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WKU SPIRIT

WKU HOMECOMING: DECADES OF SPIRIT
Celebrate the Tradition of Homecoming on the Hill
M.A.S.T.E.R. Plan helps WKU freshmen smoothly make their transition to the Hill as they get acclimated to campus, meet new friends, and learn and practice WKU traditions. Assistant University Photographer Bryan Lemon ('12) captured this image from the student carnival that followed the closing convocation of M.A.S.T.E.R. Plan on Aug. 23.
Before you jump into this issue of WKU SPIRIT magazine, I wanted to introduce myself. I am a proud two-time WKU alumna of the Gordon Ford College of Business, and I recently returned to the Hill as the Vice President for Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement.

The mission of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement is threefold: foster lifelong relationships with WKU constituents through activities designed to honor the WKU spirit, engage all members of the WKU family in the life of the University and secure private support to advance WKU’s mission. Through impactful philanthropy, meaningful alumni engagement and closer collaboration with our campus and community partners, we will continue to fulfill this mission in cooperation with efforts to accomplish and exceed the parameters outlined in Climbing to Greater Heights: The WKU Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

We will find innovative and exciting ways to provide access and opportunity for WKU students through fundraising initiatives like the WKU Opportunity Fund, and we will energize and inspire individuals, foundations and corporations to invest in the future of WKU. The WKU Alumni Association has also outlined a new strategic plan that aligns with the University-wide plan, which will guide our efforts to engage alumni across generations, backgrounds and locations. I’m excited to get to work.

I hope you enjoy our feature about hands-on research WKU students and faculty are conducting in South Africa. This is a perfect example of the applied research opportunities offered at WKU that change students’ lives. You will also find a feature on overcomers—individuals who prevailed over conflicts that seemed insurmountable. These five WKU alumni share their stories and remind us to never let anything stand in our way as we climb to greater heights.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to transform the lives of our students, our Hill, our community and beyond. See you on the Hill for Homecoming on Oct. 19 as we celebrate Decades of Spirit.

Go Tops!

Amanda L. Trabue ('02, '04, L)
Vice President for Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement

WKU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

We recognize and appreciate our WKU Alumni Association Members!

We are grateful for the support of our members, who help make this magazine and our many engagement opportunities possible.

In the body of WKU SPIRIT, the names of all alumni are listed in bold font with their applicable graduation years. Lifetime Members of the WKU Alumni Association are recognized by an "L" next to their graduation years and Annual Members with an "A." Not yet a Member? To support your WKU Alumni Association and ensure you continue to receive WKU SPIRIT magazine, join now at alumni.wku.edu/joinnow.

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WKU students finish fifth in national Concrete Canoe competition

WKU Civil Engineering students finished fifth overall in the 2019 National Concrete Canoe Competition in Melbourne, Fla. The team also finished eighth in technical paper, fifth in final product, ninth in oral presentation, ninth in women’s slalom, seventh in men’s slalom, eighth in women’s sprint, eighth in co-ed slalom and ninth in men’s sprint.

WKU's Steak TOP (207 pounds, 20 feet long) was one of 24 entries from around the world in the American Society of Civil Engineers competition, hosted by the Florida Institute of Technology. The top five finishers in overall results were University of Florida; California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; Universite Laval; Tongji University; and WKU.

Alumni and students offered Fulbright grants, participate in Summer Institute

Five WKU students have been offered Fulbright U.S. Student Grants for the 2019-2020 academic year from the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, and one has been designated as an alternate.

Nicole Childress (’19) from Crestwood, Ky., will study in the Master of Science in Marketing program at Trinity College Dublin. Keightley Dudgeon (’19) from Bowling Green, Ky., will teach English in Morocco. Amelia Kobl (’19, A) from Louisville, Ky., will teach English in Mexico. Deven Richardson (’19) from Bowling Green, Ky., will conduct research on Japanese university students’ perceptions of Americans and the Japanese-American relationship. Corinne Warlick (’19) from Louisville, Ky., will conduct research at the Wallenberg Wood Science Center in Stockholm, Sweden, exploring the possibility of preserving byproducts of the wood pulping process for use in other applications. Max McGehee (’19) was named an alternate for a Fulbright to study management at the Instituto de Empresa in Madrid, Spain.

For the third year in a row, two WKU students have been selected to participate in Fulbright Summer Institutes in the United Kingdom: Derek Collins of Hartsville, Minn., and Nathan Terrell of Morehead, Ky., are the ninth and 10th WKU students to be selected for the prestigious, nationally competitive program since 2012.

WKU Forensics Team named 2019 AFA national champions

The WKU Forensics Team has been named the national champions of the 2019 American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament, after a two-month investigation found that two students of the original winning school had violated the league’s code of standards.

The WKU Forensics Team had been announced in April as second place, but this change makes WKU the AFA NIET team sweepstake champions for the first time since 2015.
C-USA BOARD

WKU President elected to C-USA board

WKU President Timothy C. Caboni (’94) has been elected to the Conference USA Board of Directors’ Executive Committee.

The presidents of each of the league’s member schools serve on the league’s Board of Directors. Members of the Executive Committee help set league policy for the membership.

“I am honored to have been elected to the Conference USA Executive Committee,” Caboni said. “Collegiate athletics is an important part of the total college experience for our students and student-athletes as well as community outreach and engagement. Being a part of Conference USA has elevated our national exposure, and I look forward to working with other committee members in helping chart the league’s future.”

“President Caboni has been a tremendous supporter of WKU Athletics, and we are not surprised that he has been recognized as one of the leaders in Conference USA,” said WKU Director of Athletics Todd Stewart. "Dr. Caboni has been steadfastly in supporting our goals of graduating student-athletes, winning championships and providing a gathering place for WKU fans, students and alumni. His inclusion to this committee is well deserved and will be very beneficial for both WKU and Conference USA.”

New faces in leadership roles on the Hill

There are some new faces in leadership positions at WKU as two new academic deans joined the Hilltopper family on July 1, two new members of the administration started June 17 and two additional administrators were named to acting and interim roles in April.

Dr. Greg Arbuckle, who joined the WKU faculty in 2005, is the Interim Dean of Ogden College of Science and Engineering, having most recently served the College as Associate Dean. A Professor in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, he holds a Ph.D. in Technology Management with a specialization in Quality Systems and a B.S. in Mechanical Technology from Indiana State University, as well as an M.S. in Industrial Technology from Eastern Illinois University.

Dr. Tanja Rasta is the new Dean of WKU’s College of Health and Human Services. She served as Chair of the Department of Social and Public Health for the College of Health Sciences and Professions at Ohio University since 2017. Dr. Rasta earned a Ph.D. in Health Promotion and Behavior at the University of Georgia. She also received a B.S. in Kinesthesiology and an M.P.H. in Community Health Education from Indiana University.

Susan Ingram Howarth is the new Executive Vice President for Strategic, Operations and Finance. She comes to WKU from the University of Louisville, where she was the Director of Decision Support. Howarth has an M.S. in Finance from Northern Illinois University and a B.S. in Business Administration and Finance from the University of Louisville.

Dr. Christopher Shook is the new dean of WKU’s Gordon Ford College of Business. Dr. Shook was the Sprinkle & Penhale endowed dean at the University of Montana College of Business. He is a Certified Public Accountant and holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration from Louisiana State University, an MBA from the University of Mississippi and a B.S. in Accounting from the University of Northern Colorado.

Dr. Cheryl Stevens, who was named Dean of Ogden College of Science and Engineering in 2012, is the new Acting Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In this role, she also serves as President of the WKU Research Foundation.

WKU is turning a corner and beginning to see results as it implements its 10-year strategic plan, Climb to Greater Heights.

"One of the reasons the University has shifted its focus from recruiting first-year students to recruiting future WKU graduates, President Caboni said, "Our goal is not just to get them on our Hill for one semester or for one year. Our goal is to provide them with the full transformative experience, and that happens only when they come to us as degree candidates."

"One of the things that every WKU student needs to hear from us is this: that we have our backs. That our goal is for them to be successful. And that we are there for them. We are going to challenge them; we are going to push them; and we are going to make sure that their educational experience is the best that we can create. They also need to know that when they need support, they need to reach out, when they need someone, they have a place to turn."

"These are needs we all should celebrate."

GATTON ACADEMY

A top-performing school 10th straight year

The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science at WKU has been named to Jay Mathews’ list of top-performing public schools with elite students for the 10th consecutive time.

Since 1998, educational columnist Jay Mathews has ranked public high schools using the Challenge Index, his measure of how effectively a school prepares its students for college. The Challenge Index is the oldest high school ranking system in the country. Prior to the 2019 list being posted on Mathews’ website (jaymathewschallengeindex.com), the list could be found annually in The Washington Post and Newsweek.

The Gatton Academy first appeared on Mathews’ list in 2009 and has been recognized in each subsequent publication of the list.

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\[ \text{But, he added, the work will continue. There are fewer students in Kentucky graduating from high school and an even smaller percentage of those graduates are pursuing postsecondary education.} \]

\[ \text{"That is not a recipe for economic success for our region," he said. "We must demonstrate for our families and their students the lifelong value of a college degree and the economic benefit of attending and graduating from college."} \]

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\[ \text{"These are needs we all should celebrate."} \]
A renovation for the future will include a nod to the past as WKU transforms the Helm Library into The WKU Commons.

The $35 million project is a collaboration with Aramark/Restaurant Group and University Libraries. It will transform the Helm Library into a place where WKU students, faculty and staff can meet, eat, study and collaborate.

"The WKU Commons will be a gathering space for people to engage as the top of the Hill," said Susan de Vries, Dean of Libraries. "It will be an open, flexible and inviting place, offering multiple dining options, places for students to meet and study or to interact with faculty and others. We envision this space to be a buzz of activity."

WKU President Timothy C. Caboni ('94) calls "The WKU Commons the "intellectual hub" of the campus."

"Our contract with Aramark calls for a significant investment in dining options at the top of the Hill," President Caboni said. "This provided a wonderful opportunity to create a space that invigorates engagement, stimulates learning and creates a sense of community for the entire WKU family."

A committee representing faculty, staff and students has been working with architects Luckett & Farley of Louisville, Ky., and Gensler of Chicago, Ill., to take The WKU Commons from vision to concept. Will Harris of Glasgow, Ky., the student representative on the committee, said he was particularly pleased that the student voice was solicited during the design.

"The committee worked hard to gather input from all parts of the community as they worked with architects to develop a design that will serve WKU well into the future," he said. "The WKU Commons will bring together students, faculty and staff in a place where they can interact, share ideas or socialize. This will become a destination point as the top of the Hill." The building opened in 1931 and was named for Librarian Margie Helm in 1964. The facility was first used as a gymnasium and was the home court of The Men's Basketball team. The basketball court jump circle will be preserved and commemorated in its original location.

Helm Library closed at the end of the spring 2019 semester for work to begin. The WKU Commons is expected to open in spring 2021. According to de Vries, the project will be a complete renovation, including opening space between floors and up to a skylight.

David Broz, Principal in Charge for Gensler, said The WKU Commons "establishes a new model for campus libraries as centers of social plus academic opportunities that better mirror the world they will work in post-graduation. No longer is a library simply a repository of books and quiet studying. We now look at campus environments with a need for common spaces and places for students, faculty and staff to interact in multiple modes and ways—truly setting everyone up for success."

**Quick Facts**

- **What will it be called?** The WKU Commons at Helm Library
- **What will it cost?** $35 million estimate
- **How will it be funded?** The project is a partnership between Aramark/Restaurant Group and University Libraries. Funding was included as a part of the University's dining services contract.
- **Why is it needed?** The dining contract included replacing aging facilities in the Garrett Conference Center. Instead of building a new dining hall, the WKU Commons provides an opportunity to create synergy by providing a destination for students, faculty and staff to meet, eat, study, collaborate and further develop the WKU community.
- **When will it be ready?** The WKU Commons at Helm Library is slated to open in the spring of 2021.
- **What will happen to the assets currently housed in the Helm Library?** Many of these materials will be moved to Craven's Library. The rest will be temporarily stored.
- **Who are the firms doing the architectural work?** WKU engaged global design firm Gensler of Chicago as the design architects. They will partner with Luckett & Farley of Louisville as the architect of record to deliver the finished project over the next two years.
Regional medical school partnership

The UK College of Medicine-Bowling Green Campus will address physician shortage

In the fall of 2018, the University of Kentucky College of Medicine-Bowling Green Campus opened its doors to the first class of 30 medical students. The goal of the new medical school is to train physicians for Kentucky.

"A physician workforce shortage exists across Kentucky, including the western and south-central portions of our state," noted Dr. Todd Cheever ('87, L), the Associate Dean for the UK College of Medicine-Bowling Green Campus. "The University of Kentucky College of Medicine's regional partnerships with Med Center Health and Western Kentucky University, training programs have been established across the educational spectrum—from medical student to resident to advanced clinical training—to help ensure a more predictable and steadier supply of critical physician resources for the benefit of the Commonwealth."

The UK College of Medicine-Bowling Green Campus is a 24,000-square-foot facility located on the second floor of the newest building at Med Center Health. On the floor, you can find students in a variety of rooms including classrooms, multipurpose rooms, small group rooms, a computer lab and eight simulation and standardized patient rooms. Those involved say the smaller class size is just one of the benefits of the Bowling Green campus.

