10-29-1981

UA12/2/1 College Heights Herald, Vol. 57, No. 19
Homecoming '81

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HERALD MAGAZINE
October 29, 1981
Homecoming '81

HAPPY 75TH CENTENNIAL
Big Red wishes Western a Happy 75th Anniversary on its 54th homecoming. — Photo by Jim Gensheimer.

Western’s first homecoming, in November 1927, wasn’t boring by some accounts. The most unusual play of the game was when Delmar “Puss” Reynolds disappeared down the hill by the old football stadium.

Although the Hilltoppers broke up more than 20 years ago, they are still Western’s greatest claim to musical fame.

Legends of campus ghosts come to mind this Halloween. Some students say they’ve come in contact with spirits in Van Meter Auditorium, Gordon Wilson Hall and the Lambda Chi Alpha house.

University historian Lowell Harrison has lived much of Western’s history. He’s now doing research for a book on the subject.

Intramural director Frank Griffin is too, born about Western. He says he came here at age 16 and hasn’t left since, making him the faculty member with the longest tenure.

Frances Richards says she’s proud to have a small part in campus history. She was first editor of the College Heights Herald.

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In 1927, when Western celebrated its first homecoming, football was a different game. Players didn’t have heavy padding or expensive scholarships—they loved to play.

By Mark Mathis

When Western takes the field against Morehead Saturday, it will be the renewal of a tradition started in 1927—homecoming.

Players like Elvis Donelson, Max Stevens, Jim Pickens, Jim Burt, Dale Lindsey, Lawrence Brante, Virgil Lives, Dickie Moore and Leo Peckenaup were familiar to long-time Hilltopper fans.

Now it’s hard to find a Western supporter who doesn’t know about the feats of Troy Snardon, Tim Ford, Donnie Evans or Mike Miller.

Fans at that first homecoming in 1927 were yelling for Throgmorton, Winkenhofer, Reynolds and Taylor. Football has changed drastically since then, but homecoming still does today what it did on that cold November day in 1927—bring together students, faculty and alumni.

Athletes didn’t wear heavy padding, and most played the game because they loved it, former Western player and coach, Ted Hornback, said.

“When you blocked you felt it all the way to your toes; you had to be tough to walk on the field,” he said. “Padding consisted of some hard leather for shoulder pads and a hard piece of perforated leather for a helmet.”

Hornback said one player didn’t even go that far with protection.

“We had one character on the team, ‘Horsemeat’ Taylor, who didn’t wear a helmet and took off his shirt to play. ‘We didn’t have scholarships or anything—you had to enjoy the game.’”

The first homecoming was a big day for quarterback Arnold “Winky” Winkenhofer and his teammates.

“It was probably the biggest football day for Western up to that time,” the 1928 graduate said in a telephone interview from his Atlanta, Ga., home.

Indeed, Western did have a big day. Coach E. A. Diddle’s Hilltoppers upset a highly regarded University of Louisville team, 7-6.

The game’s most unusual play came late in the fourth quarter, when Western had the game in hand, Winkenhofer said.

“Delmar ‘Puss’ Reynolds went deep, and in those days the end of the stadium by the Helm Library was open and there was a swimming pool at the bottom of the hill, but the hill was covered with rocks,” he said.

“I overthrew him, and he ran down the hill and disappeared. Everybody in the stadium was standing, looking for him. He caught the ball, but he had run out of the end zone.”

Reynolds had plunged over a 20-foot embankment, Winkenhofer said, but Louisville’s strength. “Their quarterback, Freddie Koster, was one of the highest-scoring players in the country. He was a fine athlete. They were one of the best teams in the country at the time.”

Hornback also praised Koster. “He was an outstanding athlete, who could do it all. He was the best athlete in Kentucky, and he would’ve compared favorably with anybody in the Western tackle August Throgmorton punted on the ball as it rolled into the end zone. The extra point by Williams made the score 7-0 at halftime.

Winkenhofer was a defensive halfback as well as quarterback, and he made what turned out to be one of the game’s big defensive plays.

“Koster was running a punt back and I got the last man between him and a touchdown. I was able to knock him out of bounds,” Winkenhofer said.

The platoon system of an offensive team and defensive team didn’t exist when Winkenhofer played, he said. They played both offense and defense.

“We didn’t even know what going one way was. We only played about 14 or 15 people in the Louisville game.”

