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Arts & Letters: The Magazine of Potter College at Western Kentucky University

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Photograph of the 1965 hand-painted WKU campus map found in Helm Library building in the lobby of Java City.
Welcome to our Spring 2015 issue of the Potter College magazine, Arts & Letters! It’s a particularly special issue for us, because this spring marks the 50th anniversary of Potter College. As part of becoming a university in the mid-1960s, Western changed its administrative structure to establish colleges under the broader university umbrella. Most of the traditional liberal arts disciplines clustered in Potter College, which took its name from an earlier Potter College for Young Ladies, and which stood at the very crest of the Hill at the end of the 19th century. The Board of Regents approved the creation of the new Potter College on March 23, 1965, with Paul Hatcher, head of the Department of Foreign Languages, named as the first dean of the College.

In this issue of Arts & Letters, we’re taking a look back at 1965 from several different perspectives. Working with Professor Tony Harkins, some of our Popular Culture Studies students have recreated a taste of student life from the mid-1960s, a time when the University Catalog stipulated that shorts were not appropriate classroom attire and women students had a nightly curfew. Students were told that their meal expenses would be no more than $2.00 a day, and a residence hall room cost about $100 a semester. We’ll also get the thoughts of two remarkable faculty members from 1965 who are still teaching full-time in Potter College—Mary Ellen Miller in English and Jack Thacker in History. We’ve asked Mary Ellen and Jack to reflect on the changes they’ve seen over the last five decades in Potter College. We’ll also introduce you to two of our alumni, Linda and Leon Remington, who have a special connection with Potter’s 50th anniversary.

The changes of the last half-century are remarkable, but perhaps even more remarkable are the things that abide and endure in the life of Potter College and WKU. Then as now, the disciplines in the College remain central to the undergraduate experience, building students’ skills in communication and analysis and broadening their perspective on the world around them. Associate Dean Larry Snyder, a Religious Studies professor, takes a look at the liberal arts in the 21st century.

It’s been an amazing 50 years here in Potter College, and we’re just getting started!

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When the Potter College of Liberal Arts was created in 1965, it was described unceremoniously in Western Kentucky State College Bulletin as “basically a grouping of humanities departments.” Those departments included Art, English, Foreign Languages, History, and Music, with “an instructional area” in Philosophy. Students wishing to take courses in Government or Sociology would need to go to the College of Commerce, and Journalism consisted of a few courses housed in the English Department. One could even find a little help with handwriting through the Department of Penmanship. Today, the Potter College of Arts & Letters boasts 12 departments that include the arts, humanities, and most of the social sciences. The college offers 27 majors and 32 minors, including five interdisciplinary programs, and graduate degrees in most departments. Obviously, WKU has changed a lot in fifty years. However, a constant feature “in the Western Experience” from the beginning has been a commitment to the liberal arts as the cornerstone of a university education. And Potter College has played an essential role in that story.

Western Kentucky State Normal School opened its doors for the first time in January 1907 following passage of a compromise bill by the Kentucky General Assembly that provided for the establishment of two new training institutions to meet the growing demand for qualified school teachers throughout the Commonwealth. The push to establish these institutions was led, of course, by Henry Hardin Cherry, founding president of Western Kentucky. Over the previous two decades, Cherry had emerged as a national...
leader of the Normal (i.e., teaching) School movement, championing the essential role of liberal education in securing American prosperity and democracy in the twentieth century. It was clear to him that a broad education in the arts and sciences was the most effective way to train teachers, and by extension students in all fields of study, to be successful and contributing citizens. And those ideals were still very much alive in 1965. Although the name of the institution had changed, its mission had not. The preface to the Bulletin proudly reaffirmed “the ideals on which Western Kentucky State College is founded” as first articulated by President Cherry:

- To be a live school and to impart to its students a burning zeal to do and to be something;
- To let the reputation of the school be sustained by real merit; and
- To lead the student to understand that a broad and liberal education is essential to the highest degree of success in any endeavor of life.

The implication was clear: Regardless of major or career, graduates of Dr. Cherry’s school would be well-rounded and broadly educated citizens.

