Western Kentucky University
TopSCHOLAR®

WKU Archives Records

Summer 2017

UA77/1 WKU Spirit

WKU Alumni Relations

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records

Part of the African American Studies Commons, Higher Education Administration Commons, Journalism Studies Commons, Leadership Studies Commons, Mass Communication Commons, Organizational Communication Commons, Public Relations and Advertising Commons, Race and Ethnicity Commons, and the Sports Studies Commons

This Magazine is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fellow Alumni and Friends:

Twenty years ago, Julie and I began this amazing journey at our beloved alma mater. The Board of Regents’ charge to me at that time was to transform WKU attitudinally, academically, physically and financially. The timing was perfect. Faculty, staff and alumni were ready for WKU to raise its sights, to be bold and shed its sense of regional limitations. The Commonwealth of Kentucky was adopting the Higher Education Reform Act, and bolstering the number of Kentuckians with bachelor’s degrees was a public policy priority. We were poised to grow, and for 14 years WKU was the fastest-growing university in Kentucky. Since 1997, we have awarded 66,000 degrees, a number that represents 62 percent of our 107,000 living alumni!

Initially, more funding flowed from the Commonwealth for operating and capital projects, which, paired with some creativity and entrepreneurial thinking, resulted in a rebuilding effort that has reached nearly $1 billion in campus construction and renovation. During the early to mid-2000s, we were aggressive with tuition and substantially increased funding to grow our academic strengths. We also increased our presence at our regional campuses in Elizabethtown-Fort Knox, Glasgow and Owensboro. And thanks to the support of health care providers and educational and business communities, we added critical programs such as Engineering, Doctor of Educational Leadership, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Doctor of Nursing Practice and Doctor of Psychology to help meet labor demands in our region. We’ve also raised the academic profile of WKU with the addition of the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky and the Mahurin Honors College, and we’ve seen the number of WKU students competing for and winning prestigious national and international scholarships grow to over 50 in 2015-2016. Last year WKU was named a Top Fulbright Producer and tied for second in the list of top Fulbright-producing master’s degree-granting institutions in the nation. We’ve also increased the diversity of our student body, and we’ve internationalized the WKU experience, both through recruitment of international students and through study abroad for our domestic students. Our move to Conference USA, and adding Division I Football, have transformed the student and fan athletic experience and have significantly elevated our national profile. How about three straight Hilltopper bowl victories!

Paramount to all of these satisfying achievements has been you, our alumni and friends. You supported two successful capital campaigns that raised more than $300 million for faculty positions, scholarships, academic programming and capital improvements on the campus. Your annual giving has increased to $23 million as well, and we’ve seen dramatic growth in your engagement and volunteerism! Many of you have served as a member of a local alumni chapter, or have been part of the Alumni Association National Board of Directors, or have perhaps provided guidance and advice as part of Campaign Cabinets, the WKU Foundation Board of Trustees, the College Heights Foundation Board, the Hilltopper Athletic Foundation Board, the Student Life Foundation Board, the Board of Advisors or an advisory committee for a campus department or organization. Thousands of you have participated in events and activities. Thank you for your service, your passion, your energy and your spirit.

Western Kentucky University is where Julie and I met, fell in love and married. My first two jobs were here in Admissions and Alumni Relations. Our sons, Patrick and Matthew, and our daughter-in-law, Brooke, graduated from WKU. Matthew and his wife, Sandra, were married here. Even some of our dogs’ names were inspired by WKU—Topper, Spirit and Diddle!!

As Julie and I embark on a new chapter, we want to express our sincere appreciation to each of you. It has been our greatest privilege to serve as the President and First Lady of our alma mater. Julie and I gave it our all for 20 years! I hope that you share our pride in what all of us—faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends—have achieved together for WKU. Our campus transformation is a lasting one. In my 1998 Inauguration Address, I challenged this campus family to make WKU a “University for the Ages.” I believe we have done that. Thank you for your support but, most of all, thank you for your friendship. Our WKU Spirit is forever!

Go Tops!

Dr. Joe Higgins ('90)
20 Things You Didn’t Know...

About Gary Ransdell

1. **FAVORITE ROLE** | He’s a grandfather! His grandchildren, Walker and Collins, call him “Pops.” Favorite part about grandparenting? (“Being around children again and experiencing their energy and excitement in the house has been fun. It’s been a great experience having a granddaughter, since we raised two sons. We’ve never bought dresses or dolls before, and Collins is ‘all girl.’ She’s ‘Little Miss Barbie.’”)

2. **FAVORITE BOOK** | Poor Richard’s Almanac by Benjamin Franklin (“a lot of wisdom there”) and books about early American history and our founding fathers.

3. **CHILDHOOD NICKNAME** | Both sides of the family called him “Cotton Top,” since he had white blonde hair and was the only Ransdell child born in the South.

4. **HIDDEN TALENTS** | Cooking, yardwork and landscaping (“We lost a tree in our yard recently, so I got out the chainsaw and cut it down.”)

5. **FIRST JOB IN HIGHER EDUCATION** | Graduate Assistant in WKU’s Office of University and School Relations, which was the recruiting arm of the Admissions Office.

6. **GREATEST PROFESSIONAL INFLUENCES** | Jim Fisher, former President of CASE, who wrote extensively about the university presidency. (“The WKU Board of Regents actually hired Jim Fisher before the search process that led to my appointment. Jim was my mentor, and I worked with him on the institutional review while I was a candidate.”) Don Zacharias, WKU’s sixth President. (“He was a reference for every job I ever took.”)

7. **FAVORITE PROFESSOR AT WKU** | Irene Erskine, who taught Biology at WKU. (“I actually took extra biology classes, because she made it fun.”)

8. **GOOD LUCK CHARM** | A buckeye in his pocket. (“On important days with big decisions or important ballgames, I carry two buckeyes. You know it’s an important day if it’s a ‘two-buckeye day.’”)

9. **FAVORITE SONG** | Do You Believe in Magic? by the Lovin’ Spoonful.

10. **FAVORITE ARTIST** | Van Morrison.

11. **FIRST HOME WITH JULIE** | Half of a house on Adams Street. (“We rented it for $97 a month from Raymond Cravens.”)

12. **HISTORY OF RANSDELL DOGS**

   - **DOGS WHO HAVE CROSSED THE “RAINBOW BRIDGE.”**
     - Wiffer, a wonderful mutt. (“We had her in Bowling Green and for most of our time at SMU.”)
     - Maggie, a Dalmatian. (“We got her in Clemson, and she is the pet our sons grew up with. She came here with us when we moved back to Bowling Green.”)
     - Topper, a black Labrador Retriever. (“We lost her about three years ago.”)

13. **CURRENT DOGS**

   - Tsavo, a Rhodesian Ridgeback. (“This was actually Patrick’s dog, and he got her while he was in law school in Florida. He found she didn’t have enough time to care for her, so Julie drove to Florida and got her. She told him, “If I take her, I’m not giving her back.” And she didn’t.”)
   - Spirit, a yellow Labrador Retriever. (“Our son Patrick and his wife, Brooke, helped us find her.”)
   - Diddle, a black and white Cocker Spaniel. (“She’s our youngest dog.”)

14. **FAVORITE DATE NIGHT ACTIVITY WITH JULIE** | “On the beach in shorts and flip flops, drinking beer and eating peel and eat shrimp at sunset at Dewey Destin’s.”
SUMMER 2017 | 20 THINGS YOU DIDN’T KNOW

14 FAVORITE TV SHOWS | CBS Sunday Morning, The Blacklist, Black Sails (it’s about pirates!), Turn (it’s about spies during the American Revolution!) and Homeland.

15 WHAT HE WISHES MOST PEOPLE KNEW | “After 20 years, I think I’m an open book. I do get emotional, and I’m not afraid to express my emotions. But I have rarely lost my cool in this job.”

ALTER-EGO EXPERIENCE ON THE HILL | “I was Big Red during a home Men’s Basketball against FIU. Nobody but Julie and Wade (who was Big Red at the time) knew it. I was on the floor and suddenly realized I should be doing stuff, so I started running around the cheerleaders. My seat next to Julie was obviously empty, so Big Red sat next to her and started giving her a hard time... putting her head in its mouth and stuff like that.”

17 ROUTINES WE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT | He spends 45 minutes morning doing Yoga-type stretches to keep him flexible and free of back issues. He takes a nap on the weekends.

18 FAVORITE DRINK | Red wine ... pinot noir.

19 WHEN TRAVELING | He immediately falls asleep anytime he is on a tour bus.

QUOTE FROM HIS GRANDSON WALKER RANSDELL, AGE 8 | “Collins (Walker’s sister) walks around the house talking like Pops. They don’t have an inside voice.”

WKU SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION PRESENTED BY
The Ridley Group of Wells Fargo Advisors

Connecting nearly 500 scholarship donors and student recipients together is a great reason for an event! The WKU Scholarship Celebration, a premier annual event that recognizes the gift of philanthropy and the legacy of endowment, was held on March 28 at the Knicky Conference Center. The event allowed some of the University’s most generous philanthropists the opportunity to see first-hand how their gifts have had a lasting impact.
U.S. News & World Report ranks WKU online programs among best in nation

In its annual ranking of the best online degree programs, U.S. News & World Report has named WKU among the top schools nationwide in five areas for 2017.

“It’s an honor for WKU online degrees to be recognized in these rankings,” said WKU Provost Dr. David Lee. “We’re committed to making quality education as accessible as possible to our students. This national recognition highlights the outstanding work by our faculty and staff.”

WKU ranked fifth in the nation in the Best Online Bachelor Degree Programs category. The ranking also placed WKU’s M.A. in Criminology 15th in the category of Best Online Criminal Justice Graduate Programs. WKU’s Master of Science in Nursing was ranked 21st in the nation in the Best Online Nursing Degree category, WKU’s Master of Arts in Education for Teacher Leaders ranked 35th in the nation for Online Graduate Education Programs. Gordon Ford College of Business was ranked among the Best Online MBA Programs, climbing 23 places to 61st.

Ransdell to become President and CEO of Semester at Sea

Dr. Gary A. Ransdell (’73, ’74) won’t stay retired for long. Beginning Jan. 1, 2018, Dr. Ransdell will be the President and CEO of the Semester at Sea program.

The Institute for Shipboard Education, parent organization to Semester at Sea, announced Dr. Ransdell will succeed retiring President and CEO Dr. Loren W. Crabtree.

“I am pleased and proud to become the next President of the Semester at Sea program. Global learning has long been a passion of mine, and I cherish the opportunity to lead one of the world’s most important study abroad experiences,” Dr. Ransdell said. “I am fortunate to follow President Crabtree and build on the major achievements of the last few years. I look forward to joining my future colleagues on the SAS staff, and those who support Semester at Sea and Colorado State University.”

Dr. Ransdell has served on the Semester at Sea Board of Directors for several years.

“The SAS Board of Trustees conducted a thoughtful and comprehensive search for the new President and CEO. With this announcement, we enable a smooth transition to a proven executive in Gary Ransdell. Gary brings a history with Semester at Sea as a board member, an innovator and versatile leader,” said Dr. Kern荻ther, Associate Dean / Professor, Elon University School of Communications and ISB Board member.

Dr. Ransdell said he was pleased to have the opportunity to write a new chapter in his career in education.

“This opportunity will allow me to remain fully engaged with students and faculty from some of America’s leading colleges and universities. It also brings my passion for global learning into full focus,” he said. “The main differences from my current duties are that our SAS students come from many different campuses, and the SAS campus is a ship which sails to ports of call throughout the world.”

The SAS Board of Trustees will continue the search for a new president and CEO.

Six WKU students awarded Gilman International Scholarships for summer 2017

Six WKU students are studying abroad this summer on Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships.

Bryan Anders of Bowling Green, Ky.; Magen Estep of Bowling Green, Ky.; Rachel Fisher of Russellville, Ky.; Courtney Hurst of Louisville, Ky.; Melissa Reeves of Louisville, Ky.; and Chanel Watkins of Louisville, Ky., were awarded scholarships of up to $5,000 to take their studies overseas.

Anders, a third-year Biology major, is the son of Becky and Floyd “Jesse” Anders. He is studying in Japan this summer with the Kentucky Institute for International Studies. Anders plans to attend medical school after graduation.

Estep, a third-year Marketing major, is the daughter of John Estep and Kelly and Michelle Harding and the mother of 10-year-old Kenlee. Estep is studying in Stellenbosch, South Africa, where she is participating in a service learning program focused on sustainable community engagement.

“A non-traditional student and a single mother, I would have only dreamed of studying abroad without the help of the Office of Scholar Development,” Estep said. “The Gilman Scholarship has opened a door to allow me to study abroad this summer.”

Fisher, a third-year Biology major, is the daughter of Vicky and Jerry Martin. She is studying public health in Tanzania this summer. Fisher plans to attend medical school after graduation.

Hurst, a second-year Special Education major, is the daughter of Nicola Hurst. She is studying in Costa Rica with the Kentucky Institute for International Studies.

Reeves, a third-year Healthcare Administration major, is studying abroad in Tanzania this summer. Her family includes her husband, Mitch Reeves, and her two children, Emily and Robbie.

Watkins, a third-year Social Work major, is the daughter of Shannon Neal and Keith Carter. She is studying social work in Tanzania through the Kentucky Institute for International Studies.

“All six Gilman recipients will be able to take their studies abroad and will be better prepared for an increasingly globalized workforce,” Cory Dodds, Coordinator of National Competitive Opportunities for the Office of Scholar Development, said. “Our students’ successes in the Gilman Scholarship competition are a credit to WKU faculty and staff who recognize the importance of studying abroad in non-traditional destinations.”