In the third quarter U of L had the wind, and the kicking game was a factor. The Cardinal punter kept Western in its own territory most of the quarter.

After a bad punt by Williams, Koster threw a 25-yard pass to his halfback, putting the Cardinals on Western’s four-yard line.

Louisville scored the next play on a run, making the score 7-6. The Cardinals tried a two-point conversion, but their holder missed the kick. Western then decided to go for the extra point, but it was blocked by Western tackle ‘Winky’ Hornback.

Throgmorton came up with another great play late in the game to preserve the Topper victory. He intercepted a pass on the two-yard line as time ran out.

Statistics were as important then as they are now.

Winkenhofer kicked seven times, completed two short passes and had two picked off—not impressive, but effective.

Western finished 5-4 on the year under Diddle, also basketball and baseball coach at the time.

Football has changed considerably since that homecoming game and the ways to show spirit are also different than they were 52 years ago.

“The was a lot of excitement and entertainment a week before the game, but we didn’t have any big pep rallies like you do now,” Winkenhofer said.

But homecoming still does today what it did on that cold November day in 1927. It brings students, faculty and alumni together.
By Lee Grace

One was a football player; another, a basketball player. The third was a singer looking for a group. The fourth got involved because no one else would.

As a group, they are probably Western’s greatest claim to fame in popular music. They are the Hilltoppers.

"Trying," the group’s first song, was rated in Billboard magazine’s Top 10 in the mid 1960s, but what caught everyone’s attention even more was the group’s name — a name usually associated with sports.

"We (the group) were looking for a somewhat flashier name. Back then you had the Four Tops and others, and we were looking for something of the same," Don McGuire, the basketball player, said.

Their record company’s owner, Randy Wood of Dot Records, suggested using the name of the school. "After we thought about it, we decided it would be a different sort of promotional idea," McGuire said.

So on a cold Sunday in December 1962, four young men — McGuire, Jimmy Sacca, Seymour Spigelman and Billy Vaughn — organized their singing group.

In the ’50s a group such as the Hilltoppers was easy to start because of several barbershop quartets on campus, McGuire said many quartets would sing by the girls’ dorms.

"It was real neat," he said. "A quartet would go over on a Saturday night and start to sing. All of the girls would open their windows and listen — they really ate it up."

At first McGuire said Vaughn and Spigelman weren’t going to join the group.

Billy was working at a little night club called the Boots and Saddles, and got to know Jimmy Sacca (the football player). He then asked Jimmy, if he knew of any people who might want to get the group together," McGuire said.

"I really just wanted to be a songwriter," Vaughn, who wrote "Trying," said. "I never really wanted to sing, but when two people decided they didn’t have the time, I had to join."

Originally, Rusty Brown and Pat Mastrello were going to sing tenor and baritone, he said, but both were involved in some "illegitimate" fraternity activities which took most of their time. This brought Spigelman into the picture.

"I really just went along with Jimmy, who was my roommate, to listen," Spigelman said. "Billy at the time was singing baritone, listening to everyone’s voice and playing the piano.

"He just had so much to do that he finally asked me if I could sing," he said.

So the Hilltoppers were set with McGuire as bass; Spigelman as tenor, his natural range; Vaughn as baritone; and Sacca as lead singer.

The singers’ next step was recording Vaughn’s song, "I bought a cheap tape machine, and we recorded the song in Van Meter’s office, then took the tape to Bill Stamp, who worked at a radio station (WLBJ-AM) who played it that night on his radio show," Vaughn said.

During the show, the group realized they had a potential hit.

"Stamp played the song on his Sunday night show called Whistling in the Dark." After the song was over, he started getting all sorts of requests," Sacca said.

Spigelman said, "Frankly I thought we would never sell the song. I viewed it more as a demonstration tape to showcase the song, but when Stamp started getting all those requests, I began to get very excited."

Stamp took the song to Wood in Franklin, Tenn.

But the excitement began to dwindle.

"It had survived Christmas, and we were in Wood’s office trying to figure out what our next step was going to be," Vaughn said.

"Then he got a call from Cincinnati (Ohio) from a disk jockey who said that the song had just broken loose. To say the least, we were all stunned because the song had nothing on it but four boys singing and a piano — it was freaky," he said.

The song soon climbed the charts in almost every major city, going as high as fourth in Chicago and fifth in Pittsburgh.

The song didn’t, however, gain the nationwide appeal that it might have had.