"Our small class size gives us a strong sense of community among ourselves," noted Luke Gaskin ('18), a student in the inaugural class. "It's nice being able to work with administrators and a dean who knows each student on a first-name basis."

"Our campus only has 30 students per class, giving it much more of a family atmosphere," explained Dr. Cheever. "We have recruited dedicated faculty to teach and staff to help the students day-to-day. There is a palpable excitement in Bowling Green about the new medical school and what it means for the future of health care in this region."

After completing year one, students in the inaugural class say they have found there is no shortage of studying. And, while some of them have figured out what area they plan to specialize in, others are just soaking it all in.

"I spend eight to 10 hours a day studying, but that is not as bad as it sounds," said Caitlyn Galloway ('18), another student in the inaugural class. "I am learning things that I am actually interested in and that I will be able to apply to my future career in whatever field I choose to follow. If all goes perfectly well, I would love to be accepted into an integrated plastic surgery residency after medical school."

"I am impressed every day at the volume of material we are able to learn and apply," stated Gaskin. "It's difficult to say right now what area of medicine I would like to go into, as there are so many opportunities available."

On top of all of this, the students say it's pretty special to be involved in the inaugural class that will pave the way for many medical students to come.

"One of the main reasons I chose this campus was to stay close to family during stressful times," said Enes Atici ('18), also part of the inaugural class. "Having the opportunity to go to a medical school where I grew up will allow me to provide care for members of the Bowling Green community who took care of me when my family and I first moved here."

"You do not meet many people who attended any sort of school as part of an inaugural class," said Galloway. "We get to give a lot of input on what we like and what we would change for the future classes to come. It is such a good feeling knowing just how important our voices are to the administration and staff at the college of medicine."

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Enes Atici ('18)
WKU President Timothy C. Caboni and First Lady Kacy S. Caboni establish scholarship

Demonstrating their devotion to WKU and their belief in the importance of education, WKU President Timothy C. Caboni (’94) and First Lady Kacy S. Caboni established an endowed scholarship fund with a gift of $100,000 made through a combination of outright and deferred support.

The Timothy Christian and Kacy Myree Caboni Scholarship Fund will provide support for full-time, first-generation students at WKU. First preference will be given to students pursuing a degree within the Department of Communication.

"At WKU, we want every student who wants to earn a college degree on our Hill to have the ability to do so, regardless of their financial circumstances," said President Caboni.

"The stories I have heard from first-generation students have stayed with me long after they were first shared," Kacy Caboni said. "The heart stories where the oldest child was the first in their family to be able to pursue higher education because of scholarship assistance, and their siblings followed their path. Because a scholarship helped remove hurdles that prevented them from pursuing their educational dreams, these students were able to create a legacy of higher education in their family."

"My experience as a graduate student in the Department of Communication was one of the most formative experiences of my life and helped me shape much of my professional career," said President Caboni. "Kacy and I want to help others who share our passion for communication to benefit from the same applied experiences I was provided as a WKU student."

The Timothy Christian and Kacy Myree Caboni Scholarship is part of the WKU Opportunity Fund. Announced at President Caboni’s Investiture Ceremony in April 2018, the WKU Opportunity Fund is a donor-driven fundraising campaign to raise $50 million to benefit WKU students through needs-based financial assistance in support of recruitment, retention and educational experiences that might otherwise remain out of students’ reach.

"Through private support, the Opportunity Fund will help us put programs into place at WKU to ensure our students are taken care of even before they step foot on campus, throughout their time on the Hill and beyond into their professional careers," said President Caboni.

They said they wanted to include their middle names as a tribute to their grandparents and parents and to honor the support they have always received from their families.

"This was a way for us to further connect our personal families to our WKU Family," said Kacy Caboni. "Our WKU Family is a real, tangible thing, and creating this scholarship is a really exciting connection for both of us."
FALL 2019

WKU Sisterhood celebrates 10th anniversary

The WKU Sisterhood, a group of women with shared values who enjoy collaborating to advance the mission of WKU, is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2019.

"The WKU Sisterhood began as a way for alumnae and friends to support programs on campus that may not receive funding otherwise," said Julie Hinson (‘90, L), WKU Sisterhood Co-Founding Member and Chair. "WKU is a special place for all our members, and the WKU Sisterhood is a way to be philanthropically involved with the University. The impact we make by combining our resources is far more significant than what we would be able to do alone."

Members pool their financial gifts and award grants to a limited number of University designations to maximize the impact of their philanthropy. Each member has an opportunity to be connected and learn about University priorities. Faculty, staff, and students are invited to apply for funding from the WKU Sisterhood, and members have a voice on how the pooled funds are distributed annually to the WKU community. A member may be as involved as she wishes, from serving in a leadership role to simply making her gift.

"As our membership grows, we are able to make a greater impact on the campus projects that our membership selects to fund," said Dr. Barbara Burch (‘59, A), WKU Sisterhood Co-Founding Member and Chair. "Our group has supported many types of projects, and there are many deserving projects that will need funding. We have more work to do."

Established in 2009, the WKU Sisterhood awarded its first grants in 2010. Since then, 20 grants totaling more than $385,000 have been awarded to the University community. The amount of money available for distribution is dependent upon the number of members and can vary each year. Although funds stay within the WKU community, benefits extend beyond the University campus. The 2019 grants will be awarded at the annual meeting on Oct. 25, 2019.

“We have grown to more than 80 members this year and look to be 100 members strong by the end of the year," said Dr. Burch. "Adding to our membership will help the University as we will be able to award more and larger grants."

Now in 2019, the Junior Membership Level is a commitment of $1,000 per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Junior Memberships are available to women who have graduated from WKU within the last 10 years or are age 30 and under. Individuals are only eligible for Junior Memberships for two consecutive years with the expectation they will continue their membership in the WKU Sisterhood. Full members commit to a gift of $3,000 per fiscal year.

“As our Executive Committee discussed ideas concerning how to grow and engage more of the female WKU community, the idea of a Junior Member level kept arising," said Hinson. "Our hope is the Junior Member level will allow us to reach younger women who want more involvement with WKU. The Sisterhood is a special way we can support the place that made such a difference in all our lives."

To learn more about the WKU Sisterhood, visit wkusisterhood.wku.edu/Sisterhood. • Deborah M. Jenkins (‘99, ‘11, L)

LifeWorks at WKU established through $8 million in private support

LifeWorks at WKU, a two-year residential program designed to support living, working, and recreation for individuals on the autism spectrum who are 21 years of age and older, has been established through $8 million in private support. LifeWorks at WKU will be a program within the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex (CEC) at WKU.

Young adults still need continued support after comprehensive state-supported services for all students, regardless of disability or severity, end at age 21. LifeWorks at WKU will help answer the question of "What is next?" for these young people, a question that without answers brings great worry to their families and caregivers.

Representing the benefits of a strong community-university partnership, the concept of the CEC at WKU began in 2003 when a group of concerned parents and grandparents came together to ensure that the services their families needed were available in the Bowling Green-Warren County area. The University recognized this need for trained autism professionals in its community, which led to the creation of the CEC in 2006 to support families and their children from 2 years of age through high school. The Kelly Autism Program’s Circle of Support, founded in 2003, serves WKU students with autism, and, with the addition of LifeWorks, WKU will now serve individuals on the autism spectrum for as long as services are needed.

"The CEC is important to WKU, the community, and other entities because it builds on a strong tradition at the University to meet local community needs, fill service delivery gaps, provide opportunities for applied research and enrich both undergraduate and graduate students’ professional experiences through an interdisciplinary team approach," said Dr. Mary Lloyd Moore, Executive Director of the CEC. "This is most important in that the incidence of autism is now one in 59, according to the Centers for Disease Control. We are all impacted by and called to support those with autism spectrum disorder as valued members of our society."

WKU receives Educational Fundraising Award

WKU has been recognized by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) with the 2019 CASE Educational Fundraising Award, an honor given each year to exceptional fundraising programs at educational institutions in the United States. CASE is the global association for professionals in advancement—alumni relations, communications, development, marketing and advancement services—who share the goal of championing education to transform lives and society.

Among a select group of fewer than 100 colleges and universities receiving awards this year, WKU was recognized for Overall Performance based on the judges’ blind analysis of three years of fundraising data from programs showing solid growth, breadth in the base of support and other indications of maturity.
Often asked "Why WKU?" by prospective students and their families, I enjoy each opportunity to engage in my favorite conversation. These discussions bring me back to what is core to our University and the WKU Experience—providing a carefully crafted total college experience that results in a life-changing transformation for students on our Hill.

For more than 100 years, the WKU community has built upon WKU’s strong foundation—offering world-class academic courses; applied learning and research opportunities; an environment where faculty know their students' names and walk alongside them through graduation; a litany of student organizations to join; a beautiful and intimate campus that feels like home; athletic teams to participate in or to cheer for; and unique traditions and lifelong connections between fellow Hilltoppers.

WKU's mission as an applied research university fundamentally differentiates our institution from our competitors. We offer ample opportunities for Hilltoppers to engage in hands-on activities where they expand their practical know-how, connect what they've learned in the classroom to the real world and practice critical thinking and problem-solving techniques. It is in these moments that our students make final career preparations and separate themselves from the pack.

This summer, I had the privilege of joining the Meteorology Program's Capstone Applied Learning and Research Experience, best known as WKU Storm Chase, for 1,509 miles of their 7,663-mile journey around nine states. Applying theoretical and conceptual knowledge learned in the classroom, students analyzed sophisticated dynamical and statistical weather models with real-time observations to produce forecasts for severe weather—gaining the type of real-world experience typically only available post-college. I witnessed the group members demonstrate their terrific grasp of forecasting, making their way through a hail core and a bear's cage and observing tornadoes in action.

WKU faculty and staff across the University are increasingly engaging our Hilltoppers in these types of applied learning and research activities, personally guiding them through field-focused projects. In just the last 12 months, WKU celebrated the opening and expansion of two significant applied research centers: its Center for Applied Science in Health and Aging (CASHA)—where students collaborate in research that promotes health, vitality and human potential in the aging community—and its Center for Energy Systems (CES)—where students work to provide practical and meaningful solutions for industrial sponsors like Samsung Electronics, Tempur-Pedic International and Black and Decker.

Textbook cases, no matter how alive and colorful they are, can never offer this same degree of interaction, critical thinking and problem solving. We appreciate our alumni and friends who provide important connectivity and remain catalysts for applied research and applied learning at WKU, elevating our students, our University, our region and our nation.

Timothy C. Caboni (94)
Andrea Day

In spring 2019, Florida, Ala., senior Andrea Day earned $6,500 in nationally competitive scholarships to fund her participation in an intensive Arabic language program in Amman, Jordan. For a small-town, nontraditional student, Amman is literally and figuratively thousands of miles from what she had once imagined for her future, but key connections and experiences at WKU and in Bowling Green have shaped the goals that have taken her there.

As a high school graduate, Day didn’t consider college a realistic option. The first person in her family to pursue a postsecondary degree, she took the plunge into enrollment at Southern Kentucky Technical and Community College at the age of 24. She began her studies with no clear idea of how she might use her associate degree, but meeting and befriending students from Arabic-speaking countries sparked her interest in the region.

“Finishing an associate degree [in 2016] had instilled in me a confidence I never thought possible, but learning a new language and culture was exhilarating in a way I hadn’t experienced before,” Day explained. “I knew I wanted to make it a lasting and meaningful part of my life.”

Day found the resources to pave her path at WKU. She chose majors in Arabic and International Affairs and began volunteering at the International Center of Kentucky, caring for the children of refugee families and tutoring them in English. Having experienced homelessness herself, she began to see the ways in which her past life experience converged with her recent interests. Day realized her ability and desire to help those who needed a sense of security in their lives. Personal connections not only brought her to that realization, they showed her a way forward.

“IT was during my first semester at WKU, in a Middle East Politics course, that I saw a presentation given by another student that gave me an inclination to apply for a CIEF Jordan program along with study abroad scholarships like the Gilman and Fulbright for Education Abroad,” Day said.

Now, she is on a path toward a career in the federal government or with an international non-governmental organization serving refugees in the Middle East. Before she graduates, though, she intends to help other WKU and area community college students connect to the same life-changing opportunities she has had.

“Students attending community college often don’t get many opportunities to dream about study abroad. Many of them are unsure about what their academic goals are, or are waiting to get involved until later,” she said, “I want to inspire community college students to dream big and start planning ahead.” — DR. MELINDA GRIMLEY

Andrea Day

"Finishing an associate degree had instilled in me a confidence I never thought possible, but learning a new language and culture was exhilarating in a way I hadn't experienced before. I knew I wanted to make it a lasting and meaningful part of my life."

W. K. U. BASEBALL

100 years of WKU Baseball

WKU Athletics announced its 23-member All-Century Baseball Team on Feb. 12 in honor of the 100th Season of Hilltopper Baseball. The team is led by Head Coach Joel Marriner (’76), the program’s all-time winningest coach, who was the Hilltoppers’ stopper for 26 years, compiling an 815-656-4 overall record. During his tenure, WKU won three Ohio Valley titles, two Sun Belt titles and an SBC Tournament championship.

