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In an effort to “Be Marshall Green,” students and faculty work to create a more environmentally friendly university.


With new technology and new opportunities, today’s Marshall students face a different world than students of years past.

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Difficult times confront us. It is no secret that our state and nation are in the midst of the worst recession our nation has faced in 80 years.

Recently, I have been asked whether Marshall University is positioned to weather the repercussions of this deep economic recession, including projected cuts in state appropriations over the next few years. My answer is a resounding yes—the University will not only outlast this crisis but with dedicated planning, hard work and a healthy degree of sacrifice, we envision emerging stronger from it.

A significant key to our success will be sustainability efforts like those you will read about in this issue.

During a time when public universities across the country are battening down the hatches, capping enrollments and struggling to stay afloat, at Marshall University we have been working to accelerate growth, improve productivity and gain efficiencies. We are examining every aspect of the University— from top to bottom—to actualize opportunities and leverage resources that will help us serve our students and our constituents more effectively and more resourcefully.

We are combing the University for increased efficiencies—from the president’s office to boilers and light bulbs. Last fall, the University’s new Sustainability Department began the task of monitoring everything from our power usage to the food we waste in our dining halls. These efforts have rapidly produced significant monetary savings in University operations, while benefitting our students and our environment.

In fact, the University is on track to save approximately $600,000 due to changes instituted on campus in the wake of the student-initiated Green Fee, the hiring of a sustainability manager and continued energy savings produced by practices and improvements instituted by our Physical Plant.

Consider that the University has:
• Conserved more than 17 million gallons of water during the past year.
• Held natural gas expenditures steady and decreased power usage from 73.5 million kilowatt hours to 71.3 million kilowatt hours.
• Launched a campus-wide recycling program funded by a grant from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. These measures are diverting tons of waste from our local landfill and reducing waste removal costs.
• Led the State in the Demand Response Program, a regional energy curtailment system adopted to reduce electrical usage in five campus academic buildings during peak demand periods. Marshall is the first West Virginia higher education institution to participate in this voluntary program to reduce demand on the national power grid during peak usage periods.
• Promoted dining without trays to reduce food waste and water and energy usage, which is having the added benefit of improving meal plan choices for our students.
• Continued to give students a voice in the process of advancing campus sustainability through the Greening Marshall Committee, a process unique to our University. As a result of their hard work and ideas, their Green Fee has made possible our new Sustainability Department and other vital initiatives that will help us as we work to “Be Marshall Green.” Our students are responsible thinkers and doers. Their conservation and environmental consciousness bodes well for our future. I am very pleased they wear the Green and White.

We are confident that Marshall University will continue to achieve success, and even growth in these challenging times. These future successes will be built on an enduring foundation that the University’s strategic initiatives have helped establish. The recent sustainability projects are an extension of these initiatives and demonstrate our willingness to adapt our plans to take advantage of new opportunities. Adapting and adjusting to new realities—quite literally retooling our organization as we move forward—is what you can expect to see at Marshall University as we continue the important work of fulfilling the promise of a better future.

Throughout, we will remain a community steadfast in our unwavering commitment to serving, educating and inspiring future generations of students, advancing knowledge, discovery and innovation, and catalyzing greater economic development and opportunity.
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Be Marshall GREEN

Students and faculty work together to answer the question of how Marshall can reduce its environmental impact while saving money, being innovative and appealing to students of tomorrow.

Marshall has always been the home of the green and white, but a bold, new initiative at the university is changing the way people think about being green.

“Green” is the universal buzzword for being environmentally responsible, and Marshall recently joined the ranks of responsible individuals, households and major corporations making an effort to be better stewards of the environment. “Be Marshall Green” is the name of a new program aimed at making the university more environmentally efficient.

“The environment, and the earth as a whole, is a beautiful thing,” said Karen Nelson, senior environmental science major and secretary of the Marshall Environmental Student Association (MESA). “As members of an educational community it is our responsibility to learn as much as possible about the earth and to preserve it for future generations so they can enjoy it as much as we do.”

Major universities are known for leaving large carbon footprints, the total set of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by an organization, event or product. In a world where people are becoming more environmentally conscious, members of the Marshall community had one major question: how could the university reduce its environmental impact while saving money, being innovative and appealing to students of tomorrow?

To answer that question, Marshall University President Stephen J. Kopp began by simply listening to the concerns expressed by students, faculty and staff. After being approached by the Student Government Association and the Sierra Student Coalition to create a more sustainable university, Kopp formed the Greening Marshall Committee to serve as a sounding board for the university’s environmental concerns.

That decision led to an explosion of positive activity for Marshall University and the environment. The Greening Marshall Committee, consisting of students, faculty and staff, was established in spring 2008. After a few meetings, the committee was able to reenergize the existing Be Green tailgate recycling program and land a $65,000 Recycling Assistance Grant for a campus-wide recycling program. Soon after, a “Green Fee” was implemented for Marshall students, who voted to help fund environmental causes on campus by paying an extra $5 fee per semester.
Next, the Physical Plant created a Sustainability Department in 2009 to explore ways to conserve water and energy, reduce waste and incorporate green technologies and materials. But who was dedicated enough to the university and the environment to take on this task?

Enter Margie Phillips, a member of the Marshall University community since 1977 as student, staff, part-time faculty member or all three at the same time. Phillips had worked for 12 years as the university’s energy analyst, focusing on conserving the university’s finances as well as the earth’s resources. Mark Cutlip, director of the Physical Plant, says Phillips’ promotion
“We live in a global community that is more environmentally conscious with greater expectations for environmental accountability.”

– Marshall University President Stephen J. Kopp
to sustainability manager is a natural progression for her and a great fit for the university. It is also a role she takes seriously.

“My pledge is to continue to research and develop methods to save energy while enhancing and preserving the environment for our community,” Phillips said.

In order to create a more energy-efficient university, Energy Star-certified products are replacing outdated mechanical equipment as the need arises, and low-flow options are replacing water-guzzling plumbing fixtures. Even with annual enrollment increases, the university recently calculated a reduction in electricity by more than 2.8 million kilowatt hours and a reduction in water use by 19.8 million gallons from the previous school year.

Due to budget restrictions, these major upgrades have been implemented in stages. For example, since 1997 the Physical Plant staff has been replacing incandescent bulbs with fluorescents, one floor at a time, and the results are measurable. An energy audit conducted in 2006 helped certify Old Main, a 100-year-old building, with an Energy Star rating.