"Dot was a young company so they didn’t know how to cover the country. They let other companies take the song and record it with their singers," Vaughn said.

"In other words, we would perform the song on the East Coast, and someone else would have the same song on the West Coast," he said.

"We had nothing on the West Coast, but as we got bigger that changed," Sacca said.

Although "Trying" never became a gold record, the Hilltoppers’ next two songs, "I’d Rather Die Young" and "P.S., I Love You," did.

After that success, the next step was to get an agent and a television spot.

"Randy Wood was sort of acting as our agent, but when things got too much for him to handle, he decided to get someone out of New York to handle us," Spigelman said.

"The way he found us a booking agency was that he said we would sign with whoever got us the biggest number," he said. "This is when Bobby Bremer from MCA stepped in. He got hold of us and arranged for us to appear on Ed Sullivan’s.”

But the group didn’t have any
Don McGuire, who sang bass with the Hilltoppers, lives in Lexington and works for an educational publishing company.

costumes.
"We didn't have any money to buy costumes, so we all wore letterman sweaters, gray flannel pants, beanie and white bucks. Everyone owned bucks and gray flannels back then," he said. The group still had to invest a few dollars for beanie, and Vaughn needed a letterman sweater.
"It turned out to be our gimmick. Everyone insisted that we wear them on their shows," Sacca said.

D uring the late 1950s, both Sacca and Spigelman joined the Army. That started the decline of the group.
"It was an entire new music scene when I got out of the Army," Spigelman said. "The sounds had changed — ballads, which is what we did, were no longer popular. Elvis and Bill Haley were in."

But the group’s popularity did catch on somewhere else — Europe.
The song "P.S., I Love You" was a top record in England for 24 weeks. Hilltoppers made four tours of England, and the group’s last foreign tour of Japan in 1960, marked the end of the Hilltoppers.
"The hit records were not hit records anymore. We just couldn't make a living off singing and singing alone," McGuire said.

But three Hilltoppers stayed in show business.
Spigelman lives in Seneca Falls, N.Y., and is a salesman for Peter Pan Records. Sacca lives in Jackson, Miss., and runs a booking agency; Vaughn still performs in Bowling Green.

Don McGuire decided to leave the business. He works for a Lexington textbook firm.

Billy Vaughn plays an electronic keyboard at a desk in his Bowling Green home. The former baritone for the Hilltoppers is preparing music for an upcoming trip to Japan.
By Perry Hines

He said the subject doesn’t bother him. 

Yet, James Brown scurried about the large, almost empty stage taking measurements.

An eerie, icy feeling, like that of a cold hand tapping your shoulder, loomed over the small group assembled in Russell Miller Theater.

The silence was broken at times by the lonely clank of Brown’s shoes against the hard stage floor.

And, in those moments of seemingly ‘dead’ silence, someone spoke and broke the group’s glassy-eyed stares.

Brown, a theater assistant professor, and four students were deep in thought as they shared strange encounters about unexplainable, often bizarre, supernatural events — namely ghosts.

Their stories centered mainly on legends about one of Western’s oldest and most impressive buildings — Van Meter Auditorium.

Built in 1910 and dedicated in 1911, the hall has been a focal point of countless horror-stories, some of which stretch back to its construction.

As legend goes, a ghost has haunted Van Meter for more than 50 years.

During the building's construction, a young worker was startled by a noise from above, supposedly an airplane. The man fell from his scaffold and crashed through a skylight directly above the stage.

His fall caused a blood-stain on the hardwood floor that could not be scrubbed away.

And — according to legend — if the present flooring were pulled up, the bloody imprint of a man could still be distinguished.

Brown said he doesn’t believe the stories; he merely repeats, what he’s heard:

“The main reason I don’t believe in the Van Meter ghost is because I have spent a lot of time, most of it late at night, in Van Meter alone and I have failed to run across a single ghost yet.”

While I personally believe that ghosts are the products of vivid imaginations, some of the stories I have heard would make even the most skeptical person think twice,” he said.

Brown, at Western since 1966, mentioned one incident which happened in the spring of 1967 during the tragic opera “Carmen.”

“While a young girl strolled across the stage one afternoon,” he recalled, “a red spotlight suddenly beamed on the girl.

‘Normally, I wouldn’t have given it a second thought. But the fact that it was the spotlight used in the death scene made it rather strange.’