Marriner’s 800th career win came vs. Akron on March 18, 2005, and he retired following that season with a program-record 815 victories under his belt. On March 3, 2013, his No. 36 became the second number to be retired in program history. From Jan. 15 to Feb. 3, WKU invited fans to vote online and put together their own teams to count for a percentage of the overall voting totals. Simultaneously, other voting groups worked to create their own teams including members of athletic administration, WKU Athletic Hall of Fame and active W-Club Baseball lenermen.

WKU Athletics recognized the entire team during the weekend of May 3-5, and the 2019 Hilltoppers went on to complete a three-game sweep of Conference USA rival Rice for the first time in program history.
To love and be loved
Kentucky Museum celebrates 80 years

In 1939, a vision "formed of every material, native to the state, given by her sons and daughters," opened its doors to WKU. Originally charged with a collections mission to ensure every student knew Kentucky's history through primary sources, the Kentucky Building was established by Professor Gabrielle Robertson and WKU President Henry Hardin Cherry. They believed a university museum was "a fundamental thing," and it would have a tremendous influence in the work of advancing education" at WKU.

Today, that vision of the Kentucky Building serves as home of the Kentucky Museum and Library Special Collections. Through exhibits, programs, and events, the Museum gives every student-and visitor-the chance to discover Kentucky's unique history and culture. Both ancient and modern artifacts tell a story, and these stories transform student learning through experiences as student designs or through classroom study of collections, research projects, class assignments, or visits.

For Olivia Bowers, a senior Art History and Studio Art major from Cincinnati, Ohio, the Museum was one of the reasons she chose WKU, and it has become a primary site for her academic work. After completing an internship in collections and exhibitions, Bowers is furthering her professional skills by conducting research for her Honors College Capstone Experience Thesis project on a U.S. Senate Clerk Desk, which was used in the 19th century and is housed in the Kentucky Museum. She received a Faculty-Undergraduate Student Engagement (FUSE) grant in collaboration with Dr. Gay Jordan, WKU Associate Professor of Art, to conduct research at the Library of Congress on the desk's journey to Kentucky.

"I believe every piece has a story to tell," Bowers explained. "I want to be the one to tell the desk's story. I also plan to create an online exhibit for the desk, which has proven difficult to exhibit physically due to its size and condition. The staff at the Kentucky Museum have all helped me find my path in museum work."

The Museum also serves as a gathering place for the regional community to discover and tell their own stories. Recently, the Museum and its partner, the Kentucky FolkLife Program, were awarded the Kentucky Historical Society's Community Impact Award for their exhibition, A Culture Carried: From Bosnia to Bowling Green, which explored the experiences of Bowling Green's Bosnian refugee community.

"For nearly 80 years, the Kentucky Museum has been not only a treasured part of the cultural legacy of WKU, but also an educational space for the community to learn about our collective connection to one another as we explore the art and culture of the Commonwealth in an ever-widening sense," said Kentucky Museum Director Brent Bjorkman. "Through the study and presentation of artifacts in our current collections, to shared research projects like our recent collaboration with the Kentucky FolkLife Program valuing the life stories of our Bosnian neighbors, the Kentucky Museum continues to be a venerated space for sharing Kentucky with the world and bringing the world to Kentucky."

The Museum presents exhibits on fine and decorative arts, history, culture and science—all centered on its vision as a teaching museum. Admission is free, thanks to a grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

The Kentucky Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn more at wku.edu/kentuckymuseum. • TIFFANY ISSERHARDT
OVERCOMING OSS OF HEARING
SURVIVING THE 2017 LAS VEGAS MUSIC FESTIVAL SHOOTING
FINDING THE TENNACITTO OVERCOME INJURIES
DANCING AWAY STIGMAS

OVERCOMERS
BY ROSE REMENTER

From surviving the 2017 Las Vegas shooting to overcoming physical challenges like being deaf or blind, these WKU alumni have not let the cards they've been dealt in the hand of life hold them back from achieving their goals. In this feature, we take a deeper look into the lives of five WKU alumni who have earned the title "overcomer."
SURVIVING THE 2017 LAS VEGAS MUSIC FESTIVAL SHOOTING

NICHOLAS ROBONE

"There are so many good people in the world and we sometimes forget that when an event like this happens, I had so many people reach out and help in any way they could. I saw so many people giving back to the community during that time, and I knew I wanted to do the same as soon as I was fully recovered."

On Oct. 1, 2017, hundreds of people gathered for the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival on the Las Vegas Strip in Nevada. Among them was Nicholas Robone (15) of Las Vegas, Nev., a Marketing Manager for Topgolf Las Vegas and Assistant Coach for the University of Nevada Las Vegas Men's Ice Hockey Team.

"I was with my brother, Anthony, and several friends," reflected Robone. "It was our third night at the festival, and we were having a great time enjoying a beautiful night in Las Vegas listening to some of our favorite country artists."

Tragedy struck, though, when a gunman opened fire on the concertgoers, ultimately killing 58 people and injuring an additional 422 by gunfire—one of whom was Robone.

"I didn't realize I was shot until I felt a massive impact in my chest and, even then, I didn't think it was a gunshot wound until I saw all the blood," explained Robone.

Robone says panic and chaos set in at the venue. His brother and friend grabbed him, and they ran as far away as they could from where they believed the gunshots were coming from and found coverage behind a police car.

"My brother found a small first aid kit and helped bandage my wound," said Robone. "We waited on the outskirts of the strip until an ambulance was able to transport me to Sunrise Hospital. Anthony is a Firefighter and Paramedic with the Henderson County Fire Department and, after I was attended to, he actually went back to the concert venue to help assist with the injured."

Robone spent the next six days in the intensive care unit and 10 days total in the hospital.

"They didn't know where the bullet was inside my body, so they had to basically cut my chest open like they would for open heart surgery," explained Robone. "By the time I got to the hospital, all my vital organs and I just had an extremely bruised lung. They were able to remove the bullet, which wound up in my back, but I did lose a life-threatening amount of blood."

After his initial hospitalization, Robone spent the next six months in recovery, during which he experienced many emotions.

"During the shooting, I was just trying to stay as calm as possible," said Robone. "I needed to give myself the best chance to survive. During the recovery process, there were mixed emotions, from angry to sad to grateful. Overall, I'm truly blessed to still be here and just happy to be alive."

Through the tragedy, Robone says he was able to overcome it all due to the outpouring of support from the community for him and the other victims. He says it was truly inspiring and helped him focus on the positives instead of the negatives.

"This event isn't something that will define who I am," stated Robone. "There are so many good people in the world, and we sometimes forget that when an event like this happens. I had so many people reach out and help in any way they could. I saw so many people giving back to the community during that time, and I knew I wanted to do the same as soon as I was fully recovered."

In March 2018, Robone held an event that benefited victims of post-traumatic stress disorder from the October shooting. It was a huge success and raised more than $4,000. I believe doing things like this helped me overcome the tragedy.

"The tragedy has even helped him relax as a coach and in life. "The team and staff had my back every step of the way and showed me tons of emotional support," added Robone. "I wanted to get back to coaching as quickly as possible, so it was part of the reason I wanted to do as much rehab as possible. I believe I'm probably a little more laid back now as a coach because, as the end of the day, it's just a game, and there are bigger things in life. I've learned that having healthy relationships with the people you love is the only thing in life that really matters."

"Nothing is permanent.

I think that commandment is what he's trying to teach us. "
OVERCOMING LOSS OF HEARING

RUTH OSBURN

"WE ALL NEED TO FOCUS ON WHAT WE CAN DO FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS, NOT WHAT WE CANNOT DO. EVERY ONE OF US HAS A "DISABILITY" IN A WAY, BECAUSE NO ONE IS PERFECT. JUST TRY YOUR BEST, DON'T GIVE UP AND FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES."

Ruth Osburn (80, L) was born in Glasgow, Ky., but considers Nashville, Tenn., home, as she grew up there. She was 3 months old when a doctor diagnosed her as deaf, while profound hearing loss in her right ear and severe hearing loss in her left.

"The doctor who confirmed my hearing loss told my parents that I would never learn to speak and that I would not complete high school," Osburn reflected. "He even went so far as to say that I should be sent away to an institution."

Osburn says her parents knew it would be a tough journey, but they were determined for her to succeed by teaching her to learn orally rather than by sign language—since very few hearing people know sign language.

"My parents didn't want it to be a barrier between me and the hearing world," she said. "They taught me to read lips and to speak up."

Osburn attended the Bill Williams Speech Center in Nashville to undergo intensive speech and lip-reading therapy once or twice a month until the family relocated to Nashville. Once in Nashville, Osburn attended five days a week for 48 weeks of the year from the time she was 2 and a half until the age of 6. Her mother bought her first hearing aid to help amplify sounds as she learned to read lips and speak. When she entered first grade, Osburn's parents took her to a school across town to be "mainstreamed.""I attended regular classes for part of the day with the rest of the time spent in a deaf classroom. By the time she reached the third grade, it was evident that Osburn could succeed in a regular classroom all day.

"My third-grade teacher, Mrs. Jordan, believed I could do it in a regular classroom," said Osburn. "So, in the fourth grade, I was in a regular classroom all day with the exception of speech with my deaf classmates. Fifth grade was a huge milestone for me, because I was able to walk to school with my sisters and neighbors. I was proud of myself!"

Osburn had speech therapy during the school year and summer. In high school, she began to dream of working in a health-related field and, thanks to her orthodontist, she found her calling in life.

"To this day, I am thankful for my orthodontist, Dr. John Thordarson, who encouraged me to pursue dental hygiene," said Osburn. "He did not realize at the time that there was only one deaf dental hygienist in the whole country and I would soon become the first deaf dental hygienist in the state of Kentucky!"

Osburn applied and was accepted into WKU's Dental Hygiene Program. She says while she had a great education and many supporters, she did have to overcome some adversity and doubt while in the program. At the time, WKU's Dental Hygiene program was ranked third in the nation and, unfortunately, some people thought allowing Osburn to enter the program could lower that ranking.

"A few of my professors made me speak much more harshly than the other students but, because of this, I learned to work harder and I found my "voice," explained Osburn. "The majority of the experience I had at WKU were positive and loving, and I learned from the few bad experiences. I had fellow classmates who took notes for me and made phone calls to my patients. With the support and love from my family, friends and numerous teachers, as well as my fierce determination and stubbornness, I was able to overcome my disability."

Osburn graduated in 1980 from WKU's Dental Hygiene Program—which was still ranked third in the nation—and she then began to apply for jobs. She had interviewed a dentist prior to her acceptance into the program at WKU, so when she contacted him like he had requested, she did so after graduation, he hired her right on the spot.

"I worked as a dental hygienist in his office for nearly two years, and then I moved to work in Franklin, Tenn., where I worked for an additional 33 years until I retired," added Osburn.

In her retirement, Osburn works as an activist and volunteer for different community organizations. She helps other deaf students as they work to become oral communicators.

"We all need to focus on what we can do for ourselves and others, not what we cannot do," said Osburn. "Every one of us has a "disability" in a way, because no one is perfect. I see something different in life every day and I have learned to be grateful for that."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this incredible program," added Osburn. "I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this incredible program."
Finding the Tennacity to Overcome Injuries

**ABBY & THOMAS STEPHENSON**

"I CAN EMPATHIZE WITH THE FEAR, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION THEY ARE DEALING WITH. BEING ABLE TO HELP GIVE THEM HOPE AND HELP MOTIVATE THEM TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR RECOVERY IS ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING THINGS I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED."

**FINDING THE TENNACITY TO OVERCOME INJURIES**

Abby (Bryndal) Stephenson ('15) and Thomas Stephenson ('15) of Thompson Station, Tenn., look like your typical kids, but they're overcome by anxiety and depression in their young relationships.

In December 2014, Thomas and Abby were dating and had just wrapped up finals at WKU before they traveled back to Nashville for the holidays. On December 11, Thomas was traveling to West Virginia to see his best friend before Christmas when, after a few hours into the trip, he was involved in a horrible car accident.

"Thomas was driving on I-440 when a car on the other side of the interstate blew a tire, spun out, hit a semi-truck and then crossed the roadway head-on into Thomas’ truck," explained Abby. "Thomas’ truck flipped from-first then rolled the length of a football field before coming to a stop on the passenger side. Once stopped, the truck caught fire, but the driver, Thomas, pulled Thomas out of the car moments before his truck was completely engulfed in flames. Due to his extensive injuries, he was transported by Life Flight to Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Upon impact, Thomas’ lower spine was bruised, leaving his spine disorganized from his pelvis. He also had crushed both feet and ankles, had a broken femur, sternum and clavicle."

Doctors told Thomas that he would never be active again. He would eventually be able to walk, but doing activities such as running, cycling, baseball and baseball—all sports the young man loved—would not be possible. He underwent three days of surgeries followed by several weeks in the hospital and then a month of physical therapy. He says during this time he went through major depression.

"As most do in that situation, I was confused as to why it had happened to me and what it meant for the future," said Thomas. "I didn’t know how it would impact my life, my family or my ambitions in life. Suddenly, I was forced to rely on others for everyday things, like simple tasks like eating, showering or using the bathroom, which is incredibly frustrating—especially at an age where you are supposed to be exploring your independence."