“Old Main ranks just above the average office building on a national basis in energy use,” said Bill Willis, the West Virginia Division of Energy’s program coordinator. “I think this is outstanding, given the age of the building and the impacts of all the changes over the years. It speaks highly of the university.”

Another interesting method the university has implemented to save money and the environment is to explore going “trayless” in the campus cafeterias. With eyes bigger than their stomachs, students tend to collect too much food on their trays, leading to larger quantities thrown away and more dishes to be washed. Trayless cafeterias conserve water and energy as well as reduce food waste. The National Association of College and University Food Services boasts that one university saved 60,000 pounds of food and 475,000 gallons of water annually by going trayless. The Sustainability Department at Marshall conducted a three-day on-campus trial and student survey, which indicated that most students support the program. Starting this year, Twin Towers Cafeteria and Harless Dining Hall are almost entirely trayless.

President Kopp is pleased with the savings on campus and with the attitude shift among students, faculty and staff.

“We live in a global community that is more environmentally conscious with greater expectations for environmental accountability by individuals and public and private entities,” Kopp has said.

A major goal of Marshall University is to stay ahead of the green curve. When the students decided to pursue a referendum to propose a green fee in 2008, Marshall joined only two other universities in the nation with such an assessment. A year later, a New York Times article claimed college students were “clamoring” for such fees, noting that other universities are jumping on board. For Marshall, the money provided by the Green Fee - $5 per student per semester – ensures that the upfront costs of sustainability are paid, ensuring long-term success for the institution’s related programs.

Although Phillips is certain that the economic, social and environmental benefits of a sustainable Marshall University will spread into surrounding communities and ultimately throughout our state, the benefits of Being Marshall Green have already reached the nation. In 2009, Marshall was the first university in West Virginia to join the Demand Response Program, whose participants curtail their energy use during peak hours of demand, creating less of a need for new power plants and helping to suppress electrical rate increases.

Marshall also is making great strides to appeal to existing and future students who are environmentally conscious. Academically, Marshall offers both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in environmental studies, and the passion and dedication of Marshall’s environmentally conscious professors goes beyond the classroom.

Professors Dr. Anita Walz and Dr. Charles Somerville are members of the Greening Marshall Committee and have made environmental concerns a major part of their teaching careers. Walz teaches environmental geography at the 400, 500 and 600 levels and mentors graduate students whose theses relate to environmental topics. During her free time, Walz researches the urban heat island phenomenon, which revealed Marshall University as a cool spot in the middle of hot Huntington even in August.
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Somerville, in addition to being dean of the College of Science, is an environmental microbiologist who teaches courses in the biological sciences. He actively works with university officials to reduce electricity and water consumption while exploring the possibility of utilizing rain barrels around the Huntington campus and installing “green roofs” on the science buildings.

Officials on campus recognize that “Being Marshall Green” makes the university part of a global community striving to make a difference in the health and wellbeing of the planet. And if along the way Marshall can reduce its environmental impact, save money, become innovative and appeal to the students of tomorrow, then the benefit will be bountiful for generations to come.

Halcyon Findley Moses is a freelance writer living in Huntington. She is involved in numerous environmental issues and is the owner and operator of the Web site http://www.GoGreenMartAndMore.com.

In 2008, the newly formed Greening Marshall Committee earned a $65,000 Recycling Assistance Grant from the Rehabilitation Environmental Action Program. The grant helped fund the university’s recycling program, which has ensured the placement of recycling bins in every building on campus and in other high-traffic areas. Above, recycling coordinator Elizabeth Rutherford poses with recycling pods on the first floor of Smith Hall.
For 20 years, the Marshall University Alumni Association was shoehorned into makeshift quarters in a former funeral home. At the same time, the Office of Development and the Marshall University Foundation had to make do with cramped, inadequate offices.

No longer.

They now share the new Marshall Foundation Hall, Home of the Erickson Alumni Center. The visually striking $9 million building, conveniently located on the south side of Fifth Avenue at its intersection with John Marshall Drive, is destined to be a landmark of Marshall’s Huntington campus.

The original planning for a new alumni center dates back to 1999, said Tish Littlehailes, director of alumni relations. At that time, the thinking was to build a new building adjacent to the existing Erickson Alumni Center at 1731 5th Ave.

But plans didn’t move into high gear until about 2005, said Dr. Ron Area, senior vice president for development and CEO of the Marshall Foundation. At that point, it was decided that the Alumni Association, the Development Office and the Foundation should join forces. That meant a bigger building and a change of site.

“Once planning began in earnest, a key thing that happened is that Tim Haymaker, a developer in Lexington, Ky., and a great friend to Marshall, agreed to give us his time for free,” Area said. “He worked with us to help design the facility, find the architect and get the contractor. He’s been with us every step of the way.”

A majestic rotunda greets visitors as they enter the new Marshall Foundation Hall, Home of the Erickson Alumni Center. From its hand-painted ceiling to the Marshall logo recessed in its floor, the rotunda offers an elegant welcome to members of the Marshall community.

Article by James E. Casto
Photos by Reece Booth & Rick Lee
As for Haymaker, he said it was “a real privilege to get to plan and oversee the construction of the new Foundation Hall and Erickson Alumni Center.”

“I have been in the real estate business for nearly 40 years and this was the most satisfying project with which I have ever been involved,” Haymaker said. “I am here to tell you that I have never seen a building that has had form, function and heritage come together so well.”

Littlehales said it’s hoped that the building will be one that people visit on the most special days of their lives. “Maybe they’ll come for the first time when they’re trying to decide where to go to school,” she said. “Of course, they will be here when they graduate. And we hope they’re going to come back other times - for reunions and maybe even their weddings.”

The new building is a three-story brick structure that combines 33,000 square feet of offices and public spaces that are available to alumni and the community for special events, weddings, receptions and business meetings. It houses the Erickson Alumni Center on the first floor and Development and Foundation offices on the second and third floors.

“It’s a place where alumni can come together to reconnect,” said Alumni Association President Nancy E. Campbell, “but it was designed to bridge a purpose even greater than simply honoring our past. It will also open doors to our future.”

