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The Marshall Plane Crash



The Marshall Memorial Fountain, November 14, 2019. Photo by Steve Brightwell.



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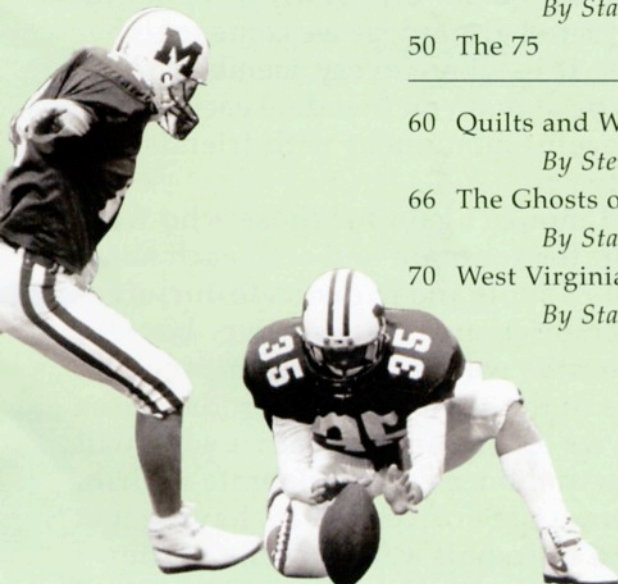
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Why Is November 14 Important?

By Marshall President Jerome A. Gilbert,
Guest Columnist

Every November 14, Marshall University's Memorial Fountain becomes sacred ground, as we come together to pay our respects. It is where every member of the Marshall family wants to be at noon on that date each year—gathered around that graceful monument with friends and our university community.

We honor our past and mourn again for those who were taken from us. We turn off the fountain and read each name to remind us of the loss of 75 souls and to dedicate ourselves to always keep their memories and legacy alive. We will spend the cold winter months walking by the empty pool; but, just as the emptiness of the season's cold winds causes us to long for the spring, we are reminded that we soon will turn on the flowing water and once again celebrate rebirth.

I first attended the Memorial Service in 2015, having just been named president of Marshall a few weeks earlier. I had, of course, seen the movie *We Are Marshall*, but that visit brought many experiences that would further expand my appreciation of the annual observance. I was deeply



Football Head Coach Doc Holliday speaks at the 49th Marshall Memorial Service, November 14, 2019. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

moved by that first ceremony and often think of it because it shaped my initial impressions of our great university and its people.

Each year since, I have come to November 14 with an even deeper knowledge and feeling. I have now been to Spring Hill Cemetery. I have visited the crash site. I have gotten to know Red Dawson, Lucianne Kautz Call, Patricia Proctor and Courtney Proctor Cross, Parker Ward Jr., Dan D'Antoni, and so many others who lost loved ones. I have also met first responders who were on duty that long-ago night and will always be affected by its events.

What once were just names are now stories of the families and their loves and losses. I have seen the effect of the tragedy on each of these lives, and have come to *really* know the story and to get a sense of the nearly unfathomable pain and heartbreak experienced by our community in 1970.

All members of the Marshall community experienced the loss in one way or another. The pain lingers, although it is now perhaps diminished somewhat by acceptance over the years. But it is still

there, perhaps transformed into other emotions as well, but still there. The heartbreak and sorrow spread to everyone there at the fountain—that sacred place—and you feel a palpable sense of unity in our now collective loss of 50 years ago.

We may have accepted the tragedy of the event and have, in many ways, come to peace with the pain. But we have not forgotten. Our Marshall family continues to be strengthened by the lasting memory. We recognize that the resilience of this community and this university has triumphed over enormous loss. We have persevered together and have grown stronger because of it.

This yearly ritual, in part, defines our university. The ceremony reminds us, strengthens us, and binds us together in love—the love of our lost family members, friends, and colleagues; the love of one another; and the love of Marshall University. And, at the end of the ceremony, we share a great sense of pride as we sing our alma mater together and reflect on the metaphor of her light shining over dark waters. We are united as a Marshall family each November 14 and always.

Ivydale Musician John D. Morris Named 2020 National Heritage Fellow

By Emily Hilliard

Aclaimed fiddler, banjo player, guitarist, and songwriter John Morris of Ivydale has been named one of nine 2020 National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellows, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. These lifetime honor awards of \$25,000 are given in recognition of both artistic excellence and efforts to sustain cultural traditions for future generations.

A lifelong resident of Clay County, John Morris is the living carrier of the fiddle and banjo tradition particular to his rural home county and the surrounding area. John has dedicated his life to sustaining, promoting, and supporting the musical tradition of his Clay County community through the founding and hosting of community-based festivals, his labor activism, regular performances, and his ongoing commitment to teaching younger practitioners.

John Morris is West Virginia's first National Heritage Fellow in 20 years, the last being Appalachian weaver B. Dorothy Thompson in 2000 [see Winter 2003, p. 10], following Trinidadian Steel Pan builder and performer Elliott "Ellie" Mannette's 1999 award [see Winter 2008, p. 38], and fiddler Melvin Wine's in 1991 [see Summer 1991, p. 9].

John grew up just outside Ivydale—in an area once known as "Kidtown"—in a musical family of farmers and teachers. He first started playing music around age seven, learning clawhammer banjo from his grandfather Amos Morris and guitar from his mother, Anna Hill Morris. When he was 10, esteemed Clay County fiddler French Carpenter gave him his start on the fiddle. John also studied with Clay County fiddlers Wilson Douglas, Ira Mullins, Lee Triplett, and Doc White, among others. In 1965, John and his brother David (singer, songwriter,

and guitarist) formed their band, the Morris Brothers.

In 1968, the Morris Brothers became interested in labor rights and offered their music to Joseph A. "Jock" Yablonski's campaign for president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). As they traveled across the region and country with the UMWA into the next decade, they shared their original and traditional songs performed in the Clay County style. John and David saw traditional mountain culture as a source of empowerment for Appalachian people. That connection was recognized by Barbara Kopple, who featured the Morris Brothers' music in her Academy Award-winning documentary *Harlan County, USA*. In the late '60s and early '70s, John and David hosted old-time music festivals across the state and region, including the Morris Family Old-Time Music Festival at their family home place. That festival model, located in the rural areas where the tradition and its practitioners lived and which encouraged sharing between locals and outsiders, young and old, became the gold standard for a community-based traditional music festival in Appalachia.

John has taught fiddle and banjo at the traditional music camp Allegheny Echoes, the Augusta Heritage Center, Dwight Diller's Yew Pine Mountain Retreats, and the 4-H Mountain Heritage Weekends. He's been recognized by the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame (inducted as the Morris Brothers, following David's passing in 2016) and at countless fiddlers' conventions, and he was the 2015 recipient of the West Virginia Heritage Fiddler Award.

In 2018, John was a master artist in the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program, leading an apprenticeship in old-time fiddle and Clay County storytelling with Jen Iskow.



Clay County old-time music master John Morris. Photo by Michael Keller.

He regularly invites young people to his home to play, learn, and share stories. John continues to play a crucial role in sustaining and promoting West Virginia traditional music and is one of the few fiddlers to continue an older regional style, infusing his playing with all the sounds of Clay County—its environment, its history, and its people.