Funded by the U.S. Department of State, more than 2,800 Gilman scholarships will be awarded this academic year for undergraduate Pell Grant recipients to study or intern abroad. The program is intended to increase the number of students traveling to nontraditional destinations and increase diversity in study abroad by funding students of underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities; students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and students with disabilities.
WKU tied for 2nd in 2016-2017 list of top Fulbright producers

WKU is tied for second in the list of top Fulbright-producing master’s degree-granting institutions. WKU had eight Fulbright grantees in 2016-2017, making it the only public master’s institution in the top three. WKU tied with Loyola Marymount University while Villanova University ranks first with 31 grantees. This is the fourth time and the third consecutive year WKU has been named a top Fulbright-producing institution as reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

WKU was the only Kentucky school to make the master’s degree institution list. The University of Louisville was the only other Kentucky school listed, tied for 11th among research institutions. WKU’s eight Fulbright grantees, all of whom are also graduates of the Honors College at WKU, are:

Brittany Broder ('16), of St. Charles, Mo., received a Bachelor of Science in Physics and Arabic. Her Fulbright funds the first year of a master’s degree program in Advanced Nuclear Waste Management at the Ecole des Mines de Nantes in France, where she has completed projects on nuclear waste containment and nuclear fuel reprocessing.

Jessica Brumley ('15), of Louisville, Ky., received a Bachelor of Arts in both English and French. She is teaching English at Secondary schools in "Germany's Appalachia" in Saarbrücken, as well as writing for the Sunbrucker Zeitung and volunteering at Lesbisch-Schulverbindung Deutschland, an LGBT support and advocacy organization.

Megan Skaggs ('16), of Louisville, Ky., received a Bachelor of Arts in both International Affairs and Spanish, as well as a Certificate in Leadership Studies. The Chinese Language Flagship Program grantee and member of the Corporate Career Development Program at Alltech is teaching English at a public school in Bera, Malaysia, a rural district east of Kuala Lumpur.

Tyler Prochazka ('16) of Newton, Kansas, received Bachelor of Arts degrees in International Affairs, Economics, and Asian Religions and Cultures. Prochazka is a graduate of the Chinese Language Flagship Program and is conducting a trial of universal basic income as part of his Fulbright-funded master’s degree program in Asia-Pacific Studies at National Chengchi University in Taipei.

Jared Johnson ('16) of Somerset, Ky., received a Bachelor of Arts in both English and German. Johnson is teaching English at secondary schools in "Germany’s Appalachia" in Saarbrücken, as well as writing for the Sunbrucker Zeitung and volunteering at Lesbisch-Schulverbindung Deutschland, an LGBT support and advocacy organization.

The six honorees are:

Carlos Bailey (’00), a private attorney, recognized in the area of Law.

Johnalma Barnett, Shipping and Receiving Manager in WKU’s Division of Finance and Administration, recognized in the area of Management.

Ryan Dearbone (’05, ’14), Assistant Director of College Advancement in WKU’s Office of Development and Alumni Relations, recognized in the area of Entrepreneurship.

Ronald Lewis (’70, ’78), retired teacher with Bowling Green City Schools, recognized in the area of Civic Engagement.

Martha Sales (’92, ’96, ’08, ’15), Executive Director of WKU TRIO Programs and the Intercultural Student Engagement Center, recognized in the area of Higher Education.

 Aurelia Spaulding (’06, ’12), Communications and Marketing Coordinator in WKU’s Division of Public Affairs, recognized in the area of Community Service.

Six WKU faculty and alumni named 2017 Trailblazer honorees

For 20 years, Bowling Green’s Trailblazers Committee has recognized community leaders during Black History Month. This year, all of the six honorees are members of the WKU family. The six local African American citizens were recognized for their leadership qualities in Management, Civic Engagement, Community Service, Law, Entrepreneurship and Higher Education.

Six WKU faculty and alumni named 2017 Trailblazer honorees

Seven WKU faculty and alumni named 2017 Trailblazer honorees

FOR 20 YEARS, BOWLING GREEN'S TRAILBLAZERS COMMITTEE HAS RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY LEADERS DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH. THIS YEAR, ALL OF THE SIX HONOREES ARE MEMBERS OF THE WKU FAMILY. THE SIX LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CITIZENS WERE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN MANAGEMENT, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICE, LAW, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

Six WKU faculty and alumni named 2017 Trailblazer honorees

FOR 20 YEARS, BOWLING GREEN'S TRAILBLAZERS COMMITTEE HAS RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY LEADERS DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH. THIS YEAR, ALL OF THE SIX HONOREES ARE MEMBERS OF THE WKU FAMILY. THE SIX LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CITIZENS WERE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN MANAGEMENT, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICE, LAW, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

---

The achievements of our students have once again placed WKU among the elite private institutions," WKU President A. Gary Ransdell said. "WKU’s Fulbright success is a great testament to the ability of our students and what they can accomplish with the mentoring of our faculty. The international dimension of the Fulbright awards is also a strong indication of WKU’s international reach.”

Melinda Grimes-Smith, WKU’s Fulbright Program Advisor, said, “We are of course thrilled to see WKU students win Fulbright grants, but as they send updates during their time abroad, we really begin to understand the transformative impact of a Fulbright experience. While they’re earning degrees, doing important research and creative work, and contributing to students’ English language proficiency abroad, they’re explaining American culture and society to people in their host communities. And as they learn about their host culture, they’re deepening their own understanding of American culture and society.”
University Distinguished Professor gifts proceeds from IRA to WKU

Dr. Betsy Sho恩felt, a veteran faculty member in the Department of Psychological Sciences with 34 years of service to WKU, has spent her career working with students in the areas of Industrial Organizational (IO) Psychology, Sport Psychology and Social Justice. Now, thanks to a planned gift made by naming WKU as the beneficiary of one of her IRAs (individual retirement accounts), the areas of study that are important to her will receive a lasting benefit.

Sho恩felt is a University Distinguished Professor at WKU, and her work has extended beyond the classroom, as she has consulted with a number of athletic teams, beginning with Coach Paul Sanderford's Lady Topper Basketball team. She currently works directly with Lady Topper Volleyball and Coach Travis Hudson, and she consulted with the WKU Swimming program to help prepare Claire Donahue for the 2012 Olympic games, where she won a gold medal in the 4x100 relay.

Though not a WKU alumna, Sho恩felt has spent her entire career at the University and it has been a very important part of her life. "I thought this would be a way to give something to WKU," she said. "There are a few things that I have as personal priorities and, by making this gift, I'm able to ensure that the things that are important to me are receiving some funding to help promote their causes."

She has designated that the proceeds of her IRA, currently valued at $100,000, support three different areas at WKU: research and conference support for IO, four of the Olympic sports (volleyball, swimming, softball and soccer) and the area of social justice.

"The gifts are going to three areas that are very important to me," she explained. "Although I'm not able to provide that sort of financial support now, it gives me a sense of satisfaction to know that individuals in these areas will be benefiting long after I'm gone. I also have spoken with individuals in the WKU Office of Philanthropy about the possibility of making smaller gifts now, just to get these initiatives started while I'm here and can help with some of the decision making."

As Sho恩felt discovered, there are number of benefits to making a gift through an IRA. "First of all, there are the tax benefits," she explained. "The proceeds that have been accruing in the account are distributed tax free. Also it's fairly simple, because you don't have to include the designation in your will. You can actually name the beneficiaries directly in the IRA and then the University and the financial advisor work together to make sure the gift is distributed. So it's really straightforward. In addition, the amount that I wanted to set aside for this gift was the exact amount in one of my IRAs, so that also made it fairly easy to name WKU as the beneficiary and then meet with representatives of the WKU Foundation to talk about how I want the money distributed."

Honors College at WKU named for Dixie ('62, '67) and Pete Mahurin ('61)

The WKU Board of Regents has honored Dixie and Pete Mahurin for their legacy of support for gifted education by naming the Honors College for them.

The Mahurins, of Bowling Green, Ky., are both WKU alumni. WKU President Gary A. Ransdell said their philanthropic and leadership support to WKU spans more than four decades. "They are pillars in the Bowling Green community and support numerous causes on and off campus," he said. "I cannot think of a more fitting way to recognize this tremendous family than to name the Honors College at WKU The Dixie and Peter Mahurin Honors College."

Their 2010 gift facilitated the move of the headquarters of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children to WKU. In addition, a 2002 gift created the Mahurin Professorship in Gifted Studies, one of the few endowed chairs in gifted education in the United States. Dixie Mahurin, a longtime WKU employee in student-athlete academic advising, is a founding member of the WKU Sisterhood, which has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to WKU. Pete Mahurin was a founding member of the WKU Foundation Board of Trustees and served eight years, four as Chair. He also served on the Campaign Cabinet for both of WKU's capital campaigns.

Dixie Mahurin said she has high expectations for WKU's impact on education and hopes that it continues to produce gifted students from around the globe. "I expect the University to serve not only Kentuckians but also people of the world," she said. "It's important just to give back. Education is a passion not only of mine but of my whole family."
Gabbi Doolin Memorial Scholarship

Gabriella "Gabbi" Corrine Doolin was born in 2007 as the second of three children to Brian and Amy Doolin. Often described as loving, rambunctious and girlie, Gabbi was the epitome of happiness. Her bright smile, playful personality and joyful attitude lit up every room she entered. She was the life of the party wherever she went; even in the grocery store she loved to show off her cheerleading skills with cartwheels and flips down the aisles. Gabbi was also known for her love for her family and friends—and the love they had for her. She also loved the colors purple and pink, bunnies, cats and her dog, Gismo. She was also crazy about her first-grade teacher, Catina Cooper ('97, '10), and dreamed of one day being a teacher herself.

David Jagger said the tragedy of Gabbi's loss was difficult for the entire Leachman team. "Brian and I discussed ways we could help keep her memory alive, and he decided that an endowed scholarship would be a fitting legacy that would endure past all of our lifetimes," he said. "Gabbi won a good student, and Amy and Brian felt like they would like to give other young people a chance to further their education in Gabbi's name."

"We administer about 1,200 scholarship funds and each one tells a very special story," Smith said. "I never had the privilege of getting to know Gabbi but, from the stories I have heard from the family and the newspaper articles, she would have been a great Hilltopper. Unfortunately, we will not have the opportunity to see her as a Hilltopper, but this scholarship fund will honor her memory forever. Students a year from now, five years from now, 100 years from now will still be getting the Gabbi Doolin Scholarship."

"I'm thankful that through this, Gabbi's memory will live on," Brian Doolin said. "Gabbi only had seven years of life. We just felt like that would be the best way to keep her memory going forever and to bring something positive out of all of this. When we are gone, our boys, Alec and Chance, can still be involved with the scholarship. Gabbi loved helping people, and many of her classmates have shared about how much she helped them. I'm thankful that through this scholarship she will continue to help other students. We just thank everyone for every donation and your continued prayers."

Donations to the Gabbi Doolin Memorial Scholarship Fund can be made by contacting the College Heights Foundation at WKU at (270) 745-4597 or online at www.wku.edu/dth/ gabbidoolinscholarship.
More than 350 guests attended the President's Circle Gala on WKU's South Lawn.

**LEFT**: Julie ('75) and President Gary A. Ransdell ('73, '74) were recognized as new members of the Cornerstone level of the Cherry Society. **RIGHT**: The Ransdell family poses together after the program. From left are Sandra and Matthew Ransdell ('90), President Gary A. Ransdell ('73, '74) and Julie Ransdell ('75), Patrick ('02) and Brooke Ransdell ('04) and children, Walker and Collins.

― alumn.wku.edu
Theatre in a new type of performance called "For the Record," which CBS recently optioned for broadcast to be part of the trend in live theatrical productions. It takes the movies of well-known directors like John Hughes and their famous soundtrack songs and presents them in a nightclub setting.

Lewis was working on a show in Las Vegas when she found out she had gotten the role in Paramour. "I kind of held out for it. This one is the perfect fit," she said of the role as the starlet Indigo.

"I'm super comfortable. They wrote her to be like me. I even got to do a little coloratura which I attribute to (retired WKU voice professor) Elizabeth Volkmann. I had so much fun practicing that with her."

On the red carpet for opening night, Lewis wore a vintage dress from a store in her hometown of Shelbyville, Ky., which was where she got her start in theatre at the age of 6 playing the part of Fern in Charlotte's Web. It was a natural progression following in her parent's footsteps as they met doing community theatre when her mom was playing Marian in The Music Man on a production where her dad was working on sound and lights.

Lewis and other members of the cast and crew have been rehearsing for the past few months and "built the show together."

While she says it's nice to have a steady job, she also fills some of her spare time with writing projects. She is working on two in particular, a short dance film and a PSA to indulge her artistic imaginative side in new endeavors. "I can creatively get my fill that way."

As Lewis moves forward in her career, she maintains a positive attitude and tries not to dwell on times in her career when she was discouraged. "I felt like I was striking out. I had several close calls for Broadway. This came along and it all worked out. I'm really excited and hope Paramour will open up new projects and keep me working."

Ruby Lewis stars as Indigo in Cirque du Soleil—Paramour

As she prepared for opening night on Broadway, Ruby Lewis (07) hadn't forgotten the role WKU played in launching her career.

A WKU Performing Arts graduate, Lewis stars as Indigo in Cirque du Soleil-Paramour, which opened last year on Broadway.

"I've been talking about Rhythm a lot lately," Lewis said of her appearance in the 2006 WKU musical, adding that she still sings her show-stopping "Back to Before" for auditions.

"Rhythm gave me the confidence to believe I could be a performer."

Cirque du Soleil—Paramour is the organization's first show created specifically for Broadway. It is a landmark production for Cirque du Soleil, blending the best of Broadway with Cirque du Soleil's signature style, to provide a new experience for both traditional Broadway musical theatre gurus and Cirque du Soleil's fans.