After finishing his time at the rehabilitation center, Thomas was still wheelchair-bound and not able to bear weight on his legs. Just weeks after his accident, the two who were planning on spending the New Year together were now engaged. The couple returned to WKU for their final exams, and Thomas continued physical therapy.

"I was definitely a point where I switched flipped and I decided that if I wanted to recover and live a fulfilling life, I had to take control of my recovery and start being radical in my efforts," he said. "That’s when I started walking every day, then slowly jogging, eventually starting to bike again. At that point, I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel that while life may never be the same again, I could still live a life that I wanted to live."

He accomplished this through physical therapy and then through athletic and strength training. Unfortunately, Thomas’ insurance only covered a few of his physical therapy visits, so the majority of it he had to pay out of pocket, with the support of his parents.

"After Thomas made it through his recovery and fulfilled his dream of competing in the 2018 Ironman in Raleigh, N.C., we began to reflect on the journey we had and we realized how fortunate we were in a lot of ways," Abby explained. "We remembered and talked about all the challenges we went through, individually and together, and how both of us were so glad to not have had to worry about the financial cost of recovery on top of everything else. Even though we both agreed we would have rather the accident not have happened, we wanted to focus on the positive—this happened for a reason, and good can come out of this."

"Recognizing they had the opportunity, experience and ability to help others, the Stephenses founded TENNACITY, a non-profit to help trauma survivors in Middle Tennessee lead active and fulfilling lifestyles by facilitating access to hands-on physical therapy and strength training for survivors who have neither the financial resources nor the ability to pay for these services out-of-pocket."

"TENNACITY is so important to me, because I recognize when I would be in that spot and how different my recovery would have been had we not been able to continue therapy after insurance had been exhausted," added Thomas. "I talk to people now on a regular basis through TENNACITY who are in the same position I was in, and I can empathize with their current anxiety and depression and how they are dealing with. Being able to help give them hope and help motivate them to take control of their recovery is one of the most rewarding things I have ever experienced."

TENNACITY opened in 2016, and the Stephenses have assisted two individuals to date and are always collecting more applications for help for others who need it. The couple married in 2016, and Thomas has now competed in four Half Ironman competitions. They both agree that overcoming the accident was extremely hard, but they are grateful that some good came about because of it through TENNACITY.

To learn more, visit tenncacityfoundation.org."
OVERCOMING LOSS OF SIGHT

KIMBERLY PARSLEY

"EVERTYBODY SUFFERS AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIFE. THE DEGREE MAY BE DIFFERENT, BUT WE ARE ALL GOING THROUGH SOMETHING. I THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT ALONE."

Overcoming Loss of Sight

Known for being able to see up until the age of 14, when suddenly, your vision is gone. That's exactly what happened to Kimberly (Shain) Parsley (97) of Bowling Green, Ky.

"I was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa at age 14," said Parsley. "It's a genetic disease that affects the retina and causes vision loss."

After graduation, Parsley struggled to find a job, until she got an opportunity to work for her alma mater.

"I spent two years looking for a job," said Parsley. "I would get called in for an interview and be excited until they realized I was blind. However, that changed at WKU. I interviewed after a former professor told me about a job. I got the job, and I worked at WKU for 10 years. I did data entry, editing and even speech writing with the use of a talking computer. I really enjoyed it."

Parsley left her job to be a stay-at-home mom when she had her first child, Ian, who is now 10 years old. She later had a daughter, Sayre, who is now 7 years old.

"It was hard," Parsley noted of her transition to motherhood. "For about five years, I was in a low-pain panic all the time. There was loss of child, poverty, imbalance. I worried about things like not being able to find a talking thermometer, but they were unnecessary worries. Parenting is 100 percent on-the-job training."

Parsley now works as a writer, and her most recent book in a series about romance is titled Whisked Away. She describes the book as part memoir and part self-help.

Through it all, Parsley says she has no regrets but has overcome the challenges life has thrown at her, but says it's not always easy to stay positive.

"It's hard, and I have days where I just shake my fist at the heavens and screams, 'Why me?'" she acknowledged. "But that doesn't give me answers and it's not productive, so I have to go on with life and do the best I can. But when my daughter gets on my lap, hugs me and says she wants to just be like me when she grows up, I can't give up on life."

"Everybody suffers at some point in their life," Parsley concluded. "The degree may be different, but we are all going through something. I think that it is important to know that you're not alone."
DANCING AWAY STIGMAS

SCOTT DOUGLAS CAMPBELL

"I BELIEVE THAT ALL BODIES, AND THE MOVEMENT THEY CREATE, HAVE EQUAL VALUE AND ARTISTIC RELEVANCE. EVERY DISABLED OR NONDISABLED BODY, OF ANY AGE, AND IN SOLO OR IN TANDEM, IS A STATEMENT ON THE POTENTIAL, CREATIVITY AND POWER OF A BODY'S ARTISTRY."
Jon Stovall ('05, '11)

inspiring students and teachers as Assistant Principal

On Aug. 31, 2013, Jonathan Stovall ('05, '11) of Scottsville, Ky., had a life-altering accident. He and a friend were in a side-by-side ATV wreck. Stovall suffered an epidural hematoma and he was told that, due to the traumatic brain injury, he would never return to teaching again.

"However, by the grace of God, after five years of recovery, I was able to return to work just one month after a craniotomy," Stovall said. After his accident, Stovall started living life like there was no tomorrow and used his story to inspire his students to never give up.

"This incident allowed me to see that we are put on Earth for a specific purpose," continued Stovall. "It made me value life so much more."

Stovall says it was when he was teaching at Parket-Bennett-Curry Elementary in Bowling Green that he truly found his passion for inspiring young students.

"I started the Boys to Men Club, which Tyreon Clark ('17) now runs successfully in more than one school," said Stovall. "The Boys to Men program is designed to help students pursue academic and behavior success in the classroom and the community."

"The goal is to mold young boys into respectable young men," Clark explained. "They are motivated weekly to achieve behavioral goals, and we focus on emotional and social development to encourage the young boys to be leaders in their school and community. On Fridays they dress for success, and we have witnessed behavioral changes through positive interactions in this program."

Stovall says he jumped at the opportunity to move to his current role as Assistant Principal of Adairville Elementary School in Logan County.

"As I grew as an educator, I wanted to not only have an impact on students, but to also have an impact on teachers as well," he explained. "I am now able to work with teachers and still able to be actively involved in the lives of students."

As Adairville, Stovall works with many projects, such as assisting with the summer reading program, the crime scene investigation summer school program and the summer feeding program through which the school partners with local churches to provide meals to families and students two days a week. He also works with the DREAM BIG program that allows a team of middle school students to be selected by their teachers to complete different outreach programs like helping the Salvation Army prepare food boxes for families in need. He says his most exciting program relates to using songwriting and recording to help students succeed in math.

"One of the most impactful programs that I have been blessed to be a part of is partnering with NF Records to take students to the music studio and let them create their own music," said Stovall. "We work with the kids to take common core materials they are learning in class and then write authentic music that can be used in the classroom. The students create the beat, write the lyrics, record the vocals and mix all of their own songs. We currently have 13 songs that will be on iTunes soon."

The program started when Stovall was trying to teach his fourth grade math standards using multiplication tables. After he incorporated songs into the facts the students needed to learn, he said their test scores dramatically improved. Now, the program includes not just math, but all core subjects, from language arts to history.

"Teachers and students come to me with new ideas for songs and subjects, including topics like bullying," added Stovall. "I encourage all teachers and administrators to give songwriting and recording with students a chance, even in the earliest grades. Experimenting with music teaches them critical-thinking skills, collaboration and communication, even when the final product isn't a professional recording song. Stealing enough confidence in students to let them try it gives them more confidence."

Stovall says it's a team effort to help lead all these projects, but it's worth it to inspire the students.

"There isn't one single program that I am involved with that is solely mine," noted Stovall. "I couldn't do any of these things without the support and guidance of all the teachers and friends I have encountered in my career. My main goal with any program that I am involved in is to simply show students that others care about them and to give them experiences that they might not otherwise have. All this work is done simply as a way to serve and give back. Life isn't measured by what you have but by what you give."
Now Available For Download!
The new WKU Alumni Connection app brings the Alumni Association right to your smart phone!

Your WKU Alumni Association is pleased to announce the launch of our new mobile app, the WKU Alumni Connection. The WKU Alumni Connection app brings the power of the WKU Alumni Association to your smart phone. Available for Apple and Android devices, it’s perfect for every Hilltopper, especially members of the Alumni Association.

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ALUMNI AVENUE Alumni Association News and Events
The WKU Alumni Association recently elected nine new board members for 2019-2020 and recognized two members who will serve in one-year appointments.

The following new members will serve for three-year terms:

Georgena Brackett ('87, '92, '10, L) of Scottsville, Ky., is System Health Information Management Director at Med Center Health.

Dr. Todd Cheever ('87, L) of Bowling Green, Ky., serves as Associate Dean of the UK College of Medicine – Bowling Green Campus.

Brent Dittus ('92, L) of Elizabethtown, Ky., is a Certified Financial Planner at Dittus Wealth Management, LLC.

Michael L. Fogle ('14, L) of Glasgow, Ky., serves as Account Manager for J.B. Hunt Transportation Services, Inc.

Sherri Goldsmith ('91, A) of Bowling Green, Ky., is Chief Nursing Officer at SKY Rehab Hospital.

Dr. Jenna Haugen ('07, '09, L) of Louisville, Ky., serves as Assistant Professor in the College of Business at the University of Louisville.

Rita Roberts-Turner ('93, A) of Goodlettsville, Tenn., is Chief Administrative Officer of Nashville MTA.

Jon Roe ('79, L) of Atlanta, Ga., is a health care attorney and Partner with Parker, Hudson, Ramage & Nodde LLP.

Mike Tarter ('85, L) of Somerset, Ky., is President and CEO of Forcht Broadcasting.

In addition, the following two board members will serve one-year terms as representatives of affiliated organizations:

Juan "Johnny" Garcia ('16) of Nashville, Tenn., is a Business Development Representative at Preferred.

Lucas Hackmann of O'Fallon, Ill., a WKU alumnus who is majoring in Health Care Administration, will represent the Student Alumni Ambassadors (SAA).

These new members will join the following alumni who were recently recognized for their contributions to the WKU community:

Jeremy Sublett ('94, L)

Todd Cheever ('87, L)

Mike Tarter ('85, L)

deborah Thomas ('82, L)

Joe Morel ('86, L)

Al Tucker ('79, L)

Dr. R. Barkley Payne ('86, L)

Dr. Robert Green ('79, L)

Dr. Ronald Norton ('76, L)

Dr. Jerri Hougen ('07, '09, L)

Dr. R. Barkley Payne ('86, L) will serve as President, with R. Barkley Payne ('86, L) as Immediate Past President.

The WKU Alumni Association Board of Directors and professional staff will work to fulfill this mission through three core goals. First, we will engage our alumni and stakeholders as global ambassadors, and we will cultivate ongoing relationships to help WKU climb higher. Second, we will work to secure the resources needed to create a more sustainable model for the Association while further inspiring alumni to invest in the future of WKU. Finally, as part of the WKU Experience, we will celebrate our alumni and their successes and achievements.

As always, it's an exciting time to be a Hilltopper! With Dr. Timothy C. Caboni beginning his tenure as WKU's 19th President two years ago, we are enjoying a new energy on campus and a renewed focus through the University's Climbing to Greater Heights strategic plan.

To complement and support the University's goals, your WKU Alumni Association is engaged in a three-year strategic planning process to support our mission to "strengthen the tradition, ignite the spirit and serve the WKU alumni community by building lifelong relationships and connections."

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I encourage you to think about how you can be involved. Serve as an Alumni Ambassador to help recruit students and future alumni. Share your career and networking skills to help students and young professionals through Hilltopper Work. Check out the latest alumni news or WKU SPIRIT to celebrate the successes of your fellow Hilltoppers. Finally, renew your membership or become a proud member of the WKU Alumni Association to provide valuable support to help us better serve you and WKU.

Together, we can support the University in inspiring innovation, elevating communities and transforming lives. Partner with us as we help the University climb higher!
The WKU Alumni Association recognizes top volunteers at annual celebration

WKU Alumni Association recognizes top volunteers at annual celebration

The WKU Alumni Association recognized its top volunteers at an Alumni Volunteer Celebration dinner on Friday, July 19, 2019. The event culminated with the presentation of six individual awards to recognize volunteers who have made outstanding contributions in support of alumni engagement this past year.

William “Whitey” Sanders ('55, L) from Ft. Myers, Fla., received the Lee Robertson Legacy Award.

AI (72, 79, L) and Joy ('73, 77, L) Tuck from Union, Ky., received the Leadership Award for Excellence.

Erin Holdeman ('99, '17, '19, L) of Bowling Green, Ky., received the Newcomer Award.

Matt Hall ('19), of Swansea, Ill., received the Outstanding Student Ambassador Award.