The annual celebration of the new class of National Heritage Fellows will take place virtually this year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information

To learn more about the Morris Brothers, please see Spring 2011, p. 52.

about this event, including the date, will be available at a later time. 🍁

EMILY HILLIARD is West Virginia's first official state folklorist with the West Virginia Folklife Program at the West Virginia Humanities Council. She writes a regular column for GOLDENSEAL. Learn more about the West Virginia Folklife Program at wvfolklife.org.



Aerial view of Huntington and the Marshall campus. Courtesy of Marshall University.

The Heartbeat of Huntington

A Tragedy Pulls a City Together

By Eric Douglas

Fifty years ago, on November 14, 1970, the Marshall University football team plane crashed at Tri-State Airport near Huntington, killing all 75 people aboard and changing lives forever. But the crash also changed Huntington, West Virginia, and Marshall University.

Marshall is located in the middle of Huntington, but, until 1970, it was separate to some degree. As with many college towns, the community supported the football and basketball teams on game days, but there wasn't what you might call a deeper connection, in part because so many students commuted. The relationship between the city—a combination of white-collar and blue-collar workers—and the university wasn't strained; they just had little to do with one another, other than the Huntington-area students who attended Marshall.

In the late 1960s, Huntington was a typical city for the region. It was trying to re-invent itself economically. Earlier in the 20th century, Huntington had a thriving business sector with steel-, nickel-, and glass-making factories as well as shops that manufactured and repaired railroad cars. Historically, it'd been a railroad city—built by agents for the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Railway and named for its president, Collis P. Huntington.

By 1970, the city was suffering through financial adversity. The nation itself was in an economic slump, entering an official recession in 1969 and 1970. The heavy industry that had propelled Huntington to prominence began to close, and railroad shops and corporate offices downsized rapidly.

Then the plane crash occurred that would forever alter the future of Huntington and Marshall. On November 14, 1970, Southern

Airways Flight 932 was carrying 37 members of the Marshall Thundering Herd football team, 8 members of the coaching staff, 25 school boosters, and 5 flight crew members. The team was returning home after a 17-14 road loss to the East Carolina Pirates at Ficklen (now Dowdy-Ficklen) Stadium in Greenville, North Carolina. At 7:36 p.m., on a rainy foggy night, the aircraft crashed into a hillside just short of Tri-State Airport (Wayne County) in what remains the deadliest sports-related air tragedy in U.S. history. Seventy children lost at least one parent in the crash; 18 lost both parents.

Morris "Mac" McMillian was a student at Marshall when the plane crashed. He describes the atmosphere on campus in a single word: "devastated."

"Everything was closed, except for the old Shawkey Student Union. We sat there and stared at each other. We didn't know what to do. There were no announcements. The buildings were closed. There were no classes," Mac says.

And there was only one subject on everyone's mind. "People just walked around in a daze downtown," Mac remembers. "And then people would . . . get engaged in conversation with someone. It would be, 'Did you know anybody on the plane?'"

Like a lot of people who were on campus then, Mac knew members of the football team, and it's still a sensitive topic for him. He still hasn't been able to visit Spring Hill Cemetery, where several former players are buried, including six whose remains were never identified.

Mike Kirtner was a Marshall sophomore in 1970. He was working for WMUL, the student-led radio station, when he heard about the crash. Mike was on a date but immediately drove to Tri-State Airport. With his student press credentials, he gained access to the crash site.

"One vivid memory I have from that night is seeing the old school bus they used to take the team to campus," Mike recalls. "It

was painted white, [and] it had Marshall University on the side. That bus was empty, and it was misting rain. I remember seeing that bus sitting there empty. For whatever reason, that's [my] most vivid memory of that evening."

Mike, who now owns Kindred Communications, grew up in the Huntington area. He describes it as a typical *Leave It to Beaver* town. "I think, when the plane crash occurred, that's when Marshall became a college town. That's when the transition started because suddenly, the innocence was gone. I mean, we'd been through the Silver Bridge Disaster [which killed 46 at Point Pleasant in 1967] and various things that happened, but after that happened in Huntington, it all changed."

For Mike, the aftermath of the plane crash brought about a grieving process for the entire city. By the next year, he'd become a radio DJ and was more aware of Huntington's emotional attachment to the team.

"I actually collected hundreds of names in support of the new football team. When they decided to play football again, that's when people started bonding with the football program, and they became emotionally attached to it, versus just being a sports attachment," Mike says.

Current Huntington Mayor Steve Williams, who started playing football for Marshall in 1974, grew up in the region and was already familiar with Huntington and the coaching staff. His father was almost a member of the staff, too, although the mayor didn't learn that until the movie *We Are Marshall* (2006) came out.

Dr. Don Williams, the mayor's father, was friends with Marshall Head Coach Rick Tolley. Williams had just quit his coaching job at Concord College (now University), where he'd led the Mountain Lions to their first two WVIAC (West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference) titles—in 1962 and 1966. Tolley offered Williams the offensive

coordinator position at Marshall, but Williams turned him down. If he hadn't, Williams likely would have been on the plane that took the lives of Tolley and most of the coaching staff.

In *We Are Marshall*, there's a scene after the crash where acting Marshall President Dr. Donald Dedmon is going through a list of potential new head coaches, calling them and then scratching names off the list. After watching the film with his parents, Steve Williams asked his dad if he'd ever gotten a call like that from Dedmon.

As Steve tells it, "Dad said, 'I did.' My mother's fork just dropped. She didn't even know that. Dad said he told the university he would only be interested if he could be head coach and athletic director. They said they were separating the two jobs. Dad went off that next year to Virginia Tech to work on his doctorate. When he finished . . . he got another call from Marshall. Marshall just kept calling our family. We were destined to be together."

Don Williams finally ended up at Marshall, serving as chair of the university's Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance for decades. For Steve, the biggest lesson of the crash is determination. "If you want to understand Marshall, if you want to understand Huntington, understand we never give up. You think you're ever going to take us down? It might take us 30 years, but we're going to figure it out. We're going to come back, and we will end up prevailing," he says.

He adds that Marshall is the heartbeat of Huntington: "Make no mistake about it, Marshall today is the heart and soul of the city, and it became that way because of the crash."

For a long time, though, no one in Huntington mentioned it much. Joe "Woody" Woodrum, longtime team manager and former color football commentator, notes,

"We didn't talk too much about the crash. I mean, it was largely avoided my first 10 years here."

Woody, who came to Marshall in January 1975, recalls, "We were trying to rebuild the program."

He has newspapers and other print materials from those early years, and there's little to no mention of the plane crash at all.

"I've got a media guide from 1971," he says. "It has a brief bit about the crash and the worst disaster in modern sports history. And that was it."

We Are Marshall documents the decision to bring back football the year after the crash, but Woody remembers those discussions happening for years, especially while Marshall was struggling to put a winning team on the field.

"I remember [sportswriter] Bill Smith in the *Charleston Daily Mail* wrote a column about 1979 or '80 and said, 'Marshall should give up football. You've got a great basketball program. Why not put more money into that?'" Woody says.

From Woody's perspective, the thing that helped people begin opening up about the crash was when the team began winning. That first winning season took until 1984—14 years after the tragedy [see p. 34].

"I think that's when people began to accept and be able to talk about the plane crash," Woody says.

Current Athletic Director Mike Hamrick played football for Marshall during the rebuilding years. He arrived in January 1976 and played from 1976 to 1979. He went on to a long career in university athletics before returning to Marshall as athletic director in 2009.