Lewis has had numerous roles in television (Desperate Housewives, Medium, Hart of Dixie, Brothers and Sisters, Rules of Engagement, Masters of Sex), and theatre productions (national tours of We Will Rock You, Jersey Boys, Gimme, and Gypsy), in the past 10 years.

She has also worked in Los Angeles Theatre in a new type of performance called "For the Record," which CBS recently optioned for broadcast to be part of the trend in live theatrical productions. It takes the movies of well-known directors like John Hughes and their famous soundtrack songs and presents them in a nightclub setting.

Lewis was working on a show in Las Vegas when she found out she had gotten the role in Paramour. "I kind of held out for it. This one is the perfect fit," she said of the role as the starlet Indigo.

"I'm super comfortable. They wrote her to be like me. I even got to do a little coloratura which I attribute to (retired WKU voice professor) Elizabeth Volkmann. I had so much fun practicing that with her."

On the red carpet for opening night, Lewis wore a vintage dress from a store in her hometown of Shelbyville, Ky., which was where she got her start in theatre at the age of 6 playing the part of Fern in Charlotte's Web. It was a natural progression following in her parent's footsteps as they met doing community theatre when her mom was playing Marian in The Music Man on a production where her dad was working on sound and lights.

Lewis and other members of the cast and crew have been rehearsing for the past few months and "built the show together."

While she says it's nice to have a steady job, she also fills some of her spare time with writing projects. She is working on two in particular, a short dance film and a PSA to indulge her artistic imaginative side in new endeavors. "I can creatively get my fill that way."

As Lewis moves forward in her career, she maintains a positive attitude and tries not to dwell on times in her career when she was discouraged. "I felt like I was striking out. I had several close calls for Broadway. This came along and it all worked out. I'm really excited and hope Paramour will open up new projects and keep me working."

Ruby Lewis (07)

By Julie Pride (07) for Arts & Letters

In his inauguration remarks in May 1998, President Gary A. Ransdell cast an ambitious vision to transform WKU into an institution of national prominence.

"Our first priority in that journey is academic quality—strength of faculty, students and curriculum. Ours is a commitment to outstanding teaching, relevant research, regional partnerships and educating the whole student," Dr. Ransdell said at the time.

The second priority was to enhance the overall experience for everyone in the WKU family. "The collegiate career at Western should be the greatest learning experience of a student's life, with the best in scholarly and social and recreational opportunities," Dr. Ransdell said in his remarks.

In 2017, as Dr. Ransdell wraps up a 20-year career as President, the student body and the WKU experience have indeed been transformed.
**Beyond the Numbers**

Enrollment growth has changed the campus dynamic, but Dr. Ransdell notes other changes that have impacted the student body since 1997. "We’re stronger intellectually and academically. We’re more connected with learning delivery methods. We’re more racially diverse, socially accepting and internationally connected," he said.

A look at the numbers shows increases in WKU’s enrollment, number of degrees awarded, six-year graduation rates, average ACT scores and high school GPAs of first-time students, international enrollment, online learning and study abroad opportunities.

Beyond the numbers, WKU’s campus transformation has provided students with access to the latest technology; improved residence halls, dining options and athletic facilities; the construction of new academic buildings and renovation of others like Van Meter Hall and Downing Student Union; and more options for leadership training and civic engagement with campus and community organizations.

"I believe our students have a much better quality of life today," Dr. Ransdell said. "We have so many things for students to be engaged in. The quality of life attracts students and engages them while they’re here."

The opportunities for campus and civic engagement continue to expand. Students have been part of sustainability efforts at WKU, and more students participate each year in programs like Habitat for Humanity, Up’til Dawn and Relay for Life.

In Student Activities and Organizations, the number of student groups has grown from 290 to 400 in recent years; participation in Greek life has grown about 40 percent with 2,500 students involved and six new groups added in the past 10 years; and the Dynamic Leadership Institute is serving 300 to 500 students each semester.

"I think the University has done a great job in engaging students in and out of the classroom," said Brian Kuster, Vice President for Student Affairs.

---

**Student Body by the Numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL/NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS</th>
<th>MOST POPULAR GRADUATE MAJORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
<td>Fall 1997 – 16,543</td>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Fall 2016 – 20,277</td>
<td>Elementary Education, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREES AWARDED</td>
<td>1997-98 – 2,567</td>
<td>School Counseling – Secondary, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015–16 – 6,169</td>
<td>School Administration, R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM+HEALTH DEGREES AWARDED</td>
<td>1997-98 – 649</td>
<td>Mental Health Counseling, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015–16 – 1,233</td>
<td>School Counseling – Elementary, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE</td>
<td>1997-98 – 63.4 percent</td>
<td>Business Administration, MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015–16 – 51.9 percent</td>
<td>Elementary Education, R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2016 – 22.6 ACT / 3.27 GPA</td>
<td>Guidance – Elementary, R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS</td>
<td>Fall 1997 – 84</td>
<td>Middle Grades Education, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2016 – 1347</td>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONLINE COURSES</td>
<td>Online enrollment began in spring 1996</td>
<td>Organizational Leadership, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 1997 – 0</td>
<td>Recreation and Sport Administration, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2016 – 718</td>
<td>Speech-Language Pathology, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY ABROAD</td>
<td>Online course enrollments Fall 1997 – 0</td>
<td>Business Administration, MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2016 – 13,207</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, EDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study abroad courses 2000-01 – 7</td>
<td>Social Work, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015–16 – 231</td>
<td>Physical Therapy, DPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study abroad course enrollments 2000-01 – 66</td>
<td>Library Media Education, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015–16 – 1,177</td>
<td>Nursing Practice, DNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOP 10 COUNTRIES</strong></td>
<td>Nursing, MSN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 1997 – 2016</td>
<td>MOST POPULAR UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kentucky Kentucky</td>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennessee Tennessee</td>
<td>Elementary Education, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indiana Indiana</td>
<td>Psychology, AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Florida Illinois</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Studies, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ohio Georgia</td>
<td>Nursing, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois Illinois</td>
<td>Accounting, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michigan Florida</td>
<td>Agriculture, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia California</td>
<td>Sociology, AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texas Texas</td>
<td>Computer Science, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California Missouri</td>
<td>Management, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOP 10 STATES</strong></td>
<td>Nursing, ASN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 1997 – 2016</td>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China China</td>
<td>Elementary Education, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Africa South Africa</td>
<td>Psychology, AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canada India</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Studies, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan Vietnam</td>
<td>Exercise Science, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>India Nigeria</td>
<td>Physics, AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Switzerland Switzerland</td>
<td>Agriculture, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Kingdom United Kingdom</td>
<td>Marketing, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iran Iran</td>
<td>Accounting, BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kuwait Kuwait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The creation of the Honors College and The Gatton Academy have been at the forefront of WKU's improved academic profile, but the University has added four doctoral programs as well as numerous programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. In addition, WKU created an Office of Scholar Development to help students compete for and win an increasing number of prestigious national and international scholarships. WKU has added partnerships with Harlaxton College, Semester at Sea and other programs to expand study abroad opportunities.

"Members of the student body today have more confidence in their potential as a broader vision of what they might be able to do after they leave WKU," Provost David Lee said.

Sam Ford arrived at WKU to major in News/Editorial Journalism in 2001 when the journalism industry was entering a period of upheaval and change. "Potter College of Arts & Letters provided me with the critical thinking tools to carve out a nontraditional career path," said Ford, who graduated in 2005 with four bachelor's degrees and is now a research affiliate at MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing, a senior consultant in the media industries, and an instructor in WKU's Popular Culture Studies program.

"By combining my studies in the School of Journalism & Broadcasting in Journalism and Mass Communication with Communication Studies in the Department of Communication and a Writing major and Film Studies minor in the English Department," Ford said, "I was able to think more holistically about the state and future of the media industries, which led me on to a media studies graduate degree from MIT and a career consulting with news organizations, media companies and other organizations thinking about those changes when it comes to their public relations and organizational communication."

James P. Stovall planned to major in Spanish when he arrived at WKU in the fall 2010, but after learning about WKU's new International Affairs major, Stovall began a path that included joining the Chinese Flagship Program and becoming fluent in Chinese, winning several prestigious scholarships, traveling to Argentina and China, and graduating with majors in International Affairs, Asian Religions & Cultures and Spanish.

"It's pretty incredible looking back at who I was when I entered WKU," said Stovall, who is Managing Director for Sinclair Group in Shanghai, China. "WKU, the Honors College and the Office of Scholar Development really helped me to get the opportunities that made me see where I wanted to be."

Sarah Schrader, a 2014 graduate, also took advantage of the opportunities offered by WKU's transformation. She entered in 2009 as a member of The Gatton Academy's fourth class, participated in research through the Genome Discovery and Exploration course, joined the Chinese Flagship Program and worked with the Office of Scholar Development to earn several prestigious scholarships and fellowships and to become WKU's first finalist for the Marshall, Rhodes and Gates-Cambridge scholarships. The research and language skills she learned at WKU have benefited Schrader during her graduate program in the Weill Cornell/Rockefeller/Soan Kettering Tri-Institutional M.D.-Ph.D. Program in New York City. After completing two years of medical school curriculum, Schrader is focusing on tuberculosis research in her Ph.D. program.

"The research opportunities I had as a Gatton student and undergraduate at WKU helped me discover my love of microbiology, which led me to choose my current research lab," she said.

In addition to the research opportunities, Schrader said, "there is no doubt that the academic challenges, international experiences and scholarship mentoring I benefited from were essential to helping me gain admission to the Tri-I M.D.-Ph.D. Program in the first place. Here, many of my classmates are graduates of Ivy League institutions, but I can’t help but think that my own experiences as an undergraduate at WKU are a match for any of them."

Dr. Jaco Lux, Director of Recruitment and Admissions, said scholarship opportunities and programs like Chinese Flagship, Harlaxton and Semester at Sea help WKU students feel empowered to compete with top students around the globe. "Why not us?" Dr. Lux said. "Why not our students?"

More students are coming to WKU today expecting to study abroad. For five years in a row, WKU has been nationally ranked in the Institute for International Education's (IIE) U.S. study abroad rankings. For the past two years, WKU placed in the top 20 in the nation among master's institutions for its total number of study abroad students—and is the only public institution in Kentucky to appear in the rankings.

"Our self-image of what is possible has changed," said Dr. Craig Cobone, Executive Director of the Dixie and Peter Mahurin Honors College. "We are a much more global campus. Students have a more expansive set of goals."

The opportunity to participate in WKU's study abroad program at Harlaxton College in Grantham, England, was the main factor that attracted May 2016 graduate McKenzie Perdew to WKU. "Harlaxton was a huge pull for me," she said. "With the opportunity for that adventure, I was like count me in."

Perdew was also a member of the Mahurin Honors College and took advantage of undergraduate research opportunities. "I couldn’t have asked for a better college experience," said Perdew, who is pursuing her master's degree in School Psychology. "Everything has worked out perfectly for me here. I can’t imagine that happening anywhere else."

Perdew spent the fall 2014 semester at Harlaxton, but also was able to experience WKU’s growing international reach on campus by developing a relationship with a student from Saudi Arabia during an Arabic class. "I was able to help her with English while she helped me with Arabic," Perdew said. "Having a relationship with her was so awesome. I learned so much about language, Islam and Middle Eastern culture. It opened my eyes and allowed me to see beyond the stereotypes."

"We want to educate teachers and accountants and journalists and scientists – and we do that well. We also want the economists and the sociologists to understand the environments, to be well rounded, to be able to inspire others with the written and spoken word. The Western graduate must be a leader in corporate America, in education or in public life."

PRESIDENT GARY A. RANSDELL
Inauguration Remarks
WE HAD TO WALK THE TALK

Increasing international student enrollment has been a key factor in WKU's vision to become "a leading American university with international reach," Dr. Ransdell said. "As we expanded the University's reach and raised our sights to be more national and international in scope, it was critical that we expand our international student population," he said. "We had to walk the talk."

WKU added an International Enrollment Management office and began to recruit in China, India, the Middle East and other areas. "With our internationalization came a greater appreciation of other lands, other religions and other cultures," Dr. Ransdell said.

New academic programs in areas like Arabic and Chinese and the construction of the Honors College/International Center are providing an international experience for all students.

"Our curriculum has become much more international," Provost Lee said. "The number of international students on campus has increased as has the number of students studying abroad. Our students are leaving here with much more of a sense of a wider world than they did 20 years ago."

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

As enrollment has grown and opportunities have expanded over the past 20 years, one part of the student body's WKU experience hasn't changed - the personal touch.

Diego Leal Ambiriz grew up in a small town in Mexico and was attending the state university in Monterrey when he learned about an opportunity to study abroad at WKU for the fall 2009 semester. "WKU's desire of being a university of international reach with students of different countries made me feel that my stay would be very beneficial and gratifying," he said.

During that semester, Ambiriz "fell in love with this University. I knew that I could not leave this amazing place and that I needed to transfer."

In November 2009, he stopped at the President's Office to drop off a letter describing his experience and seeking guidance on scholarship assistance to transfer to WKU. Ambiriz ended up meeting with Dr. Ransdell that day. "He was instrumental in helping me become a Hilltopper. This was one of the best things that ever happened to me," said Ambiriz, an International Business major who graduated in May 2012. "I was supposed to be at WKU one semester, but I loved it, transferred and spent three fantastic years there."

Ambiriz, who has been working for Xerox Financial Services in an operations and finance role since 2012, will soon begin pursuing an MBA at the University of Michigan. "The sky is the limit, and I will be forever thankful to WKU for welcoming me with arms wide open into such an amazing community that allowed me to challenge myself, grow and expand my horizons," he said.