Brown offered a possible solution to the mystery.

“It was not impossible for the light to switch on by itself,” he said, “because at the time Western had very poor lighting equipment.’

However, the students, some of whom do believe in ghosts, disagreed with Brown.

William Long, 26, Van Meter Auditorium technical coordinator, said he didn’t really believe in ghosts until about four years ago.

In summer 1977, Long shared a four-bedroom house
In North Carolina where "weird" things happened.

"We were so convinced that we were living with a ghost and his dog; we named the ghost Jerome," Long said. "I mean, some really bizarre stuff happened in that house that I'll never forget.

Long said he had his first encounter with the Van Meter ghost about a month after the Bowling Green-Warren County Junior Miss pageant.

"After the pageant, I went through Van Meter turning off all the lights and locking the doors," he said, drawing a deep breath.

"Now, this next part is going to sound a little strange but here goes: After I had cut the lights out, I went to the rear of Van Meter where my car was parked. When I looked up, the lights were on again.

"I just thought to myself, 'Hum, the ghost, and went home.'"

Long, who sets up lighting equipment for each production, said he's not afraid of ghosts. But he tries to avoid them whenever possible.

"Usually when I'm finished in Van Meter, I try to get out of there as soon as possible," he said.

Another legend says the Van Meter ghost is really Henry Hardin Cherry, Western's founder.

That legend says Cherry fell from the lobby staircase late one night. And some believe it's his spirit that comes back to haunt the auditorium.

Even though the auditorium is most often associated with Western's ghosts and other unexplainable events, other campus buildings and even a fraternity house are said to be haunted.

Gordon Wilson Hall supposedly has a part-time ghost in residence.

Its legend incorporates stories about both Gordon Wilson Hall and Van Meter Auditorium by saying the ghost travels between the buildings.

"I don't know how to describe it," Martha Parks, a Glasgow senior, said. "You just get those eerie feelings when you're in a place like Gordon Wilson."

Parks, who believes in ghosts, was once accidentally locked in Van Meter.

"It didn't scare me because I just accept that there are things that just cannot be explained," she said. "Those who rationalize and try to come up with a solution are just coping out."

Deedee Bush, a Bowling Green senior, echoed Parks' sentiments.

"I don't think it's a matter of people in theater being too sensitive," Bush said, "a lot of people get those eerie feelings, but they just don't want to admit it."

According to Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity members, their house on Chestnut Street is occupied by a ghost - some used to say it was female, but nobody knows now.

Barry Miller said some fraternity members believe so strongly in the Lambda Chi ghost that one brother gave the secret oath of truth, known as ZAK's when he told of the ghost.

"When I was pledging, a brother woke up early one winter morning and came downstairs," Miller said.

"After he went outside to pick up the paper, a fire had started in the fireplace.

"No one else was even up at the time, and all the doors were locked. When he told somebody he gave him ZAK's, and I mean you don't lie when you say ZAK's to someone.""
A Keeper of History

Western has been a part of Lowell Harrison for decades. Now he's preparing the story of the school he grew up with.

By Alan Judd
Dr. Lowell Harrison works in his “hut,” a specially built building in his back yard where he does his research. He keeps his information on 4 x 6” index cards so he can store them in shoe boxes.

As he does his research, Harrison removes only one box of material from the archive shelves. From each box, he takes out one folder, and then one document from the folder.

He carefully writes with a ball-point pen onto one of his note cards, each of which is neatly stacked on the desk, and he changes cards every time his topic changes even slightly. He never writes on the back of a card.

“I’m a fairly methodical person. The more methodical you are and the more systematic you are in taking your notes, the easier it is in the writing stage.”

“And, heaven knows, when you get to the writing stage, you need all the help you can get.”

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A Keeper of History

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Harrison doesn't plan to begin writing the book until he is almost finished with the research, which may be another 1 1/2 years.

"I like the assurance that I have maybe 90 to 95 percent of my research done. I prefer to wait so I can concentrate almost entirely on that," he said.

As he writes, though, he will tie a few loose ends — he plans to delay his reading of the minutes of every Board of Regents meeting until after he starts writing.

He does most of his writing — "if it's of any real magnitude" — at home. He has an 8-foot-long table beside his desk on which he can spread note cards.

"At school, there are just too many interruptions," he said.

Harrison hasn't stopped all his other research and writing projects, although they have slowed. He recently wrote an article for Civil War Times Illustrated magazine.