Deanna Mills ('94, L) of Woodstock, Ga., served for six years with the last three as President Elect, President and Immediate Past President. Seven Board members, first elected in 2016, ended three-year terms of service: John Carter ('88, '91, L) of Somerset, Tenn., Amy C. Hardin ('02, '10, L) of Bowling Green, Ky., Jeff Keys ('99, L) of Glendale, Ky., Peggy Krug ('78, L) of Louisville, Ky., Curtis Lucas ('76, '93, L) of Liberty, Ky., Leslie McCoy ('95, '97, L) of Bowling Green, Ky., and Holly Vaughn ('83, L) of Bowling Green, Ky. In addition, Katie Board ('99, L) of Bowling Green, Ky., served a one-year term as an ex-officio member of the Board as President of the Young Alumni Council.

The Alumni Association also recognized chapters and groups for outstanding events and partnerships:

- Membership Award: WKU Alumni Owensboro Chapter
- Spirit of Service Award and Young Alumni Involvement Award: Greater Louisville Alumni Chapter
- Scholarship and Fundraising Award: WKU Alumni Owensboro Chapter
- Power of Partnership Award: WKU Ticker Office

Tuck from Union, Ky., received the Leadership Award for Excellence.

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HILLTOPPERS, TELL US HOW WE ARE DOING!

We want your feedback on WKU SPIRIT magazine and how we can serve you better. WKU is conducting an anonymous survey administered by our trusted partner, Everedify.

Go to everedify.com/wku to take the survey. Survey results are anonymous and will be used only for the purposes of improving your experience with WKU SPIRIT.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Dana Brown has been named the recipient of the annual Lee Robertson Scholarship

A rising WKU senior from Pittsboro, Ind., has been named the recipient of the annual Lee Robertson Scholarship.

Dana Brown, who is majoring in Sport Management with a minor in Business Administration, earned the $500 award designated for an upper-class student at WKU who exemplifies the WKU Spirit. The award is presented in honor of Lee Robertson ('50, '57, L) and administered by the WKU Alumni Association.

Known by Hilltoppers as "Mr. Western" in recognition of his 60 plus-year relationship with the University, Robertson celebrated his 97th birthday June 16. He currently serves as Special Assistant to the Vice President for Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement at WKU, but his WKU legacy spans his time as a student, Director of Alumni Affairs and Placement Services, Director of the WKU Glasgow Campus and a six-year stint as Men's Golf Coach.

Alumni Leadership Scholars

WKU Alumni Association awards four leadership scholarships to incoming freshmen

Four incoming WKU freshmen were awarded a four-year renewable scholarship totaling $8,000—$2,000 per year—as part of the WKU Alumni Association’s Alumni Leadership Scholars program.

The Alumni Leadership Scholars program was established in 1983 and the funds are provided through endowments housed in the College Heights Foundation—the Calvin M. and Rosella Spivey Jebb Scholars and the Bob and Norma Joan Kirby Scholars. Of the 228 qualified applicants, the following four students were selected to receive the scholarships:

Logan Barber of New Albany, Ind., an incoming freshman studying Elementary Education

Sadie Edwards of Louisville, Ky., an incoming freshman studying Agriculture

Grace Moore of Alamo, Tenn., an incoming freshman studying Pre-Nursing

Grace Meiser of Wilder, Ky., an incoming freshman studying International Affairs

While there are many requirements to be selected for an award, Allie Sharp ('13, '15, L), Coordinator of Student & Young Alumni Engagement for the WKU Alumni Association, says the selection committee looks for students who are motivated to get involved at WKU.

"We look for a well-rounded student," explained Sharp. "Academics are important, but our goal for this scholarship program is to help identify future campus leaders. We look at academics, organization involvement and leadership roles the students pursued during their high school years."

The four students will join 13 other students who are already part of the Alumni Leadership Scholars group.
TOPPER TRAVELERS

Nineteen Topper Travelers set sail aboard the S.S. Antoinette

In June 2019, a total of 19 Topper Travelers set sail aboard the S.S. Antoinette for a picturesque Castles on the Rhine river tour. The group of WKU alumni and friends enjoyed an eight-day cruise with an optional three-day stay in Amsterdam.

"The Topper Travel program allows WKU alumni to meet other Hilltoppers who like to travel as they explore the world together," said Dr. Anthony McAdoo (L), Executive Director of the WKU Alumni Association. "Travel programs are selected based upon interest in destinations and offer alumni the opportunity to learn more about the region, culture, food and history in the areas visited."

Emarking from Amsterdam, travelers also enjoyed ports in the German cities of Cologne, Koblenz, Boppard, Rudesheim, Germersheim, Kehl and Breisach. Throughout the journey, they explored the history of the castles along the Rhine River and the role they played in shaping the geopolitical landscape in the region.

"Travelers learned about German food and wines for each area visited," McAdoo said. "They even had the opportunity to learn firsthand about the medicinal properties of vinegar and to take a private cooking class with Matthias Mangold, a judge from Germany's MasterChef television show. While in port, alumni and friends were able to explore each town or village and interact with locals. Abord ship, alumni enjoyed dinner together, shared photos and memories created during the day, had the opportunity to expand their network of Hilltoppers and shared more about their personal WKU experiences."

The 2019 Topper Travel trip was offered in partnership with Picture This Travel in Bowling Green, Ky., and agents Sheri Clarke (A) and Arie Rayner (B-A), provided outstanding service to all travelers before, during and after the trip.

McAdoo said the WKU Alumni Association is exploring options for trips in late 2020 and in 2021. Visit alumni.wku.edu/toppertravel to sign up to receive notices of future adventures.

Three to join WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni during Homecoming 2019

A Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist, a nationally recognized public health official and an award-winning professor and mathematician will join WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni this fall.

J. Scott Applewhite, Dr. Shirley B. Gray and Dr. Dixie L. Snider Jr. will be inducted during WKU’s 2019 Homecoming Celebration. The 28th class of noted alumni will be recognized during a luncheon at 11 a.m. on Oct. 18 at Sloan Convention Center.

The Hall of Distinguished Alumni is presented by Franklin Bank & Trust, a longtime supporter of WKU. For more information, contact the WKU Alumni Association at (270) 745-2586 or visit alumni.wku.edu/hoda19.
J. Scott APPLEWHITE

J. Scott Applewhite is a Pulitzer Prize-winning senior photojournalist with The Associated Press in Washington, D.C.

For nearly four decades, his primary beat has been the White House, where he has photographed the last seven U.S. Presidents, including Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

During these years, Applewhite has had a front-row seat to history in the making, documenting campaigns, scandals, and public and private moments that permanently shape the presidency. He's also covered conflicts overseas in the Middle East, the Balkans, Panama, Haiti, Africa and Somalia to document war, invasions, terror and anguish. His expertise at getting into and filing from some of the world's most difficult datelines made him one of AP's busiest frontline photojournalists. Most recently, Applewhite has focused on Congress and the struggles within that divided and diverse body.

Applewhite's photographs from the 1992 presidential campaigns helped the AP earn a Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography in 1993. That same year, his coverage of the Somalia tragedy triggered the Pulitzer Honored Finalist citation. In 1999, he was honored with his second Pulitzer Prize in Feature Photography for his poignant images that documented President Clinton’s impeachment crisis. Noting a career of excellence and initiative, the AP singled out Applewhite for its prestigious Gramling Spirit Award. He was also honored as the recipient of the White House News Photographers Association Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017.

A native of Louisville and Elizabethtown, Ky., Applewhite’s passion for news was sparked as a journalism student at WKU where he received the 2011 Award for Outstanding Contributions to Journalism. WKU had no formal photojournalism program in the early-1970s, but with mentoring and inspiration from friends at the College Heights Herald, he quickly learned the skills to become a features photographer for the newspaper and yearbook. He credits the engaging and nurturing environment of the Herald and WKU for his success.

With a boost from the College Heights Herald, he earned an internship with the Louisville Courier-Journal, which led to postings at The Glomer in Henderson, Ky., the Palm Beach Post and Miami Herald in Florida, and to the AP.

On Capitol Hill, he serves as Chairman of the Senate Press Photographers Gallery and serves on the board of The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. Beyond his daily work for The Associated Press, Applewhite is enthusiastic about sharing his experience with young journalists through mentoring programs and professional associations.

Dr. Shirley B. GRAY ('57)

Dr. Shirley B. Gray ('57) is an award-winning teacher, researcher and mathematician.

A Professor of Mathematics at California State University, Los Angeles, Dr. Gray received the 2016 Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award from the Southern California-Nevada section of the Mathematical Association of America. She and her research team have been featured in Notices of the American Mathematical Society, one of the highest-impact journals in the world, for their work on the Method of Archimedes. In a quest to image the footprint of Archimedes, Dr. Gray found original mathematics neither identified nor published for 2,200 years. This collaboration united the mathematics, computer science and engineering skills of faculty, students and industry representatives—serving as a springboard for research projects that combined all three academic areas to strengthen STEM education.

Dr. Gray and her collaborators were the first on their campus to publish 3-D printer models based on mathematics. After an extensive search of literature, they were also among the first to identify a unique mathematical curve. After 27 years on the faculty at Cal State, she continues to produce nationally and internationally recognized scholarly work in the National Curve Bank Project initiated by the National Science Foundation and continued by the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation.

She has implemented hands-on learning activities in partnership with the Huntington Library, one of the country’s greatest treasures, that has received national recognition and been a model for other universities. Under Dr. Gray’s leadership, countless students from first-generation, underrepresented or historically underserved student populations have had the opportunity to visit the Library to view rare mathematics written by gender and ethnically diverse individuals. Many of these former students now enjoy successful careers at Disney, NASA, JPL, Silicon Beach startups and academia.

In addition to her scholarly achievements, Dr. Gray also led a 20-year effort to encourage both the Vatican and the government of Italy to recognize Maria Gaetana Agnesi by issuing postage stamps in her honor. Agnesi’s two-volume calculus is the first known surviving book of mathematics written by a woman. Dr. Gray’s campaign, joined by at least 300 students and several dozen colleagues in the U.S. and Europe, resulted in the Vatican and the government of Italy honoring Agnesi this past year by issuing stamps on the 300th anniversary of her birth.

A native of Beaver Dam, Ky., Dr. Gray makes her home in Pasadena, Calif., with her husband, Dr. Harry B. Gray ('57), a member of the 1957 Class of WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni.
Rear Admiral Dixie E. Snider Jr., M.D., M.P.H. (’65), former Chief Science Officer, Office of the Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has had a profound effect upon public health in the United States.

After earning a B.S. in Chemistry from WKU, he attended the University of Louisville School of Medicine, graduating with highest honors. He had additional training at Washington University and at Vanderbilt University and became board-certified in internal medicine and in allergy and clinical immunology.

In 1984, he received a Master of Public Health from Emory University. Dr. Snider began working for the CDC in 1973 as a Tuberculosis Medical Officer at the Oklahoma Department of Health. Although public health had not been his initial career choice, he fell in love with the idea of improving the health of a population as opposed to treating one person at a time. In 1975 he was appointed Chief of the Research and Development Branch of the Division of Tuberculosis (TB) Control, followed by an appointment as Director of the TB Division in 1985 and as Chief Scientist for the Office of the Director in 1993 until his retirement in 2006. He was a full-time consultant to the CDC until 2013.

As Chief Scientist, Dr. Snider was the Executive Secretary for the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, which set national immunization policy. He also oversaw vaccine safety monitoring, protecting human research subjects, assuring proper care and use of animals and technology transfer at CDC and helped set national policy in these areas. In 1998, he led a CDC working group through negotiations with the Food and Drug Administration to fortify cereal grains with folic acid which has prevented thousands of neural tube birth defects. He also created a permanent CDC Ethics Committee to enhance organizational integrity. Dr. Snider frequently represented the CDC in Washington, D.C., and at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. He played a key role in arranging the 1997 Presidential apology for the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.

Dr. Snider received many career awards including the Department of Health and Human Service Secretary’s Distinguished Service Award. In 2007, he received the Distinguished Achievement Award from Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University. In 2008, he was named an Alumni Fellow by the University of Louisville School of Medicine and, in 2009, he was inducted into the University of Kentucky Public Health Hall of Fame.

Dr. Snider lives in Decatur, Ga., with his wife, Fran.
In 1963, Homecoming festivities kicked off on Friday, Oct. 26, with a pep rally in the stadium, traveled down to the square and made their way back up to the stadium for an afternoon pep rally. A Homecoming Dance followed in the gym that evening. The next day, the Hilltoppers were victorious, with a 24-16 win against the Tennessee State University. The year 1963 was an excellent year for WKU athletics, as A.E. Diddle Arena was dedicated later that year.

In 1944, Anna Jo and Betty Jo Cook made Hilltopper history, as legendary Coach E.A. Diddle saw them perform at a state tournament and was inspired to bring them to WKU as cheerleading scholars. Wearing reversible red and white skirts and letter sweaters, the duo often enter saxed crowds during halftime with a sash and dance routine. Though football had been suspended during World War II, a small football squad returned for the 1946 season. During the Cook twins' senior year, the Oct. 18, 1947, Homecoming was declared "bigger and better than ever before." The Hilltoppers remained undefeated as they beat the Bradley University Braves, 15-12.

The Cook twins, who were inducted into the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017, continue to cheer for WKU for the rest of their lives. Anna Jo married Jim Pickens ('52), who played both baseball and football at WKU, coached the Hilltopper Football team for 11 seasons and later served as Director of the Campus Recreation Program. Betty Jo married Dee Gibson ('48, '68), who played both basketball and tennis at WKU and who served as the University's Director of Public Relations. Anna Jo passed away in 2012 and Betty Jo passed away in 2017.