Students arriving on the Hill fifty years ago often came, like many students today, without a full understanding of the nature or purpose of a college education. It remained for the school to explain the need for learning beyond the bounds of the major or for career preparation. Along with information about graduation fees ($10 for bachelor’s and $20 for master’s degrees) and dress standards (“comfort tempered with good taste”), the 1965 Bulletin provided students with the expected listing of course descriptions and matriculation information. Students could pursue one of five general curricular areas: Teacher Education, Elementary or Secondary; Arts and Sciences, including 30 different majors and minors; Special Studies, such as accounting and industrial arts; Professional Curricula, including agriculture, nursing, and “Curriculum
for Training Leaders of Boys Clubs”; and Pre-Professional, including pre-dental and pre-veterinary. Candidates for graduation from any of these programs would earn a minimum of 128-130 credit hours. But the Bulletin made it clear that Western Kentucky embraced a broader educational mission. “[The college] has as a prime objective the broad and liberal education of all its students,” it stated. “Every curriculum of the College has been formulated with this objective in mind.”

The primary means for this liberal education both then and now was general education. The 1965 general education curriculum required students to complete 56 to 62 hours in Social Science (12 hours), Natural Science (12 hours), Mathematics, (6 hours), Physical Education (2 hours), and Psychology (3 hours). Moreover, students were to complete coursework in Communications and Humanities, including taking 6-12 hours in a foreign language, depending upon high school preparation. That core ensured that “a broad and liberal education” remained an essential part of the experience of every graduating Hilltopper.

In the fall of 2008, a university task force was formed to review WKU’s general education program and make suggestions for a revision. The faculty group was asked to address four important questions: What skills and knowledge does every student need to be successful in the 21st century? Why do they need these things? Can we build a robust and flexible core curriculum that embodies those values and goals? How can we know if they have learned and acquired those skills? To help answer those questions, the task force looked to recent work by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), a leading association of more than 1,100 colleges and universities in North America. In 2005, the AAC&U sponsored the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) Initiative as a national effort to identify the “essential aims, learning outcomes, and guiding principles for a twenty-first century college education” (see http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm), publishing its findings in College Learning for the New Global Century (2007):

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
- Intellectual and practical skills
- Personal and social responsibility
- Integrative learning

Over the next four years the task force worked to craft the LEAP “Essential Learning Outcomes” into a new core curriculum that promoted a broad and liberal education appropriate for the next generation of WKU students. The result was the new Colonnade Program, which went into effect in Fall 2014.

The name was chosen to emphasize the strength and stability of a liberal education by adopting one of WKU’s most prominent icons—the Terry Gander Colonnade. It is a 39-hour program divided among three categories:

- Foundations: Practical and Intellectual Skills (18 hrs)
- Explorations: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World (12 hrs)
- Connections: Understanding Individual and Social Responsibility (9 hrs)

The most distinctive feature of the Colonnade Program is the final category, where students select upper level courses designed to make “connections” between disciplines by addressing some of the most significant issues affecting the
modern world. By having them do so, the program hopes to promote learning that is holistic, incremental, integrative, and applicable to the lives and concerns of WKU’s students. That seems wholly consistent with Dr. Cherry’s desire for WKU “to be a live school and to impart to its students a burning zeal to do and to be something.”

It is not too much to say that over the past fifty years, Potter College of Arts & Letters has been the custodian of liberal education at WKU. The faculty and courses have always been at the heart of the core curriculum in earlier versions of general education and now in the Colonnade Program. Potter College takes as its primary area of scholarly concern the study of men and women—their past, present, and future, as well as their aesthetic expression, metaphysical concerns, and social interaction. Students are thus prepared to enter a wide range of careers and programs of advanced study. A diverse and distinguished faculty offers excellent instruction in some twenty disciplines and provides all students at the university with a broad education in important areas of human knowledge and experience. Students in Potter College get their hands dirty—they learn to imagine and to create, to communicate and to think critically about the world. Broad and liberally educated students are intellectually curious and embrace the process of learning. In so doing, they are then better prepared to adapt to changing conditions, to solve problems, and to live responsibly.