Current Huntington Mayor and former Thundering Herd football player Steve Williams. Courtesy of the mayor's office.



Roses left by football players at the Marshall Memorial Fountain, November 14, 2019. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

"There were people into the mid to late '70s that didn't think Marshall should have football," Mike remembers. "Just imagine, you are an 18- or 19-year-old college kid, and you're playing for the Thundering Herd, and people in the community are telling you, 'Man, we don't need football here. Let's just forget about football.' In the '70s, we didn't refer to the plane crash at all."

Mike credits the players from those early years after the crash for keeping the program alive even though the team wasn't winning. He feels that "without the guys in the '70s, [and] the late '70s, the program probably would have gone away. I'm telling you, I was there. There were people that wanted the program to go away. And thank goodness for the leadership at Marshall at the time. They kept football going, and look what it's done for our university today."

As Marshall President Dr. Jerome Gilbert writes in his guest column for this magazine, he attended his first Memorial Service on November 14, 2015—before he was actually sworn in as president.

"It was very moving and emotional and hard to describe if you've never been there," Dr. Gilbert says. "The intensity of the emotion and the intensity of the feelings that are present on that day with so many people gathered there to pay their respects. It made me feel there was a very special bond at Marshall due to the tragedy."

Dr. Gilbert agrees with Mayor Williams about the connection between the school and the town: "When you look at a lot of universities in cities and towns, there's often the town-gown rivalry. The townsfolk don't want to associate with the university folks, and there's some of that vice versa. That was a positive side effect of the plane crash. It really drew the city and the university closer together."

This article is the result of a partnership between GOLDENSEAL and West Virginia Public Broadcasting. Listen for Eric's radio piece on the Marshall plane crash on *Inside Appalachia* and *West Virginia Morning* in November. Check WVPublic.org for more information.

GOLDENSEAL would like to extend a special thanks to Elizabeth James and the staff of Marshall University Special Collections for their assistance with this issue of the magazine.



Students read sympathy telegrams from across the country, including one from President Nixon to Marshall acting President Dedmon, 1970. Courtesy of Marshall University Special Collections.

There's very little distinction between the city and the university. They embrace each other. And I think that's the way it should be."

Dr. Gilbert equates the plane crash and Huntington's reaction to it with the trauma of war: "You see a lot of World War II veterans that never talked about the war when they were younger, and then, in their later years, they started talking about it. My father-in-law was certainly in that camp. He wanted to put it out of his mind because it was such

a horrible experience. I think it's something that you have to give time to be able to psychologically deal with it. So I think that has been part of it over the years—to sort of make peace with the whole event and to be able to talk about it and commemorate it in appropriate ways as we're doing now."

Fifty years later, the Marshall community—both the school and the city that surrounds it—discuss the crash publicly. There's still emotion, and there are tears, but they're



The official laying of the wreath in 2019, showing (left-right) Head Coach Doc Holliday and a Ceredo Fire Department veteran who responded to the crash 50 years ago. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

mixed with pride at what the university has accomplished since November 14, 1970. Those involved with the football program today make sure new arrivals appreciate that legacy.

"The parents of the recruits really understand it—when they're doing their homework, before they come up with their son on their recruiting trip. But if they don't understand it before they get here, I can promise you, they understand that once they get here," Mike Hamrick says.

As part of the visits, potential recruits hear people tell about losing their parents or losing an aunt or an uncle or a grandparent or a friend.

Mike adds, "It doesn't take them long once they get on this campus to understand what that fountain means, and to run up to Spring Hill Cemetery and see that memorial and look at the graves of those unidentified players. It sinks in real quick what this is all about."

Before *We Are Marshall* was the 2000 documentary *Marshall University: Ashes*

to Glory, which helped the community begin talking about the crash. In the 50 years since the disaster and 20 years since that documentary, Marshall alumni and supporters around the world have developed a better understanding of that connection between the city and university.

"Over the years," Mike concludes, "Marshall and Huntington have grown as one, and we are one. I don't think either one of us could survive in the manner that we would like if we were not joined together. So yeah, we're all in this together. November 14, 1970, is a part of Huntington, it's a part of Marshall, and it will always be that way." 🍁

ERIC DOUGLAS is a Charleston-area author. He grew up in West Virginia, and even though he left the mountains for a few years, they never left him. He has a series of adventure novels and has recorded more than 150 oral histories. This is his second contribution to GOLDENSEAL. His first was "Growing Up Jewish in Charleston" in Winter 2018.



Wreckage from the plane crash, November 1970. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Police.

The Crash of Flight 932

By David Board

The crash of a Southern Airways DC-9 flight from North Carolina to Tri-State Airport in Wayne County changed untold lives. The final two minutes of this tragic flight are shrouded in mystery. This article tries to piece together what went horribly wrong on the rainy night of November 14, 1970.

In the aftermath of the crash, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) wrote an extensive 78-page technical report about the accident. The NTSB did the best it could with the available data from the flight recorders, the cockpit voice recorder, and eyewitness testimony. Still, the final cause was never officially determined. A detailed re-examination of this tragedy, strictly from an

experienced pilot's point of view, reveals that, sadly, this catastrophe was totally avoidable.

Captain Frank Abbott was in command. He was, without doubt, a very experienced and highly skilled pilot who'd served Southern Airways with distinction for over 20 years. Abbott, age 47, had accrued more than 18,000 hours of flight time. Every six months for the preceding 23 years, either the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or Southern Airways' check airmen had rigorously tested Abbott's knowledge, skills, and abilities through an extensive in-flight check-ride.

Two years after the crash, the NTSB report couldn't identify anything amiss with the plane, its engines, or its equipment—nothing that would explain the cause of

this horrendous event. The evidence doesn't tell us what Abbott was thinking in those last moments. According to all weather reports, a landing at Huntington was quite literally a mission impossible. Abbott must have known this. The bases (bottoms) of the overcast clouds were well below the altitude he needed to find his way legally and safely down from the clouds and onto the runway.

The lowest altitude he could have safely, legally descended to was 1,240 feet. That evening, the bases of the clouds were 140 feet lower than that threshold: 1,100 feet. Perhaps 140 feet doesn't sound like much, but it's a considerable change in altitude for a plane weighing more than 89,000 pounds (9,000 pounds heavier than the maximum allowable weight of an 18-wheeler) with a cargo of 75 people on board. Making matters more critical, the weather was about as bad as it gets. Dense fog, rain, wind, and smoke (based on the weather report) hampered the situation. Added to this, the crew had only one headlight, was traveling at 145 m.p.h., and planned to land on three wheels. There simply was no room for error.

Ideally, Abbott should have tracked a radio signal that would've led him precisely to the extended runway center line. Then, 6.4 miles from the runway, the pilots should've crossed over a radio beacon and carefully descended from 2,200 feet to 1,240 feet. If the plane would've made it on the centerline 400 feet above the runway threshold, Abbott could still have pulled out of the descent if he was unable to see the runway. His next step should've been to advance the throttles to take-off power, adopt a *nose up* climb altitude, and fly another 10 or 11 minutes to Kanawha (now Yeager) Airport in Charleston, where the weather was much better.