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Anna Jo Cook Pickens ('48) and Betty Jo Cook Gibson ('48)

Photo by Tommy Gibbons

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Shirley (Barnes) Gray ('57)

At WKU's 50th anniversary Homecoming on Oct. 28, 1956, Shirley Barnes of Beaver Dam, Ky., was crowned Homecoming Queen in front of a full crowd at the Coliseum. The College Heights Herald noted that "the Western Spirit was obvious throughout the week," and the Saturday morning Homecoming Parade was deemed the "largest and most exciting" event to date. A Friday night bonfire on the baseball field, followed by a "snake dance" around town and a Homecoming Dance later that night. A Homecoming Chapel was held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, followed by the parade that began on State Street, circled downtown to the square and returned to the State Street entrance of the stadium. Later that day, WKU beat top rival, the Eastern Maroons, 14-6.

Alice (Gateway) Waddell ('74)

Nick Gateway made history in 1972, as she was the first African American student to be crowned Homecoming Queen. This followed a year of social tensions, as Regional Clinics (72-73) became the first black student elected as Vice President of the Student Government Association in 1971, and approximately 250 students held a September 1972 sit-in in the lobby of the administration building to demand that more students of color be allowed on the cheerleading squad. "It was so unexpected," Gateway said after she was crowned Queen before the WKU vs. Middle Tennessee Homecoming game.

Linda (Thomas) Stone ('66, '68, A)

WKU's 1965 Homecoming theme of Fortune and Fame was selected to recognize the University as one of the fastest-growing in the South and to acknowledge its success in the areas of teacher education, athletics, music, liberal arts and great spirit. The College Heights Herald noted the Oct. 23 event as "the most memorable in the history of Western." The week's festivities began with a Monday convocation in which Goo Edward L. Bennett, president of the Grady School of Journalism, named him Kentucky's "Outstanding Citizen" on the occasion of his 10th anniversary as WKU President.

Coach E.A. Diddle was said to have "brought down the house" at a Thursday Homecoming assembly that featured the band, cheerleaders, Homecoming Queen candidates, and Coach Nick Deer and the football squad, followed by a pop rally and "nearly invited street dancing" attended by 2,500 students on Thursday night. Billy May and his orchestra entertained 500 Westerners at the annual Friday evening dance, during which Linda Thomas, a senior English and French major from Bardwell, Ky., was crowned Queen. On Saturday morning, 36 floats in the Homecoming parade "composed the longest WKU canvas on record." Dana Fortn Dame didn't strike on the Drake team as the fantastic Hilltoppers cooled a pace before 10,000 ecstatic fans. The Aerial continued, as the Red and White won by a touchdown, coming out the 18-21 victor.

Homecoming Float, 1972

The 1972 Homecoming featured a theme of "We Ethnicity Done Go By." Those Who Die Days. The Saturday morning Homecoming Parade started downtown in the Sears parking lot, traveled around the square and ended at E.A. Diddle Arena. The weekend was full of festivities, with a bonfire, pop rally and street dance on Thursday at Douglas Kent Hall parking lot, a Friday night alumni dinner and dance featuring Billy Vaughn and his orchestra, and a Beach Boys concert on Friday night. The original Hilltoppers quartet rounded out the theme with a halftime performance, but WKU left to the Middle Tennessee Rattlers, 21-17.
Lucas Hackmann

WKU Student Alumni Ambassador steals St. Louis baseball fans' hearts by capturing "Rally Cat"

I f you are a St. Louis Cardinals fan or even just an avid baseball fan, you might remember the night of Aug. 9, 2017, when a curious cat ran onto the outfield at Busch Stadium and caused a ruckus when the Cardinals were playing the Kansas City Royals. Now, more than two years later, the grounds crew workers, who happens to be a WKU student and the one responsible for capturing "Rally Cat," is being honored with a bobblehead of the dynamic duo.

IT STARTED WITH SOME CAT-ITUDE

Lucas Hackmann, of O'Fallon, Ill., is a senior at WKU studying Exercise Science, and he is President of the Student Alumni Ambassadors (SAA), where he works closely with the WKU Alumni Association to promote the WKU Spirit.

"Working as an SAA has been my most memorable experience here on the Hill," explained Hackmann. "It has provided me with a new family from the friends I work with and given me an appreciation toward WKU that I never thought I'd achieve. I am able to meet alumni who have made a great reputation for WKU and who help inspire students like me to make the most of our time here."

When not on the Hill, Hackmann has spent the past five years working as a Grounds Crew Member for the St. Louis Cardinals. In 2017, he got a taste of fame he never expected, all due to a fearless feline.

"It was a very crucial game down the stretch of the season," noted Hackmann. "The game was in the bottom of the sixth and the Cardinals were losing five to four. After a couple of hits, the bases were loaded for our most infamous player, Yadier Molina. As he went up to bat, a little kitten ran into center field. I spotted the cat from the dugout and noticed that no one was going to retrieve it, so I took it upon myself to run out there and catch the cat so the game could be resumed."

During his act of bravery, the cat started to attack.

"I ran to the outfield in front of 50,000 fans and millions watching on TV. I picked the cat up and as I took three steps back towards the dugout, the cat started biting my hand," Hackmann said. "The crowd was cheering as I held on and I was even bitten a few more times as I was running back. I eventually made my way out of the stadium to release the cat. The very next pitch after I got the kitten off the field, Yadier Molina hit a grand slam to put us ahead."

With the luck the cat brought, fans coined the name "Rally Cat" for the ferocious feline. And, of course, the memorable attack went viral.

"The aftermath was something I couldn't imagine," added Hackmann. "I ended up having to go to the hospital to get antibiotics that night. Then, I had every person I ever met in my life texting and calling me. My phone was a constant buzz. Next, I started getting calls and texts from news reporters. I went home to find myself on every sports network. The next day was even crazier. I started at 6 a.m. doing radio interviews with local stations, went down to TV stations to do live interviews, and then it got even bigger. I did live video interviews with Sports Center and MLB Network. They showed my video and talked about me on the Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon."

Hackmann even made it onto ESPN's "Not Top Ten" list as number one that week and number three for all of 2017. Hackmann said people would stop and ask for his picture and even his autograph.

In 2018, Rally Cat got his own bobblehead and on the one-year anniversary of the Rally Cat capture, the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum released a Rally Cat bobblehead in a red Cardinals uniform. Now, Hackmann tells us they are in the process of creating a bobblehead of him and the cat.

"This has been in the works for a while now and the process has officially started. I am so excited about this and can't wait to have my own bobblehead," Hackmann said.

As for his baseball journey, Hackmann says he hopes to have one more year at the Stadium before he graduates. • HEDGE HEANNTER
WKU STUDENTS AND PROFESSOR CONDUCT LIFE-SAVING RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. Michael Stokes ('94), a Professor of Wildlife Ecology in the Department of Biology at WKU, has been involved with research in South Africa since about 2002. He started developing contacts in the area with the goal of getting WKU students to the country to do research. After he worked out logistics and grant funding, students were finally able to begin research in South Africa in 2010. Dr. Stokes says learning in the classroom is one thing, but to actually be in a foreign country, doing hands-on research, is something that is invaluable to students.
"Besides the extra knowledge and experience, students are learning to be self-sufficient since they are there without me the majority of the time," stated Dr. Stokes. "Cars break down, communication is hard, and they have to learn to work in a different economic and political environment as well as work with people who don't look or sound like them. The students develop situational awareness, which comes from working in the African bush where there are lots of things and animals that can be dangerous. They really get first-hand experience developing solutions to their own problems."

The research projects have varied over the years, but Dr. Stokes always tries to cater the research to the students' area of study. "The goal is to create shorter projects that students can complete in a few months while there," said Dr. Stokes. "The typical student who goes to South Africa for research wants to go to vet school or become a wildlife biologist. I pick research that is relevant for their careers, so vet students will look into ecological systems of animals, learn about conservation issues as well as wildlife biology, and look into concerns around habitat or population management."

One of the first research projects took place over four years and began in 2010. Students worked on developing multi-modal scarecrows with the goal of decreasing crop raiding by wildlife to help local farmers.

"Here in America, we don't have to rely on crops to live, meaning we have industrialized farming to do that for us," explained Dr. Stokes. "In South Africa, the people there are subsistence farmers, so one thing or elephant damaging or eating their crops overnight could ruin their lives. We had students look at developing non-lethal ways to deter the animals. Over the four years of trial and error, students developed scarecrows that would flash lights, emit smells and make random sounds overnight. That diversity helped ward off animals because it kept them from getting used to a pattern and ultimately deterred them from the crops."

Another project came about due to pure opportunity. In 2012, Balule Nature Reserve near Kruger National Park was getting ready to reintroduce an endangered black rhino population to the area. The black rhino is in severe danger due to poaching, so relocating them to private and public reserves helps keep them safe. Balule Nature Reserve hadn't had black rhinos in the area for many decades and they were not sure what was going to happen. The students helped by conducting various research projects to track and monitor the black rhinos.

"We helped track them, monitored territories and looked into what factors attract them in terms of landscape, what they have available to eat and water holes," noted Dr. Stokes. "Another student looked into farms that will deter them, such as housing. Both students wrote graduate theses based on their research. We received grant funding and basic equipment to do the research, and the students spent a whole semester and summer there tracking rhinos through radio-tracking processing data."
TITLE: AHMED: USING DRONES TO PREDICT INVASIVE SPECIES LOCATIONS

Tithe Ahmed of Cave City, Ky., is a Biology student at WKU with an anticipated graduation date of Spring 2020. She is one of the most recent WKU students to have come back from South Africa, where she conducted research using UAVs, more commonly known as drones, to build a statistical model to predict locations of the prickly pear cactus—an invasive species in the area.

"I went to South Africa in the summer of 2018 to perform research for my thesis," explained Ahmed. "My research was centered around assessing the possibilities of using drones to first, perform un-supervised invasive plant species classifications, and second, perform habitat analysis. I have never been much of a technology person, so this project taught me more about how specific software and hardware work and how to best troubleshoot issues I run into with technology. I also gained a better understanding of the flora and fauna prevalent in South Africa. This opened my eyes to how diverse one area can be and how starkly different various habitats are around the world."

For two weeks, Ahmed and Dr. Stokes conducted the research together in the Balule Nature Reserve. Each day, they hiked through rough terrain in the hot sun. They would then conduct two to four drone flights between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

"After locating each plot we were looking to study, we had to fly and perform our regular duties like walking each plot and marking specific locations, and then the flights were completed for the day," Ahmed explained. "After the raw data collection was completed, not without technical difficulties, the data was saved daily onto both a hard drive and my computer."

Ahmed says working in the African bush had its dangers and surprises as well.

"We would often be surprised by elephants or giraffes along the way, and we made sure to give them their space," said Ahmed.

After the two weeks of doing research with Dr. Stokes, Ahmed was left to her own devices to finish out the research.

"To be quite honest, I was very intimidated at first by the idea of traveling and doing research in South Africa, especially knowing I had to do research on my own at some points," admitted Ahmed. "But, after the first few days of tinkering with the drones and figuring out a pretty solid schedule, I felt much more comfortable and confident. I had the help I needed while also having to push myself at times to figure things out on my own. Obviously, I ran into some frustrating problems that often derailed my mood, but at the end of every day I would sit and listen to the lion sounds and realize that I wouldn't have traded those days for anything. The experience was eye-opening, new and one-of-a-kind."

Ahmed says she learned a lot from the trip, both academically and personally.

"After coming back from South Africa, I had more confidence in talking to professionals and taking the steps I thought were appropriate to fix any issues I was dealing with," noted Ahmed. "I became better at reading scientific literature and looking for specific pieces of information I needed. I gained a sense of independence from walking in the bush every day and having to make decisions on what I should do about my research, because I realized it was my research. I came back knowing that I had seen and experienced things no one else had at WKU, and I could share my story with others and connect with them through my experiences. But, aside from the research aspect, I learned a lot about the South African conservation community and about myself in the six weeks I spent away from home."

CHRIS BANOTAI: CONTINUING RESEARCH FROM WKU TO GRAD SCHOOL IN ARIZONA

When studying at WKU, Chris Banotai ('17), originally from St. Louis, Mo., enjoyed his time and research in South Africa so much that he went on to continue his research in graduate school. In 2016, Banotai went to South Africa to study the role rodents play in seed predation and dispersal, as well as the seedling predation of large tree species.

"There is a large tree decline in the area of South Africa, and people are blaming large animals like the elephants," explained Dr. Stokes. "I prompted the students to look into other explanations. When you take out large animals, you see an increase in small animals, like rodents. Large animals are declining for numerous reasons, so we are looking into the role of rodents with trees and plants in the presence of large animals and absence of large animals. This is a long-term research project we will conduct over 20 years."

The project began in 2014, so Banotai was able to dive right into the research when he arrived in South Africa in 2016."
"The research I conducted was investigating whether or not native rodent species in the Bushveld Savanna Ecosystem feed on the seeds and seedlings of native tree species," said Banorai. "I performed this research by trapping rodents in the field, then putting them through feeding trials in arenas where they were given time to acclimate before being presented an arrangement of seeds or seedlings of native trees and a supplementary food—commercial rodent food—known to be palatable to them. After the trial, I evaluated the damage done to the seeds or seedlings before returning the rodents to their place of capture and releasing them."