Some of the building’s highlights include the following:

- A first-floor conference area seats 240 guests for a meal or an audience of 300 people seated lecture-style. Three-story arched windows encircle the space, bathing it in light. The area can be subdivided into two smaller sections with a moveable wall. Just off to one side is a catering kitchen. French doors lead from the conference area to a patio with a greenery-covered pergola.
- A majestic rotunda includes 10 display cases for a changing array of Marshall memorabilia. A beautiful grand staircase leads up from the rotunda to the second-floor mezzanine.
- An intimately sized alumni lounge with a sports theme has been named in honor of Nate Ruffin. A member of the 1970 Marshall football team, Ruffin was sidelined by an injury and thus wasn’t on the plane that crashed Nov. 14, 1970, killing all 75 people aboard, including 37 Marshall players. Ruffin was a tireless supporter of Marshall University until his death in 2001.
- Herd Heaven is a large lounge area that overlooks the rotunda. “We’ve dedicated this area to Tim Haymaker, who has been such a tremendous help to us,” said Area. Look up and you can see the beautifully painted vaulted ceiling. Look down over the ornamental iron railing and you can see the large Marshall logo recessed at the center of the floor below.
- The building’s state-of-the-art call center will be used for the Marshall Link fundraising program.
The facility is completely equipped for wireless Internet use, and the meeting rooms include video and telephone conferencing equipment. The conference area features a large descending projection screen.

Outside is a carefully landscaped 60-space parking lot.

Neighborgall Construction Co. of Huntington was the general contractor for the building, which was built with union labor. The Neighborgall firm has enjoyed a long relationship with Marshall, erecting and renovating a number of Huntington campus buildings over the years.

Those interested in utilizing the facility for a meeting or event should contact Krystle Nichols, event and building operations manager, at (304) 696-3420 or nichols50@marshall.edu.

Naming opportunities for rooms in the building are still available. Interested individuals should contact Lance West, vice president of development, at (304) 696-5407.

James E. Casto is the associate director for public information at the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing.
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Colleges reportedly serve as a microcosm for society as a whole. This was true 40 years ago when activism and civil rights struggles were synonymous with the word “student.” It’s also true today in the sense that the compartmentalization of Marshall students’ lives mirrors the fragmentation and technology addiction of the culture that surrounds and penetrates them.

“It’s hard for students today,” said Dr. Frances Hensley, associate vice president for academic affairs.

Tell us something we don’t know.

The consensus seems to be that the Marshall students of today are more pressured, worn thin and distracted than ever. The distractions imposed by modern media and technology, along with the rise in numbers of working students and the likelihood of students having family or parental responsibilities, have made life for today’s college students much more complicated. In their world, the compartmentalization of their lives is not only beneficial, but also necessary for survival.

Steve Hensley, dean of student affairs, said that the possibility of financial stress presents another burden on today’s college students.

“Some parents have sacrificed a lot to get their kids a college education,” Steve Hensley said. “When I was a student, tuition was $100 a year; now it’s $3,000. Students are aware of this big sacrifice, and it can add to already mounting stress.”

Social networks like Facebook, as well as the mobile devices that students rely on so heavily to function in their daily lives, have become integral to education. From using their phones to perform research online, to coordinating study groups via text message, to finding yet another way to avoid paying attention in class, modern technology has earned mixed reviews throughout the academic world.
Steve Hensley said he believes that today’s communication technology has had overwhelmingly positive effects, keeping connections between people viable and maintained when they might not be otherwise. However, Frances Hensley said she worries about the lure of yet more distractions worming their way into Marshall students’ lives.

“Individuals are never really alone,” she said. “This communication and convenience comes at a price, and that price is time.”

But with the amount of work burdening today’s students, whether academic, familial, personal or job related, these potentially distracting devices may be a smart risk and a necessary evil.

“I can’t imagine researching topics without the current technology,” said Emily Rowe, a senior English major from Parkersburg, W.Va. “The ease with which students can access a broad range of information that informs and enhances not only their work but their lives is indispensable.”

There are, however, observable effects resulting from this increasing workload.

“Students aren’t as interested in some activities and clubs as they were 30 years ago,” Frances Hensley said, “but there are a lot more of those clubs which serve more diverse interests.”

Marshall was named second in the nation for outstanding programming by the National Association of College Activities in 2008. With more than 150 student organizations from which to choose, students have plenty of opportunities for face-to-face friendships and networking. Steve Hensley said that declining student participation is most notable in political activism; compared to past decades, students are just not as impassioned about political issues as they once were. He also said he has noticed that students spend less time hanging out in groups.

“Dating as I knew it is dead,” he said. “The mechanisms by which you meet people are just different.”

Dating worked for Frances and Steve Hensley, though. They have been a couple since their undergraduate days at Marshall and will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary in June.

The changes in students have led to a new core curriculum for undergraduates, which Frances and Steve Hensley both worked to develop. The new core will be implemented with this fall’s incoming freshmen and will place an emphasis on critical thinking. A new freshman seminar will replace the old university orientation class (UNI 101) and core classes will be tailored for individual disciplines.
“From the beginning, students will work purposefully toward a foreseeable end to develop a skill set which will allow them to complete their final capstone,” Frances Hensley said.

There is no question that students are different when they leave Marshall from when they first set foot on one of its campuses. The differences include a higher education, of course, but also greater sense of responsibility, self-confidence and self-knowledge. Steve Hensley said he wants to pinpoint the sources of these changes and shape them in a way that is compatible with today’s society and beneficial to Marshall’s graduates.

“How can we utilize this change and make students become more analytical, critically thinking and better able to separate the important from the trivial?” he asked.

These are the questions that those shaping the new core curriculum are asking themselves.

Differences obviously abound between today’s student and the students of the past. Student vehicles are now the rule rather than the exception. Physical exams are no longer required for acceptance. Most importantly, technology and communication networks have gone from enhancing and informing students’ lives to completely enveloping them. However, there are still some similarities.

Marshall is still awarding degrees to many first-generation college graduates, Frances Hensley said. And, as it has been since Marshall first opened in 1837, education comes easily to some but not to others, and the threats of neglect of their studies and distraction from them are ever present.

“Temptation is constant,” Frances Hensley said. “The form it takes is not.”

Steve Hensley said he takes a more generalistic approach to the similarities between past and present students. He cites two ideas seemingly at odds with one another but also shared by all students, regardless of time or generation – uncertainty and hope.