But there were issues other than pilot error. Based on the cockpit voice recorder, we know that Abbott and his first officer, Jerry Smith, were discussing how their approach chart was more than a year out of date. The chart was supposed to be a diagram with a set of

specific instructions for how to approach and land in adverse weather. This information should have been tested and published by the FAA and given to the crew by Southern Airways. The crew knew there'd been recent changes to the diagram and/or instructions, but neither Abbott nor his copilot could have guessed what those changes were.

From a purely technical perspective, had the crew made a successful approach and landed without incident, the FAA likely would've still fined the airline and crew and suspended their pilots' certificates. Flying on expired charts in these circumstances is unthinkable in aviation. They should simply have gone to Charleston.

For reasons known only to Abbott, he chose not to do that. Instead, dealing with an out-of-date chart, inadequate non-precision approach skills, and virtually impossible weather conditions, he began a blind descent—sometimes at an excessive rate—precariously low to the ground. Considering how critical the conditions were, it's surprising Abbott and his first officer didn't seem to be communicating with each other. For example, the landing gear was lowered at some point (you can hear the rumbling sound on the voice recorder), but Abbott never ordered for it to be lowered. In addition, Smith never called out that there were three green lights, assuring the team that the gear was safely down and locked for landing. This is standard cockpit procedure.

Then, there are questions about Abbott's decision making. In the final two minutes of the approach, he (more than once) exceeded a 1,000-feet-per-minute rate of descent. Large planes, in particular, shouldn't build up downward momentum so rapidly. That's precisely why Southern Airways had a strict written policy that planes must never exceed the 1,000-feet-per-minute descent on a final approach; when this happens, the copilot is obligated to send out an alert. This, in turn, would have triggered what's called a



State Police and other investigators search through the debris. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Police.

missed approach procedure. The flight recorder documented that the plane exceeded the 1,000 feet-per-minute limit more than once. No alert, however, was called, and no missed approach procedure was triggered.

Furthermore, Southern Airways and FAA regulations all dictate that Abbott should not have, under any circumstances, descended below 1,240 feet while he was still in the clouds and unable to see the runway threshold. We'll never know why a 23-year veteran pilot continued below 1,240 feet. But the record clearly shows he did. This is why the DC-9 flew into trees at 922 feet—318 feet too low.

Eyewitnesses on the ground saw the aircraft fly by in level flight well below the clouds. Abbott was no rookie. He should've noticed he was fatally low. If not, the first officer should've been alarmed and pointed it out. At this stage, Abbott must have known he was in serious trouble. He was descending lower and lower—and already more than 300 feet below the cloud deck—when he asked his copilot if he could see the airport lights. Since both Abbott and his first officer were unfamiliar with Tri-State Airport, namely the rugged foothills of the Allegheny Mountains,

why didn't they sound the alarm and pull out of the landing?

One problem was with the localizer approach they were trying to execute. This technique was a bit of a relic from a bygone era. It required a very different style of flying that was better suited to an old DC-3 of the 1940s than a modern DC-9 jet. Reading the NTSB report, it's abundantly clear that Southern Airways, the NTSB, and the two pilots really didn't understand how non-precision localizer approaches should be flown. Southern showed its hand with some telltale discrepancies in its non-precision approach checklist requirements.

Equally telling, at no point did the NTSB address the critical lack of time-keeping on the non-precision approach. The NTSB frequently referred to it as an "ILS (Instrument Landing System) approach." This would've allowed the DC-9 to navigate the last two minutes with a combination of a *localizer* (lining the plane up laterally with the runway centerline) and a *glide slope*, a secondary radio beam that guides pilots' vertical descent to a landing spot 500 feet down the runway and beyond the runway threshold. This ILS *precision* approach



Debris at the crash site, November 1970. Courtesy of Marshall University Special Collections.

would've been focused primarily on a very specific altitude and mostly unconcerned about time-keeping. But that still doesn't explain why Abbott and Smith descended nearly 300 feet below minimums, with no airport in sight, and not try to correct it.

The NTSB didn't address a number of other glaring missing details. For example, the audio marker radio beacon system was muted as the pilots crossed the outer marker beacon. This rendered the flight crew blind to the middle marker beacon. The control tower had specifically asked the pilots to report when they had crossed this specific beacon. By this point, though, the pilots seem to have been lost in their approach, possibly without even realizing it—another mystery. Abbott is heard asking, "That was the approach?" Smith was unable to tell his captain where they were: about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way into the approach with a little more than 30 crucial seconds of the two allotted minutes still to go. Neither pilot seemed to realize they were still more than $\frac{3}{5}$ of a mile short of the airport threshold.

The final anomaly missed by the NTSB is that the airplane rolled onto its back during the final moments. There's only one

explanation for this: the DC-9 must have stalled. Curiously, though, a stall warning horn is supposed to blare whenever this occurs. The voice recorder contained no evidence of the horn, which should've sounded well before the stall actually occurred.

There's absolutely no evidence that Abbott or Smith intended to crash. Rather, it seems that Abbott was rather reckless, at worst. Based on the lack of panic displayed on the voice recorder, he'd probably made approach maneuvers like this before. But, in the past, he was most likely flying into a familiar airport. He probably thought he could do it again.

On this November night in 1970, however, the odds were all stacked against him. Given the weather conditions, in particular, and his unfamiliarity with the airport, this wasn't the time to take such a risk.✱

DAVID BOARD is a retired aviator and aircraft mechanic who managed the Marshall County Airport for over 20 years. He was a Gold Seal flight instructor and Air Charter Pilot. In a career that spanned 50 years, he flew gliders, a hot-air balloon, helicopters, and all kinds of aircraft. He also was a captain in the U.S. Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and built the CAP's airport office building in Wheeling. This is David's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

"We will never forget"

By Caryn Schafer Gresham

I am a daughter of Marshall. In fall 1970, I was a freshman living in Laidley Hall, a co-ed dorm on campus. I was still getting used to college classes, dorm life, and homesickness when Marshall University became the top news story around the world. I will always carry with me the heartbreak of November 14.

One of my new friends, Cathy, dated Alan Saylor, a 19-year-old defensive end on the football team. She was new to Marshall, too. She'd moved from her northern Ohio hometown to attend school and be with him. That night, she was getting ready to meet him when he arrived back on campus after the East Carolina game. She was so glad she'd moved down to Huntington to see Alan more and watch him play football. None of us who were hanging out in her room could know this would be the last night she'd live in Laidley Hall.

There were a few other women in our dorm who dated guys on the football team, and they were getting ready for their Saturday postgame dates, too.

Then there was a scream. A wail. Sobbing echoed down the hall. Our resident adviser came into Cathy's room and turned off the television. She told us that the plane had crashed and that rescue crews were on the way. She didn't tell us everyone had died. That she would leave for Cathy's parents, who were hurrying from her hometown to be with her.