"I like to have a couple of things going at one time. I can change from one to another. I find it good to have a change of pace that way," he said.

"I doubt if I would really be happy if I weren't involved in research or writing.

And even though he is on a long way from writing his book on Western, he is already thinking about the problem that confronts every writer — what to include and what to leave on his note cards.

"I'm painfully aware of the fact that when I start writing, one of the main problems is cutting," he said. "There are so many interesting things you keep coming up with."

The only previous history of Western was published in 1957 by James F. Cornette, an English literature major. It was for a doctoral dissertation at George Peabody College in Nashville, Tenn.

Cornette's "Harrison's" history will be interesting, he hopes.

The introduction to Cornette's book is, Harrison said, indicative of the work as a whole: "Most of the background material of Chapter 1 and much of the statistical information pertaining to later chapters will hold little interest for the general reader."

Harrison would like to read former students' and teachers' letters, diaries, journals — anything that contains information about the Western of the past.

"This is the sort of thing that will add interest," he said. School catalogs and other official publications "don't tell all the interesting things."

Western has been a part of Lowell Harrison for much of the last half century. His family moved to Bowling Green when he was 3 or 4, and he received all his education through a bachelor's degree from Western.

As a Western undergraduate, a history major and English minor, Harrison wrote stories on the Kentucky Building for the Herald, then published once every two weeks. "The result was a lot of news items were pretty stale by the time the paper came out," he said.

But his chief interest was history.

"It's something I've somehow always been fascinated with. As far back as I can remember, I've always been very fond of reading. Even as a child, a great deal of what I read was more 'view of history,'" he said.

"By the time I started in college, there wasn't any matter of not knowing what I wanted to study, of changing majors. 'History was really my first love.'"

After he finished his education at Western in 1946 (after being delayed for three years by World War II), Harrison went to New York University, where he received his master's and doctoral degrees. In 1951-52, Harrison studied at the London School of Economics on a Fulbright Scholarship. He returned to the United States and went to teach at West Texas State University, where he spent 10 years as history department head.

But in 1957, 19 years after he left, Harrison came home to Western, and he has been here since — teaching history, writing books and articles and advising history department graduate students.

Harrison's long-time association with Western may explain his desire to write the school's history.

"A part of my interest stems from the fact that I had an early association with the school. It's been interesting to see how the institution has grown and how it has changed."

"I had felt for some time there was a need to bring the history of the university down more to the present. Research is simply something I'm interested in."

If history — whether of a country, a school or a person — teaches us anything, Harrison believes, it is how to put events into perspective.

"(A knowledge of (....) ought to make you more hesitant to make snap judgments," he said. "It's helpful if you can take that knowledge of the past and make use of it to temper somewhat your, contemporary judgments.

"You learn from your study of history that what seems awfully important at a given moment may, on down the road, not be very important at all. ... You just don't know at the moment. That's one reason my period of specialty comes somewhat earlier than the modern."

And that historical perspective is helpful in knowing what to expect from modern-day problems, he said. For instance, he has found many similarities between Western's financial difficulties during the 1930's Great Depression and the current tight budget.

Then, as now, faculty members lost their jobs because of lack of money — in the 30's, about one-fourth of the teachers were laid off, and the ones who retained their jobs had to live with a 16 percent pay cut. Cherry cut his yearly salary from $6,000 to $6,000, and he had five telephones removed from campus.

"I suspect that was a pretty good percentage of the phones," Harrison said.

"This is where the historical perspective is of comfort. Look what happened in the '30s. We did survive it. It makes one hope we may be able to do so again."
At her Simpson County home, Frances Richards reminisces about her days as a Herald editor and journalism teacher at Western. Photo by John Rott

A Link to the Past

Frances Richards, the first editor of the Herald, still keeps in touch with Western and the traditions she started.

By Lisa Beaty

Walking into Frances Richards’ home in Simpson County is like walking into the past. The sprawling white clapboard house is filled with Indian artifacts, antiques, paintings and — in the attic — back issues of the College Heights Herald and letters from former Western students.

It’s fitting that the lady who lives in this house is a link with the past of Western and the Herald.

Miss Richards became the first editor of the College Heights Herald when the newspaper was organized in 1925. She taught Western’s first journalism courses and became Herald faculty adviser.

Miss Richards, 87, said she remembered well when plans for the Herald were announced.

