

# WE ARE... MARSHALL™

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## Commencement to Feature Graduates, Hickam, Hechler

Coalwood, W.Va., native Homer H. Hickam, Jr., author of the best-seller *Rocket Boys: A Memoir*, will deliver the commencement address at Marshall University's 170<sup>th</sup> commencement, MU President Stephen J. Kopp has announced.

Commencement begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 5 at the Big Sandy Superstore Arena in downtown Huntington.



Homer Hickam

Hickam will receive an honorary Doctor of Literature degree, and Dr. Ken Hechler, former longtime U.S. Congressman and West Virginia Secretary of State, will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree during the ceremony. Honorary degrees have been conferred to highly distinguished recipients since 1928 when Dwight Whitney Morrow and Guy Fielding Yost each received honorary Doctor of Laws degrees.

Kopp said Marshall University is honored to have Hickam as its latest commencement speaker.

"One of Homer Hickam's friends from the *Rocket Boys* used to say, 'A rocket won't fly unless somebody lights the fuse,'" Kopp said. "A fuse was lit that stoked the ambition of Homer Hickam a long time ago in Coalwood, W.Va., and his career has been soaring ever since. From his days as a youngster building rockets in Coalwood, to his time as a NASA engineer and a best-selling author, Homer Hickam has lived a full, rewarding life and made all West Virginians proud. We look forward to hearing his inspirational story during commencement."

Hickam said he is excited about the opportunity to speak to Marshall's 2007 graduating class. He was the featured speaker at Marshall's Elizabeth Gibson Drinko Honors Convocation in April 2002.

"I am pleased and honored to give the commencement address for the 2007 graduating class of Marshall University," Hickam said. "Marshall is known across the country for its excellence in education and West Virginians everywhere are proud of the university's accomplishments. Many of my friends from Big Creek High School went on to graduate from Marshall and all have gone on to lead successful, honorable lives. I will give my remarks with them in mind. I will also be receiving an honorary doctorate from Marshall which will certainly please my mom, and perhaps astonish some of my teachers at Big Creek."

*Rocket Boys: A Memoir* is the story of Hickam's life in Coalwood. It was selected by the New York Times as one of its Great Books of 1998 and was an alternate "Book-of-the-Month" selection for both the Literary Guild and Doubleday book clubs.

In February 1999, Universal Studios released its critically-acclaimed film *October Sky*, which was based on *Rocket Boys*. Delacorte Press, which published *Rocket Boys*, subsequently released a mass market paperback of *Rocket Boys*, re-titled *October Sky*, which reached the No. 1 position on the New York Times' best-seller list.

Hickam graduated from Big Creek High School in 1960 and from Virginia Tech University in 1964 with a B.S. degree in Industrial Engineering. In 1967 and 1968, he served as a First Lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry Division in Vietnam, where he won the Army Commendation and Bronze Star medals.

Hickam has been a writer since 1969 after his return from Vietnam. His first book, *Torpedo Junction*, was published in 1989 by the Naval Institute Press and became a best-seller.

He also has written *The Coalwood Way* (2000), a memoir of his hometown; *Sky of Stone* (2001), which was a sequel to *The Coalwood Way*; and *We Are Not Afraid: Strength and Courage from the Town That Inspired October Sky* (2002).

During his writing career, Hickam was employed as an engineer for the U.S. Army Missile Command from 1971 to 1981. He began employment with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at Marshall Space Flight Center in 1981 as an aerospace engineer.

With NASA, Hickam worked in spacecraft design and crew training. His specialties included training astronauts on science payloads and extravehicular activities. He also trained astronaut crews for many Spacelab and Space Shuttle missions.

Hechler, who served on President Harry Truman's White House staff from 1949 to 1953, attributes the idea to pursue his own political career to the influence of students in his first classes at Marshall. He first taught political science at Marshall College in 1957. He also taught at Columbia and Barnard colleges.