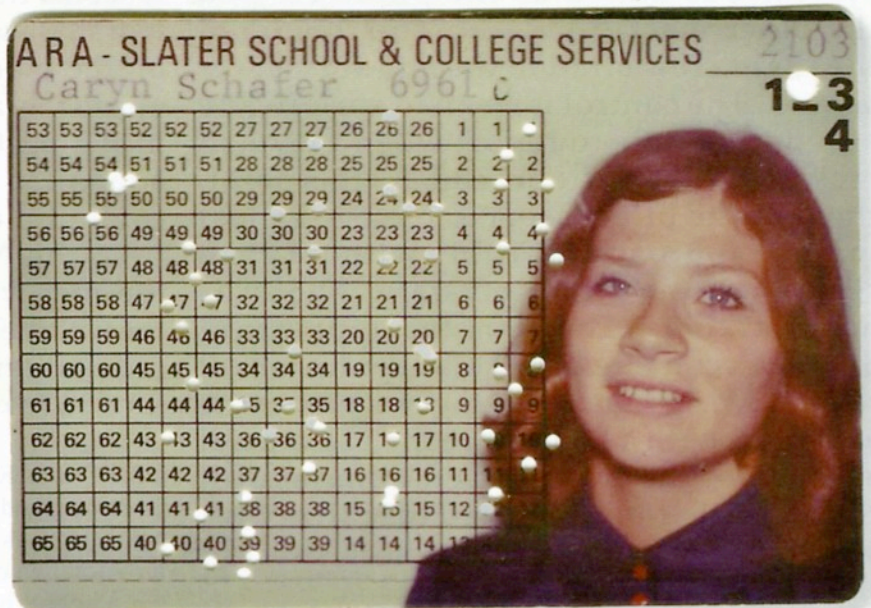
So, we waited, like so many others, hoping and praying that

everyone would be alright. Worrying about what had happened and trying to talk about everything else, but always coming back to a single question: When will we know?

Knowing was indescribable. Knowing was beyond comprehension. Knowing was sadness.

When I came back to school after the extended Thanksgiving break, Marshall was the same, but different. Cathy was gone. Other classmates were gone, too. The football players we saw every day in the South Hall cafeteria were gone. There were empty seats in classrooms. Yet, life went on.

Some people talked about it. Others didn't. I remember wondering why everything seemed normal but in a not-quite-real sort of way. Looking back, I think the plane crash became a mental marker for everyone who was touched by the tragedy. This marker



Our author's meal ticket at Marshall. All images courtesy of our author.



Our author chats by the Marshall Memorial Fountain with professor Dr. Charles Moffat, who taught history at Marshall from 1946 to 1977. Dr. Moffat's Great Dane looks like he wants to join his friends in the fountain. Photographer unknown.

brought into focus the harsh realities of life and death. It brought a new perspective to everyday life, friendships, love, and how quickly our lives could change.

There are times, even though so many years have passed, when I feel the sadness of that day. Rainy November days can do it. Every time someone leaves to travel, I worry until I hear they are safe at their destination.

I wasn't a parent, sister, brother, close friend, or love of someone on that plane. Their losses were greater than mine; their lives changed in much more radical ways. But

I know, as someone who walked the campus for four more years, that my memories are much like the other students who were there. And we will never forget. 🍁

CARYN SCHAFER GRESHAM is a 1974 graduate of the W. Page Pitt School of Journalism at Marshall. Her career has included corporate communications for the Union Carbide and Columbia Gas Transmission corporations and communications and media relations for the West Virginia Divisions of Tourism and Culture and History. She lives in Charleston with her husband, Andy, and has two sons, Robert and Stephen. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

"It was a really bad time"

Pat Daugherty Reflects on the Crash

By Stan Bumgardner

Pat Daugherty, now 88, remembers the plane crash all too well. A 1955 graduate of Marshall, she worked for a while at WSAZ-TV. She recalls, "I worked at WSAZ doing commercials, but I wasn't really very good, so I dropped that."

Instead, she raised three children: Jimmy (who later passed on), Jane, and Carolyn. Her husband, who's still living, was a prominent attorney in Huntington and former president of Marshall's alumni association. Pat and David Howard Daugherty attended almost all of Marshall's football and basketball games.

During our conversation, I learned coincidentally that she and I had been at the Cam Henderson Center at the same basketball game on February 7, 1985, when Bruce Morris—a backup guard who only diehard Marshall fans had heard of—threw up a prayer at the end of the first half from full court. To this day, Morris holds the record for the longest shot in basketball history: 89 feet, 10 inches. She and I both remember that moment exactly the same. When the shot went in, there was complete silence from the sellout crowd. We all seemed to be collectively thinking, "Did this just happen, or am I dreaming?" A second later, a deafening roar removed all doubt. It was a night no Herd fan will ever forget.

Sadly, she recalls the tragic night of November 14, 1970, in equal detail. Pat and David had just finished eating dinner, and the phone rang. "I was in such shock," Pat remembers. "We lived downtown, and I just kept looking in the direction of the airport wondering what was happening."

Pat notes how many people rushed to the site to help rescuers or simply because they didn't know what else to do. "So many people

went down there," Pat says, "but you couldn't get close to the site."

Like everyone in Huntington—and the families of players across the country—they prayed for survivors. But all too soon, it was clear that all had perished. As horrifying as that night was, Pat says the weeks that followed were surreal and just as depressing. Like most in Huntington, Pat and David knew many of the people on the plane. They also knew their children.

"We went to three funerals a day for probably two weeks solid. The saddest part was going to funerals and seeing two caskets." There were eight funerals in which both a husband and wife were memorialized.

She also recalls assistant coach Red Dawson fondly. Dawson drove, instead of flying, to East Carolina because he wanted to do some recruiting along the way. As a result, he lived, but the survivors' guilt he must have suffered is unimaginable.

Pat notes, "Red Dawson was at every funeral." She went to the first memorial service, attended by more than 7,000 people, at Huntington's Memorial Field House the day after the crash. The memorial was the inspiration of Field House manager Harold Beach. Beach's wife, Margaret, recalled his efforts in putting that event together, "He worked day and night for that to get them suited for Marshall for the funerals. . . . He loved those boys. He loved those Marshall players."

Marshall Student Body President Mike Gant memorialized the dead, "We are all brothers in this hour. . . . We have lost so many like ourselves . . . the wounds are deep . . . something is missing and we feel it very deeply." He continued, "But never let



Pat Daugherty of Huntington. Courtesy of Pat Daugherty. Photographer unknown.

us forget that we shared with these people the most important things we have to give—ourselves.”

When Governor Arch Moore walked to the podium, he spoke mournfully, “These young people were our lives, and we had looked to them for a future.” He added, “To forget for a moment this tragedy would seem to be a tragedy of a greater type. I hope all will build to create a greater university and greater state as a living memorial.”

When it was finished, the mourners filed out silently, an atmosphere that Pat describes as “thick with grief and sadness.”

She remembers that the university and city always had a close connection, unlike many other medium-sized colleges. In part, that was because Marshall was more of a school for the local community than many schools then or today.

But the crash cemented that bond forever. Pat says it’s “like glue. We have things here that bring us all together with that crash.”

She adds that some of her sharpest memories of November 1970 seem somewhat random now. For one, after the crash, she remembers fresh-cut flowers in nearly every restaurant and business. The flowers had been sent from all over the country, including from East Carolina. She even remembers that flowers were left outside Davis’ Place, a longtime Huntington pub. She said, “Someone placed flowers outside Davis’ and left a note, ‘We used to go here and have a beer after the ballgame.’”

But Pat’s most vivid memory is of all the children left without parents. There’s no way to fill that void. Fifty years later, you can tell Pat is still searching for some way, even in the slightest, to help these children, but how can you replace such a loss?

“There was nothing we could do to help. It was a really bad time.” ❁

STAN BUMGARDNER is the editor of GOLDENSEAL, Marshall University, Class of 1987.