Marshall’s new core curriculum will take into consideration the differences in students today and the careers they intend to pursue. Those needs will be reflected in combination with the needs undergraduate college students have always had in order to develop fulfilling lives and careers.

Even the way students exercise has transformed as new technology has emerged. The Marshall Recreation Center, which opened in February 2009, features cardio equipment with TV screens, places to plug in MP3 players and even a way for students to track their workouts on a USB flash drive to help them meet their personal fitness goals. It is not uncommon for a student to check his or her cell phone in the middle of a workout.

Cory Jackson is a freelance writer and an English major at Marshall University.
DREAMERS.

Meet 16 Marshall alumni who saw their dreams come true.

Over the course of its 173-year history, Marshall University has had its fair share of dreamers. Whether it was the freshman sitting in history class daydreaming about his date next weekend with his girlfriend or a senior sitting in biology class daydreaming about med school, every student has had unique plans for the future. But a select few dreamt of finding fame and success on stage, screen and beyond. Fewer still actually saw their dreams come true. These are stories of 16 Marshall alumni who made it.

Article by Clint McElroy
Conchata Ferrell was born in Charleston, W.Va., and grew up in Circleville, Ohio. She graduated from Marshall with a degree in social studies education. Ferrell began her acting career on stage, winning both the Drama Desk Award and the Obie Award for her role in *The Sea Horse*. She was in the original Broadway cast of *Hot L Baltimore*, which led to her television debut in the ABC TV series of the same name.

Ferrell has three Emmy nominations to her name: one for her role as a supporting actress on *L.A. Law* in 1992 and two for her role as Berta in the hit comedy series *Two and a Half Men* on CBS. Her other TV work includes *ER, Friends, JAG, Touched by an Angel, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Murder She Wrote, Night Court, Matlock* and *St. Elsewhere*. Her film work is equally extensive, including *Network, Edward Scissorhands, Erin Brockovich, Mr. Deeds, Mystic Pizza* and *K-Pax*.

Michael W. Smith was born in Kenova, W.Va. He left Marshall University before graduating for Nashville, Tenn., to pursue a career in music. Smith was asked to
play keyboards in a band backing up singer Amy Grant, which led to his solo recording career. He has released 20 albums, nine gold and three platinum. He has 28 No. 1 singles, three Grammy awards and 40 Dove Awards. With his wife, Debbie, Smith has written 10 books. He started his own label for Christian artists called Rocketown Records in 1996. He has sung before our nation’s presidents and other national leaders and has been very active in the Billy Graham Crusades.

**J. Mark McVey** was born in Huntington, W.Va. The Marshall graduate made his Broadway debut as Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* after winning the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Actor while touring with the show. His other Broadway credits include *The Who’s Tommy* and *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public*. Off-Broadway appearances include roles in *Chess*, *Hey Love* and *The Show Goes On*. His national tours include shows like *My Fair Lady*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific* and *Show Boat*.

In 1997, McVey made his Carnegie Hall debut with Marvin Hamlish. He has been a guest artist with numerous symphonies around the world, including the Boston Pops and the National Symphony Orchestra. He performed with the Boston Pops on PBS; he also sang with Hamlish during the PBS Christmas special for U.S. military troops and on the PBS performance of *A Tale of Two Cities*. McVey won a gold record for his participation in Trans-Siberian Orchestra’s *The Lost Christmas Eve*. He said attending Marshall helped shape his career and his life goals.

“It’s my feeling that if any institution of learning truly has the best interest of their students in mind, they are master facilitators of dreams and aspirations,” McVey said. “Marshall afforded me a wonderful palette from which to create my own personal vision for life.”

Proving that there is something genetic to determination, McVey’s sister **Beth McVey** has followed her own dreams of stardom as well. Like her brother, she was born in Huntington and attended Marshall. She made her Broadway debut in the original cast of *42nd Street*. Other Broadway appearances include Annie, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Nine*. She played roles in tours of shows like *Oliver*, *Greys and Dolls*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Copacabana*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Urinetown*.

Comic **Billy Crystal** went to Marshall on a baseball scholarship. When the baseball program was suspended, he left for New York. He studied theater and began doing stand-up comedy, which led to his first big role as Jodie on the controversial ABC TV series *Soap*. He was a regular on *Saturday Night Live* in 1975 and boasts an impressive film career. His list of credits include *When Harry Met Sally*, *City Slickers*, *City Slickers 2*, *Analyze This*, *Analyze That*, *Throw Momma From the Train*, *The Princess Bride*, *Monsters Inc.* and many more. In 2005, he won a Tony Award for his play *700 Sundays*. He has won five Emmy Awards for his work hosting the Academy Awards; he has hosted the awards ceremony eight times and counting. Crystal also has co-hosted *Comic Relief*, an event that raises money for America’s homeless, with Robin Williams and Whoopi Goldberg.

Born in Huntington, W.Va., **Brad Dourif** has been nominated for both an Academy Award and a Screen Actors Guild award. He has won a Golden Globe and many other show business accolades. Dourif has appeared in nearly 100 motion pictures, working alongside actors Jack Nicholson, James Earl Jones and Faye Dunaway and world-renowned directors John Huston and David Lynch. He is the voice of Chucky in the *Child’s Play* movies, and he played Grima Wormtongue in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. He won an Academy Award for his role as Billy Bibbit in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.

Dourif has appeared in many television shows as well, including *The X-Files*, *Murder She Wrote*, *Miami Vice* and, most recently, the HBO series *Deadwood*. He has had a string of stage successes, including a very impressive stint with the highly respected Circle Repertory Company. The beginning of a lifelong friendship is at the basis of his Marshall memories.

“One of the shows I worked on at Marshall was a political review, kind of a take-off of *Firesign Theatre*,” Dourif said. “After performing it one night, another Marshall student approached me and said, ‘What are you doing here? I told her, ‘Wasting my life. What’s it look like? I’m going to college.’ The young woman said, ‘You should come to New York.’ And that was Conchata Ferrell. We’ve been close friends ever since.”

**John Fiedler** is a Hollywood film producer who has movies like *Copycat*, *A Good Man in Africa*, *Serial Mom*, *The Beast of War*, *Simply Irresistible*, *Cecil B. Demented*, *Beyond the Law* and *Pecker* to his credit. He is married to actress Bess Armstrong. He graduated from Marshall in 1973 and said he relishes the ties that have kept him close to his alma mater.