Recently, Hechler taught an honors class at Marshall on Harry S. Truman: His Life and Times. In conjunction with a biographical analysis of Truman's career, the course studied certain American political institutions as reflected in Truman's actions and decisions, including such issues as presidential leadership, public opinion and pressure groups, Congressional relations, White House staffing, foreign policy, controlling bureaucracy, political parties

(continued on page 4)

# General Faculty Meeting to Honor Retirees, Award Winners

All faculty are invited to attend the General Faculty Meeting scheduled for Friday, April 27, at 2 p.m. in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center.

The meeting will feature, among other things, the recognition of retiring faculty and the presentation of several prestigious awards.

Dr. Larry Stickler will welcome the group and his address will be followed by remarks from President Stephen J. Kopp.

Nominations from the floor will be taken for faculty representatives to the Advisory Council of Faculty and the Marshall University Board of Governors.

Stickler, along with Dr. Dale Shao, will recognize retiring faculty who include Dr. Kenneth Ambrose, Dr. L. Howard Aulick, Dr. Elwyn Bellis, Lance Belville, Dr. Stephen Fish, Dr. Gary Gilbert, Dr. John Lancaster, Dr. Mary Marshall, Marilyn McClure, Dr. Jane McKee, Dr.

## Dinner, Performance to Cap Holocaust Remembrance Month

Marshall University will conclude Holocaust Remembrance Month with a dinner, discussion and theatre presentation of "The Diary of Anne Frank" Wednesday April 25, to support Faces of Appalachia: Studies in Ethnicity and Gender, a National Endowment for the Humanities Initiative.

Throughout April a series of Holocaust remembrance events marking the remembrance have taken place in Huntington and on Marshall's Huntington campus.

The April 25 dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in the John Marshall Room of the Memorial Student Center. It will be followed at 7 p.m. by "Coffee and Conversation," with director and MU faculty member Gene Anthony and Rabbi David Wucher on the theatre production in the Francis-Booth Experimental Theatre.

"The Diary of Anne Frank" will be presented at 8 p.m. in the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse. The performance will also take place at 8 p.m. daily April 26-28.

A \$100 donation per person to the Faces of Appalachia project reserves a place for the evening of dinner, discussion and theatre. Reservations may be made by calling Kristi Arrowood at ext. 63505.

**WE ARE... MARSHALL™**



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The next regular issue of *We Are...Marshall!* will carry an issue date of May 4, 2007. Deadline is April 27. Articles or other materials for consideration should be sent to Pat Dickson, editor, at the South Charleston campus or by e-mail to [pdickson@marshall.edu](mailto:pdickson@marshall.edu).

William Rhoten, Dr. Paul Sheils, Dr. Karen Simpkins, Dr. Ralph Taylor, Cora Teel.

A series of awards will be presented. The awards and their presenters include: Distinguished Service Award, by Dr. Sarah Denman; Outstanding Graduate Advisor Award, by Dr. Leonard Deutsch; Distinguished Artists & Scholars Award, by Dr. Venkat Gudivada; Pickens-Queen Teaching Award, by Prof. Karen Bailey; Reynolds Outstanding Teacher Award, by Dr. Karen Mitchell; Hedrick Outstanding Faculty Award, by Prof. Gary McIlvain.

Immediately following the meeting, a reception will be held in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center.

## Glenwood Subject of Humanities Lecture

The April 29 Little Lecture presented by the West Virginia Humanities Council will focus on archeological work being conducted at one of Charleston's most historically significant properties, Glenwood, an estate owned by the Marshall University Graduate College Foundation.

Dr. Billy Joe Peyton, a noted local historian, will deliver the presentation, "The Story of a House: The Glenwood Project," at 2 p.m. at the MacFarland-Hubbard House at 1310 Kanawha Blvd. East in Charleston.

Glenwood is a house built in 1852 on an estate of 366 acres in what is now the Edgewood section of the West Side of Charleston. It was home to three prominent Kanawha County families—the Laidleys, Summerses, and Quarriers. Over the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the house stood as a witness to Charleston's transition from a rural landscape to an urban setting.