Wendell Berry—Kentucky’s own gentleman farmer and resident philosopher—has argued that an educational preoccupation with career placement is both short-sighted and self-defeating. According to Berry, the power of education is diminished if it is treated merely as a career track toward job placement. The true goal of education, he says, is not the training of workers or even of good citizens. Those will follow naturally. Rather, education is “to preserve and pass on the essential means—the thoughts and words and works and ways and standards and hopes without which we are not human.” In helping to make our students more informed and more responsible, we teach them to participate more fully in the community, both locally and globally. We give them tools for life.

“Potter College of Arts & Letters: exploring the past, shaping the present, and creating the future.” I think President Cherry would like that.
Linda and Leon Remington share a special connection with Potter College. They both graduated in 1965, just as Potter College was established, and they married that summer. Leon even proposed to Linda in front of the Kentucky Building in March of their senior year. Leon used the money from selling his Volkswagen to buy a ring. Consequently, both the Remingtons and Potter College share an important 50-year anniversary in 2015.

Now retired from careers in education, Linda and Leon still live in Bowling Green. They’ve stayed in touch with WKU and are avid fans of Hilltopper athletics. In some ways, they remember a Western very like the University today. Parking was difficult, and the Hill was steep. Leon was a non-traditional student who held various jobs and met his military obligation while working steadily toward his degree in History and Government. In other ways, their college experience was quite different from the student experience of today. Linda remembers a 9:30 curfew for women students in the residence halls, weekly room inspections, and a strict prohibition on keeping food.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the Remingtons remember demanding and committed faculty and staff members who went out of their way to support, something that’s still very much a part of the WKU experience today.

You can hear the Remingtons reminisce about their years on the Hill in the online version of Arts & Letters at www.wku.edu/go/arts-letters. Don’t miss Leon’s story about a misguided attempt to steal his car!

David Lee is Dean of Potter College and professor of History at WKU.
Expenses and Fees

Tuition ...............................................................................NONE
Meals (approximately) ................................................. $252.00 per semester
Books (approximately) .................................................. $35.00

Undergraduate Registration Fee
(to be paid at the beginning of each semester)
  - Resident Students .................................................. $87.50
  - Non-Resident Students ........................................... $200.00
  - Summer School Residents ..................................... $43.75
  - Summer School Non-Residents .............................. $100.00

Fees for Graduation
Candidates for the bachelor’s degree will be charged a graduation fee of $10.00. Candidates for the master’s degree will be charged a graduation fee of $20.00. This charge will cover the cost of cap and gown, diploma fee, and other necessary expenses.

Campus Dress Standards
College fashion emphasizes comfort tempered with good taste. The College does not permit students to wear shorts in the classrooms, laboratories, libraries, or offices and encourages all students to exercise sound judgment and good taste in the attire worn on any occasion.

Automobile Regulations
In accordance with the policy of the Kentucky Council on Public Higher Education, the student motor vehicle policy of Western Kentucky State College prohibits the possession and operation of any type of automobile by freshman on campus. In addition, no sophomore with an academic standing of less than 3.0 will be allowed to possess or operate an automobile on campus.

Living Accommodations
The College furnishes pillows, pillowcases, and sheets. Quiet hours are observed in all residence halls daily beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Housing Off-Campus
Students who live off-campus are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct required of students who live on campus. Men and women are not allowed to visit one another in rooms or apartments. The possession of alcoholic beverages in off-campus living quarters is in violation of college policy.

Student Health Insurance
Insurance is available for one semester, two semesters, or the full year at $7.65, $15.30, and $22.50, respectively.

Student Organizations
Western has more than 80 student organizations representing a wide range of interests, thus making it quite easy for a person to find some group that fits his needs and interest. Students are urged to seek out the group or groups of their special interest and to become identified with the early in their college career.

Potter College of Liberal Arts
The name was taken from Potter College for Young Ladies, which was established in Bowling Green in 1867.