Banorai says during his time in South Africa through WKU, he learned a lot from the research.

"We learned that, under the appropriate circumstances, rodents will feed on the seeds and seedlings of Bushveld Savanna trees," added Banorai. "Small mammals are largely understudied in this region of the world, as much more funding gets put toward larger, more charismatic species such as lions, rhinos and elephants. Therefore, our findings are important for understanding rodents' roles in this ecosystem, as well as in making informed conservation and management decisions regarding elephants and mamba mice."

Banorai is now a Ph.D. student at the University of Arizona where he is building on the research he started at WKU. His goal is to investigate the decline of mamba—an ecologically, economically and culturally important tree species in the Greater Kruger Ecosystem. His specific interest is in the factors influencing the lack of recruitment of new trees into the population, something he learned from researching rodents with WKU.

"There are important conservation implications of this work," noted Banorai. "Elephants are currently blamed for the declining populations of mamba, as it is one of their favorite food sources. However, much of the decline is coming from a lack of recruitment of trees into the populations, which would be unlikely to be caused, or influenced by, elephants. Gaining a greater understanding of the other species that may be influencing this problem is critical to making informed management and conservation decisions with positive outcomes. I can potentially have a positive impact on wildlife that I care about and the communities around where they live."

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DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!

Please list names of each person in picture and their graduation year. Also include date and location of picture and send your pictures to: WKU Alumni Association, Red Towel Travels, 292 Alumni Ave., Suite 309, Bowling Green, KY 42101 or email to alumni@WKU.edu.

*Pictures will not be returned.

Mark Lane Hobgood ('92), Hayden Michael Hobgood ('18), Marcella Ann Crowley Hobgood ('66) and Merle Bayne Hobgood ('67) on WKU'S MAIN CAMPUS celebrating three generations of WKU graduates in December 2018.

Leo Bertucci (Current Student), at the Garden Tomb in JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, in June 2018.

Shanna Ballard ('16, '18, L) on GRANOTURK, TURKS AND CAICOS, in June 2018.

Sherry Howell ('82, L) at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in STUTTGART, GERMANY, in April 2019.

Tom ('69, L) and Claudia Taylor Lennon ('70, L) in DURNSTION, AUSTRIA, in April 2019.

Mike Tarter ('85, L) and his daughter, Ellie Tarter (Current Student), at the west rim of the GRAND CANYON in May 2019.

Mary Rentrow/Parmley ('92) and Randall Parmley ('91) at Athabasca Glacier in the Columbia Icefield in ALBERTA, CANADA, in June 2019.

Sam Sankovich ('90, A) at the Piazza Michelangelo overlooking FLORENCE, ITALY, in April 2019.

Mary Rentrow/Parmley ('92) and Randall Parmley ('91) at Athabasca Glacier in the Columbia Icefield in ALBERTA, CANADA, in June 2019.

Sherry Perkins Smith ('69) and Col. James L. Smith ('69, '90) at the American Military Cemetery in NORMANDY, FRANCE, in June 2019, in honor of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Mary Rentrow/Parmley ('92) and Randall Parmley ('91) at Athabasca Glacier in the Columbia Icefield in ALBERTA, CANADA, in June 2019.

Sherry Perkins Smith ('69) and Col. James L. Smith ('69, '90) at the American Military Cemetery in NORMANDY, FRANCE, in June 2019, in honor of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Kayla Swanson ('15) and Denise Swanson ('85, '90) in MYSORE, INDIA, in November 2017.
Michelle James ('98)

Communication, cocktails and cancer: A look at the life of an inspirational marketing mogul

Michelle James ('98), originally from Hopkinsville, Ky., now calls the New York City, N.Y., area home, as she works as the Vice President of Marketing at Fuse Media—a cross-platform entertainment media company.

“I love connecting to people,” said James. “It’s a puzzle with all this clutter and saturation in media. I have to figure out how I can break through that clutter and make a real connection with our audience, so for me it’s fun to have a career that lets me tap into the creative and strategic side of my brain.”

Climbing the ladder of success looks different for everyone, but James faced added struggles, as she did it while battling breast cancer in 2015.

“It was a challenge being 40 and diagnosed with breast cancer,” James shared. “I was launching the biggest TV show of my career to date and going through chemo, but I said I wanted to work, so I did.”

When James received her cancer diagnosis, she was working as the Vice President of 360 Consumer Marketing and Brand Strategy for BET Networks. She said she chose to keep living life every day.

“Fear of what the answer would be, I did my research prior to the conversation with my doctor to find out if I could drink during chemo. I learned that drinking one glass of wine or a cocktail a week actually reduced stress and could help with overall mental health while going through chemo. I then followed up with my doctor, asked if I could have a cocktail while on chemo and was answered with an overwhelming ‘yes,’” James says crying, laughing hysterically and enjoying a cocktail are not only allowed, they’re mandatory with her podcast. She hopes to educate people on early detection and awareness, as well as support those who’ve been affected by cancer.

“Cocktails and Cancer is about the process of reflection and a personal reaction to the three years that followed my cancer diagnosis,” James explained. “It’s about the journey back to being okay and how a positive biopsy can impact not only the patient but the loved ones around them. The goal of this podcast is to inspire and empower anyone who’s been touched by cancer. And, most importantly, make the word ‘cancer’ a little less terrifying.”

The podcast started in March 2019 and can be found on iTunes, Soundcloud and Spotify. James hosts the weekly episodes with her best friend, Danielle “Dani” Brown. She said the name for the podcast came about when she asked her doctor if she could have a cocktail while on chemo.

“I wanted to have something I could do to help me feel like myself during the six month schedule of chemo I was given,” explained James. “Afraid of what the answer would be, I did my research prior to the conversation with my doctor to find out if you could drink during chemo. I learned that drinking one glass of wine or a cocktail a week actually reduced stress and could help with overall mental health while going through chemo. I then followed up with my doctor, asked if I could have a cocktail while on chemo and was answered with an overwhelming ‘yes.’”

James says she was blessed with people who helped her succeed in her career and while she was on the hill, so to her it’s important to give back to the University that gave her so much.

“I learned a lot of life lessons at WKU,” said James. “I had an internship, I had great professors and I was in a sorority. There were a lot of things that helped build a strong foundation for who I am. When I look back, I think that the reason I was able to adjust, excel and accomplish so much was because of the things I learned at WKU.”

To learn more, visit cocktailsandcancer.com.

MICHELLE JAMES ('98)

BACK ON THE HILL

The podcast isn’t the only way James hopes to create an impact.

In 2008, while watching WKU Basketball in the NCAA Sweet 16, she really began to wonder how she could give back and help those in her community. With that in mind, and with the assistance of the WKU College Heights Foundation, James created the Michelle June James Scholarship Fund—an annual scholarship given to a full-time student majoring in a branch of media or marketing.

“When you’re a student, the financial burden for college can be difficult, so I want to relieve some of that burden and support education,” noted James. “It helps you from a competitive standpoint to be successful. So, if I can help a student focus on their studies rather than on how they are paying for college, that’s all that matters.”

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To learn more, visit cocktailsandcancer.com.
Timothy Gilliam ('11, '14) has spent his professional career working in the political arena. Hailing from Louisville, Ky., and a primarily apolitical family, he was drawn to WKU because of the broadcasting program. However, his personal interest in politics pulled him down a different path toward a degree in Political Science. In 2011, he graduated from WKU with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Broadcast Communications. Three years later, in 2014, he went on to obtain his Master of Public Administration from WKU.

Gilliam credits the success he has experienced in his career to two of his professors, Dr. Scott Lasley and Dr. Saundra Ardrey.

"Without question, they are the reason I have been able to successfully pursue a career in politics. The exposure to opportunities they provided really shaped my path, along with their encouragement and advice."

He also credits the internship he had as a WKU student in Washington, D.C., as an experience that solidified his desire to follow a path in politics. This internship provided him valuable lessons for his career and offered a glimpse into how a congressional office operated, which would later prove invaluable. After leaving the Hill, he began his journey on the campaign side of politics before moving to his current position on Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell’s staff.

"Without question, my professors are the reason I have been able to successfully pursue a career in politics. The exposure to opportunities they provided really shaped my path, along with their encouragement and advice."

Timothy Gilliam ('11, '14)

"While serving in the 22-county region, he spends most of his days traveling throughout the area, meeting with constituents, local elected officials and community leaders. When Sen. McConnell is in the area, Gilliam is responsible for planning the Senator's visits. He says building local relationships is the most rewarding part of his work.

"Traveling my region and meeting people along the way is what I look forward to each week," Gilliam said. "Every community has a story to tell. I enjoy hearing the history of the communities I visit and the challenges and successes that each one of them have."

For those with a similar career interest, Gilliam encourages them to network and volunteer.

"The people I know who have made a successful career in politics are those who prioritized networking in college by volunteering and finding internships," he said. "The more contacts and relationships you can build, the higher probability you will find gainful employment down the road. The people you are sitting next to in class could wind up being your boss or a key connection to a job you apply for."

Gilliam is married to Alexa (Cantner) Gilliam ('15), and they have two daughters: Sutton, 4, and Reese, 6 months.

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1960s

Joseph Itrana ('63, '66) of Owensboro, Ky., published a cookbook titled From Kentucky to the Philippines: Memoirs and Recipes, in which he shares his family's Italian dishes and stories about his life.

HILLTOPPERS NATION

1970s

Clarence Glover ('71, Law), Louisvillle, Ky., was inducted into the Caerns High School Hall of Fame in 1998.

Villa Rica High School

Robert Kramen ('84, '88) of Portage, Mich., has been named President and CEO of Emerald Biologicals, and was also appointed to the organization's Board of Directors.

THUMBS-UP! Dr. Cynthia (Williams) Resor ('88, '90)

Dr. Cynthia (Williams) Resor ('88, '90) of Lancaster, Ky., recently published her third book, Discovering Quacks, Opiums, and Cemeteries: Modern Lessons from Historical Themes through Rowman & Littlefield. It is the third in a series of books for educators exploring social history themes through time. Dr. Resor works as a Professor of Social Studies Education at Eastern Kentucky University and was recently named an EKU Foundation Professor—the highest honor for excellence bestowed by EKU.

Dr. Benny Lile ('86, '12, LL) of Naylorville, Ky., was named the 2019 Naylorville County Educator of the Year by the Educational Metcalfe County Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Lile is the Superintendent of Metcalfe County Schools.

Sherry Webb ('86) of Portland, Tenn., was named Assistant Principal at White House High School.

Dr. Stephen Basham ('82, L) of Springfield, Va., has been promoted to Lieutenant General in the United States Air Force. He will serve as Deputy Commander, United States Air Forces in Europe-Africa. Lt. Gen. Basham’s wife, Angie (Fleming) Basham ('85), has been a part of his entire Air Force career, as her husband commands the air war. She was promoted just three weeks before he entered the service.

Sam Raye ('86) of Covington, Ky., was inducted into the Glasgow High School Outstanding Athletes Hall of Fame for his accomplishments in the sport of baseball as a player and coach.

Dr. Christopher Goldsby ('89, '91, '93) of Owensboro, Ky., received the 2019 NIAAA State Award of Merit. Dr. Goldsby is a Certified Addictions, and the District Athletic Administrator for Owensboro Public Schools.

Dr. Michelle (White) Trzwick ('89, '90) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been named Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Excellence in the WKU Office of the Provost.
1990s

Tim Mudc (90, 96) of Elizabethtown, Ky., was named Principal of Mansfield Elementary School.

Christopher Nation (90), of Bowling Green, Ky., is currently serving as Network Administrator for the National Corvette Museum.

Lora Peoples (90) of Smith Grove, Ky., has retired as Chief Park Ranger at Mammoth Cave National Park after more than 30 years with the National Park Service.

Lanie Stubblefield (90) of Mammoth Cave National Park after more than 30 years with the National Park Service.

Bryan Baysinger (90) of Glasgow High School began his weekly podcast on iTunes, Spotify, Google Play and TuneIn, in which he discusses all things southern, from cooking, to hospitality, to culture.

Krista (Combs) Thompson ('93, '99, Outstanding Athlete Hall of Fame), was inducted into the Glasgow High School Athletics Hall of Fame. Thompson was named Principal of Bowling Green Junior High School.

Leslie (Smith) McCarty ('94) of Bowling Green, Ky., was elected to the Board of Directors at Owensboro, Ky., and is the Site/Civil Engineering Manager at Owensboro, Ky.

Robert Langston Jr. ('94) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been promoted to Senior Associate Athletics Director at Bowling Green University.

Jeff Hurley ('95) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named President/Branch Manager of First & Federal National Bank.

Mike Thomas ('96, A) of Bowling Green, Ky., was promoted to Senior Associate Athletics for Florida Southern College.

Darrin Horn ('96) of Bowling Green, Ky., was promoted to Senior Associate Athletics

Karen McCarty ('97) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Director of Athletics at Owensboro, Ky.

Jen Wasson ('97, 11) of Bowling Green, Ky., won the Wrestling Championship of the Year award from the Kentucky High School Athletic Association and the Kentucky Wrestling Coach Association.