“In my senior year of high school, I took a journey,” Fiedler said. “My first visit was to Morgantown – and then I traveled down to Huntington to visit Marshall. Once I arrived on campus for the first time, I felt very comfortable. It just felt like a good place for me to be.”

While attending Marshall, Fiedler maintained a very busy schedule, balancing classes, rehearsals and part-time jobs to help him pay his way through school. One of Fiedler’s strongest influences within Marshall’s the-
atare department was Bill Kearns, who had an understanding of the pathos of theater unlike anyone Fiedler had ever encountered.

“He taught me that each night had a life of its own and that was the exciting thing about theater,” Fiedler said. “His approach to material was genuinely emotional.”

Fiedler maintains strong ties to Marshall, primarily through his involvement with the Society of Yeager Scholars Board of Directors.

Julia Keller was born and raised in Huntington. She graduated from Marshall where she earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English. In 2005, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing for an article she wrote about a deadly tornado outbreak in Utica, Ill. It was published in the Chicago Tribune, where Keller works as a cultural critic.

She wrote Mr. Gatling’s Terrible Marvel: The Gun That Changed Everything and the Misunderstood Genius Who Invented It, a biography of inventor Richard Jordan Gatling. She also wrote the novel Back Home, which tells the story of a Midwestern family that must deal with the father’s severe injuries suffered in the Iraq War. Keller is an essayist for the PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. Her memories of Marshall are warm ones.

“My father, the late James Keller, taught math at Marshall for many years, and among my warmest memories of the university are the times we’d have lunch at Wiggins, right across the street from Old Main,” she said. “After my class, I would meet him in his office on the seventh floor of Smith Hall, and we’d head out, talking about sports and politics.”

Keller said growing up in Huntington meant that attending Marshall was the natural and normal thing to do, but she will always be grateful for the memories the school gave her.

“My father died very young, at 51, and thus those days at Marshall shine in my memory like the burnished peaks of a distant mountain,” she said. “I can always see them, even though they are forever beyond my reach.”

Author Craig Johnson has won popular and critical acclaim for his novels The Cold Dish; Death Without Company; Kindness Goes Unpunished; Another Man’s Moccasins, which won the Western Writers of America’s Spur Award as Novel of the Year; and The Dark Horse, which was named by Publisher’s Weekly as one of the top 100 books of the year and named by the American Library Journal as one of the top five mysteries of year.

“I remember going to Marshall and searching for a parking spot for four years,” Johnson said. “Mostly I snugged my ‘72 Mach 1 against a telephone pole by an alternator and battery shop just off Third Avenue. Whenever I get back home I go visit that parking spot and remember it with fond memories. I think it saved me about $3,000 in permits and fines.”

Joe Chrest was born in St. Albans, W.Va., and earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Marshall. He plays the role of Jim Carrey’s father in I Love You Phillip Morris and has a supporting role in Welcome to the Rileys, starring Kristen Stewart. He is also in The Hungry Rabbit Jumps with Nicolas Cage and Battle: Los Angeles with Aaron Eckhart and Michelle Rodriguez. Other movie credits include Erin Brockovich, The Ring, Runaway Jury, Ocean’s Thirteen, The Informant and The Blind Side. He recently won Best Actor at the 2009 New Orleans 48 Hour Film Festival for his performance in Kink.

Chrest has also had roles in numerous television shows, including CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Medium, Enterprise, Deadwood, Touched by an Angel, Chicago Hope and Law and Order. Chrest is a founding member of the Swine Palace Regional Theatre and the Tri-Coast Stage Company.

“I’ve always been a night owl,” Chrest said. “I used to love to slip into Old Main Theatre well after midnight and practice monologues or musical ballads. I’d creep onstage and wait for my eyes to adjust to the darkness, imagining a full house silently awaiting my next word. One night around 3 a.m. I stood center stage, frozen with the fear that I was not alone. Suddenly a deep voice cut through the silence, bringing me as close to a heart attack as I’ve ever come. The voice said, ‘If you have something to say, it had better be worthy of that stage, boy.’ I nearly jumped out of my skin! My classmate Craig Johnson, who had been asleep in the balcony, decided he would give me a good scare. Goal accomplished, Craig.”

Born in Huntington, Michael Paxton graduated from Marshall with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. He had a one-person show at the N.A.M.E. Gallery in Chicago and was a visiting artist at the world-renowned Art Institute of Chicago. Paxton has maintained a studio in Chicago with his wife, Jeanne Nemcek, and his work has been featured in many one-person and invitational group exhibitions around the country. His awards include grants from the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. He is an adjunct instructor of drawing and painting at Columbia College in Chicago. His memories of Marshall center around one of his professors.

“The late Ruby June Kilgore changed my life and gave me a career,” he said. “She was the professor emeritus of the art department. I hadn’t even planned on
Clint McElroy graduated from Marshall University with a degree in broadcast journalism. He is the co-host of the Morning Wake-Up Call show on WTCR radio.

Patricia Prunty received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Marshall and went on to earn her Master of Music from Yale. She debuted with the Los Angeles Opera in 1992 and is one of the most sought-after sopranos on both the operatic and concert stage.

As a winner of the Center for Contemporary Opera's International Competition, Prunty presented her Weill Recital Hall debut in 2000 and Carnegie Hall debut the preceding fall. She has performed all over the world and is a founding member of the Trillium Ensemble, a soprano, baritone and pianist trio that performs nationally and internationally. In 2003, Prunty joined the music faculty at California State University at Fullerton.

Mary Stout was born in Huntington and graduated from Marshall with a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Education. This actress and singer played Mrs. Fairfax in the Tony-nominated musical Jane Eyre; her other Broadway credits include Beauty and the Beast, Copperfield, Me and My Girl, My Favorite Year and On the Twentieth Century. She performed in a number of national tours and recently concluded a hugely successful Los Angeles production of Fiddler on the Roof in which she played Yente.

Even performing in different cities across the U.S. hasn’t stopped Stout from crossing paths with her former classmates and friends.

“I was Mrs. Santa Claus at Radio City for three years,” Stout said. “One year, it was Beth McVey and I who shared the role. We were at Marshall together in 1970 and 1971 and then did summer stock in Kentucky together. We performed together in Beauty and the Beast in New York as well.”