"I had the best three years of my life at WKU and I hope many other students will have the same opportunity of a lifetime at this University that has true international reach."

Nick Gilyard experienced the personal touch when he traveled from Miami to audition for the WKU Forensics team. The visit by Gilyard, a high school teammate and their coach included a meeting with Dr. Ransdell, where he discussed how nationally ranked programs like Forensics were an important part of his vision for WKU.

"It said a lot to me that he would meet with a prospective student," said Gilyard, who now works in public relations in New York City. "That played a role in me choosing WKU."

Even for online learners like Ruth Gray-Diorio of Houston, Texas, WKU maintains a personal connection. Gray-Diorio came to WKU in 1966 but left in 1970 without her degree. After retiring, she decided to complete her associate's degree and began to look at course opportunities and possible degree paths.

"In Texas, I would have started back as a new student," she said. "At WKU, as a returning student, I was able to utilize all of my previously earned credits."

Staff members in WKU's Academic Outreach Office and the Registrar's Office were able to assist in her re-entry into WKU. If she decides to seek a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, she will continue as a distance learning student.

"Coming back was like coming home," she said. "The warmth and the knowledge that helped before was once again available."
Mass Media and Technology Hall named in honor of Kentucky State Rep. Jody Richards

By Bob Skipper ('82, '91)

"My official comment is 'Wow.'"

That was Jody Richards’ reaction after the covering was removed and the lettering designating Mass Media and Technology Hall as Jody Richards Hall was revealed on May 4.

"This beautiful and functional building would have been my choice to bear my name if I had a choice," he said.

Richards, who has served Bowling Green as a State Representative in the Kentucky General Assembly for 42 years, including a record 14 as Speaker of the House, was honored by the WKU Board of Regents for his support. The building, one of at least seven for which Richards helped to secure state funding, was chosen in part because he spent seven years teaching journalism at WKU and advising the College Heights Herald student newspaper and Talisman yearbook.

"No elected official has represented WKU as passionately and delivered as much to WKU as Rep. Jody Richards," WKU President Gary A. Ransdell said. "The fact that he is Bowling Green's own is reason enough to commemorate him on WKU’s campus. More importantly for WKU, however, Jody Richards has for more than 40 years, been the go-to guy to get things for WKU done."

Dr. Ransdell said moments like these are rare.

"No one has earned it more on this campus than the man we honor today," he said to a crowd gathered outside the building's east entrance. "I am so proud that I am the President who gets to do this."

Richards has a long history of sponsoring impactful legislation, including the Kentucky Education Reform Act in 1990, the Kentucky Higher Education Reform Act in 1997 and the Kentucky Innovation Act in 2000, which, among other things, established the WKU Center for Research and Development. Richards was instrumental in securing funding to establish The Carol Martin Catton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky at WKU in 2006 and sponsored the legislation to authorize The Gatton Academy in 2007. He also helped secure funding to expand the number of students attending the Academy.

"No one has been more instrumental in the improvements at WKU than Jody Richards," fellow Warren County Rep. Jon DeCesare of Rockfield, Ky., said. "When you think about WKU, you can't help but think about Jody. This is a well-deserved recognition, especially because it's in the building that houses the journalism program where he began his career."

Richards said the building was particularly important to him because it provides a permanent home to the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, as well as the Division of Information Technology. During his teaching years, Richards said the Journalism program moved three times. Even though it landed in a "tired" former apartment house, Richards said they were able to start the photojournalism program in the kitchen and expand publication of the Herald from twice a month to twice a week.

Even given journalism’s importance in a free society, Richards said it wasn’t easy to secure the funding.

"It required planning and advocacy of President Ransdell, and we were eventually able to get approval and funding from the General Assembly," he said.

Richards’ legacy extends beyond journalism.

"My passion throughout my legislative years has been education—education at all levels," he said, adding that WKU has been a leader in teacher preparation as well.

"It's my hope and desire that future budgets of the Kentucky General Assembly would properly support education at all levels because we all know that every Kentucky child deserves a first-class education."
Are you interested in encouraging students from your area to become Hilltoppers?

As a graduate of WKU, you are able to offer a unique and valuable perspective to prospective Hilltoppers. Alumni Ambassadors will provide a much-needed personal touch to the college admissions process. You will have the unique opportunity to tell your WKU story to prospective students from your community.

Your time and talent are valuable! In partnership with the WKU Office of Admissions, we have developed several opportunities to meet the needs of WKU alumni of all ages and stages.

COLLEGE FAIRS
Representatives from multiple colleges and universities set up an exhibit and provide information to prospective students and their parents. Students will make their way from table to table collecting information and fill out information cards for colleges they're interested in learning more about. The WKU Office of Admissions will provide materials, a tablecloth and reference information.

Availability: College fairs are scheduled both during the school day and after hours.

Skill Set: Ability to stand for extended period of time, outgoing personality and willingness to communicate key talking points about Western Kentucky University.

NOTE WRITING
The WKU Office of Admissions will provide Alumni Ambassadors with a list of prospective students from a defined geographic area. The Office of Admissions will also provide information about the students' current admissions status and suggested points to include in the note. Note cards and return address labels will be provided by WKU Alumni Association.

Availability: Note writing is the most flexible volunteer opportunity, however mailings are time sensitive.

Skill Set: Ability to effectively communicate through written communication and meet deadlines.

AWARD CEREMONY PRESENTATIONS
Representatives will attend high school award ceremonies and recognize scholastic achievement by presenting scholarship certificates to incoming students. The Office of Admissions will provide certificates and descriptions of the scholarships being presented.

Availability: Awards ceremonies are held during the school day and after hours late in the spring semester.

Skill Set: Ability to effectively speak briefly in front of large groups and maintain flow of program. Presentation remarks will be scripted.

SUMMER SEND OFF RECEPTIONS
Event hosts will work with the Office of Admissions to invite incoming WKU students and their families to a Summer Send Off Party where our newest Hilltoppers can get to know local WKU alumni and other students from the area. These events are designed to help students form deeper connections to the WKU community prior to taking their first semester of classes.

Availability: Event window is June through early August. Event hosts will plan event with support from WKU Office of Admissions and WKU Alumni Association.

Skill Set: Ability to effectively plan and host students and families in your community.

CAN YOU HELP?
Contact Laura Smith with the WKU Alumni Association at (270) 745-2586 or laura.smith@wku.edu.

To learn more about the Alumni Ambassadors Program, visit alumni.wku.edu/alumniambassador.
A WKU professor has received China's top award for foreign scientists for his two decades of research on water resources in the karst systems of southwest China.

University Distinguished Professor of Hydrogeology Chris Groves ('84, '87) was one of six recipients of China's 2016 International Science and Technology Cooperation Award, the top honor for foreign scientists working in China. The awards were presented by President Xi along with other leaders in January at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

"As someone working in China for more than 20 years, this is the highest honor I can imagine," said Dr. Groves, Director of the Crawford Hydrology Laboratory within WKU's Applied Research and Technology Program.

"My collaborations with Chinese colleagues have been focused on understanding the hydrogeology, geochemistry and water resources of southwest China's vast limestone karst regions, among the world's most extensive and well-developed," Dr. Groves said.

"These have been both basic and applied research questions as there are many interesting geological problems but also significant water resource challenges for rural people in those areas."

WKU scientists and students have been working with Chinese scientists to find solutions to these problems for more than 20 years. More than 30 WKU students, faculty and staff have traveled to China in the karst program, and numerous Chinese scientists and students have come to WKU over the same period.

In 2013, Dr. Groves was a Ministry-level finalist for the China Friendship Award, that country's highest award for foreign experts who have made outstanding contributions to the country's economic and social progress.

In November, Dr. Groves was appointed to a second six-year term on the Governing Board of the International Research Center on Karst (IRCK), which is headquartered at the Institute of Karst Geology (IKG) in Guilin and is China's premier government laboratory for the study of karst landscapes, aquifers and water resources.

University Distinguished Professor of Hydrogeology Chris Groves ('84, '87) was one of six recipients of China's 2016 International Science and Technology Cooperation Award, the top honor for foreign scientists working in China. The awards were presented by President Xi along with other leaders in January at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

"As someone working in China for more than 20 years, this is the highest honor I can imagine," said Dr. Groves, Director of the Crawford Hydrology Laboratory within WKU's Applied Research and Technology Program.

"My collaborations with Chinese colleagues have been focused on understanding the hydrogeology, geochemistry and water resources of southwest China's vast limestone karst regions, among the world's most extensive and well-developed," Dr. Groves said.

"These have been both basic and applied research questions as there are many interesting geological problems but also significant water resource challenges for rural people in those areas."

WKU scientists and students have been working with Chinese scientists to find solutions to these problems for more than 20 years. More than 30 WKU students, faculty and staff have traveled to China in the karst program, and numerous Chinese scientists and students have come to WKU over the same period.

In 2013, Dr. Groves was a Ministry-level finalist for the China Friendship Award, that country's highest award for foreign experts who have made outstanding contributions to the country's economic and social progress.

In November, Dr. Groves was appointed to a second six-year term on the Governing Board of the International Research Center on Karst (IRCK), which is headquartered at the Institute of Karst Geology (IKG) in Guilin and is China's premier government laboratory for the study of karst landscapes, aquifers and water resources.

I started working on the Red Towel Travels section of WKU SPIRIT in 2013. I was really excited to take over this section because I love looking at everyone's travel photos and it helps cure my wanderlust...a little.

If you've submitted a photo recently, you will have likely received an email from me thanking you for your submission and telling you how you can view your photo in our online albums. I quickly started recognizing a familiar face in the photo submissions.

If we gave away awards, Gale Kerney ('73) of Burien, Wash. would easily win the “Most Red Towel Travels Submitted” Award. To date, Gale has submitted 31 photos from 19 different countries on five continents!

Gale got started traveling by backpacking through Great Britain and Europe for three months after he graduated from Seattle Pacific University with his bachelor’s degree in Philosophy. “America is such a young country in comparison to Europe. I wanted to see all those things and places you read about and studied while in school, so I went and did it,” Gale said. “I loved every minute of it.”

Red Towel Travels was first printed in the WKU SPIRIT magazine in spring 2004. Gale submitted his first photo in 2005. He’s been with us from the very beginning. I think it’s safe to say that Gale and I have struck up a friendship through our many emails when he submits new photos. After wondering how and why he went to so many amazing places, I decided it was just time to ask. What follows is my conversation with Gale about traveling, where he’s been and where he still has left to go.
Have you always loved traveling, and how did you get started?

I caught the travel bug in 1971. I had just graduated from college and the Vietnam War was still going on. Upon graduation, I was re-classified 1A and given my physical. I couldn’t go on to graduate school at that time because of the draft. During the summer, I was doing warehouse work. One day at work, one of the guys said, “Why don’t you go to Europe?” I was 22 and thought, “Well, that’s a bad idea.” So I started planning my trip, and the day before I was going to quit I got laid off.

I planned my trip to coincide with the full weather. I had a Brit Rail and Student Rail Pass and rode the trains across Great Britain and Europe. Throughout the trip, I stayed mostly in youth hostels and obtained a hostel passport that was stamped each time I stayed at one. It was like a dollar a night! I actually spent less than $1,000 in three months, and that included my airfare. I hitchhiked, slept in train stations, outside train stations, in my sleeping bag, rode trains at night or stayed in hostels and pensions. I would buddy up with people if I wanted to, or I’d just keep traveling alone. I found that you have to be flexible when you travel. My philosophy while traveling was that if you don’t go looking for trouble, you don’t find it.

In those three months, I traveled through 17 different countries in Great Britain and Europe. I was fortunate to have the flexibility and ability to travel. I enjoy traveling and have been very blessed to be able to do so. It’s fun to go places and learn about different countries, their history and culture.

How did you end up at WKU all the way from outside Seattle, Wash.?

At that time in the 1970s, the Humanities were the big thing. A master’s degree was above and beyond. It showed you could be trained, that you were more erudite or learned, and I was planning to teach at the college level. WKU offered the degree I was looking for in Humanities with a major in Philosophy.

I wanted to get a cross-culturalization of the States, and I thought graduate school would be an ideal opportunity to get that cross-culturalization. I got involved on campus when I came to WKU and had a wonderful time while attending there. I also had a Graduate Assistantship, which kept me very busy. I really enjoyed my time at Western.

How many countries have you visited?

I’ve visited 75 different countries around the world and six of the seven continents. I just haven’t made it to Antarctica yet!

When I visited China (the first Red Towel Travel he submitted in 2005), I had to carry around rolls of film. I took all these photos and just hoped they made it home and turned out I actually met the farmer who discovered the Terracotta Army Soldiers when I was in Xi’an. It was so incredible. You never know who you may meet while traveling! I’ve also been to 45 of the 50 states, plus D.C. I just haven’t been to some of the New England states and North Dakota. One thing that has changed over the years is that I now tend to travel in groups and let someone else make all the plans!

Have you filled more than one passport?

I have six passports. I got my first passport in 1971 and have had one ever since. It’s really sad that Customs rarely stamps them anymore. I also have the one from the youth hostels I stayed at.

While traveling in Europe in the fall of 1971, I stayed at a youth hostel in Florence, Italy. On one of the walls I noticed some words of wisdom that are just as true today, as they were in 1971. It was titled “To Be Young.” I share these words often with people when I’m speaking to groups.

I am very involved with the Masons. I was the 147th Grand Master of Masons in Washington from 2009-2010. That’s why I was at Mt. Rushmore in September 2016. There is a lot of Masonic history behind Mt. Rushmore. The event was to commemorate the 75th anniversary of its completion. Mt. Rushmore was named after Charles Rushmore, a Mason from New York, and there were a number of other Masons who were involved in the creation of this beautiful monument. There was one day dedicated to the Masons during the anniversary celebration year. I even had the pleasure of meeting the last living monument worker, who was 95.