“Marshall means a lot to a lot of people”

By Jim Workman

Each year, November 14 is a reminder of a tragedy that claimed 75 lives and nearly ripped out the heart of a community. Fifty years later, Huntington still aches from the memory of that evening's disaster, which followed a road game at East Carolina.

The pain still reverberates beyond the Huntington Tri-state area, though, as a group of Marshall University athletic staffers and radio crew found out in Greenville, North Carolina, the morning of November 11, 2006.

After the crash, Marshall had played at East Carolina just once (1978) before the 2006 contest. By 2006, both schools were members of Conference USA, playing in the same East Division. Forever tied together in history, the Thundering Herd and Pirates were now locked in as rivals. On the gridiron anyway.

Some don't see it as a rivalry but more as a brotherhood. The morning before the 2006 game, Randy Burnside, Marshall University's sports information director and assistant athletic director at the time, was sitting in a Greenville restaurant. Before heading to Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, Randy and his crew settled into their booth, decked out in their Thundering Herd jackets. Before them was a spread of eggs, sausage, muffins, hash browns, and juice. The group had caught the eye of a local man.

“I have my back toward the door,” Randy says. “And I feel someone's hand on my left shoulder. I turned to look up, and there's an older gentleman, wearing one of those classic, you know, late 1970s satin sports jackets that a lot of teams would wear then. It was faded. You could tell it was an older East Carolina

jacket. The gentleman didn't say anything at first. He was choking up. There were tears in his eyes.”

Breakfast was put on hold, as Randy and his group sat in silence while the man tried to gain his composure.

“We just waited on him to say something,” Randy continues. “And after a few seconds, he said, ‘You have no idea how good it is for me to see you all.’ And he started to cry.” Randy describes the overall scene in the restaurant as “very emotional.”

“We're sitting there wearing our Marshall gear,” Randy recalls. “I think I had a Marshall pullover sweater, and everybody at the table had on some kind of Marshall apparel. And this gentleman stood in front of us and just cried for a little bit. In my best recollection, he said, ‘I was an assistant coach on the 1970 East Carolina football staff, and there is not a day that goes by that I don't think about those faces and those coaches and those kids. It just makes me feel so good to see that Marshall logo again, and to see you all here again.’”

Even in retelling the story, Randy's voice cracks.

The gentleman went on to say, “Ever since that day in November 1970—now I've always been an East Carolina fan—but I was also a Marshall fan moving forward.”

Randy adds, “He said something to the effect that Marshall means a lot to a lot of people. The fact that Marshall kept playing football following the tragedy means a lot. He said, ‘I've always watched for the Marshall scores. It's the first team I look for, after East Carolina, to see how they [do] every single week. I've been there for all the highs, and



East Carolina University sweatshirt left at Huntington's Spring Hill Cemetery, November 14, 2019. Photo by Stan Bumgardner.

I've been upset through all the lows. Just always remember, that Marshall logo means a lot more than a lot of the other logos."

As quickly as the man came, he vanished.

Randy continues, "He just began walking away, and we thanked him for talking to us, but we didn't get the gentleman's name. I wish I did. [Marshall radio announcer] Steve Cotton and I even talked about it afterwards. I wish we would have thought to ask him his name, but it happened so quickly.

"That was really, really a powerful experience," Randy adds. "And you know, I've lived in West Virginia my whole life, and I think it's natural for us, especially around Huntington, West Virginia, to think that we were the only people impacted."

Randy was a staffer at Marshall when the 2000 documentary *Ashes to Glory* was being planned and filmed. He assisted with its research. He later aided producers of *We Are Marshall*, which starred A-list actor Matthew McConaughey as Jack Lengyel, Marshall's new head coach in 1971. The movie grossed more than \$40 million.

"I began realizing more the impact [of the tragedy] outside of our area," Randy recalls.

"Towns like Greenville, North Carolina, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Cities in New Jersey. The hometowns of each one of the players on that team. This affected so many communities outside of Huntington. It has a lasting impact. That's something that hit me hard. I don't think you can go to one of those fountain ceremonies and hear the speakers and not be moved," Randy says.

One of the most memorable speakers was Frank Loria, Jr. His father, Frank Loria, Sr., was a 23-year old assistant coach for Marshall in 1970. The father, a Clarksburg native, had been a standout player at Virginia Tech and an Associated Press All-American defensive back in 1966, with a promising future as a football coach. After a brief tryout for the Denver Broncos and a short stint in the Canadian Football League, he accepted his first coaching job offer from Marshall Head Coach Rick Tolley, who was also a Virginia Tech grad.

Loria, Sr., arrived in Huntington with a young family of two daughters—Vickie, 3, and Julie, 1—and a pregnant wife, Phyllis, 22, his high school sweetheart from Clarksburg's Notre Dame High School. But

his coaching career lasted only one year. He was on the fateful flight that fell that November night. His wife was seven-and-a-half months pregnant with a son, Frank Loria, Jr.

"I'll never forget Frank Loria, Jr., speaking at a ceremony," Randy says. "I think it was at the 35th anniversary at the time. He had not even been born and lost his father. . . . I imagine his whole idea of who his father . . . was from other people's viewpoints. You can see that road sign in Clarksburg today that reads, 'Frank Loria, All-American.' And then I find out through his [son's] speech that he'd never even been on campus at Marshall University until that moment. And that he felt like he had filled this void. He didn't have his father. And then, when he stepped on campus for that ceremony, and he realized all of the hundreds of people that were there, he had this calm come over him and this feeling that, you know, he had this large extended family he never knew about. Well, those are things that just, I mean, if that doesn't move you, there's something wrong with you as a human being."

Randy Burnside says he's been blessed to talk to a lot of family members through the years. "My heart goes out to them," he says. "I can't imagine the loss of someone so young."

"It's the worst terrible tragedy that you can imagine, losing loved ones like that, to have their lives cut short that way."

"But I also see in them this bond—a bond that they all have because of that tragedy and how they have helped each other through. . . . I think that makes the Marshall story a very special one because it shows that no matter how bad things are, and you've hit rock bottom with a horrible tragedy and loss, that if you press on, good things can happen down the line. Just don't ever give up."

It's universally agreed. Marshall University and Huntington wouldn't be the same in 2020 had a decision been made to eliminate the football program in the 1970s. The university

has flourished, helped no doubt by the exposure and the additional revenue the Thundering Herd football program brought to Huntington with its outstanding successes of the late 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s [see p. 34].

"The way the community responded, the way the university responded by continuing football and moving forward, is a testament to the human spirit and what we're capable of even in the worst of times," Randy states.

"I feel blessed to have gone to Marshall. I feel blessed to have worked there. I got to work with a lot of amazing people and great athletes that became first-round draft picks in the National Football League. But the thing I think about too, in retrospect, and I don't think enough people give credit to this fact: I think of all the opportunities that would have been lost for young people. Student-athletes, football players that would have never had a chance at a college degree."

Randy Burnside was a 1999 graduate of Marshall and earned his master's in 2001. He was assistant sports information director from 1999 to 2003 and assistant athletic director for media relations from 2003 until 2011.

"I got to watch a lot of great football games," Randy reflects. "I'm so proud that I chose to go to Marshall and for all the opportunities that it gave me." 🍀



Former Marshall sports information director and current assistant director of the West Virginia Lottery, Randy Burnside. Courtesy of Randy Burnside.