Matthew Clark was in the first graduating class of the Society of Yeager Scholars at Marshall. He has worked as a cinematographer and camera operator on films like The Baxter and Day Zero and on television shows like Ugly Betty, Strangers With Candy, Stella and 30 Rock, for which he recently received an Emmy nomination.

Joe Johns is a graduate of Marshall and a member of the Society of Yeager Scholars Board of Directors. He began his career in broadcast journalism as a television reporter at WSAZ in Huntington. He has worked as an NBC News Capitol Hill correspondent for The Today Show and other NBC programs. Johns currently works as a CNN correspondent based in the Washington, D.C., bureau. He won an Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio-Television News Directors Association and is the recipient of two National Association of Black Journalists Salute to Excellence Awards. He also contributed to CNN’s Emmy award-winning Election Night coverage in 2006.

Beau Smith, comic book writer and columnist, attended Marshall as well. He started off writing letters to comic book editors and creators and gradually worked his way into his own writing career. He has written issues of Green Lantern Corps, Guy Gardner, Black Terror, Wolverine, Scout and Showcase and has created popular comic book series like Parts Unknown and Wynonna Earp. Like Paxton, his favorite Marshall memory involves a professor.

“I remember Professor Ralph Turner asking me why I chose journalism as my major,” he said. “My answer was that I hoped to one day write comic books and thought a journalism degree would help. Professor Turner gave me a serious look and said, ‘Son, journalism is about facts, not fiction.’ The next day, I changed my major. I wasn’t about to let facts get in the way of having a career in comics.”

J. Mark McVey, class of 1983

“If any institution of learning truly has the best interest of their students in mind, they are master facilitators of dreams and aspirations. Marshall afforded me a wonderful palette from which to create my own personal vision for life.”

– J. Mark McVey, class of 1983
Mike Hamrick: Marshall’s Bold New Athletic Director

Mike Hamrick arrived on Marshall’s campus with a bang. The 52-year-old Charleston native and Marshall graduate came to town in 2009 and has had an immediate impact on the athletic program. In his first few months, he has presided over an exciting revival of the basketball program, hired a high-powered new football coach and raised more than $2 million to take Marshall athletics to a new level.

Hamrick came here from a successful turnaround at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas (UNLV), where teams won 22 conference championships in just five years. But it wasn’t just athletic success they achieved. Thirteen of 17 teams had average GPAs of 3.0 or better, and 131 student-athletes were named to academic all-conference teams.

Additionally, while at UNLV Hamrick forged a new partnership with Nike worth $3 million and with ISP Sports Network worth more than $31 million over 10 years. And he did it all the right way, with the athletic department passing an 18-month NCAA certification process with no concerns. In the nearly six years of his tenure at UNLV, more than $11 million was spent improving athletic facilities in such sports as soccer, tennis, football, swimming and baseball.

He did all this while raising a family with the help of his wife, Soletta, herself a Marshall grad. In 1977, Hamrick met her at a dance through her sorority sister who was in a class with him. At the party, he asked her roommate to dance and got turned down. He asked Soletta, and the romance began. Four years later, Hamrick and Soletta were married at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Huntington. They now have three children: twins Brett and Justin are 21 years old, and their 18-year-old daughter Mollie is a freshman at Marshall.

Hamrick was a linebacker at Herbert Hoover High School, located just outside of Charleston, and a two-time all-state 1st Team AAA selection. He was recruited to Marshall by Jack Lengyel and played under both Frank Elwood and Sonny Randle in the 1970s. Randle once said, “If I had more players like Hamrick, I’d still be coaching.”

After Hamrick graduated from Marshall, Assistant Coach Waverly Brooks told him about a graduate degree at Ohio University in Athletic Administration. Hamrick successfully completed his master’s degree there while also serving as an assistant football coach. He directed several athletic programs before ending up as athletic director at East Carolina from 1995 to 2003. That’s where he developed his philosophy of scheduling prominent regional and BCS teams on a home-home basis. Hamrick wanted games that the team could be bused to and the fans could attend easily. He has already made that a reality at Marshall with home-home games scheduled with Purdue, Louisville and Miami of Ohio. This forms the basis for increased ticket sales and the contributions that go along with that.

When he took the job as UNLV athletic director in 2003, Hamrick said he and Soletta decided that it would be their last stop – “unless we ever had a chance to come home.”

Article by Dan O’Hanlon • Photos by Rick Haye & Rick Lee
“This was a chance for us to come home and be around family,” he said. “We’ve not had that chance for the last 28 years. I felt I could make a difference, and it was just a love for Marshall that brought us back.”

When asked about his memories of Marshall in the 1970s, Hamrick said, “[Athletic dormitory] Hodges Hall was a very unique place to live. I met so many lifelong friends there.” He said he remembers in particular the impact that Dr. Charles Bias, one of his professors, had on his academic career.

Of course, playing football at Marshall was not easy in the “rebuilding years” – those years after the 1970 plane crash that killed 75 Marshall players, coaches and fans.

“Of course, the 75 people lost in the plane crash were the real heroes,” Hamrick said, “but the players in the 1970s who helped rebuild the program are my heroes, too, and many of us remain close friends to this day.”

He said the lesson he learned during that time was perseverance.

“Somebody had to be in there in the ’70s,” he said. “It was us, and I’m glad it was.”

Hamrick sees a very bright future for Marshall athletics, and hiring Doc Holliday as football coach is a big part of that.

“Doc and I were friends in high school and competed against each other when he played at Hurricane High School,” he said. “We’ve crossed paths for the last 28 years. In fact, I tried to recruit him as the head coach at East Carolina, but it didn’t work out. I knew of his skills as a recruiter and an overachiever. Doc convinced me he really wanted to be here. Additionally, Dr. Kopp was instrumental in helping us bring Doc Holliday to Marshall.”

Now that Hamrick is here, he is looking forward to giving Marshall fans the teams they deserve.

“We’ve had some really great times here,” he said. “Recently we’ve been in a lull, but I think the Herd Nation is ready. Everything looks bright to me for the future. I look forward to getting out with Doc and Donnie Jones on the Coaches Tour this spring, meeting the alumni and listening to what they have to say. And we will be asking for their support to help make this whole thing happen the way it should.”