The Bachelor of Arts Degree
The Degree of Bachelor of Arts is conferred upon those students completing the institutional requirements with a major in any one of the following fields: Art, Business Management, Economics, English, French, German, Government, History, Latin, Library Science, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish.
BY MEGAN SERIO  
JACOB FACKLER  
AND JAKE PARKER  

ASSISTED BY  
TONY HARKINS  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
DIRECTOR, POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES MAJOR  

Life
Campus life on the Hill has undeniably and dramatically changed in the past 50 years in terms of culture, current events, and the physical landscape of the University. Yet in other ways, the daily pleasures and demands of WKU students in 2014 are not so different than they were in 1965. To consider what is new, and not so new, since 1965, three Pop Culture majors offer here: an overview of the broader political and cultural events of that time; an insider’s look at the ways the 1965 College Heights Herald covered the Hill; and reminiscences of students who were at Western Kentucky State College in that year.
The year 1965 was marked by a great deal of civil and cultural change and unrest in the United States. On February 13, in the dawn of the year, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the United States Navy and Air Force to commence Operation Rolling Thunder, which transformed the role of the U.S. in the Vietnam War from a defensive to an increasingly destructive offensive force. On March 19, President Johnson first authorized the use of napalm.

While the war worsened overseas, the civil rights movement at home seemed to gain traction, moving away from an emphasis on nonviolent protest. Riots became more frequent and violence increased at a horrifying rate. In New York City on February 21, 39-year-old civil rights leader Malcolm X was assassinated. The next month, however, provided an ultimately more positive step in the movement, as the iconic march in Alabama from Selma to Montgomery took place. Although it began after brutal police attacks on peaceful demonstrators on the Edmund Pettus Bridge outside Selma, it ended with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. leading a crowd of civil rights leaders and activists 54 miles to the state capitol building, affirming the need for African American voting rights. On August 6, President Johnson signed into law the landmark Voting Rights Act.

The culture of the nation also underwent equally dramatic changes in this year. Ralph Nader discouraged trips in automobiles with the help of his exposé about car manufacturers’ resistance to safety features, *Unsafe at Any Speed*, while Dr. Timothy Leary of Harvard University encouraged “trips” of a different nature. Rocketing the United States ahead in the Space Race with the Soviets, astronaut Edward White II participated in the first American space walk, spending over a quarter of an hour at the end of a 25-foot tether outside of his Gemini 4 spacecraft. Across the pond in England, the mini-skirt appeared in London, prompting a gradual shortening of hemlines here at home. As ladies’
skirts got shorter, guys’ hair got longer. “Flower power” sprouted across the country, its named coined by Allen Ginsberg at an anti-war rally in Berkeley. In the summer of 1965, actions of the underground subculture in San Francisco and the Bay Area paved the way for the phenomenon of Haight-Ashbury and the music that infused it, one of the most iconic symbols of the decade.

Already reeling from the introduction of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones the previous year, mainstream Americans in 1965 found themselves coming to terms with psychedelic rock bands such as The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. The Beatles-influenced group The Byrds released their first single on January 20, 1965—a cover of Bob Dylan’s “Mr. Tambourine Man.” Much to his folk followers’ disappointment, Dylan “went electric” that same summer, amplifying his guitar in front of a less-than-pleased crowd at the famed Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island.