Photos Submitted

Asia – 9, Africa – 1, South America – 3
North America – 4, Europe – 14
Total: 31
Do you have a favorite place that you’ve visited? Or, is there somewhere specific you’d like to return?

Two places I would like to revisit are the Neuschwanstein Castle in Fussen, Germany, and the Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

Seeing the Waterford Crystal factory in Ireland, the crazy drivers in the Philippines and India, Iguazu Falls on the border of Brazil and Argentina, Christ the Redeemer and Sugarloaf Mountain in Brazil, and climbing upon the ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru. These are just a few of the many places that I have enjoyed.

I can’t say that one place is better than another because each place is unique and special in its own way to that individual traveler. There are so many places to go back to, but still so many places in the world yet to visit!

Is there somewhere you haven’t been yet that you really want to visit?

Egypt. I was going to go in 2011, but the tour was canceled because of the political unrest. That’s when I came up with the plan of going to South America – Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. Maybe someday I’ll have the opportunity to go to Egypt when things settle down more.

You visited your 100th different Hard Rock Café in London in 2015. Do you have a favorite Hard Rock Café? Have you visited any more since then?

I have been to 112 different Hard Rock Cafés around the world. I’ve collected more than 4,000 Hard Rock Café pins, and I have a tall shot glass from each Hard Rock Café I’ve visited. Everyone collects something!

I chose to celebrate my 100th visit in London because that’s where my traveling all started in 1971, and the original Hard Rock Café was founded that same year. They had a cake for me. It was a lot of fun. I flew over on Sunday evening, got there on Monday morning and took the Tube to my hotel. I checked in, went to the Hard Rock, where they wired and dined me, went back to my hotel, and then got back on the plane Tuesday morning and flew home. It all happened in a couple of quick days.

One of my favorite Cafés was in Queenstown, New Zealand. It is a resort town much like Aspen, Colorado. It only lasted about four years and then it closed.

Why do you think traveling to new places is so important?

Traveling opens up your horizons. We are so spoiled in the United States where we can travel 2,000 miles and everyone still speaks English. It has always been important to me to experience what other cultures are like. Traveling helps you discover an awareness of self, and you are able to reach out and touch the history that you have read about. That’s why I had to walk among the ruins of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

How did WKU, and receiving your master’s degree, help prepare you for your future endeavors?

My master’s degree just helped me to become a more well-rounded individual. I always encourage people to keep learning. I think I would have stayed in school my entire life if I could have managed it.

I was planning to teach with my degree, but sometimes you just take a different turn in the road and sometimes you just get lucky and fall into an opportunity, and that is what happened to me at the Lockheed and Boeing companies.

My life would have taken a different spin without WKU. I’m retired now and have so many wonderful memories of travel and school. I actually feel closer to WKU than with my undergraduate institution. I still think about the people I met while attending there and I have often wondered what happened to them and how their lives turned out after all these years.

I enjoy looking at the Red Towel Travels photos and seeing the people who have submitted pictures. My Red Towel photo in front of the Taj Mahal is one of my favorites. I am often asked why I am having my photo taken with the Red Towel. Then I have the opportunity to share WKU’s story with them. It’s another way to talk to people and share what they are doing, where they’re going, and where they have been.

You only get one chance at life—do as much as you can, enjoy every minute of it and never regret a single moment. Live a full life and don’t hurt anyone in the process. I try to do just that. I have fun and I’m very involved in many different things. I have had so many wonderful experiences.
WKU partners in community park project in Allen County

By Carol Cummings ('92)

Western Kentucky University has partnered in the development of a new community park in Allen County, Ky., to offer more than 300 acres of property for educational and recreational programming and research. Through the generosity of the Dugas Family, this partnership will provide student engagement opportunities and create academic experiences for students in a real-world environment.

Dugas Community Park is named for the family that is the chief benefactor of the park: Laura Dugas (daughter of Dollar General founder Cal Turner); her late husband, Wayne Dugas, who passed away in March 2017; their sons, Foster and Steve Dugas; and their late son, Bruce Dugas, who passed away in 2008. Programming at Dugas Community Park will include an ongoing collaboration with WKU.

In addition to endowing an operating fund to help sustain the Park's operations long-term, the Dugas family also endowed a Visiting Professorship at WKU. That professor will collaborate with the Board and executive director of the Friends of Dugas Community Park to create unique and meaningful educational experiences for students from Allen County Schools and WKU.

A new non-profit, the Friends of Dugas Community Park, has been formed to govern the park long-term.

WKU President Gary A. Ransdell ('73, '73) said WKU is excited about the endless possibilities that exist for Dugas Community Park and pleased to be a part of this collaborative effort. "Dugas Community Park will undoubtedly become an incredible resource for the south central Kentucky region, in particular the Scottsville community and residents of Allen County," he said. "This beautiful location will provide opportunities for recreation, agri-tourism, festivals, special events, historical/interpretive activities and so much more. The opportunities to engage students in a meaningful way will span the academic curriculum and benefit students in a myriad of disciplines such as Parks and Recreation, Engineering, Public Relations, Horticulture and Anthropology, just to name a few."

Dr. Ron Ransing, WKU Associate Professor of Kinesiology, Recreation and Sport, has been appointed as the inaugural Dugas Family Professor of Recreation Administration to help coordinate the interdisciplinary educational opportunities at Dugas Community Park. According to Ransing, work on the first phase of the three-phase park has begun with an archeological site survey, and the complete project concept will be further developed through a collaboration among WKU, the City of Scottsville, the Allen County Government, the Dugas Family and the Allen County Schools.
"The plans for the park are to create an open-space setting that blends Civil War heritage, natural conservancy, health and wellness opportunities, recreation and agricultural uses," Dr. Ramsing said. "This unique partnership is a testament to the strong support from the Dugas family and their commitment to community and the education of future generations. The support of the Dugas family will allow WKU to be a strong community partner in the planning and development of this property into a multi-functional, cultural resource for the region."

As a first component of the partnership, WKU students were on hand last fall to participate in an archaeological survey at Dugas Community Park, as they dug holes, screened and looked for artifacts. As the land is a historically significant place and was the site of a Civil War encampment, the archaeological survey was required before any construction could begin.

"Before any movement of soil, it had to be surveyed to see if there was anything in the ground that contractors and other parties involved need to be aware of," Ramsing said. "Throughout the 10-day dig, WKU students helped a team of professionals survey the land and gain hands-on experience in the archaeological field. We worked in partnership with the park and with the city of Scottsville and the friends of Dumont Hill to assist with any of the educational components of the property and to create educational and research opportunities."

As they searched, students used metal detection and shovel testing, screening the soil to locate potential artifacts. Among the items located were a prehistoric chert flake, which is a small piece of debris from making a prehistoric stone tool, and a 19th century cat nail.

"I found the dig to be a great opportunity to experience hands-on work in a field different than my own," Dr. Ramsing said.

"The Dugas Community Park Executive Director Brittany Fisher (’07) said future plans involve eventually rolling the Dumont Hill area into Dugas Community Park where there will be more agricultural-related activities, a farmers’ market, an amphitheater and treehouse village to create a more regional draw."

"I found the experience fulfilling and I appreciated that the archaeologists allowed us to take an active role in the fieldwork. We did almost everything they would do, and they monitored and helped us with it all along the way. This gave me a good idea of the typical nature of archaeological work. Although we learned about applied work in the classroom, seeing it and participating in it at Dugas Community Park helped me to better understand what archaeological work is like," she said.

"Additionally, I learned how to count and measure my strides, sifted dirt and spoke with the project managers to gain some understanding of the responsibilities and tasks present at an archaeological site. Being a proponent of well-roundedness, I would do anything to experience hands-on work in a field different than my own."
Biology grad student’s research on human-elephant conflict recognized by Student Research Conference and WKU Fund

By Carol Cummings ('92)

Thanks to the WKU Fund, students like Lynn Von Hagen were recognized for groundbreaking research projects at WKU’s 47th Annual Student Research Conference. Von Hagen was one of 39 student researchers out of 480 participants who received an award sponsored by the WKU Fund in March.

Raised in Mt. Juliet, Tenn., Von Hagen is a non-traditional graduate student who currently makes her home with her husband in Old Hickory, Tenn. However, during the week she lives in Bowling Green, she is completing graduate school and studying elephant behavior and conservation.

“I have been interested in conservation since I was a teenager, with an extra interest in elephants and their behavior,” she said. “One of my goals is to inspire other older students to return to pursue their dreams as I have. It’s never too late!”

Von Hagen’s project, which won in the Natural Sciences Graduate Papers section of the research competition, focused on using chili pepper fences to deter elephants from destroying crops in Kenya’s Kasigau Wildlife Corridor. This method will help alleviate human-elephant conflict, which is the overall topic of her graduate thesis. Von Hagen is currently working at the Kasigau Wildlife Corridor as part of an eight-month collaboration project with Dr. Bruce Schulte, Head of WKU’s Department of Biology, who was awarded a grant through the International Elephant Foundation to support the work. The study is part of a long-term project supported in part by the Earthwatch Institute, an advocate and organizer of citizen science.

“Human-elephant conflict occurs whenever humans and elephants come into contact and compete over resources,” Von Hagen explained. “Crop raiding is the most common form and can result in an elephant destroying an entire farmer’s field in one evening. This creates a loss of livelihood for rural people, who are often struggling to feed their families and rely on their crops as sustenance and income.”

This conflict creates tension that can sometimes result in violent retaliation against elephants, and farmers can often be harmed or killed trying to defend their fields. Researchers continue to look for deterrent measures, which can prevent elephants from plundering crops. “Our study, in conjunction with Wildlife Works and Earthwatch, will compare deterrent methods, such as chili pepper fences and a new metallic strip fence, in a paired control field experiment,” Von Hagen said. “I am also conducting a lab experiment that could help quantify the amount of capsaicinoids, the active ingredient in the chili pepper fences and the focus of my research presentation, that are lost over time, which could affect the efficacy of the fences.”

During her time in Kenya, Von Hagen will also be cataloging the elephant groups in the area, and attempting to identify crop raiders, as well as performing wildlife surveys to determine if there are any indicator species that may signify crop raiding fluctuations. She will also be looking at damage to trees caused by elephants and determining any temporal correlations with crop raiding.

“Working with Dr. Schulte has been a dream,” she said of her mentor. “He is excellent at developing his students as scientists, writers and conservationists. He will be joining the project for part of the time I will be in Kenya, and he has and will be instructing me closely from afar the remainder of the time.”

“Lynn is an intelligent, compassionate, diligent, enthusiastic and personable non-traditional student,” Dr. Schulte said. “She has been and will continue to be a wonderful ambassador for WKU during her research study in Kenya on human-elephant conflict. Lynn has a bright future as a conservation biologist.”

Another alumnus, Simon Kasaine ('11), a native Kenyan who received his M.S. under the direction of Dr. Michael Stokes, will also be involved as a collaborator with Von Hagen and Dr. Schulte on the project in Kenya.

With plans to complete her thesis in the spring of 2018, Von Hagen hopes to become an international conservation biologist, working with species and ecosystems that are experiencing difficulties due to anthropogenic activities and climate change. “This research has enriched my life in ways I never thought possible,” she said. “It has allowed me to pursue my childhood dreams and adult aspirations, and it will forever make WKU an important part of that journey.”

Marc Archambault, President of the WKU Foundation, said, “The WKU Fund, managed by the WKU Foundation, attracts unrestricted private donations intended to support WKU priorities. This unrestricted support from our alumni enhances innovative initiatives that help students persist, achieve and graduate. The Student Research Conference was a perfect partnership, as it recognized the research of some of WKU’s brightest minds.”
Four former Hilltoppers were among the 11 members of the 2017 Class of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Michelle Clark-Heard ('90), Betty Jo Cook Gibson ('48), Anna Jo Cook Pickens ('48) and Jesse Stuart ('78) were inducted during a March 18, 2017 ceremony in Lexington, Ky. Though the recipients were chosen for their contributions as high school athletes, all four of the former Hilltoppers also left a strong mark on WKU during their collegiate careers.

Prior to her time on the Hill, Michelle Clark-Heard ('90) was a three-year starter at Atherton High School, where she earned All-District, All-Region and All-State honors each of those three seasons for the Lady Rebels. At WKU, she was a part of four consecutive NCAA Tournament teams. She helped the Lady Toppers to a pair of Sun Belt Conference Tournament titles, two regular season Sun Belt championships and 89 victories during her collegiate career, while totaling 790 points and 615 rebounds.

Clark-Heard made the transition to coaching after her playing days came to an end, with coaching stops at Cincinnati, Nebraska, Kentucky State and Louisville. Bowling Green, Ky., once again became her home when she was named Head Coach at WKU in 2012, and she went on to earn Sun Belt Conference Coach of the Year honors in her first season with the Lady Toppers.

Betty Jo Cook Gibson ('48) and Anna Jo Cook Pickens ('48) were the first cheerleaders to receive athletic scholarships to WKU, after being recruited personally by legendary Coach E.A. Diddle. The duo, who began cheering when they were seventh graders, wrote and performed their own cheers at London High School. "The Twisters" were flooded with attention by Lexington and Louisville media members after performing at the 1944 KHSAA state tournament, with glowing reviews appearing in the city newspapers following their routines. Their popularity at WKU grew to the point that the duo had their own twice-weekly radio show, and when the Hilltoppers traveled to New York and Indianapolis, the twins went with them. On Christmas night in 1944, the twins performed between games of a basketball doubleheader at New York's Madison Square Garden before 18,500 fans and received six encore-a-feat noted by The New York Times. Anna Jo Cook Pickens passed away in 2012 at the age of 85, and Betty Jo Cook Gibson resides in Louisville, Ky.

