alpha Psi house party before heading to Alpha Phi Alpha's Pretty Cold Party.

Photos by JABIN E. BOTSFORD

"Everyone will just have to come to see what new and exciting things will be done in this year's show."

—REGINA GARR
Louisville Senior
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Three renowned WKU alumni will be inducted into the WKU Hall of Distinguished Alumni during this year’s Homecoming celebration.

Jerry E. Baker, Vicki Phillips and Norris “Norro” Wilson will all be enshrined Friday during a luncheon at Sloan Convention Center, making them the 20th class of distinguished alumni.

The luncheon will include an induction ceremony, with a video highlighting the major accomplishments of each inductee’s career. Inductees will then deliver an acceptance speech.

Anybody who attended or graduated WKU is eligible to be nominated for the honor. Hopeful inductees can nominate themselves or be nominated by others by filling out an application packet that is then reviewed by a selection committee.

Tracy Morrison, assistant director of the Alumni Association, said it isn’t easy to be selected.

“We have astronauts, actors, college presidents,” she said. “It’s very competitive to get in.

“It’s the highest honor we bestow upon our alumni.”

Donald Smith, executive director of the Alumni Association, highlighted the difficulty and the prestige of being accepted into the Hall of Distinguished Alumni.

“When you look at 97,000 alumni that potentially could be nominated and out of the hundred or so that people have taken the time to fill out an application and nomination for, all of which are deserving,” said Smith. “And then it gets narrowed down to 15 and really any of those 15 are deserving.”

Those 15 are then sent to the National Alumni Board of directors, of which three inductees will be chosen.

Baker, a business owner and philanthropist, graduated from the Bowling Green Business University in 1951 and since then has made considerable contributions to WKU. Baker in 2006 made a $15 million gift to WKU, a donation that included his arboretum, which is a botanical garden for trees, his collection of art, and even his home.

He is currently a member of the WKU Alumni Association and served on the WKU Foundation Board of Trustees. Baker received an honorary doctorate from WKU in 2001.

Phillips received her master’s degree in school psychology from WKU in 1987 and later earned a doctorate in education from the University of Lincoln in England. Phillips is currently director of Education in the U.S. branch of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and oversees College-Ready Education, a program that helps to ensure students who graduate high school are prepared for college.

She began her career as a teacher in Simpson County. Phillips received an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree from WKU in 2010.

Born and raised in Scottsville, Wilson attended Western Kentucky State Teacher’s College on a music scholarship and would go on to become a song writer and music producer. His single, “Do It to Someone You Love,” was a top 20 hit in the 1970s. Wilson wrote numerous other hits in the 1970s and 1980s, including “A Very Special Love Song” performed by Charlie Rich, that earned Wilson a Grammy for Best Country Song in 1974.

Wilson is also an inductee of both the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and The Kentucky Music Hall of Fame.

By CAMERON KOCH
news@wkuherald.com

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Johnson 'honored' to enter Athletic Hall

By KURT CARSON

Former men’s basketball forward Kannard Johnson reached many milestones while playing at WKU from 1984-1987.

Johnson is the only Topper in history to earn All-Sun Belt Conference honors for four straight years and currently sits seventh on WKU’s all-time scoring list.

His honors and achievements during his tenure will be recognized at Homecoming this weekend with his induction into the WKU Athletic Hall of Fame.

Johnson said the acknowledgement “means everything” to him.

“It means that the work that I did there is very well appreciated,” Johnson said. “It was highly recruited coming out of high school,” Johnson said. “I was known as a scorer and as a pretty good offensive basketball player when I played.”

Johnson played to his potential, setting the WKU record for games started. He remains third on that list to this date.

Former men’s basketball player Steve Miller, who played with Johnson for three years, said Johnson’s hard work ethic was visible from the moment he arrived on the Hill.

“I’ll never forget coach (Clem Haskins) walking me in to the gym and pointing to Kannard saying, ‘He got a lot of awards as a freshman,’” Miller said. “He said he led the Sun Belt in a couple of categories and pointed out that he’s right there working on his game still.

“It was a heck of a sight to see a guy that fit with all his physical gifts still working on his game early in the summer.”

Johnson used those gifts and athleticism to lead the Toppers in dunks all four years, including setting the single-game school record with six.

However, probably the biggest moment in Johnson’s career was a buzzer-beater he hit against West Virginia to give WKU a 64-62 victory in the opening round of the 1987 NCAA tournament.

“That was a really, really special moment,” Johnson said. “That play wasn’t even designed for me. For Tellis (Frank) to see me wide open and hit that shot was pretty special, most importantly because we advanced to the next round.”

Johnson’s teammate and former WKU guard Brett McNeal said it was Johnson’s composure in atmospheres similar to the West Virginia game that made him such a special player.

“He always seemed poised and he always seemed relaxed,” McNeal said. “He was always very, very confident about his playing ability and what he was capable of doing.”

Johnson’s confidence and poise came from the fact that he simply “loved” the four years he played at WKU.