Popular musical tastes during the middle years of the sixties were still dominated by the British invasion. The Beatles were as popular as ever, with “I Feel Fine” and “Eight Days a Week” both charting that spring. Other British artists were also on heavy rotation, including rock bands The Animals, The Kinks, and The Moody Blues, Scottish psychedelic-folk musician Donovan, and Welsh singer Tom Jones. Also spinning that year were songs by Motown Records stars The Supremes (“Come See About Me”) and the soul vocal group The Temptations (“My Girl”), the beat group The Searchers, and blue-eyed soul sweetheart Dusty Springfield. Still, young people seemed to long for less cookie-cutter fare, as the aforementioned Dylan cover by The Byrds, The Rolling Stones’ “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”, The McCoys’ “Hang On Sloopy” and even Barry McGuire’s pessimistic anthem “Eve of Destruction” all made the Billboard charts that summer and fall. Western students reflected these national trends and became increasingly unsatisfied that while neighboring universities saw the likes of Bob Newhart and Peter, Paul, and Mary, Western had Dick Clark come to campus three semesters in a row. 
A diverse set of films appeared in movie theaters around the country and in Bowling Green. The David Lean-directed film *Dr. Zhivago*, an epic drama-romance starring Omar Sharif and Julie Christie that chronicled the life of a fictional Russian doctor during the Bolshevik Revolution, opened in December of 1965. In addition, The Beatles starred in their second feature film, *Help!* a James Bond satire directed by Richard Lester. Sidney Lumet’s *The Pawnbroker*, which marked the debut of Morgan Freeman, was also one of the top films of the year. *The Sound of Music*, an adaptation of the stage musical starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer, became the number-one box office hit of all time, surpassing *Gone With The Wind*, and was nominated for ten (and won five) Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. Western began to offer an experimental film series on campus as well, showing the likes of *Hamlet* and *Dr. Strangelove* to students.

Popular books in 1965 also reflected the transforming cultural mood. These included Frank Herbert’s *Dune*, a science fiction novel about a feudal interstellar society ruled by nobles; John Fowles’ *The Magus*, a psychological postmodern novel; Kurt Vonnegut’s *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, and Norman Mailer’s *An American Dream*, which stripped away the social pretenses of society and revealed a world of sheer hunger and cruelty.

Megan Serio, from Beaver Dam, KY, is completing her final semester at WKU as a double-major in Literature and Pop Culture Studies.

**A Look Back at the 1965 College Heights Herald**

Looking back on the 1965 *College Heights Herald*, many aspects of covering campus life have remained the same while other aspects of the 1965 paper—tightly-packed text, fewer images due to a lack of color, more cartoons throughout—have changed. Unlike then, today’s *Herald* does not have specific editors for Religious News, Society, or Greek news and the position of Features Assistant is now an editorial board position.

In the fall of 1965, the campus was full of many changes including a column in the paper...
called “Hilltopics.” Celebrating the introduction of individual telephones in dorm rooms, columnist and editor-in-chief Barbara Sharp wrote that incoming freshman did not realize the luxury afforded to them. She also discussed how students were concerned that they did not have access to administrators' phone numbers. As a result, all students received a telephone directory in November for the first time. At a time when a substantial number of people still smoked, she also reported on campus drives held to send cigarettes to soldiers in Vietnam.

The age-old battle between the Greek and non-Greek cultures was just as strong as it is today, and the paper devoted a full-page spread in the middle of one issue to the points of views of supporters and critics of Greek life. There were far fewer organized activities on campus then, and many students found themselves going home for the weekends if they were not involved in clubs, fraternities or religious organizations.

Then as now, sports were popular but it was not one of the best years for the football team. Indeed, writer Al Stilley wrote a column in a fall edition titled “James Bond Is Requested for New Mission: Find the Real Hilltoppers before Saturday.” Playing off the popularity of the British spy films, Stilley wrote, “In their first five games,
imposters have been used. The group is not cast from the same mold that won the Tangerine Bowl in 1963.... Remember James, the REAL Hilltoppers may be hiding in the past or in the future. Your mission is to find them, wherever they may be hiding. And the sooner the better.”

The Herald rang in the new year of 1966 with a strong issue, complete with information about current plays being performed (The Doctor), a guest column written by a professor on the image presented by the collective campus body, and a feature on three students who produced TV programs for their final projects.

**Reminiscences about Life on the Hill in 1965**

One way to understand the changing landscape of WKU is to listen to the voices of those who were here 50 years ago. It’s one thing to look at history books to learn about how the world was changing, but we all know the best experience is firsthand experience. The men and women who attended Western Kentucky State College in 1965 are truly the ones that can shed the most light on what the times were like then.