Jesse Stuart ('78) was a dominant track and field athlete at Glasgow High School, winning three-consecutive state titles in the shot put, while setting a state record that still stands 47 years later. His dominance as a high-school athlete paved the way for an NCAA Championship and three Silver medals as a member of Team USA. After starting his collegiate career at the University of Kentucky, Stuart transferred to WKU, earning five All-America honors over the course of his NCAA career. Ranked in the top-10 nationally on 13 occasions, he was a member of 13 USA National Teams and competed in the 1975 and 1983 Pan American Games. Stuart currently makes his home in Reeds Spring, Mo.

Hilltopper Football Head Coach Mike Sanford

Mike Sanford, one of college football’s brightest offensive minds and a former Hilltopper assistant, was named the 20th Head Football Coach at WKU on Dec. 14.

PERSONAL

BORN: Feb. 4, 1962
HOMETOWN: Lexington, Va.
COLLEGE: Boise State, '85
WIFE: Anna Marie
CHILDREN: Peyton, Gunnar and Griffin

COACHING CAREER

2001-2006 UNLV Graduate Assistant
2010 UNLV QB/Passing Game
2011 Stanford Running Backs
2014 Boise State OC/Quarterbacks
2015-2016 Notre Dame OC/Quarterbacks
2016-2017 WKU Head Coach

BOWL EXPERIENCE

2002 HUMANITARIAN Boise State, Player
2003 FORT WORTH Boise State, Player
2004 LIBERTY Boise State, Player
2011 FIESTA Stanford, Coach
2012 ROSE Stanford, Coach
2013 ROSE Stanford, Coach
2014 FIESTA Boise State, Coach
2015 FIESTA Boise State, Coach

ASSISTANT COACHES

CLAYTON WHITE Defensive Coordinator | JUNIOR ADAMS Offensive Coordinator - Wide Receivers | STEVE SPURRIER JR. Assistant Head Coach - Quarterbacks
MIKE SANFORD, Assistant Coach - Running Back | GEOFF GARTH Assistant Coach - Offensive Line | JIMMY LINDSEY Assistant Coach - Defensive Line
JAMIE DEEBER Assistant Coach - Safeties/Recruit Coordinator | BYRON NHAMFRET Assistant Coach - Tight Ends | MAURICE CRUMB Assistant Coach - Linebackers
Volleyball Update

The WKU Volleyball squad racked up the individual awards during its 30-3 2016 campaign. Head Coach Travis Hudson was tabbed an AVCA National Coach of the Year finalist to go along with his AVCA Regional Coach of the Year and C-USA Coach of the Year nods. Alyssa Cavanagh, Jessica Lucas and Rachel Anderson combined for six All-American accolades across three outlets as Cavanagh and Lucas earned AVCA All-America status for the third-consecutive season. Cavanagh took home C-USA Player of the Year honors while Lucas was tabbed the league’s Setter of the Year for the second-straight season and Anderson went on to be named the C-USA Tournament MVP. Five Lady Toppers were honored as All-Conference performers.

Looking Ahead to 2017-2018 Hilltopper Basketball

The future looks bright for the WKU Men’s Basketball program as the Hilltoppers head into their second season under Head Coach Rick Stansbury. WKU made waves in the recruiting scene during the November 2016 early signing period by inking a nationally ranked class. WKU received national letters of intent in the fall from five-star center Mitchell Robinson, four-star guard Josh Anderson and three-star guard Taveion Hollingsworth. Robinson is ranked as high as the fourth-best prospect in the entire 2017 class and is the first McDonald’s All-American in WKU history, while Hollingsworth is the first Hilltopper signed to win Kentucky’s Mr. Basketball award since 2007. Anderson, a top-100 guard, helped his Madison Prep Academy win its third straight state title this season. The recruiting haul is ranked in the top 15 in the country by Rivals, Scout and 247Sports.

The Hilltoppers have also signed junior college guard Jordan Brangers this spring. The sharpshooter is ranked as the No. 3 JUCO prospect in the nation, was named a First-Team All-American and led the country in made 3-pointers. Along with more expected additions and returning players, the 2017-2018 season is shaping up to be an exciting one for the Hilltoppers. The schedule includes three games against top competition in November at the Battle 4 Atlantis in the Bahamas, as well as a trip to perennial power Wisconsin.

WKU will have a chance to build some early chemistry with a foreign tour trip to Costa Rica in August. That event allows the Hilltoppers to hold 10 extra practices and play in a handful of games against international teams to prepare for the season ahead. The buzz around the program should make for an electric atmosphere next season in E.A. Diddle Arena. Despite an up-and-down season, the Hilltoppers notched an 11-3 record at home in 2016-2017, continuing Stansbury’s impressive home record. His teams have won nearly 88 percent of their nonconference home games in his 15 seasons as a Head Coach, as well as nearly 80 percent of all home games. Stansbury notched his 300th career victory at Florida Atlantic on Dec. 31, 2016.

Women’s Basketball 2016-2017 Season Recap

C-USA Regular Season and Tournament Champions

For the second time in three seasons as a member of the league, WKU claimed both the C-USA regular season and tournament titles, notching a 16-2 record in conference play to match the best record in program history. The Lady Toppers fired off 12 consecutive wins beginning with a 67-58 win over Louisiana Tech on Feb. 2 and became the first team in C-USA history to win each of its three tournament games by double digits. WKU’s tournament championship was its 12th in program history and guaranteed the 19th NCAA appearance for the Lady Toppers.

Rewriting the NCAA Record Book

Against Lipscomb on Dec. 15 inside Diddle Arena, WKU held the Bisons to just two first-half points, the lowest points allowed in a single half during the shot clock era in either men’s or women’s basketball. The Lady Toppers led 56-2 at the halftime break and limited Lipscomb to just 1-of-30 shooting from the field over the first 20 minutes. For the first time in program history since the quarter system was implemented prior to the 2015-2016 season, WKU also held an opponent scoreless for an entire quarter as Lipscomb did not score during the second frame.

Perfect at Home in Conference

In C-USA games played inside Diddle Arena this season, WKU posted a perfect 9-0 record, its first perfect home record in conference play since also going 9-0 as a member of the Sun Belt in 2007-2008. In its three years as a member of C-USA, WKU holds a 25-2 record at home against conference foes and is 42-3 overall; the Lady Toppers are also one of only seven programs nationwide with one or fewer losses at home in each of the last three seasons, joining powerhouse programs such as UConn, South Carolina and Notre Dame.

MARQUEE WINS

WKU 85, No. 25 Indiana 74 (Nov. 19, 2016) – WKU’s second win over a ranked team in as many seasons
WKU 90, FIU 38 (Jan. 1, 2017) – fourth-largest margin of victory in a C-USA game in conference history
WKU 67, Southern Miss 56 (March 11, 2017) – WKU wins 2017 C-USA Tournament
RON SKILLERN ('82) AND JOE WESTERFIELD ('71)

Two WKU Alumni included in 2017 Class of Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame

WKU is proudly represented in the ninth class of the Governor Louise B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame, as two of the three inductees are WKU alumni. Ron Skillern ('82) of Bowling Green, Ky., and Joe Westerfield ('71) of Owensboro, Ky., were inducted on March 8 during a ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort.

Ron Skillern ('82)

Ron Skillern, who teaches Social Studies at Bowling Green High School, has received numerous awards in a teaching career that has spanned more than 30 years, but he is quick to share the credit.

"As a high school teacher, I stand on the shoulders of giants," he said. "Every preschool teacher, every elementary teacher that has laid the foundation for whatever we get these children." Skillern has led an interesting and influential career. He received his B.A. in History and Political Science from WKU in 1982, and he went on to receive his M.A. in Education from Vanderbilt University in 1984 and his Rank 1 in Education from WKU in 1987.

Throughout his career, he has taught at Warren Central High School, Greenwood High School and Bowling Green High School. In 1992, Skillern began teaching a three-week intensive course titled Nazi Germany & the Holocaust, through The Center for Gifted Studies/ V.A.M.I.O program (The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth). He has continued to teach this summer course to this day.

His many awards and recognitions over the years include the Governors Scholars Program "Outstanding Educator Award" (numerous years), 1968 Teacher of the Year for Warren County Schools, 1997 Teacher of the Year at Bowling Green High School, a Distinguished Alumni Summit Award from WKU and The Center for Gifted Studies in 2015, and was also named 2017 Kentucky Teacher of the Year by Valvoline, Inc., and the Kentucky Department of Education.

Skillern said he still enjoys making an impact on students' lives and preparing them for the future. "Something that continues to drive me is being able to reach and impact students every day," he said. "It is a dynamic day. No day has ever been the same."

Joe Westerfield ('71)

Joe Westerfield, who taught Social Studies for 33 years until his retirement in 2002, said he was thrilled and humbled by the Hall of Fame recognition.

"Just to be considered is an honor," he said. "To be selected as one of the winners is mind bogglng."

Westerfield has been, and continues to be, extremely active in political forums and activism, serving on various related committees and registering more than 5,000 students to vote. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1969 before earning his master's degree from WKU in 1971 and his Administration Rank 1 from WKU in 1973.

Throughout his career, he taught at Daviess County Junior High and Apollo High School, and he served a term as Director of Instructional Support with the Kentucky Department of Education. At Apollo, Westerfield served as the Social Studies Department Chairman, was a member of its site-based council and sponsored many different clubs.

Westerfield also served four years as the Congressional District Contact Team Person for the National Education Association in the 2nd District, and was appointed to serve on the Governor's Advisory Committee for Federal Funding for Education. Among his many awards and honors, he was chosen in 2004 as the winner of the Liberty Bell Award, which is given each year by local bar associations to honor outstanding citizens within the local community.

Westerfield acknowledged that he was lucky to have a job that he enjoyed. "I knew from a long time ago that this is what I wanted to do," he said. "I had a great career. I loved it."
Matt Bevin to chair the Performance Funding Work Group, which included the eight public university presidents, the President of the Council on Postsecondary Education, representatives from the House, Senate and the Governor’s office and the State Budget Director. Their charge was to develop a model that was fair yet also challenged the universities to make improvements in retention and graduation rates, among other metrics.

The Performance Funding Work Group’s report was submitted in December 2016 and was the impetus for SB153, which passed during the 2017 Kentucky General Assembly, sponsored by Kentucky Senate President Pro Tem David Givens (89, 97) of Greensburg, Ky. SB153 established the performance funding model for distribution of all state funds to the public universities.

“Having worked closely with Gary on issues impacting WKU specifically and Kentucky postsecondary education generally,” said Sen. Givens, “I have discovered in him a rare combination of skills. He is driven to pursue excellence but deals in the reality of people and issues. The ability to reconcile those conflicting pressures while staying engaged day after day – on good days and bad – is a rare gift. Thankfully, Gary has done it very well, to the benefit of WKU and the Commonwealth.”

Kentucky State Rep. Michael Meredith (19) of Brownsville, Ky., not only worked with Dr. Ransdell in Frankfort but also was a student at WKU during his tenure. “It has been a privilege to be a student under President Ransdell’s leadership and to work with him as a legislator during the transformation that he has led of our beloved University,” Rep. Meredith said. “His integrity and leadership is highly respected in Frankfort and will certainly be missed. I know I join all of my colleagues in wishing him and Julie well in their future endeavors.”

Dr. Ransdell approached the legislative process as a tool to improve postsecondary education in Kentucky. He navigated the legislative system with ease and developed important relationships to move WKU forward to achieve his vision of becoming a “leading American university with international reach.”

“President Ransdell was singularly focused on budgetary and program priorities before and during each legislative session,” Rep. Richards said. “His goals were strategic, expansive and clearly defined, and he paid attention to all necessary details. I have greatly enjoyed working with him because he had unique vision for WKU and knew how to work with others to accomplish that vision. I enjoyed working with him very much and am happy to call him my mentor.”

Dr. Ransdell’s work with the Kentucky General Assembly has improved WKU and the educational experience students receive at the University. Through his leadership and vision, WKU is a leader in higher education.

Kentucky Legislature Approves Performance Funding Measure for Universities

By Rebbecca Morrison Taylor (90, 97)

In an effort aimed at ensuring a return on investment, Kentucky policy makers approved a sweeping change in how the state’s public universities will be funded beginning with the fiscal year that starts July 1, 2017. The measure, SB153, was sponsored by Sen. David Givens (89, 97) of Greensburg, Ky., and followed the recommendation of the Higher Education Performance Funding Work Group that was established in the previous legislative session. The work group consisted of the presidents of each of Kentucky’s public universities, the President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, one member from the Kentucky House of Representatives and one from the Senate, the State Budget Director and a representative for Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin. WKU President Gary A. Ransdell (73, 74) chaired the workgroup, which submitted a consensus recommendation to the Governor and the legislature last December. SB153 was passed by the Senate and House during the 2017 session and subsequently signed into law by Gov. Bevin.

Performance funding for Kentucky universities sets priorities for the distribution of the nearly $1 billion in state appropriation that universities currently receive and will guide how new funds are spent in future years. The funding formula devotes 70 percent of the funds to outcomes-based components and 30 percent to operating support.