Admission to the lecture is \$10 and includes a reception with the speaker. Seating is limited, so those interested in attending are encouraged to call the Humanities Council at 304-346-8500 to reserve a seat or receive additional information.

## Pickups for Yard Sale Begin

In preparation for the popular university "yard sale," which is scheduled for July 23-24, departments are being asked by Physical Plant to begin submitting work orders so that items can be picked up.

It's essential to be specific with room numbers and buildings so that items can be picked up as quickly as possible, according to Carol Skaggs, Receiving Department supervisor. Requests for pickups should also include a contact person and phone number and each item should have the org. number of the department sending the items so that credit can be given if it's sold, she says.

Broken objects such as chairs, tables, lamps, etc. should be marked for trash pickup. Anyone having questions should call Skaggs at ext. 66678.

## Dunn, Noble Re-Elected to Classified Staff Positions

Mike Dunn has been re-elected Classified Staff Council Chair and Marshall University's representative to the ACCE, with terms to run from 2007-2009. Sherri Noble was re-elected to the Institutional Board of Governors for the term 2007-2009.

## Profile: Audrey Deel and Stephanie Gray

A series on interesting Marshall University people.



Stephanie Gray



Audrey Deel

They're miles apart, but they share a passion for raising their voices in perfect harmony. And their motto might very well be, "Have pitch pipe, will travel."

For Stephanie Gray, who celebrated her 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary with the Human Resource office April 5, and Audrey Deel, who works in the office of the Dean of Graduate School of Education and Professional Development in South Charleston, singing with the Sweet Adelines International is not just a hobby but a major "chord" running through their lives.

"And it's cheap therapy, too," Gray says with her musical laugh.

Sweet Adelines is the barbershop vocal group for women, featuring songs that are performed, unaccompanied by musical instruments, in tight, four-part harmony. Barbershop singing literally began in barbershops in the South and is considered one of the few original American musical art

forms. Sweet Adelines feature two types of groups: the chorus and the quartet. The singers are classified as tenors, leads, baritones and basses. Both Gray and Deel are members of a chorus and a quartet, although in different cities.

Gray, who grew up in a family in which music was an integral part of their lives, is the only charter member left in her chorus, River Magic, which was established in Huntington in 1976 and chartered in 1977. She also sings tenor in the We 4 Quartet. Although members have come and gone through the years, they remain a vibrant enthusiastic group eager to go out and entertain anywhere people want to enjoy good singing.

Like other Sweet Adelines, her chorus and quartet perform in a wide variety of venues for all kinds of audiences. The quartet is popular for delivering birthday and anniversary greetings, both in private homes and restaurants, and both groups perform for civic organizations, business meetings, charity functions, hospitals, churches and community events such as Huntington's annual Summerfest and Relay for Life.

"We sing anything that can be arranged in four-part barbershop harmony," Gray explains. "We do religious, contemporary, traditional, country, pop, Barry Manilow, Reba McIntire, you name it, we can do it and we have. We've sung for patients in intensive care in hospitals, in chemotherapy units, just about anywhere that's requested. I think we really do brighten people's day and others around also enjoy our singing. That makes us feel good about what we do." Deel concurs, her groups also perform for groups and individuals all over the Kanawha Valley.

There are some expenses involved with belonging to Sweet Adelines, so fundraising is a necessity. But few groups can combine as much fun with making money as the intrepid singing ladies. Both Gray and Deel agree that Valentine's Day is the mother lode for raising money and both regularly plan ahead to take the day off so they

(continued on page 4)

## Lewis to Offer Moffat Lecture



Dr. Ronald Lewis

Dr. Ronald L. Lewis, the Stuart and Joyce Robbins Chair in History at West Virginia University, will deliver the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Moffat Lecture at 2 p.m. on Friday, April 27 in Corbly Hall 105. The lecture is entitled "Ethnicity and Change in Transnational West Virginia."