Former men’s basketball trainer Randy Deere said he could tell Johnson loved the game from the moment he met him.

“He knew that he could use the game to better himself, and that’s what he did,” Deere said. “He took the opportunity that was afforded him and made the best of it.”

JOHNSON

Other Hall of Fame inductees

Forest “Frosty” Able
WKU basketball player 1954-1956
He was selected the No. 21 overall pick in the 1956 NBA Draft by the Syracuse Nationals, now known as the Philadelphia 76ers, where he played one year in the league.

Jack Turner
WKU basketball player 1949-1953
Turner finished his career totaling 1,123 points. He was the eighth overall pick by New York Knicks in the 1954 NBA draft. He was the second player in WKU history to be selected in the first round.

Mike Murray
WKU baseball player 1977-1980
While at WKU he set school records for career at-bats (804), runs scored (180), hits (236), doubles (46) and stolen bases (89), among others.
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Jimmy Feix still makes it to every game played on the field that bears his name.

The 80-year-old — a two-time All-American quarterback, assistant coach, head coach and athletic director at WKU — has been slowed a bit in recent months by the effects of Parkinson’s Disease.

But he will be there Saturday when the Toppers take Feix Field to face Louisiana-Lafayette in WKU’s annual Homecoming contest.

“I want to see them get a win on that Feix Field,” said Feix, whose 106 wins as head coach from 1968-1983 are the most of any coach in program history. “It’d mean just a little more to me than it would to everyone else in those stands.”

There’s a lot that brings the Topper legend back, especially on this particular weekend each year.

Feix gets to see the team he for so long was a part of play on a field named after him, re-kindle old ties with men he once coached and share memories with teammates from his playing days.

One of his favorite parts of Homecoming is the reunion of WKU’s 1952 team that went 9-1, one of the best in school history.

The 1952 Toppers capped off that season with a 34-19 win over Arkansas State in the Refrigerator Bowl.

After not officially coming together for four decades, the team celebrated its 40th reunion at Homecoming in 1992, and has been meeting on that weekend every year since.

This year will be the 59th anniversary of the Refrigerator Bowl team. Feix, who was named an All-American that season, said the bond the players on the team developed brings them back to the Hill each year.

“We were with each other through thick and thin,” Feix said. “You feel that personal warmth that’s there, and that connection.

“You’ve been in the huddle with them, in the room crying after a loss, then celebrating. You’ve done things that you’ve done with nobody else.”

In many respects, Feix has himself to thank for the fact WKU still has a Homecoming where he can see his old teammates.

Feix said that in the 1990s, after he had retired from a five-year stint as Athletic Director, he received a call saying school president Thomas Meredith was going to drop the Topper football program altogether.

Feix, along with longtime assistant Butch Gilbert and former WKU player Mickey Riggs, decided to take action so that the program they’d spent their lives building wasn’t going to die.

Under the direction of then-Head Coach Jack Harbaugh, Feix and his friends picked up the phones to sell tickets and raise support for the football team.

“We got on the phones and started hollering,” he said. “We started shaking some leaves, getting some support, just doing anything we could to save the program.

“And Coach Harbaugh dug his heels in and would not quit on me. That made all the difference in the world.”

Administration chose to keep football and, just a short time later, Harbaugh led WKU to the 2002 I-AA National Championship — that title ironically coming during the 50th anniversary season of Feix and his teammates’ Refrigerator Bowl win.

Head Coach Willie Taggart, an assistant on that team and a former All-American Topper quarterback himself, has invited Feix to talk to the current WKU squad several times.

“You look at a lot of his success — it was because of his love for Western Kentucky University,” Taggart said. “He’s one of the toughest guys you’ll ever meet, and our guys need to see that.”

Senior running back Bobby Rainey and junior tight end Jack Doyle hand-delivered Feix a team birthday card on his 80th birthday in August.

Rainey said it’s vital that WKU football players learn about Feix and what he’s put into the program.

“As far as even having this program, he’s an important guy,” Rainey said. “To know your history and be able to go talk to him and present him a card for his birthday, it’s an experience you’ll never forget.”

WKU has faced rough times in recent years after making the transition from the Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA) to the Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A.)

While some have questioned the Toppers’ move to the FBS, Feix said WKU made the right choice because “there wasn’t any way to go but up.”

“In the past we moved from Division III to Division II, we thought, ‘woo-woo,’” Feix said. “Then Division II to Division I-AA, we said, ‘woo-woo.’ Now we’ve moved from I-AA to I-A and we’re saying, ‘woo-woo.” So it’ll come. It just takes awhile.”

He said he has confidence Taggart is the right man for the WKU coaching job, and that he’ll have a successful career as the Toppers’ head coach.

“Willie’s kind of like me — an old quarterback, an old Westerner and an All-American,” Feix said. “And because he’s a Westerner, he’s got the energy and enthusiasm to make it work.”

**By BRAD STEPHENS**

sports@wkuherald.com

Former WKU quarterback, head coach and athletic director Jimmy Feix, now 80, has stayed around the football program in his retirement, regularly speaking to current teams.
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