By strategically aligning funding with desired outcomes and student success, the funding formula rewards institutions for student progression and graduation, and provides added incentives for degrees earned by underrepresented minorities and low-income students. The formula also rewards universities for producing more graduates in the high-wage, high-demand STEM-H (science, technology, engineering, math and healthcare) workforce sectors.
Cabo Cliffs Golf Course, Inverness, Nova Scotia, Canada
August 2014
Jason Baysinger ('94) and Chad Davis ('90)

Cerro Negro Volcano
Leon, Nicaragua
January 2017
Lisa Stahl ('04)

Mesa Verde National Park
Mancos, Colorado
February 2017
Amanda Puszel ('12)

Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona
October 2016
Ray Harris ('79, '78)'65

Havana, Cuba
November 2016
Pam ('72) and John Record ('73, '75)

Waterboat Point, Antarctica
December 2016
Stephen Turvick ('06)

Vienna, Austria
October 2016
Sharon Wilson Tolypka ('78, '87), Steve Tolypka ('78)
Kenneth Tolypka ('78) and Janet Siddle Tolypka ('73)

Tail of the Dragon (318 curves in 11 mi.)
Deals Gap, North Carolina
October 2016
Ray White ('80) and Phyllis White

"American Eagle" Riverboat Cruise
September 2015
Susan ('63) and Royce Coles celebrating their 50th anniversary

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!
Please list names of each person in picture and their graduation year. Please include date and location of picture. Send 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.
Thumbs-Up! recognizes the artistic endeavors of our talented alumni. We want to honor your creative spirit and share your achievements. Do you have something to share with your fellow alumni? Have you recently published a book, sung your heart out in a musical, or held an exhibition of your artwork? Please submit your announcement by mail to WKU Alumni Association, 292 Alumni Ave., Suite 309, Bowling Green, KY 42101 or via email at alumni@wku.edu.

Michael Hicks ('95)

Michael Hicks ('95) of Owensboro, Ky., recently worked as Editor and Creative Consultant on the documentary The Noble Heirs, which has been accepted into the Cannes Short Film Festival in Cannes, France. The documentary is set in Drôme, a department in southeastern France, and interviews remaining survivors of World War II who share intriguing stories of the resistance, military fighters, and the scars of occupation. He also received the AVA Award for his role in the short film.

Larry B. Gildersleeve ('71)

Larry B. Gildersleeve ('71) of Bowling Green, Ky., has released his debut novel, Dancing Along Without Music. Set in both Bowling Green and Chicago, the novel is a present-day contemporary story that will resonate with persons of faith, as well as all those who embrace the merits of perseverance in overcoming life's challenges.

Sherrill Williams ('74)

Sherrill Williams ('74) of Vine Grove, Ky., and Charles Thurman ('65) of Sonora, Ky., have co-authored a biography on the life and athletic career of Raymond "Corky" Withrow. Uncorked! Kentucky Sports Legend Corky Withrow chronicles the true story of this charismatic and colorful Central City High graduate who had been a first-team All-American high school cage star in 1956. Withrow would go on to be selected by the NBA's Philadelphia Warriors in the 1961 draft and sign a professional baseball contract with the Milwaukee Braves.

Ruth Robbins ('92)

Ruth Robbins ('92) of Greendale, Wis., has published her first novel, Josher's First Thirty Days in Heaven, a story about a young boy's orientation to Heavens. In addition to her writing, Ruth has also published three music CDs and sells her original artwork and jewelry.
Class Notes is a department that allows WKU Alumni Association members to update fellow classmates on significant accomplishments and events in their lives. Annual memberships are $35 for a single or $50 for a joint membership. Lifetime memberships are $700 for a single and $1,000 for a joint membership. If you wish to publish announcements in Class Notes, please submit them by mail to WKU Alumni Association, 292 Alumni Ave., Suite 302, Bowling Green, KY 42101 or via email at alumni@wku.edu.

Kathryn (Brown) Gilbert ('39) of Bowling Green, Ky., celebrated her 101st birthday on August 30, 2016. Gilbert attended the Training School (College High) from first grade until her high school graduation in 1934. She went on to study at the Business University in 1937 until her graduation in 1939. Utilizing her business degree and natural business acumen, Gilbert has worked in many positions and industries including serving as the first Secretary of the Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Beverly Keepers ('70) of Louisville, Ky., has been named an Alumni Fellow at the University of Louisville for distinction in her career and for serving as an exemplary ambassador for the University. She recently retired as Dean of the College of Education at Spalding University after a long career in school administration in Jefferson County Public Schools.

John W. Ridley ('74) of Bowling Green, Ky., has been awarded the Accredited Investment Fiduciary® (AIF®) designation from the Center for Fiduciary Studies™. Ridley is the Investment Officer/Managing Director of the Ridley Group of Wells Fargo Advisors in Bowling Green.

Dr. Beverly Keepers ('70) of Louisville, Ky., has been named an Alumni Fellow at the University of Louisville for distinction in her career and for serving as an exemplary ambassador for the University. She recently retired as Dean of the College of Education at Spalding University after a long career in school administration in Jefferson County Public Schools.

Andy Sears ('74) of Pewee Valley, Ky., retired from Baptist Health after more than 37 years. He began his career at the two Baptist hospitals in Louisville in 1979. Serving in many roles throughout the organization, he has been the Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer since 2013. Sears was instrumental in developing and implementing strategies that has seen Baptist Health, a $2.3 billion company, grow into the largest and most successful health system serving Kentucky. (Photo 1)

Randall E. Norris ('78) of Columbus, Ohio, was recently promoted to the position of Senior Litigation Specialist in the Litigation Services Department of Motorists Insurance Group (MIG). He has been with MIG since 2007. He received his J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1982 and is admitted to the Bars of Kentucky, Ohio and Virginia. Norris previously served as Assistant Jessamine County Attorney for 16 years and as a Judge Advocate in the United States Navy, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander. (Photo 2)

Randall E. Norris ('78) of Columbus, Ohio, was recently promoted to the position of Senior Litigation Specialist in the Litigation Services Department of Motorists Insurance Group (MIG). He has been with MIG since 2007. He received his J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1982 and is admitted to the Bars of Kentucky, Ohio and Virginia. Norris previously served as Assistant Jessamine County Attorney for 16 years and as a Judge Advocate in the United States Navy, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander. (Photo 2)

Stanley DeWayne "D.J." Johnson ('79) of Owensboro, Ky., has been elected as the District 13 Representative to the Kentucky State House of Representatives. The photo shows Johnson and his wife, Ellen Wiltynett Johnson ('77) receiving a congratulatory phone call. (Photo 3)
George Nichols III (’83) of Potomac, Md., an employee of New York Life Insurance Company since 2001, has been promoted to Executive Vice President in charge of the Office of Governmental Affairs, which includes all state, federal and international legislative, regulatory and public policy issues at the company. With the appointment, Nichols will take on additional duties on an array of enterprise initiatives in support of the company’s long-term strategic objectives. He has led the Office of Governmental Affairs since 2007.

Jennifer Meta Robinson, Ph.D. (’88) of Strickley, Inc., received the 2016 Distinguished Service Award from the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) at the organization’s annual meeting on Oct. 13, 2015, in Los Angeles. She is a Professor of Practice in the Indiana University Department of Anthropology. (Photo 7)

Bill “Doc E” Edwards (’74, ’76) to retire after 47 years of service

After 47 years of service to Western Kentucky University Athletics, Associate Athletic Director for Athletic Training and Sports Medicine Bill “Doc E” Edwards has announced his resignation effective March 1, 2017. Edwards, a 1964 inductee into WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni, was named Head Athletic Trainer at WKU in 1963 after six years as an assistant and was elevated to his current post in 2009. A two-time graduate of the University in 1974 and 1976, Edwards came to the Hill as a student in 1970 and began his career as a student athletic trainer. He received his degree in Physical Education in 1974 and was a member of Phi Delta Theta, where he served on fraternity president in 1973-74. Edwards followed his undergraduate curriculum by earning his graduate degree in Secondary Education and Health Education from WKU in 1976 and certification with the National Trainers’ Association, a distinction he has held since 1975.

“As I close out my career, I am extremely indebted to my mentor and our first full-time athletic trainer, Russell Miller, who extended an offer to become a student athletic trainer in the fall of 1970,” Edwards said.

“I have been so fortunate to work at my alma mater my entire career. Through five presidents, nine athletic directors, seven years with basketball, 47 years with football, eight football coaches and 533 football games, it’s time for a new chapter.”

“I am thankful to President Dowling and Coach John Oldham for hiring me and for the privilege of working with many of my heroes: Coach Jimmy Fretts, “Burch” Gilbert, Jim Richrands, Glenn Haskey, Jack Harbaugh, Bill Powell, Burch Oglesby, Wes Strader and many others,” he continued. “I’ve been blessed to work with over 200 student-athletes, 29 associate athletic trainers and my team physicians who have been the best. I am appreciative of the support of our administration has provided to our Athletic Training and Sports Medicine Department. I am retiring from my position but not from my University and looking forward to great days ahead.”
Kelly Ford ('87) Co-Hosts America's Morning Show with NASH-FM

Kelly Ford ('87), who got her start at the college radio station at WKU, is now co-hosting the popular America’s Morning Show, a nationally syndicated program on NASH-FM in Nashville, Tenn.

In a recent article by Style Blueprint writer Heidi Fetter, Ford credited WKU with giving her a start in the business. “I love to talk,” she said. “At some point during my college years at Western Kentucky University, it dawned on me that I could actually get paid to talk! No heavy lifting! Where do I sign up?”

Ford spent 20 years in Denver, Cola, on air at a country music station, before she moved to New York City three years ago to start a country music station — the first one in New York City in 17 years. In January, she started the coveted NASH job in Music City.

“It’s like coming home,” the Kentucky native said. “I feel like every single experience I’ve had personally and professionally has led to this opportunity, and I’ve never been more prepared or capable to take it on.”

Ford was recently highlighted in a FACES of Nashville column for Style Blueprint, the South’s largest-growing online lifestyle brand, anchored by articles, curated local guides and a newly launched app. Read the full article at http://blueprint.com/eng.

Sarah Miller Camic ('09) and Brandon Camic of Lexington, Ky., were married on April 5, 2016, in Millwood, Ky. Sarah currently serves as the Volunteer Coordinator for UK HealthCare and is an Instructor in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Kentucky. (Photo 17)

Jordan English ('09) and Meredith (Schultz) English ('09) of Lexington, Ky., were married on March 5, 2016. Jordan (former Sigma Alpha Epsilon President) and Meredith (former Sigma Alpha Epsilon Preservation Officer) were surrounded by their friends, family and other Hilltoppers to celebrate a journey that has been eight years in the making. The newlyweds are excited for all the future holds and thank WKU for bringing them together! (Photo 18)

Emily Patton ('12) and Nathan Bishop ('12) of Henderson, Ky., announce their engagement and upcoming wedding in October 2017. (Photo 21)

Meredith Coleman ('13) of Phoenix, Ariz., has accepted a job as a Speech Pathologist at The Clubhouse, a private clinic for children in Phoenix. She received her master’s degree from the University of Kentucky in May 2015.

Luke Coleman ('15) of Nashville, Tenn., was hired as an Outreach Coordinator for The Heart Trew Foundation in May 2015. While a student at WKU, he was a volunteer and served as Chapter President of the “Trew Friends.” Luke recently had a successful bone marrow transplant at the Sarah Cannon Cancer Center in Nashville, Tenn., from an unrelated donor on the National Bone Marrow Registry. He and his sister, Meredith Coleman ('13) have become active in educating and registering people to become bone marrow donors.

Joseph Taylor Richard ('15) of Overshun, Ky., has joined the investment banking team at Brown Gibbons Lang & Company as an Associate in the fall of 2015. He is pictured with Professors Michael Gerhardt and Russell Riley. (Photo 16)

Sara Miller Camic ('09) and Brandon Camic of Lexington, Ky., were married on April 5, 2016, in Millwood, Ky. Sarah currently serves as the Volunteer Coordinator for UK HealthCare and is an Instructor in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Kentucky. (Photo 17)

Jordan English ('09) and Meredith (Schultz) English ('09) of Lexington, Ky., were married on March 5, 2016. Jordan (former Sigma Alpha Epsilon President) and Meredith (former Sigma Alpha Epsilon Preservation Officer) were surrounded by their friends, family and other Hilltoppers to celebrate a journey that has been eight years in the making. The newlyweds are excited for all the future holds and thank WKU for bringing them together! (Photo 18)

Emily Patton ('12) and Nathan Bishop ('12) of Henderson, Ky., announce their engagement and upcoming wedding in October 2017. (Photo 21)

Meredith Coleman ('13) of Phoenix, Ariz., has accepted a job as a Speech Pathologist at The Clubhouse, a private clinic for children in Phoenix. She received her master’s degree from the University of Kentucky in May 2015.

Luke Coleman ('15) of Nashville, Tenn., was hired as an Outreach Coordinator for The Heart Trew Foundation in May 2015. While a student at WKU, he was a volunteer and served as Chapter President of the “Trew Friends.” Luke recently had a successful bone marrow transplant at the Sarah Cannon Cancer Center in Nashville, Tenn., from an unrelated donor on the National Bone Marrow Registry. He and his sister, Meredith Coleman ('13) have become active in educating and registering people to become bone marrow donors.