“President (Henry Hardin) Cherry announced in chapel one day that it was decided that we would have a newspaper. It was very dramatic,” she said.

“We had chapel every day, and Dr. Cherry had some of the outstanding speakers of the country. He believed good speakers would help advertise Western. Many of the faculty members were also speakers.

“He believed emphatically in Western,” she said. “He believed that by having a newspaper, Western would be sending a ‘message from the Hill.’ He believed in anything that would advertise Western with dignity and truth.

“Although other names for the paper were suggested, College Heights Herald was chosen because ‘that was the one he (Cherry) liked,’” she said.

When Miss Richards became editor, she was starting the last semester of her senior year. “The dean (G.C. Gamble), the president and the English department head (M.A. Leiper) had a discussion, and I was named editor,” she said. “I think they named me editor because I was a good English student.” She was paid $25 a month.

The Herald was born on a ‘cubbyhole’ on the ground floor of Gordon Wilson Hall, with about 20 volunteer staff members and only a few desks and chairs, she said. “I did some writing and edited all the copy as it came in. Dr. Leiper read the flip copy. He was a stickler for accuracy.

“The Bowling Green Times-Journal printed the paper,” she said. “The copy was perfect when it was sent in, but when the first paper came out, it had numerous errors. It just broke my heart. It was really a bad edition — there were very few copies kept.”

“The paper tried to be a mirror of campus activities,” she said. “There were no sororities or fraternities, so of course there was no news about them. But the paper was a pretty accurate index of literary clubs — there was a history club, an English club and several departmental clubs."

“The paper did a lot to cement the student body,” Miss Richards said. “There wasn’t a more psychologically united group.”

Miss Richards said the paper’s staff had little journalistic experience. “The writers did the best they could, but what they wrote was amateurish,” she said. “But it was a loyal group. I didn’t have any problem getting them to work. The average college student (then) was a little older and more mature than now.”

Miss Richards said her inexperience created problems.

Dr. Gamble was a graduate of Columbia University, which was considered the best journalism school in the country,” she said. “When I wrote my first editorial, I didn’t have any journalism classes. Dr. Gamble tore it (the editorial) all to pieces. He tore it all to smithereens. I don’t believe any young student had as good a course as I did in just one session.

Continued to Page 13 —
Love-More introduces a new facet to Homecoming.

To help celebrate Western's Homecoming, Love-More Fine Jewelers in the Greenwood Mall is giving away a free diamond ring.

Please fill out the coupon and bring it in to our store at the Greenwood Mall.

We will draw the winning coupon on November 14, 1981.

Name__________________________
Address________________________
Telephone_______________________
Newspaper and College Heights

When the student body of Western Kentucky State Teacher's College voted unanimously to establish a newspaper, a great moment was launched which has since seen the beginning of one of the greatest and most far-reaching movements in the history of the college.

The growth of this institution and the various activities connected with it have been very great proportions. It is in keeping with the progress along many lines that the newspaper movement has advanced. Practically every large institution throughout the country publishes a paper, and it is in evidence of the many things that are being done in the Hill that College Heights Herald will be published.

One of the main purposes of this paper is to keep all students in touch with the affairs of the school. Due to the fact that a majority of activities are connected with it, and that a multi-personal effort is necessary to make it a success, it is hoped that a more intimate touch can be maintained with the thousands of students enrolled in the school. Many were here last year because of the recent progress of the institution, and by means of a school paper it is hoped to bring them to knowledge of the development.

Besides being the means of disseminating the news of College Heights throughout the country, opportunities will be given for literary development. Controlled by students and edited by students, it will afford training along literary lines which can be secured in no other way. It is a golden opportunity for improving such talent and initiative which will be a stimulus to many people to contribute their own productions in its columns.

Through the columns of this student publication, it is hoped to give some description of events, both good and bad, that are happening in the school. The school paper will publish news of various school activities in a manner that it is believed will be of some tangible benefit to the teachers of the State, and through them to the children. It is its purpose to send to the Teachers throughout Western Kentucky a message from College Heights concerning the teaching activities of the school which will be a benefactor to them. While the paper will publish news of various school activities, it is hoped that in the future, the best ideas and methods that this school gives, will be taken in the natural order by all schools.

It is hoped that the school paper will come in the natural order of things and as Western Kentucky schools, it will be a success, in a fragment of the entire.