JoAnn Butler, who graduated from WKSC that year with a degree in post-secondary education, remembers quite a few changes going on during that time. “This was a pretty progressive time for Western. In 1963 Diddle Arena was completed. They finally gave us 15 minutes between classes. There were also three to four dorms finished in those four years. In 1965, three new colleges were added to Western so they would qualify for University status—I think they did that in 1966,” says Butler.

Butler recalls too that fashion was ever-changing on the steps of Western. Gone were the days of poodle skirts and plaid jackets as a new informality became more common. “We mostly...
wore slacks to class—girls, that is; boys wore jeans. Girls wore jeans for casual [wear].” Some students were even more relaxed in their attire, Butler recollects. “It was very common to see several in trench coats at 8:00 classes because so many overslept.”

The dorm life has certainly changed since back then as well. “Dorm life was pretty rigid,” Butler explained. “We had room check every week to see that they were clean. If we went out at night, we had to sign in and out. We had to be in by 9:00 on weeknights and 12:00 on weekends. We could not have anything to cook with and our rooms were regularly searched for coils which we used to put in soup to make it hot.”

As far as activities around the campus, students were always able to find things to do. Since few students had a car, most of the activities included walking to certain destinations, and the campus had a strong sense of shared community. Butler remembers, “Downtown was where all the shopping places were and more than once, as several of us girls were trudging up the Hill, Coach Ed Diddle would stop and say, ‘Pile in’ and he would take us to our dorm.”

The broader culture was changing fast, but life on campus was somewhat sheltered from this upheaval. Alan Burnett, a nontraditional student who at age 29 came to Western Kentucky State College in 1965 to pursue a teaching degree, remembers campus life as a “bustling hub of energy of active learners.” Burnett notes that there were no anti-war protests or experimental drug taking (at least that he was aware of). He describes it as not much different from the stereotypical simple life of the 1950’s. Burnett states that the most popular musical groups were The Beach Boys and The Beatles.

It is clear from the remembrances of Butler and Burnett that in south central Kentucky, the cultural wave of the 1960s had not yet hit, but it was still an exciting time. As Bob Dylan once wrote, “The times, they are a changin’” and these changes were just beginning to take hold at Western in 1965.

Jacob Fackler is a class of 2014 Popular Culture Studies and Advertising double major from Webster, KY.

Thanks to JoAnn Butler, Alan Burnett and all who contributed their memories to this project.
The More Things Change...

Mary Ellen Miller

Fifty-one years ago on Western Kentucky University’s (then College) campus, things were not as different as you might imagine. Eighteen-year-olds were just as thrilled to be out from under the monitoring eyes of their parents; teachers struggled to motivate sleepy or stressed out, careless students; we all complained about administrators’ and coaches’ salaries; about being overworked and underpaid. But there were some differences between the 60’s and now; the 70’s and now; the 80’s and now, but I see fewer differences between the 90’s and now.

Currently, in 2014-2015, my students were born in the 1990’s; by then computers and computer savvy were as common as the electric typewriter was to my husband and people of our age group.

My husband, Jim Wayne Miller, and I came to WKU in 1963 when Jim had finished his coursework for his doctorate and was writing his dissertation at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. Those were the days my friend, for getting a job in the academic world. With minimal effort, Jim was offered three jobs, all of them good offers. He chose Western partly because of its proximity to Vanderbilt. I had my M. A. in English from the University of Kentucky, but we did not know whether Western would offer me a part-time job in the English Department. But they did, and I grabbed the job. We didn’t exactly know it then, but we were home.

The campus was pretty in the 1960’s. Today it is spectacular. There was something to do every night of the week: dance programs, music events,
dramatic performances, art exhibits, and poetry readings (our favorite), just as there is now.

President Kelly Thompson, Western’s third president, was a vibrant, compelling speaker and despite his and his wife’s agony of loss (one of their three children, a son, was dying of brain cancer) the president kept going.

Early on, we encountered some colleagues who seemed oddly backward for college teachers. Once, over coffee in the Faculty House with several of my English colleagues, one was complaining of a dreadful essay a student had handed in. Another teacher leaned in close and whispered, “Is he black?” I thought I had died and gone to hell.