Joseph Taylor Richard ('15) of Overshun, Ky., has joined the investment banking team at Brown Gibbons Lang & Company as an Associate in the fall of 2015. He is pictured with Professors Michael Gerhardt and Russell Riley. (Photo 16)
Brandon Davidson ('08, '11, Staff) and Danyel (Lashbrook) Davidson ('09) of Bowling Green, Ky., welcomed their daughter, Inde Rene, on June 17, 2016. (Photo 25)

Lucas Gilliam ('12) and Katie Gilliam ('10) of Henderson, Ky., announce the birth of their twins, Anne Taylor and James Nowlin, who arrived in June 2016. (Photo 26)

Justin Henninger ('08) of Kentucky, announce the birth of their daughter, Genevieve of Bowling Green, Ky., announce the birth of their son, April (Parry) Kron ('01) of Henderson, Ky., announce the birth of their daughter, Tinslee Estelle, welcomed as son, William Lee, on Aug. 24, 2016. Leslie McCoy ('05, '07) of Lagrange, Ky., announce the birth of their daughter, Sadie Victoria, on June 14, 2016. She was welcomed by her two older brothers, Haydn and Nolan. (Photo 36)

Brittany Sears Walker ('07, '10) and Alan Walker of Adairsville, Ky., announce the birth of their second child, Wesley Alan III, on Oct. 20, 2015. He weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 20 inches long. He was welcomed by his big sister, Mattie. (Photo 31)

Julie Lyn Barber, Assistant Professor of Theatre & Dance, won an "Arts in the Parks" grant from the Indiana Arts Commission to write, produce, direct and perform in Indiana Square Stageplay, a new musical. Barber graduated from Ball State University in 2014 with a Doctor of Arts in Music. While at BSU she studied voice with Mei Zhong, composition with Jody Nagele and directing with Karen Kessler.

The Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed the 2017 Class of Leadership Bowling Green, and the 31-member roster includes 19 WKU alumni. Leadership Bowling Green, which began in 1985, is a leadership development program that involves nine sessions, beginning with a retreat in April and ending with a graduation in November. During the nine sessions, the class studies the community’s strengths and challenges through lectures, discussions, tours and role-playing activities. The goal is to gain a wide knowledge about Bowling Green through an overview of a variety of community functions.

LEADERSHIP BOWLING GREEN

The 2017 Class includes the following WKU alumni:

Alicia Carter ('07) WKU Division of Public Affairs
Chad Carter ('07) BGSU
Amber Frye ('11) Franklin Bank & Trust Company
Melanie Hatfield ('09) Service One Credit Union
Erin Holdeman ('09) Western Kentucky University
Scott Holt ('99) Stewart-Ritchey Construction, Inc.
Chelsea Houchins ('13) American Bank & Trust Company
Christopher Kummer ('97) Warren County Parks & Recreation Department
B.J. Malone ('99) Warren County Water District
Christi McCown ('92) Happy Place Travel
Rebekah McKinney ('12) Bell, Os, Ayers & Moore, LLP
Linda Moore ('90) Citizens First
Jackson Ross ('15) U.S. Bank
Alison Sexton ('02) Bowling Green Municipal Utilities
Brian Summers ('04) Farmers National Bank
Joey Traughber ('07) Traughber Mechanical Services, Inc.
Melanie Watts ('93) Bowling Green Police Department
Chad Webb ('09) Crown South
Brandy Zackery ('09) Arnold Consulting Engineering Services, Inc.
SUMMER 2017 | IN MEMORIAM

Janet Clark Frockt, a longtime friend of WKU, passed away in February 2017. She was a frequent collaborator with her husband, Richard Frockt (67), in both business and civic ventures. She was a key member of WCT Communications Inc., a Santa Barbara-based company that, in 1994, was named Fortune Magazine's 26th fastest-growing public company in the U.S. In 2003, the Frockts established the Frockt Family Professorship in History at WKU, deepening their long-time commitment to WKU.

In 2003, the Frockts established the Frockt Family Professorship in History at Western Kentucky University, following their long-time commitment to WKU. Her survivors, in addition to her husband, include a son, Ryan Jeffrey Frockt (jacqueline) and husband, Reagon Clark.

Charles A. Keown, a former administrator at Western Kentucky University, died in January 2017 at his home in Bowling Green, Ky. He was 92.

Keown, who was an Agriculture Professor at WKU, was tabbed by then-President Kathy Thompson to become the first Dean of Students at WKU in 1956. He held that post until he retired in 1985. During his 30-year tenure, Dean Keown helped establish and oversaw the Student Government Association, WKU Greek system, University Center Board, Black Student Union and a comprehensive residence hall system, among other programs.

"Dean Keown believed that there should be outlets outside the classroom for students to learn and grow into responsible citizens," said former SGA President Katie Dawson '16 (69).

Kentucky Representative Jody Richards said, "Charles Keown was a good man who discharged his duties as Dean of Students at WKU with compassion, fairness and a firm hand. He will be missed by thousands of students, faculty and other friends with whom he had contact."

Keown is predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Jewell Arington Keown, and son, Mike. He is survived by a daughter, Pam Feldman, of Bowling Green, Ky.; a son, Greg (Ashley), of Louisville, Ky.; seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Mr. Timothy Edgar Hampton, 72
Mr. Terry Hill Hudson, 76
Mrs. Janet Hayford Robinson, 78
Mrs. Martha F. Hayes
Mr. William S. Haynes Jr., 96
Mrs. Teri Tichenor Herbst, 76, 78, Staff
Dr. John Herndon, 68
Dr. Norman E. Hertzel
Mrs. Alma Jean (Bender) Hockett, 61, 69
Mr. William Gay Hogue Jr., 99 BU
Mr. William Monroe Hulbert, 79
Mrs. Doris A. Hollaway, Staff
Mr. Robert Wilson Hummer, 78
Mr. James Ronald Hurley, 98
Mr. Raymond Hunt Jr., 63
Mr. Ronald H. Hunter
Mrs. Carolyn (Gibson) Why, 77
Mrs. Gwendolyn (Hudson) Johnson, 61
Mr. John William Jones II, 71
Mrs. Nola Pope Jones
Dr. Randall Edward King Jr., 35
Mrs. Julia (Hartley) Kinky, 95
Dr. Walter B. Kleinman Jr.
Dr. Teresa "Terry" A. Kuefer, 78
Mrs. Karen F. Knight
Mrs. Alene (Hapeler) Keen, 39
Mr. Charles Kungan
Mr. Kenneth L. Laakso, 76
Mr. Dexter "Dale" Lamattina, Staff
Mr. William E. "Buddy" Langley, 62, 62, Faculty
Mr. William L. Lamman, 72, 79
Mr. John Serpente, Jr., 82
Ms. Cori C. Latch, 74
Ms. Myrtle Braddock Lindsay
Mr. Harold Arthur Link
Mr. Maurice L. Linton, 61
Mr. Curtis B. Lloyd
Mr. Morris C. Longman, 62, 67
Ralph "JR" W. Marquette Jr., 87
Mrs. Jimmie D. (Hubbert) Martin, 54 BU
Mrs. Rachel C. Martin
Mrs. Joyce A. Maxon, 61, 73, 78
Dr. Tom Prier Mason, 72
Dr. Wayne McKinley Mason, 79, 81, Faculty
Mrs. Gloria (Biren) May
Mrs. Anne Egzyston McDaniel
Dr. William R. McQueen
Mr. Richard "Rick" D. Medlin
Mr. Joe William Meng Jr., 70
Mr. Louis Ronnie Miles
Mr. Gary Lynn Miller, 70
Mr. Roger W. Miller, 72
Mrs. Tamara Paula Montgomery
Mr. Tush Bryan Morgan, 72, 73
Mr. Zachary Link Runnion
Mrs. Emily (Dearing) Newberry, 61
Dr. William L. Newman, 59
Mr. Robert "Rob" Denvery Rowllin II
Mr. W. Brent Oaks
Mrs. William G. O'Connor, 69 BU
Mr. Benjamin F. O'Daniel
Mr. W. Harold O'Dell, 52, 62 BU
Mrs. Evelyn S. Owen, 73
Mr. Charles C. Palmer
Mrs. Phyllis Palmer
Mr. Cody G. Payne
Mr. Ruby James Peil
Rev. Lt. Col. James M. Pence, 51
Mr. Mark Jeffery Perdue
Mrs. Maye K. Perdue
Mrs. Emily Hunter Perkins
Mr. Thomas M. Perkins
Mrs. Mary Lynn S. Plue, 79
Mrs. Whitney Alaine Parkinson, 71
Mrs. Sandra Singeys Pittman, 99
Ms. Brenda L. Plaschke
Ms. Susan觐 Pohl, 15
Mr. Donald G. Porter, 55
Ms. Deirdre Miller Powell
Mrs. Mary Milford McCelry Prather, 39
Mr. Paul R. Preston, 51
Mrs. Loukie Pratt
Mr. Kenneth Pryor
Mr. Arv W. Pyman, Faculty
Mr. Thomas Bradley Ragland, 80
Mr. Gerald "Joe" Randolph
Mr. Justin Aluns Reusch
Mr. Daniel Kostyk Rodriguez
Mr. Thomas "TJ" Rivas, 50
Mr. Cliford Sealander
Mrs. Nancy Lee Bell Skeeter, 58
Mr. Herbert Slye Jr., 98 BU
Mrs. Marla Ann Drainage Stiger, 95
Mr. Derek Wade Smith
Mrs. Fiona Harman Smith
Mrs. Patricia Summerfield Snider
Mr. Charles G. Stinnel
Mr. Mark Stanley
Mr. Nathaniel Austin Stanfield, 76
Mr. Alford "Buck" Stevens
Ms. Alaine (Jenkins) Steen, 54
Mr. Alka E. Severson
Mrs. Linda Stallion Stimson, 49
Mr. Kenneth John Strem, 69
Mr. Joseph Herman Stuhl, 72, 77
Mr. John Robert Strawton, 61 BU
Ms. Samantha Lendle Stram, 16
Mr. Yemmis G. Sater, 56 BU
Mr. Gosta "G" Blom Swanson, 64, 68
Mr. Rust Edgewood Swift, 39
Mrs. Margaret Taylor
Mr. Richard Gerard Sylas, 83
Mr. Cecil Freeman Trefethen, 66
Mr. Patrick F. Thomas
Mrs. Linda Shawn (Ploeh) Thompson, 63
Mrs. Joan Young Thompson
Mrs. Carol McKinney Tokas

Dr. David "Doc" Warren Livingston (51) of Bowling Green, Ky., died in February 2017 after a long battle with Alzheimer’s.

Dr. Livingston began his professional career in music at age 15 when he arranged and played for a dance band in clubs and on radio. After graduating from high school, he joined the Army infantry but was later transferred to the Air Force to play with the 4th Air Corps Band at March Field in California, where he ultimately was assigned to play jazz saxophone.

A career musician, Dr. Livingston had music degrees from the University of Kentucky and Ohio State. After his military service, Dr. Livingston began his long teaching career, starting as a band director. Following an 18-year stint in public schools, he began his tenure at WKU, where he became a professor and taught until his retirement in 1990. While at WKU, Dr. Livingston served as Director of Bands and taught courses in theory, composition and woodwinds. He was inducted into WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 1994.

Dr. Livingston was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Joyce, and his brother, Carl Blair Livingston. He is survived by his daughter, Pam Thurman (Mike); son, Tim (Susan); three granddaughters and nine great grandchildren.

Mr. James E. Trautwein
Ms. James "Doug" Douglas Turner, 54
Ms. Donna M. Thurman Wagoner, 96
Mrs. Opal Wilson Willsbough
Mr. William C. Wieder, 54, 56
Mr. Joel Allen Wilson
Mr. Robert Conway Ward
Mr. Ralph Emerson Wilson
Mr. Stuart Karen Wilson, 81, 83
Mrs. Georgia Frances Watson, 49 BU
Gen. Billy Gene Wellman
Mr. Justin Tyler White, 53
Mr. Rurie E. Wilsob, 47
Mr. Robert "Bobby" Joe Whittaker, 76

* Data for Memoriam is gathered from a variety of sources and is deemed to be correct to the best of our knowledge. Records include deaths reported through Dec. 31, 2016.

alumni.wku.edu | SUMMER 2017
Mario Nguyên ('12)

On his first day at Harvard Law School, Mario Nguyên ('12) of Dallas, Texas, found himself sitting next to students whose families had attended Harvard for generations and were related to prominent politicians. This experience was overwhelming for the son of an undocumented Mexican immigrant and a Vietnamese refugee.

Nguyên graduated from WKU with a degree in Public Relations in 2012, and he received his law degree from Harvard last month.

"Neither of my parents finished high school," Nguyên said. "WKU recognized that I came from a different background, from poverty. WKU saw someone with big dreams and invested in them."

While at WKU, Nguyên was a member of the nationally-recognized Forensics team. Mario earned recognition as the Best Informative Speaker in the United States at the American Forensics Association national tournament in 2012.

After graduating from WKU, Nguyên spent time abroad through the Fulbright Binational Internship to Mexico. He served as the Venture and Fellowship Coordinator for Ashoka Mexico and Central America, and he studied business administration at the Tecnológico Autónomo de Mexico in Mexico City.

"The Fulbright Program allowed me to grow and develop. It was critical to preparing me for my future at Harvard."

Nguyên used the unique experiences he had at WKU to improve the experience of first-generation students at Harvard Law School. He worked to ensure they had a support network and created a fund to support them in applying for judicial clerkships.

"I brought a very different perspective to Harvard Law School than most students because of WKU," Nguyên said. "Few of my peers attended public universities."

After receiving his law degree in May, Nguyên returned to Dallas to work at a law firm on white-collar crime and government investigations.

"It is shocking to have gone from food stamps to Harvard Law. The support at WKU has made it possible."

"I want to become the newest member of the WKU Alumni Association"
**Save the Date!**

**HOMECOMING 2017**

Saturday, October 14, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>OPPONENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>Eastern Kentucky</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>at Illinois</td>
<td>Champaign, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Louisiana Tech*</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>at UTEP*</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Charlotte*</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>at Old Dominion*</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>Florida Atlantic*</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>at Vanderbilt</td>
<td>Nashville, Tenn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>at Marshall*</td>
<td>Huntington, W.Va.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>Middle Tennessee*</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>at FIU*</td>
<td>Miami, Fla.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates Conference USA game

For up-to-date game times and broadcast information, visit wkuathletics.com.