College Heights Herald
Jan. 29, 1925

Frances Richards wrote her first editorial on the founding of the paper. She said she thought it was a masterpiece, but her advisor ripped it to "smithereens."

A Link to the Past

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"It pricked my pride. I thought I had a masterpiece. He said I used too flowery language - simplicity was essential to good writing."

Miss Richards said her Herald editing was "a very happy experience."

After she graduated, she immediately accepted a teaching job in Western's English department. She taught English courses, two journalism courses and was Herald adviser from 1925 to 1964, when she retired.

Her career was interrupted only by a leave of absence in 1929 and 1930 to earn a master's degree from Indiana University. "I never considered working for a newspaper or anything like that - I loved teaching," she said.

Miss Richards' former students include David B. Whitaker, Western's journalism department head; Julian Goodman, former president of NBC; and former Western President Kelly Thompson.

"President Thompson was one of the best students I had," she said. "I believe his journalism work helped when he worked for Western."

She recalled an incident: the Columbia Press Association Awards when she was Herald adviser. "The Herald has always had a good rating, but one year the Columbia Press Association didn't give us a high rating. I found out that Western, instead of being considered a liberal arts college, was considered a teacher's school."

"I worked on getting it (the category) changed to a liberal arts college with a teaching emphasis, and next year the Herald got a high rating again."

Miss Richards still keeps in touch with Western.

She has kept almost 1,000 letters from former students. "I'm very much pleased with the men and women who had the journalism classes I taught. I have done so well," she said.

One of her favorite traditions is attending the annual Herald homecoming breakfast, an event she helped establish in 1961.

During those 30 years, an accident forced her to miss the breakfast in 1978.

"I fell and broke my hip three years ago around homecoming," she said. "They put in an intercom system in the hospital so I could hear the Herald breakfast proceedings. I heard Mr. Whitaker say at the beginning, 'Miss Richards, this will be a success, it will be a fragment of the entire."

"Until I fell, I went to Bowling Green about once a week. I'd go to the college, the library, to the journalism department to see the faculty and to the president's office to see Mr. Downing."

Miss Richards and her sister have a farm where cattle is raised, but spend most of their time welcoming visitors, many of them journalism faculty and former students, to their home.

Now, Miss Richards' lifetime Herald subscription helps her keep up with Western events, she said.

"I think the Herald is a good paper," she said. "I enjoy it thoroughly. It has impressed very much. It's so infinitely better than it was."

"A big oak has to have a little acorn to start," she said. "I like it (the Herald) so much, I feel I had a little tiny part in it."
A Dogmatic, Selfish, Jealous Man

That’s how Frank Griffin describes himself, but in reality he’s none of those.

By Tommy George

Frank Griffin’s association with Western is similar to a locomotive with an old engine — after 35 years, Griffin just keeps chugging.

Griffin describes himself as a dogmatic, selfish, jealous person. He says he’s dogmatic because he can be stubborn:

“Whenever you’re right, go ahead — I’ve always believed that. When you believe in something and have a cause, you can get a lot accomplished.”

He says he’s selfish because he constantly searches for self-fulfillment:

“You come into this world with nothing and certainly leave with nothing. I’ve tried to help people all I could. It gives you the kind of feeling money can’t buy.”

He says his love for Western makes him jealous:

“I’m very jealous of Western — when we lose it hurts. I want to see Western be successful in everything. The roots are very deep.”

Griffin, recreational activities director and the university’s faculty member with the most service, is 62 and an Ashland native. He came to Western at the ripe age of 16.

“I decided to come to school here in 1937,” he said, leaning back in a chair and puffing a brown pipe. “I hitchhiked all the way; I didn’t have a dime in my pocket.”

He came from a family of 11. His father worked in the steel mill, and he said his mother used to stay home to take care of him, his four brothers and four sisters. Griffin, the fifth born, said an older brother who was a 145-pound guard for Western influenced him to become a Hilltopper.

Griffin majored in physical education at the former Western Kentucky State College. He played football for Western, competing at offensive and defensive end. He also ran track — throwing the discuss and running the quarter-mile and relay.

He said his childhood and college days were hard. His family had very little money, and often he was hungry.

“In college and in the Navy after graduation, ‘I turned to boxing as kind of a means of survival,’” the 265-pound Griffin said, remembering days he was a 185-pound puncher.