Soon, though, we met and bonded with people who were to become lifelong friends, people who believed that equal rights belonged (or should belong) to all God’s children. Some had even participated in the marches and demonstrations (as we had done in Nashville). These events were beginning to happen all over the South and elsewhere. It was the 60’s! Hippiedom was front and center, and it did not bypass Western though it just got here a little later. Some of our fellow teachers were appalled at the bare feet, the raggedy jeans, the pot smoking, the chants, but these were mild here compared to many other places in the country.

In our second or third year at Western (still mid-60’s), President Thompson gave an opening convocation speech that I will never forget. I am not sure if he titled it, but my title for it is, “Trash or Treasure.” He talked about the hippies on campus, and he calmed some people, shamed (I hope) others, but many of us found his remarks uplifting and inspiring. What we must do, he said, is recognize that some of these behaviors are nothing more than adolescent rebellion, show-off juvenilia, but as teachers of these young people we must learn the difference between what is Trash and what is Treasure and teach them the differences. Of course, by Treasure he meant the demonstrations for equal rights for all regardless of race, creed, or nationality. He was aware of the sacrifices made elsewhere in the country (with many yet to come) for equal rights. Sacrifices, in some cases, that cost young people their lives. This wonderful speech

“He talked about the hippies on campus, and he calmed some people, shamed (I hope) others, but many of us found his remarks uplifting and inspiring.”
was delivered with quiet power in that beautiful, unforgettable voice. Some faculty were shocked. They had no idea that President Thompson was not, most emphatically not, on the side of bigotry in any shape, form, or fashion.

From then on, Jim and I felt we had found our heart’s home. It was a shopper’s market in the 1960’s in the academic world. We could have gone to other schools where two jobs were offered, but in all kinds of ways, we had begun to feel this would be our permanent academic home.

A colleague of Jim’s, Howard Carpenter, a musician who also taught a few German courses, invited us to dinner. “Jean and I would love it if you would come.” Jim explained that we had not yet lined up an evening sitter. “No problem. Bring the kids. Our son will watch them.” And watch them the son did, first the two boys and later, on other occasions after our daughter who had joined our family. Barely in his teens and with nary a sign of irritation at having children dumped on his evening, he made up games, read to the children, invented some kind of kickball game that even a little kid in a walker could play; not just that first evening but on many others to come. Years later, it was fun to tell the kids that filmmaker John Carpenter had once been their baby sitter.

We made other wonderful friends through the years, many of them now dead, as is Jim.

**CHANGES, CHANGES, CHANGES.** We faculty work harder now than we did 50 years ago. We are asked to do more things that have nothing to do with our real jobs of teaching, research/creative writing, and service. Now, a day in the life of a faculty member (even more so for department heads) is studded with clerical chores of various kinds that have nothing to do with our important work. I dread opening my email. True, half of it can be deleted immediately, but half cannot. We can’t refuse to write letters of recommendation for a student trying to get into graduate school, and it seems churlish and uncropped to not respond to every request from a colleague. But it is simply not possible.

**COMPUTERS.** Yes, that’s the biggest technology change in the past 51 years—changes that are both good and bad—but my students now and for the past 25 years at least have not lived without them. And texting. Life without texting, students. Try to imagine that.

**STUDENT JOBS.** Students today often have full-time jobs in addition to their full-time schedules. My friend and colleague, Walker Rutledge, did a survey recently and determined that at least half of our students have jobs. This is good; this is bad. The reasons for good and bad seem obvious.

The more things change the more they stay the same. It has been 50 years since President Thompson gave his beautiful, groundbreaking Trash or Treasure speech; it has not been five months since our current president, President Gary Ransdell hosted his beautiful, groundbreaking dinner for our LGBT community. (If you don’t know what those initials stand for, look them up, wise up, rise up, and modernize.)