Stacey Poppewell ('97) of Russell Springs, Ky., was promoted to the position of Assistant Director of Men's Basketball at Northern Kentucky University.

Amy Smith ('97) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Assistant Director of Healthcare at Owensboro, Ky.

Barry Nesbitt ('97) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been promoted to Senior Associate Athletics for Football.

Leslie (Smith) McCarty ('98) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Athletic Director at Owensboro Catholic High School.

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Michael Ellemore ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named CEO of Seven Age Inc. during acquisition of the company he started, Workshop Branding.

Darrin Horn ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was elected to the Conference USA Board of Directors.

Terry (Cunningham) Floyd ('99), '10, '15, L of Greenville, S.C., has been promoted to Vice President of Business Development at Wayne Healthcare in Greenville.

Luke Sanders ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Senior Associate Athletics Director at Bowling Green University.

Jen Wasson ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Athletic Director at Owensboro Catholic High School.

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Robert Langston Jr. ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Athletic Director at Owensboro Catholic High School.

David Kessler ('99) of Owensboro, Ky., was named Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Owensboro.

Bobby Leach ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Principal of Bowling Green Junior High School.

Robert Langston Jr. ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Principal of Bowling Green Junior High School.

Lorna Peppers ('99) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named Principal of Owensboro Catholic High School.

Christopher Nation (90), Operating Officer at Green, Ky., has been promoted to Senior Associate Athletics Director at Bowling Green University.

Graham Keene (90) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been promoted to Senior Associate Athletics Director at Bowling Green University.

Lanier Stubblefield (90) of Mammoth Cave National Park after more than 30 years with the National Park Service.

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THUMBS-UP! Michael Croley (’00)

Michael Croley (’00) of Granville, Ohio, released his debut collection of stories, Any Other Place. In the 13 stories, Croley takes readers from the Appalachian regions of rural Kentucky and Ohio to a village in South Korea where the characters find themselves in circumstances of displacement. The characters yearn to find some semblance of home as they circle each other’s pain, struggle to find belonging, and make sense of the mistakes and bad breaks that have brought them there. Croley was the recipient of an NEA Fellowship in Literature in 2016, and his work has appeared in Narrative, Virginia Quarterly Review, Catapult, Kenyon Review Online, and The Paris Review Daily. He teaches creative writing at Denison University in Granville, Ohio.

THUMBS-UP! Chelsea Hart (’13)

Chelsea Hart (’13) of Denver, Colo., created an art series that reimagines astrological signs. Hart uses abstract painting to portray the signs’ emotions by using various colors and brush stroke characteristics. Hart has a degree in Visual Studies from WKU.

Deena London (’18) of Elizabethtown, Ky., was named President of Magness Bank.

CASEY McCArTHY (’00) of Owensboro, Ky., was named a Sports Reporter for the Columbus Dispatch.

LILLY MOORE (’00) of Morgantown, Ky., was appointed as an agent with Butler County Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company.

ERIK GOOSEN (’18) of Henderson, Ky., was named Young Engineer of Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers. Morse is the Lead Engineer for WSP.

ZAC LECHLER (’16) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named the Head Coach of the Lady Gator Soccer program at Greenwood High School.

ZACH HILLER (’16) of Bloomington, Ind., graduated summa cum laude from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in May 2019. Miller is working as a Law Clerk for a Federal Judge on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and will soon transition to a role as an Attorney for Barnes & Thornburg in Indianapolis, Ind.

Danielle Pugh (’13) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been named an Assistant Coach of the Hilltopper Softball Team.

Patrick Thurston (’17) of Louisville, Ky., has been selected by the New York Yankees in the MLB draft.

HONORARY ALUMNUS

Bluegrass musician Sam Bush (’19) of Nashville, Tenn., received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from WKU at the 2019 Commencement ceremony. The Grammy Award-winning artist is credited with helping create the “new grass sound” in 2009, the Americana Music Association awarded Bush the Lifetime Achievement Award for Instrumentalist. President Timothy C. Caboni (’94) noted that Bush’s 2016 album Storyman features the song “Bowling Green,” co-written with John Randall Stewart, which describes growing up on a Warren County tobacco farm.

“Sam Bush is a revered member of the bluegrass community who never forgot his Kentucky roots,” Caboni said.

“Thank you, Western Kentucky University, for this great honor,” said Bush. “It’s a long way from a cattle and tobacco farm five miles outside town on Morgantown Road. ... I just want to say thank you. What an honor. I never thought this would happen.”

HOLY WATER

Retired Lt. Col. Joseph P. “Roller” Scates (’66) will be inducted into the WKU Army ROTC Hall of Fame on Veterans Day 2019. His 24 years of service included two tours in Vietnam earning the Bronze Star with Valor device for his actions during the 1968 Tet Offensive and the Silver Star for his rescue of soldiers under fire. Scates served with the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before retiring to civilian practice where he authored three U.S. patents and created computerized strategic, tactical and operational risk programs. A native of Bowling Green, Ky., Scates and his wife, Eileen, currently reside in Arizona.

ROT HONORS

RYAN CAREY (’10) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been named the Head Baseball Coach for Daviess County High School.

Clint Bryant (’16) of Louisville, Ky., was named softball manager for the Ottawa Redblacks of the Canadian Football League.

Def arson Farris (’16) of Shelbyville, Ky., has signed to play professional football with the Ottawa Redblacks of the Canadian Football League.

Sarah Gerharts (’10) of Nolin Lake State Park, has signed to play professional soccer with Linköpings FF of the Swedish Elitserien League.

THUMB-UP!

Teresa Stewart (’96, ’10) of Bowling Green, Ky., was inducted into the 2019 Henderson County Sports Hall of Fame for his accomplishments as a member of the Colonel Football Team.

Ryan Carey (’10) of Columbus, Tenn., joined Farmers and Merchants Bank as a Private Banker.

Drew Frey (’17, ’14) of Overton, Ky., was promoted to Manager of Nursing, Oncology-Medical at Overton Health Regional Hospital.

Hannah Thurman (’11, ’17) of Owensboro, Ky., joined the Owensboro Chamber of Commerce as the Events and Communications Coordinator.

Zetoria Alleyne (’12) of Hopkinsville, Ky., was named Editor of the Kentucky New Era.

Rachel King Frey (’12) of Overton, Ky., was named Assistant Director of Marketing and Independence Bank in Owensboro, Ky.

Dr. Robert Jackson (’12) of Murray, Ky., has been appointed the 14th President of Murray State University.

Dr. Kevin Thomas (’12) of Troy, Ill., was named Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management at the University of Central Arkansas.

Preslie (Crauz) Norris (’13) of Glenclaire, Ala., has been named head softball coach at Concordia College.

Jason Ross (’15) of Bowling Green, Ky., was appointed branch manager for the Credit Union.

Catherine (Ston) Clemens (’15) of Bowling Green, Ky., joined English, Lucas, Peek & Oswald, LLP as an Associate Attorney.

Dr. Ronnie P. Johnson (’15) of Montgomery, Texas, has been named an Exploration Geologist for Exxon.

Katie Bennett (’09) of Nashville, Tenn., has joined the Nashville Symphony as a Commercial Relationship Manager, OP at Old National Bank.

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Brandon Kenney (’09, A) of Overton, Ky., was hired as a Commercial Relationship Manager, OP at Old National Bank.

Kendrick Bryan (99, 12) of Huntsville, Ky., received the Kentucky Outstanding Civics Education Leadership Award for the 5th Region. Bryan is a Social Studies teacher at LaRue County High School.

Laurie (Baflr) Castles (’99) of Owensboro, Ky., joined Head Coach of Owensboro Catholic Dance Team.

Rachel Collier (’09) of Louisville, Ky., joined the Kentucky Derby Museum as Communications Director.

Rene Gabbard (’09) of Washington, D.C., received a master’s degree in Global Hospitality Leadership at Georgetown University in December 2018. Gabbard is Senior Manager of Corporate Communications for Brand USA.

Deena London (’18) of Elizabethtown, Ky., was named President of Magness Bank.

CASEY McCArTHY (’00) of Owensboro, Ky., was named a Sports Reporter for the Columbus Dispatch.

LILLY MOORE (’00) of Morgantown, Ky., was appointed as an agent with Butler County Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company.

ERIK GOOSEN (’18) of Henderson, Ky., was named Young Engineer of Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers. Morse is the Lead Engineer for WSP.

ZAC LECHLER (’16) of Bowling Green, Ky., was named the Head Coach of the Lady Gator Soccer program at Greenwood High School.

ZACH HILLER (’16) of Bloomington, Ind., graduated summa cum laude from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in May 2019. Miller is working as a Law Clerk for a Federal Judge on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and will soon transition to a role as an Attorney for Barnes & Thornburg in Indianapolis, Ind.

Danielle Pugh (’13) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been named an Assistant Coach of the Hilltopper Softball Team.

Patrick Thurston (’17) of Madison, Ind., has signed as a pitcher for the Chicago Dogs, part of the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball.

Mike Arthur (’18) of Magnolia, Texas, has been hired as an Exploration Geologist for Exxon.

Katie Bouchard (’18) of Warwick, R.I., has been named an Associate Attorney.

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IN MEMORIAM

Retired Col. Gary A. "Mickey" Riggs (‘58, ‘74) of Bowling Green, Ky., died on March 21, 2019, at the age of 86.

He was a retired Army officer with 30 years of active duty as a command officer, a Green Beret and a highly decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam era. His assignments included four tours of duty in Laos and Vietnam, Deputy Commander of the Remedy Special Warfare School, Army Command and General Staff College, Commander of the U.S. Military Group in Venezuela and Battalion Commander of the 8th Special Forces Group. He was also a former leader of the WKU ROTC Program.

A lifelong supporter of WKU, where he played football in the 1950s, he was a member of the original WKU 100 Club. He is an inductee of both the WKU Hall of Distinguished Alumni and WKU ROTC Hall of Fame, and his name is engraved on the Guthrie Tower.

He was married for 59 years to his high school sweetheart, Margaret Ann, who preceded him in death. He is survived by three sons, Dr. Gary A. Riggs Jr. (‘74), Tim Riggs (’96) and Dr. Michael W. Riggs (’94, ’96), as well as five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
Green, Ky., died on June 20, 2019, at the age of 79.

Formerly Vice President for Student Affairs and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, Dr. Wilder spent 39 years at WKU before he retired in 2004. Prior to his career in higher education, he served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam era. At WKU, he was a member of the ROTC Hall of Fame, the President's Circle, the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, and the Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mrs. Maxine (Davis) Smith, '61, and a daughter, Laura Wilder, '18, and two grandchildren, Jerry R. Wilder, '61, '62, of Bowling Green, Ky., and Robert H. Garland, '79.

Mr. Eugene (Foller Harlin, '54, '55) of Nashville, Tenn., a Police Officer with Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPD), died in the line of duty on July 4, 2019, at the age of 28.

Anderson graduated from the MNPD Academy in 2015 and also served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves as a Military Police NCO. Assigned to the Central Precinct for his entire career, he was a member of the department's Drill and Ceremonial Team and recently completed the MNPD's Motorcycle Division officer training program. He had received MNPD's Lifesaving Award in 2017 and 2018, as well as the Department Commendation Award in 2017. Anderson is survived by his parents and his 18-month-old son, Gavin Lee Burt.
LOOKING BACK

1944

25 YEARS AGO

In 1944, a College Heights Herald retrospective contrasted the Homecoming of 30 years earlier. Replacing 1914's bonfire, chapel assembly and dance were newer traditions: tailgating, Big Red's Roar and the Hanging of the Red, a competition between residence halls to have the most of anything red hanging from their windows. A 1964 alumnus recalled his Homecoming as smaller and less orchestrated; "bigger and more under control" was his take on the 1944 event.

1969

50 YEARS AGO

The Interfraternity Council had threatened to boycott the festivities over issues of self-government, but in 1949 a record student body of more than 11,000 enjoyed a "Western Roundup"-themed Homecoming, with 24 parade floats and 22 Homecoming Queen candidates. WKU shut out Tennessee Tech 42-0 on the gridiron and Dru Gibson (71), daughter of basketball great Dee Gibson (48, '58), took the Queen's crown.

1919

75 YEARS AGO

The Hill was quiet for Homecoming 1944, the second of three suspended years during World War II. A scaled-down 1942 Homecoming was without the annual bonfire, which would have consumed rubber tires and other materials needed for the war effort. By 1943, both the football program and Homecoming activities were canceled; students would no longer enjoy victory on the playing field, declared the College Heights Herald, "until a greater victory is won." At the first postwar Homecoming and football game on Oct. 26, 1946, ceremonies honored all Hilltoppers who served in the war.

1944

100 YEARS AGO

In 1919, Homecoming had not yet come to the Hill. WKU's first official "Homecoming Day" was Nov. 5, 1927, when alumni and local citizens gathered to admire the 1920s building boom that included a 3,600-seat stadium and football field (now the site of the Amphitheater, "Gander" Tony Colomande and Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center). The highlight of the day was the football team's surprise 7-6 victory over the University of Louisville Cardinals.

LYNN NIEDERMEIER / PHOTOS: WKU ARCHIVES
We love to showcase our alumni who share their WKU spirit! Use #WKUALUMNI and tag us @WKUALUMNI.