“The street carnivals used to come to town and would challenge the fellows to win dollars if they could stay in and fight some big fellows for so many rounds.”

Griffin accepted the challenges, and his hunger didn’t last.

“I was pretty successful; I guess I just loved to hit people.”

He had so much fun he made a two-year career of the sport, claiming Golden Gloves Boxing’s Southern Heavyweight Championship. At one stretch, he won five fights in seven minutes.

While in the Navy during World War II, Griffin became close to former World Heavyweight Champions Jack Dempsey and Jim Tunney. He continued to be a fighter, but in different ways.

“I was at the naval base in Key West, and I and a guy who was kind of a sissy were supposed to lead the group in calisthenics. There were about 1,000 men.

“The first day was the other guy’s turn, and when he tried to get the group to exercise, they whistled at him. The guy jumped on his bike and rode off.

“The next day it was my turn, and as I began to lead the group, the guys started whistling again. I quickly said, ‘OK, you guys, we aren’t going to get anywhere this way. If any of you guys really want to whistle, meet me tomorrow and we’ll see how loud you can get.’”

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Intramural director Frank Griffin has seen Western change a lot since he enrolled as a student in 1937.

Coach Frank Griffin (standing left) was assistant head football coach in 1963 when Western finished with a 10-0-1 record, the Ohio Valley Conference title and a win in the Tangerine Bowl.
A Dogmatic, Selfish, Jealous Man

Griffin said the next day almost all 1,000 men showed up and chose three of the group's toughest to fight him. The group didn't know he was an experienced boxer.

"It was three up, three down," Griffin said, laughing. "The next day calisthenics went without a problem. I was later commissioned and made a boat officer just because of that incident."

Then he was knocked out one time. "It was the only time in my life I was knocked out — was walking around — but didn't know it."

"I was walking around that night and the next day but to this day don't remember where I was or what I did."

He returned to Western to begin the intramural program and to coach football and golf in 1946. He ran into much opposition trying to get intramurals off the ground: the program didn't receive funding — $100 — until 1955. But the administration's laissez-faire attitude didn't stop Griffin, today he speaks with the same deep commitment for students as he did in '46.

"Show me a person who only reads books and goes to class and I'll show you a very dull person who's in trouble."

Griffin funded intramurals by selling popcorn at home football and basketball games. Then the program offered only football and basketball, but it now has more than 25 sports andintramural director Jim Pickens at De-trex field.

Griffin, left, talks with assistant named OVC Coach of the Year in 1965 and 1966. He fondly remembers the 1947 season's Southern Intercollegiate Tournament in Athens, Ga.

"Golf had no budget — no money to go to the tournament, no money for a motel," he said. "Well, the team got some money together and we drove my little rattle trap to Athens. We built tents and slept on the greens the night before the tournament and the next day won three out of six flags.

"There's some fond football memories, too. Back then when I coached, there wasn't such a thing as a facemask: I had a player, Eagle

Keys, who got cut in the face and required 23 stitches. I'm the first mask I've ever seen; old Eagle didn't miss a game."

Griffin's life has taken new direction. Western doesn't necessarily come first anymore.

His wife, Billie, of 39 years, is dying of bone cancer.

"My time is my wife's time," he said. "I don't really have any leisure: I haven't hit a golf ball since her sickness. She's very much a part of my life... the thought of losing her is almost unbearable."

His wife is bedridden, and her speech is sometimes affected. She, like Griffin, is a fighter. Doctors had given her only a couple of months to live — that was 1 1/2 years ago.

"I jotted down this quote which really says a lot," Griffin said. It reads:

"Leisure, which had been the property of heaven, came to us before we knew what to do with it."

Griffin said he thinks constantly of his wife and four children; he wants the children, whose ages range from 24-32, to succeed, as all parents would want their children to.

He said he thought of retiring to spend every minute with his wife, but "I wouldn't hear of it."

"She said, 'You know you're going to lose me — I don't think you could stand to lose me and Western, both.'"

Griffin pondered a moment, sighed and said, "You know, I think she's right."

Though his hair has turned gray and his eyesight isn't as good, Griffin still exudes Western spirit.

And don't make the mistake of asking him when he will retire. "None of your damn business," he said. "That's what I tell people."

"I've stayed young and I feel young. I've made a million friends and when I see them over the years it's a feeling I wouldn't trade anything for."

The real reason Griffin hasn't retired is obvious — he's already at home.