This event, which is presented by Phi Alpha Theta, the student history honorary society and the department of History, is named in honor of Dr. Charles Moffat, who taught history at Marshall from 1946 to 1977 and who

recently was recognized as one of the top professors in Marshall history by *Marshall Magazine*.

Lewis, a prominent historian of Appalachia, is the author of several books and currently is completing a study of Welsh coalminers in America. A reviewer of *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside* called it "a book that everyone interested in the process of development in the mountains should read—and read again."

A question-and-answer session will follow the talk, and Lewis' books will be available for sale and signing immediately thereafter.

## Marshall Artists Series Presents 'The Guys'

A collaboration of West Virginia professional artists will come together for the first time in May to present playwright Anne Nelson's true story of New York City and its people in the aftermath of 9/11, in the drama, *The Guys*, directed by Cathey Crowell Sawyer, Artistic Director of the Greenbrier Valley Theatre in Lewisburg.

The play will be staged for three performances—Monday, April 30 through Wednesday, May 2 at 8 p.m. in the Francis Booth Experimental Theatre in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center.

The story takes place less than two weeks after the September 11 attacks. Nick, portrayed by Jack Cirillo, a fire captain who lost eight men in the collapse of the World Trade Center, must prepare eulogies for each of them. Feeling overwhelmed and unable to express his feelings, he enlists the help of an editor, Joan, played by Beth McVey. They build a friendship as she helps him put together the difficult, heartfelt speeches that he must deliver with honor, humor and poise.

Huntington native and Broadway star Beth McVey, who has appeared in numerous Broadway productions including "Annie," "Phantom of the Opera," and "Beauty and the Beast," will reprise the role of Joan. Jack Cirillo, an associate professor of theatre, has worked extensively in New York as well as in many of this country's finest regional theatres.

The set and lighting will be designed by Lang Reynolds, Chair of the Department of Theatre since 1999. During his career Reynolds has served as a lighting/set designer, technical coordinator, and producer of numerous professional projects. In addition he consults on theatre renovations and new theatre construction.

For ticket information, contact the Marshall Artists Series Box Office, located in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center, at ext. 66656. The box office is open Monday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m.

## *Audrey Deel and Stephanie Gray* from Page 3

can criss-cross the area delivering their popular singing valentines

"Valentine's Day is by far our busiest day," according to Gray. "Altogether the Huntington Sweet Adelines had 35 valentines to perform. My quartet did 10-12 of them. We handle the Huntington, Ashland area and this year we had one quartet in Charleston as well."

In Charleston Deel and her quartet, "Mountain Jewels" delivered 13 valentines this year. They also did "Christmas Cards" by phone this past year and sold cookie and candy trays to raise money.

This year's nasty's weather on Valentine's Day slowed down but didn't stop Cupid's deliveries. The day started out snowy with icy roads, which didn't daunt either Gray or Deel's quartets. It took a while, but to the delight of their customers they showed up in good voice.

Gray, who also sings in her church choir, grew up in a musical family. Her father, a Marshall graduate, was a music teacher in Cabell County schools and her mother gave private piano lessons. Gray first raised her voice in church at age 5 and she's been singing ever since. "I grew up with music; I love it. I sing with the radio or anywhere I can. I have a sign on my car that says, 'Caution: Driver Singing.' I like to watch the audiences as we perform. It's fun to watch people's facial expressions and how they are interacting with you."

A lifelong resident of Huntington, she came to Marshall fully intending to pursue a music degree, which she did for two years. She decided to work for a while, eventually coming to Marshall at a time when there was no centralized Human Resources office. "The HR office actually was established in 1976 and I began there as a clerk. In the 1990s Human Resources and Affirmative Action split and I went with Affirmative Action until the offices were put back together in 1997-98. So one way or another, I've been with HR my entire career at Marshall."

Today she's a Human Resource Assistant III with the responsibility of screening applications for most employment categories other than faculty and some of the higher administrative positions, placing advertisements, and working closely with the director of equity programs who handles grievances, conflicts and the like, among other duties.