So, Mike and Soletta, welcome home! □

Dan O’Hanlon is the chief circuit judge for Cabell County and a former department chair at Marshall University.
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ike Hamrick spent eight years in Las Vegas, within earshot of the Vegas strip, but he never has been much of a gambler. Oh, he’d take the occasional trip to the casino when friends came to visit, but an every-so-often game of poker was the extent of his high-stakes ambitions.

That doesn’t mean Hamrick isn’t afraid to roll the dice, as he did on Dec. 17, 2009. He hired John “Doc” Holliday to be Marshall’s 29th football coach.

It’s not that Doc Holliday doesn’t have an impressive résumé. His reputation as a great recruiter, particularly in Florida, is well known in coaching circles. But he played football at West Virginia University and spent 23 years of his coaching career as an assistant at WVU. Anyone who’s traveled around the Mountain State knows that Blue and Gold and Green and White don’t mix well sometimes.

Coach Holliday quickly proved how beneficial being colorblind in West Virginia could be.

“You know what? I’m a West Virginian,” Holliday said after the news conference announcing his hiring. “I grew up down here. I just want to see this university and Marshall be successful, and I’m going to put every ounce of energy I have into making that happen.”

During the search process, Hamrick kept asking himself the same question over and over again.

“Who is the best person to come into this program at this time and shake it up – shake up our fan base, shake our stadium up and shake our opponents up? I think we found that person,” Hamrick said.

It didn’t take long for Holliday to get his warm-up pitch along the recruiting trail. He signed 23 players in his first class. His group was ranked as one of the 10 best non-BCS classes in college football. Included were players who chose Marshall over offers from schools such as Miami University, Florida State University, the University of Tennessee, Wake Forest University, West Virginia University, Kansas State University and the University of Maryland.

Herd fans and the new coach both hope this is the beginning of many “Holliday” seasons to remember.

Keith Morehouse is the Sports Director for WSAZ NewsChannel 3 in Huntington, WV.
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The Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine has experienced exponential growth in its technology, programs and fellowships. However, the school has never deviated from its original mission to provide opportunities for quality health care to the Tri-State region.
hen an organization becomes as integral to a community as Marshall University’s Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine is to Huntington, it can be easy to forget that there was a time before its existence. Even people with good memories might not recall that before the school’s current, state-of-the-art facilities were built, before the school operated in the Coon Medical Education Building on the campus of Huntington’s VA Medical Center and even before its first students were educated in the Doctor’s Memorial Building on Sixth Avenue, the School of Medicine existed for years only in the minds of a few local visionaries.

“Something of the magnitude of a medical school does not just start. It’s not an easy process,” said A. Michael Perry, who served on state governing boards overseeing the school beginning in the early 1980s and most recently as a Marshall Board of Governors member. “Many people just take its creation for granted, saying, ‘It’s so important and it does such a wonderful job, so there could not have been any difficulties in creating it.’ Quite to the contrary, it was an extremely difficult task that consumed many years and required the leadership of many people in the community.”

Huntington physician Albert Esposito is sometimes referred to as one of the founding fathers of the School of Medicine due to his dogged efforts, beginning in the early 1950s, to galvanize support within the community and with state politicians in hope of beginning a medical school in Huntington. He finally found his opportunity when Congress passed the Teague-Cranston Act in 1972. This act approved funding for the creation of new medical schools to operate in conjunction with existing Veterans Administration hospitals. Given this opening, Marshall President Robert B. Hayes and School of Medicine Dean Robert W. Coon succeeded in the herculean challenge of turning Esposito’s dream into a reality.

Article by Molly McClennen

Photos courtesy of the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine
The states where the Teague-Cranston schools were located were expected to contribute to the costs of beginning and operating a medical school, and sometimes those funds were not easily obtained. Gary Rankin, Ph.D., one of the original members of the Department of Pharmacology and its chair since 1986, said he remembers sitting in a classroom during one of his first years at the newly created school, waiting to get news from the dean of whether or not the state Legislature had included funding for the school in its budget and, consequently, whether he and his colleagues would continue to have jobs.

“We weathered a lot of financial turmoil in those early years,” he said.

But Rankin also noticed that the fledgling school was quickly making a name for itself far beyond the Huntington area. He said that in the school’s early years, when he would present research at national conferences, people would ask him where Marshall University was located. That question was soon replaced by another.

“They stopped asking where we were and started asking what research we were doing,” he said. “When you see that transition, you know you’ve made it.”

Uncertain funding during the early years in no way meant that the quality of education offered by the school was lacking or that the school was not able to provide its students with the most modern medical education possible. All medical schools in the United States are held to the same accreditation standards, and those standards require teaching the most up-to-date medicine available. This, in turn, has provided Huntington residents with access to excellent, state-of-the-art medical care.

“With medicine, if you’re not thinking five years ahead, you’re 10 years behind. We have to teach the most current medicine,” said Charles McKown, M.D., dean of the School of Medicine and vice president for Health Sciences. McKown began as the school’s chair of radiology in 1975 and has served as its dean since 1989. “As a result, what we are teaching, we are practicing. We can’t just be good at what we used to do. We have to be good at what is new today because we teach it.”

The growth the school has achieved in the few decades since its inception is remarkable. The school now requires facilities in four locations: the Coon Medical Education Building, the Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Science Center on Marshall’s main campus, the Marshall University Medical Center connected to Cabell Huntington Hospital and the Erma Ora Byrd Clinical Center on the site of the old Fairfield Stadium. The school began with about 100 full-time faculty; it now has 225. Twenty-four students were enrolled in its first class; today, each class contains 75 students.

The School of Medicine now offers seven residency programs and three fellowships. Marshall’s master’s and doctoral degree programs in biomedical science are part of the School of Medicine, as is a nationally acclaimed program in forensic science. This growth was made possible through the support of the Huntington and Marshall communities.

“The success of the medical school through the years is due to a history of abidingly strong and sustaining
Top left: The school’s first medical students were educated in the Doctor’s Memorial Building on Sixth Avenue. Top right: Charles McKown, M.D., dean of the School of Medicine and vice president for Health Sciences. Bottom left: Gary Rankin, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Pharmacology. Bottom right: An aerial view of the Marshall University Medical Center at Cabell Huntington Hospital.

support by the university’s administration and its governing boards,” McKown said.