JIM WORKMAN is the publisher of *Wally's & Wimpy's Sports Digest* and a member of the Football Writers Association of America and the West Virginia Sports Writers Association. His 30-year career has also included roles with the *State Journal*, *Beckley Register-Herald*, *Charleston Gazette*, and the West Virginia Press Association. He can be contacted by e-mail at workmanmediawv@gmail.com. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

The Fountain Remembrance and Memorial

By Brad Crum

Remembrance and memorial are vital parts of life. Human nature wants to remember past events, whether happy or tragic. A memory, memorial, or even a symbolic token can help us cope with past events and ensure that tragedies, and their victims, are remembered by future generations. When an event has an impact on an entire community, we're duty bound to make sure it's not forgotten.

After the crash, the Marshall family wanted to preserve the memory of *The 75*. But what would be meaningful and respectful? A work of public art on campus could intertwine memories with the surrounding landscape, where *The 75* used to meet, laugh, and sometimes study. The challenge would be how to express this through art in a way that transcends time.

A committee—composed of various individuals from Huntington and Marshall, including some widows and children of the victims—selected Harry Bertoia (1915-1978) to build a memorial fountain sculpture on Marshall's campus. Bertoia was an Italian-born artist who'd emigrated to Detroit when he was 15. He was perhaps best known for his sound sculptures in locations such as the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Smithsonian and Hirshhorn in Washington, D.C. Shortly before the plane crash, he'd been awarded the prestigious Gold Medal for Sculpture of American Institute of Architects.

He was recommended to the committee by E. Keith Dean, architect of the new



Since its construction, the Marshall Memorial Fountain has been a central gathering place for students. Courtesy of Marshall University Special Collections.



Workers lower the 6,500-pound Marshall Memorial Fountain into place, 1972. Courtesy of Marshall University Special Collections.

Memorial Student Center. Dean had begun designing the center—to replace the old Shawkey Student Union—before the crash; by coincidence, he'd already called for a fountain in the courtyard area. Then, in one of his many discussions with Roberta Emerson, former director of Huntington Galleries (now Huntington Museum of Art), Dean decided the fountain should become a memorial *for* the living.

According to a 2006 article by Mike Kirtner for *Herd Insider*, some townspeople wanted the memorial to be a buffalo, representing the team mascot. Dean and Emerson considered this inappropriate, and so did Bertioia, who wrote, "I think the campus student center is very handsome and I would not like to see a buffalo detract from it."

One of Bertioia's mottos was that the "urge for good design is the same as the urge to go on living." He specifically designed the Marshall Memorial Fountain to "commemorate the living—rather than the dead—on the waters of life, rising, receding, surging to express upward growth and eternity."

Bertioia understood that his design needed to blend into the landscape while still being distinct enough to honor *The 75*. For his work on the fountain, which still stands sentinel over the Marshall campus, Bertioia accepted \$25,000—a fraction of his usual rate—including all design, labor, and materials.

The 13-foot-high 6,500-pound fountain was dedicated by Marshall President John G. Barker on November 12, 1972. Athletic Director Joe McMullen observed, "Words, pictures, and material things are inadequate tributes to so many who gave so much to their university. Our greatest tribute is for us to continue to build that which they so ably started but are unable to continue except through our dedication and efforts."

Memorials receive the respect they deserve because of the memories we attach to them.

The memories of West Virginians and friends and family of Marshall who lived through November 14, 1970, will never be forgotten. But what about the next generation and the generation after that?

To those who see it for the first time, the Marshall Memorial Fountain looks like a blend of traditional and modern art. But for those who know the whole story, the 75 spires at the top represent not just *The 75* but the hopes and dreams of their families and the children some of them never got to meet. The fountain signifies that *The 75* will never disappear from our collective memories.

The fountain honors the heritage of the school, the community, and *The 75*. It's a place where students whose parents weren't even born in 1970 can go have a cup of coffee and chat about classes and their social lives. All the while, they're within eyesight of a lasting tribute to those who came before and those still to come. The fountain will forever live in the memories of Marshall students and faculty and all Huntingtonians. But even outside those communities, the fountain is a beacon of curiosity that draws in passersby, who soon learn of *The 75*.

The fountain, quite simply, carries an abiding meaning that few of us can grasp. As long as it stands, it will be an anchor on the campus and a constant reminder of what it means to be a son or daughter of Marshall. But, it's not just about our memories of *The 75*. It also urges us, the living, as Harry Bertioia wanted, "to go on living." ❁

BRAD CRUM grew up on his family's dairy farm in southeastern Ohio. He graduated with a B.A. in history and an M.A. in cultural/historical geography from Ohio University. He's the education and cultural program specialist for the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture & History and an Air Force veteran. He and his wife, Christine, also run a small primitives arts-and-crafts business from their home in Proctorville, Ohio. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Bronze *We Are Marshall* statue, designed by Burl Jones of Sissonville, at the entrance of Marshall's athletics building, 2019. Photo by Jim Workman.

"It's more than just us" Tragedy Becomes Inspiration

By Randy Yohe

O h, you go to Marshall University? Isn't that the school that had the plane crash?

More than a few current Marshall students get some form of that question, usually from someone not from West Virginia. However, it's always asked with honesty and curious sincerity. How do today's students answer? Marshall Student Body Vice-President Anna Williams says "yes," with a caveat. Anna explains, "I'm a native West Virginian. The plane crash story is told in many of our history classes. I've seen the movie several times. I remember being in second grade and first watching *We Are Marshall*. It was all kept in mind when I came to Marshall, understanding the resilience and leadership behind the name."

Current Huntington Mayor and Marshall graduate Steve Williams (no relation) says succinctly, "The Marshall plane crash and its aftermath define me as a man and Huntington as a city."

A half-century later, the impact on surviving family members, friends, Marshall students and student athletes, and the people of Huntington continues to resonate in myriad ways. Thundering Herd senior offensive lineman Levi Brown says, "It cuts deep because we often talk about *The 75*, not just when we wear the number on our helmets that [anniversary] week in November but throughout the year. We all get the mindset of what happened and how deep and devastating that is to a campus and community."

Martinsburg junior Brennan Ameral speaks with emotion: "The plane crash and aftermath remain a unifying force for our campus. Honoring the memory strengthens the bond even more. The community has

never really split apart since the plane crash."

Senior defensive lineman Milan Lanier didn't know about the crash until he came to campus. Milan says, "My freshman year, we watched the movie, then the coaches explained the background of it. It made a deep impression on me, made me work even harder in their memory. It impacts us a lot. We never take things for granted, and it shows us we have to get on the field and work hard because it's more than just us."

This legacy directly links Marshall students with the school's history. Junior Darby McCloud explains, "We feel very connected to the victims of the plane crash. At the annual memorial ceremony, it's impactful to listen to the relatives and friends of those who lost their lives and hear their stories."

Anna Williams contemplates the meaning of the annual Marshall Memorial Service: "The impact is tremendous. What this community went through 50 years ago, there's a legacy still. Grief is a feeling all too familiar to Huntington. And this is the one time of year for all to come together and remember exactly what our community went through that day. It is impactful, especially as generations of students usher through this university. It reminds us of the values we really are all about."

Marshall football players all attend the ceremony, each placing a rose on the fountain. Milan says, "It's all very touching and humbling. The ceremony brought another side to me that I never imagined I had. It teaches you to never take life for granted."