She likes the diversity, likes meeting people, likes explaining about the available jobs, and the qualifications that are necessary for job openings. She has to be a good listener as well, a role that comes easy for her, with her calm and friendly manner.

"It's really a very interesting job," she says reflecting on the past 31 years. "It's different every day. I deal with so many diverse people--there are the applicants and then people from the various departments."

Gray and husband Jerry are proud that their daughter, Ami, is carrying on the family's strong musical traditions, along with her husband, Joe Dangerfield. Ami has her B.F.A. in flute performance from Marshall. Joe also has a B.F.A. from Marshall in composition and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. They live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he is an assistant professor of composition and the conductor of the orchestra at Coe College. Ever the optimist, the proud grandmother has high musical hopes for grandson Conner, 3-1/2, and granddaughter, Piper, 18 months.

Audrey Deel has spent her entire working life in education. She spent 26 years as the secretary to the Title I program at the West Virginia Department of Education and five years working for the Kanawha County Board of Education. In 1995 she came to the graduate college in South Charleston where she spent 11 years as secretary for the North Central Association's office which was located there until four years ago when the office moved off campus. Since then she's been a staff member in the graduate dean's office.

Like Gray, she's always had a love of music, encouraged by her mother, Laura. In fact, Deel was so impressed when she went to her first meeting of the Almost Heaven chorus in 1995 that the next week she took her mother with her. They've been singing in both the chorus and their quartet, Mountain Jewels, ever since where Deel sings baritone and her mother sings tenor.

Both Deel and Gray agree that being a member of musical groups takes commitment and lots of time. Both rehearse two nights a week and Gray spends a third evening at her church's choir practice

Singing has always been a large part of Deel's life. Her grandfather was very musical, she says. She started singing in church as a youngster, performing in duos, trios, and sextets. She's bought a dulcimer and she and her mother are learning to play it.

Singing barbershop harmony improves listening skills, she says. "Because there are no instruments you have to be in tune with the other parts, to be sure you're with them providing the harmony."

The outgoing Deel also cuts quite a rug as a line dancer. She was a member of a dance team, the Lonesome Doves, for several years until her knee required surgery. Physical therapy has improved her knee so much that she hopes to get back to dancing when she has time. "I love line dancing, it's so much fun and great exercise," she says..

The entire Deel family likes to travel and they enjoy taking frequent trips to their favorite spot, Pigeon Forge, Tenn.. It's not unusual for the family, including her mother and her husband Brooks along with other family members, to pile in cars and head south, sometimes three times a year. Their son Kevan lives the Charleston area.

And like Stephanie Gray, she agrees that singing can be very therapeutic. "When our quartet gets together, if someone is feeling down, we sing and cut up and by the end of the evening everyone is laughing and feeling better. One good thing also, you get to know other people well and develop friendships with people you otherwise wouldn't have known well."

## *Commencement* from Page 1

and campaigns. The course also explored substantive issues such as civil rights, price control, and health care.

"Fifty years ago when I first stepped into the classroom at what was then Marshall College, I was immediately hooked on the spirit of the students and faculty," Hechler said. "That same indescribable spirit was there in greater measure on my recent return to teach a seminar for Yeager and Marshall Scholars."

Hechler served as a U.S. Congressman from 1959 through 1977 and as Secretary of State in West Virginia from 1985 through 2001. Hechler is the author and editor of several books, including *Working with Truman: A Personal Memoir of the White House Years*, and *Bridge at Remagen*. He served as a major in the U.S. Army, and was awarded the Bronze Star and five battle stars.

In 1965, Hechler was the only member of Congress to march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during the historic Selma (Ala.) March.

Hechler is a native of Roslyn, N.Y., which is 14 miles from Franklin D. Roosevelt's childhood home. He was named West Virginia Son of the Year in 1969. In 2001, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission awarded Hechler the Human Civil Rights Award "for advocating social change in the pursuit of equality for others." He received the Harry S. Truman Award for Public Service in 2002, and was named Mountaineer of the Year for 2003 by Graffiti magazine.