While the medical school has never deviated from its original mission of providing primary care to the region, it also provides an impressive array of highly specialized medical services. Trauma and burn care, fertility treatment, high-risk obstetrics, pediatric subspecialties and both neonatal and pediatric intensive care units are among the medical specialties that, thanks to the School of Medicine, the area’s residents no longer have to travel far from home to receive. McKown said the school will continue to look at what needs it can meet for the region as it plans for the future. The school is planning fellowships in geriatrics and medical oncology and residencies in neurology and neurosurgery. Additionally, the school will work with Marshall University to establish new programs in the health sciences, such as pharmacy and physical therapy programs.
Perhaps the most obvious contribution the medical school has made to Huntington and the surrounding region is the number of local physicians it has supplied. Of the 1,224 physicians the school has produced since its first class graduated in 1981, 338 are practicing in Huntington or the surrounding region. The school’s success should not be measured only by these numbers, but also by the quality of its graduates. In two of the past three years, 100 percent of Marshall’s students have passed on their first attempt at Step 2 of the National Medical Licensing Board Examination, taken in the last year of medical school and necessary to receive the M.D. degree.

“That is very unusual for a state-supported school,” said McKown. “It’s a reflection of a highly capable, dedicated, talented faculty, and it’s a reflection of the nature of our students. Seventy-five percent of our students come from West Virginia, with most of the rest coming from the surrounding states. Given the opportunity, they show they have the maturity, direction of purpose and intellectual capacity to excel.”

Beyond its impact on the quality of medical care in the region, the medical school has had a powerful positive effect on the local economy. Millions of dollars of research grant money flow through the school each year, which then flow into the area’s businesses and tax base. Also, access to excellent medical care is one of the key factors businesses and individuals consider when choosing and moving to a new community.

“As someone who has been involved in economic development for many years, I have seen firsthand that you’re not going to attract new businesses into the community and create jobs without first-class medical care, and certainly having a wonderful medical school has provided that for our area,” Perry said. “We’re deeply indebted as a community and state to the med school and to the leaders who made it happen years ago and who continue to provide for its exciting future.”

Molly McClennen is a freelance writer living in Huntington.
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Marshall University Basketball Locker Rooms
Photo by Thomas Lieberman

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With a desire to foster the continuing advancement of Marshall University and to assist its students, West Virginia native Dale C. Lowther was sworn in as the newest member of Marshall’s Board of Governors on Sept. 8, 2009. Lowther was first selected to fulfill the four-year term on Aug. 21 of that year.

An alumnus of Marshall and the first resident of the Mid-Ohio Valley to serve on the Marshall Board of Governors, Lowther called the appointment a great honor and a chance to give back.

“I look at this as a way to help my alma mater and its students,” Lowther said. “The opportunity arose, and I decided to take it. I knew a few people on the board and simply thought it would be something good for me to do.”

Lowther, who grew up in Parkersburg and St. Mary’s, W.Va., earned two degrees in education from Marshall. As a student, he was active in collegiate and intramural athletics as well as student government. Lowther was a member of the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity and The Robe, a men’s leadership honorary.

After graduating from Marshall, Lowther furthered his academic career at Arkansas State University, Marietta College, West Virginia University and West Virginia State University. He currently is employed with Cain & Associates Certified Public Accountants, an accounting firm with offices in Charleston and Parkersburg.

Lowther’s service record is extensive and ranges from political service to voluntary art instruction. He is a past chair of the Wood County Democratic Executive Committee, and he was responsible for the creation of the Pleasants County Area Art League, where he was an art instructor. Lowther has served as director of the Fourth Congressional District’s Young Democrats’ Club and the Parkersburg Area Jaycees.

“I believe my experiences in the arenas of education and business are an asset to the board,” Lowther said. “I am a firm believer in promoting people and in doing what is best for my community and state.”

Lowther also served the West Virginia Special Olympics as its accounting adviser and public relations director, and he is a past member of the Mountwood Park Board of Directors. He currently is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Parkersburg and is the secretary-treasurer for the Wood County Senior Citizens.

Lowther fulfilled a six-year tenure as chapter president for the Mid-Ohio Valley Marshall University Alumni Association and also acted as chair for the chapter’s finance committee. Lowther is a member of the Big Green Foundation, the M Club and the Marshall University Alumni Association.

Lowther said his experiences with the Board of Governors have been motivating and productive.
“The members of the board are extremely dedicated, and it is an honor to work with them,” he said. “I have a tremendous amount of love and respect for Marshall, and I am humbled by this opportunity to give back.”

Lowther said his primary goals as a member of the Board of Governors are to enhance enrollment and to maintain students.

“Growing our enrollment is the responsibility of everyone associated with Marshall,” he said. “We would like to increase employee salaries, but a one-percent pay raise across the board would require $400,000. The only way to accomplish this is to augment student enrollment. In addition, our rate of retention presently stands at 71 percent. If we could get it to 80 percent, I would be very satisfied.”

He said he looks forward to the work the Board of Governors will accomplish in the future.

“I am eager to work with the students, faculty and administration of Marshall, including Dr. Stephen Kopp, whose experience and talent are invaluable,” Lowther said. “Marshall has a brilliant future, and I look forward to playing a role in it.”

Jessica Farner Linville is a graduate of Marshall University’s W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communications. She lives in Logan, W.Va.
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Perfect for reunion planners, kits include scenic postcards, West Virginia highway maps, travel guides and Genuine West Virginia goodie bags that are sure to please your guests.

Qualifying for your reunion kits is free and easy!

- Reunion must take place during the summer of 2010.
- Only school, family or community reunions taking place in West Virginia are eligible.
- Kits are FREE, but limited. First come, first served. Planners must pick up kits or arrange for shipping.

Register online at www.genuinewv.com or call 304-957-9363 or 304-957-9336 to reserve your kit today. Reunion planners can register their reunions online allowing guests to upload photos, video and stories to their reunion Web page. Planners can nominate their reunion to be the featured "reunion of the month," winning a professional photography shoot of the event.

"West Virginia has the great quality of life you remember and the opportunities you’re looking for today. There is no better time to come home!

If your school or family reunion is planning an event in West Virginia this summer, help us distribute our free reunion kits and spread the message: genuine people, genuine hospitality, genuine West Virginia."

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