Jim Wayne Miller, dead now for 18 years, typed 15 words a minute on a manual typewriter (I never timed him on the electric). He graduated to the computer and fell in love with the ease of storing his manuscripts, but he refused to learn to use email. Still, he made his mark on the world. I’m still struggling. Just give me another 51 years. I’m on it.
When I started teaching at Western Kentucky University, it was called Western Kentucky State College. There was no Potter College, only the Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of the Graduate School and a Dean in charge of keeping track of absences. The History Department shared the second floor of Cherry Hall with the Math Department and also shared the same secretary—she worked for History in the morning and Math in the afternoon. The History Department had only three telephones: one in the outer office, one in the department head’s office, and one around the corner in an alcove. My first year, office space was so limited I had to share with a colleague. The only computer was a mainframe in the administration building; there were no Xerox machines and all of our exams were mimeographed (consequently, during final exam week my hands were always purple).

The campus was small enough that the Faculty House was the center of things. All the faculty congregated there between classes and especially during the chapel programs on Tuesday and Thursday.

Faculty participation in University governance was almost non-existent. There were curriculum committees but almost all other decisions came from the top (President Thompson and Dean Cravens). In fact, at the end of my second year, when Dr. Poteet retired, there was no search committee and the History Department members learned about it from the newspaper.

“...consequently, during final exam week my hands were always purple.”

During my second year, we became Western Kentucky University and Potter College was created. Dr. Paul Hatcher, the head of the Foreign Languages Department, became the first dean. It was a time of tremendous growth; buildings were going up everywhere as the student body and faculty steadily increased (sixty new faculty members were added the year I arrived). Two things, however, have not changed. While the building boom continued, every effort was made to maintain the beauty of the campus, and everywhere you went on campus, it was always uphill.

We taught the same way our professors and their professors had taught: we lectured and had discussions. I tried the Socratic Method and still do at times, but my students keep forgetting their lines. We used blackboards and chalk, and high-
tech was an overhead projector. If we wanted to show a film in class, it had to be scheduled from the audio-visual unit in the Education Department. Oh, and the teaching load was five classes each semester and two in the summer (almost everyone was required to teach 2 classes in a ten-week session in the summer).

Western was still basically a Normal School, so its main emphasis was training teachers, and the majority of our students were in the teacher education program. American history was required for all teachers, so the two survey courses were the main courses taught by the History Department. Although my specialty was Modern European history, I taught more American history survey courses during my first few years.

Another thing that has not changed was Western’s devotion to athletics. Diddle Arena was completed the year before I arrived. At that time, the Library was located in Gordon Wilson Hall and was so cramped for space that many of the books were stacked on the floor. Rather than build a new library, Western opted to convert the old field house into Helm Library. That may have been an indicator of the university’s priorities then.

To me, the most striking change in my 50+ years tenure at Western is the way we teach our classes. Interactive television classes, web classes, and “smart classrooms” have changed not only what we do in the classroom but also what we can do. We are able to teach students who we were not able to reach earlier. These innovations mean that students who cannot attend the University because of schedules or distances, can now take classes, in some cases without leaving their homes. I remember one of the graduate students who had taken several classes with me by interactive TV telling me when he took his oral exams that it was the first time he had been on campus. It has also made life easier for faculty. The first few years, I taught at Western, I taught off-campus classes in Louisville, Owensboro, and Elizabethtown. I still do, but now it’s by IVS. Our entire MA program is now online and most of our graduate courses are taught on the web.
We hope you've enjoyed this edition of *Arts & Letters* and are as excited as we are about the accomplishments of Potter College's students, alumni, and faculty. Please make a gift today supporting the **Potter College of Arts & Letters Dean's Fund for Excellence**. Your financial support will provide increased academic opportunities for students within Potter College, including student support for study abroad, research and creative activity, and innovative learning opportunities beyond the classroom. We greatly appreciate your gift. It's an investment in the future.

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WKU’s photojournalism students spent eight weeks documenting the culture and community of students, faculty and staff as Potter College celebrates its 50th birthday. The winning photo is by photojournalism student William Kolb. The photo was taken during the February 5, 2015 presentation by Melissa Harris-Perry at WKU Van Meter Auditorium. Photos from the challenge will be on display at the Mass Media & Technology Hall Gallery at WKU from April 6th to May 1st.