Levi Brown adds, "To me, it's the keynote speakers at the Marshall Memorial Service that hit home. Listening to family members



Marshall administrative, athletic, and student leaders at the 2019 Memorial Service. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

of the plane crash victims keeps the story alive. . . . Honoring their memory is still very alive in this community. It's something that people will never forget, something that resonates from older to younger generations, and everyone who has come through this town knows the story."

Keith Morehouse and his wife, Debbie Hagley Morehouse, don't think they've ever missed a ceremony. Keith spoke at one many years ago and remains humbled at the preservation of his and his wife's heartfelt memories. "Once they started the memorial, it became a tradition. In the old days, it would have been word-of-mouth. Now, they have these physical monuments and emotional ceremonies. The fact that they do them year after year automatically puts it on the new

players and new students. Even if you kind of wanted to get away from it, you really can't. That's just the way it's happened here at Marshall. It's hard to believe it's so many years ago. I think of it as a real tribute to the school that they continue to remember. Sometimes, it might be easier to put it in the closet and let it go. They've been very steadfast."

The disaster forged a connection within the Marshall and Huntington communities that endures through generations. For the Morehouses, that bond encompasses the remarkable, resilient, and romantic. The two met in their high school years. Keith remembers, "We were on our senior trips." Keith went to Huntington East, and Debbie went to Huntington High. Keith continues,

"Both senior trips coincided at Myrtle Beach. We met, I recognized her last name, and she recognized my last name. We kind of hung out for the week, got to know each other, and there you go."

Both Keith and Debbie come from families with six children. Debbie lost both parents in the plane crash; Keith lost his father.

Longtime Huntington attorney Jim St. Clair grew up with Ray and Shirley Hagley. Jim says he and Ray were fast friends from the start. Dr. Ray Russell Hagley was a general practitioner who eventually became Marshall's football and basketball team physician. Jim says that with six children, "Ray and Shirley seldom if ever rode on the same plane together, for the kids' sake. But this particular time, the offer was a free trip with all the trimmings for the couple, so they chanced it."

After the crash, the St. Clairs helped the six Hagley orphans pull their young, shattered lives back together.

Keith says the father-in-law and mother-in-law he never met were much more than avid Thundering Herd fans, noting that "Deb's dad helped form the early beginnings of The Big Green [athletic support group] and Marshall Scholarship Fund. The Hagleys weren't just fans. They were dedicated boosters and decided to put together a master plan of what they would like to see done with the facilities at Marshall. They were really gung-ho about it."

Debbie still cherishes her parents' zeal for Marshall's success. "We have copies of everything they did," Debbie says. "To me, it's all really neat, interesting, even prophetic what they wanted—a baseball field and other improvements for Fairfield Stadium—and a lot of it has come true."

Keith adds, "The Hagleys founded the Marshall Basketball Invitational, formed in the 1960s. Marshall was a big basketball school back then. They turned that tournament into a showcase for Huntington. Deb's mom and dad helped

make the kids on all those teams coming in feel special when they came to Huntington. That's what the Hagleys did. They wanted to make the school a better place."

Jim St. Clair shares a personal story about Ray and Shirley Hagley. Jim says Ray told him, "I want to do something nice for her, buy her a special diamond ring."

Ray went to Rushlein's Jewelers in Huntington and had a special ring made for about \$15,000. Jim explains, "Before each game on game day, the wives of people involved would get together for lunch. That day, at the luncheon, wives were sitting around the table, some commenting on Shirley Hagley's beautiful ring. She held it out, all the ladies saw it, and she said, 'Yes, my husband bought it for me,' and, as far as we know, she had the ring on the plane. After the crash, nobody could find that ring."

In handling the Hagleys' financial and insurance affairs, Jim says, "The ladies at that luncheon signed affidavits for the insurance company, swearing they all saw that ring and all described it to a 'T.'"

Jim also helped the Hagley children find a new home in Huntington. In cleaning out the old home, Jim says, "Some shelf paper was pulled from the master bedroom closet, the paper hit the floor, and there was a clunk. That clunk was a diamond ring. The kids said, 'That looks like Mom's ring.' No one can explain the ring mystery. It's one of those *Twilight Zone* things."

Debbie heard the same story from Jim years ago and says, "My dad bought Mom a cocktail ring that had a bunch of diamonds. When she wasn't wearing it, she would wrap it in tissue and put it in the corner of her closet shelf. Jim said when they found Mom's ring, they took it back to Rushlein's because Dad still owed money on it, and Rushlein's said, 'Oh well, we'll take it back and call it even.' [The owner] told us some wives went to lunch on game day in North Carolina and saw Mom's ring, even passed it around, and later, all the women claimed



(Left-right) Shirley and Ray Hagley. Voice of the Thundering Herd Gene Morehouse. Both courtesy of our author.

they saw it and even tried it on." When asked how she reconciles the ring stories, Debbie says, "I have no idea."

Keith's father, Gene Morehouse, was on the plane. Gene was both the radio voice of the Thundering Herd and the Marshall University sports information director. Keith says his dad held both jobs to pay for a household with six children. Keith still works as the longtime sports director for Huntington's WSAZ-TV. He says growing up with his dad, even if it was just until he was eight years old, helped pave the way for his future. "I would be at the ballgames as a kid," Keith recalls, "shooting ripped-up paper cups into the basket at the Field House after school. That was a big time for a seven- or eight-year-old. I'm thinking then that 'my dad is a really good kinda guy, with a cool job,' and then, he was gone. I didn't

know exactly how it would work after that. I just knew I was going to go into journalism, and I did. In 1996, I got the opportunity to call Marshall football and basketball games on TV. It was a no-brainer. My dad and I, we got really lucky. It was a blessing [for me] to call those games when Marshall had championships with Randy Moss and Chad Pennington and Byron Leftwich. It's not something I take lightly."

For every one of the 10 years that Doc Holliday has been head football coach at Marshall, he's taken the team on a summer run from campus to Huntington's Spring Hill Cemetery, where a number of plane crash victims are buried and another memorial reminds us what was lost. Every one of those 10 years, Keith Morehouse has spoken to the team at that solemn gathering.



Debbie and Keith Morehouse. Photo by Randy Yohe.

"I speak every year," Keith says. "If they are going to put that much effort into telling and retelling the story, then at least I can keep connecting them to just what happened. . . . They've probably seen the movie and heard the stories, but when they get up there and see the gravesites and the monuments and read the names, they realize that these guys came before us. They start to really connect with what happened. I tell them how football is different at Marshall. People are a little more euphoric when they win, a little more downtrodden with they lose. It all just means a lot here because it was almost taken away—and for 75 people, it was. So, I tell them, 'Don't take it for granted, and remember that every time you run out from that tunnel, understand just how many people are cheering you on.' If they don't

get it when they get here, by the time they leave, they figure it out."

Current Huntington Mayor Steve Williams came to Marshall in 1974 and played football with "The Young Thundering Herd." He says the plane crash shaped his life and Huntington's future: "I went to school with kids who lost their families. I learned how many brothers and sisters raised each other. When I think of [it] 50 years later, I first think of the resilience of our city. Huntington is much different than in the 1970s, but we still depend on one another. When you consider what was lost and think of what happened to the city in the 1970s and '80s in terms of loss of industry and population, you realize the core of community leadership was lost in that plane crash. It took a generation to produce the city leadership that could be reestablished. On my inauguration night,



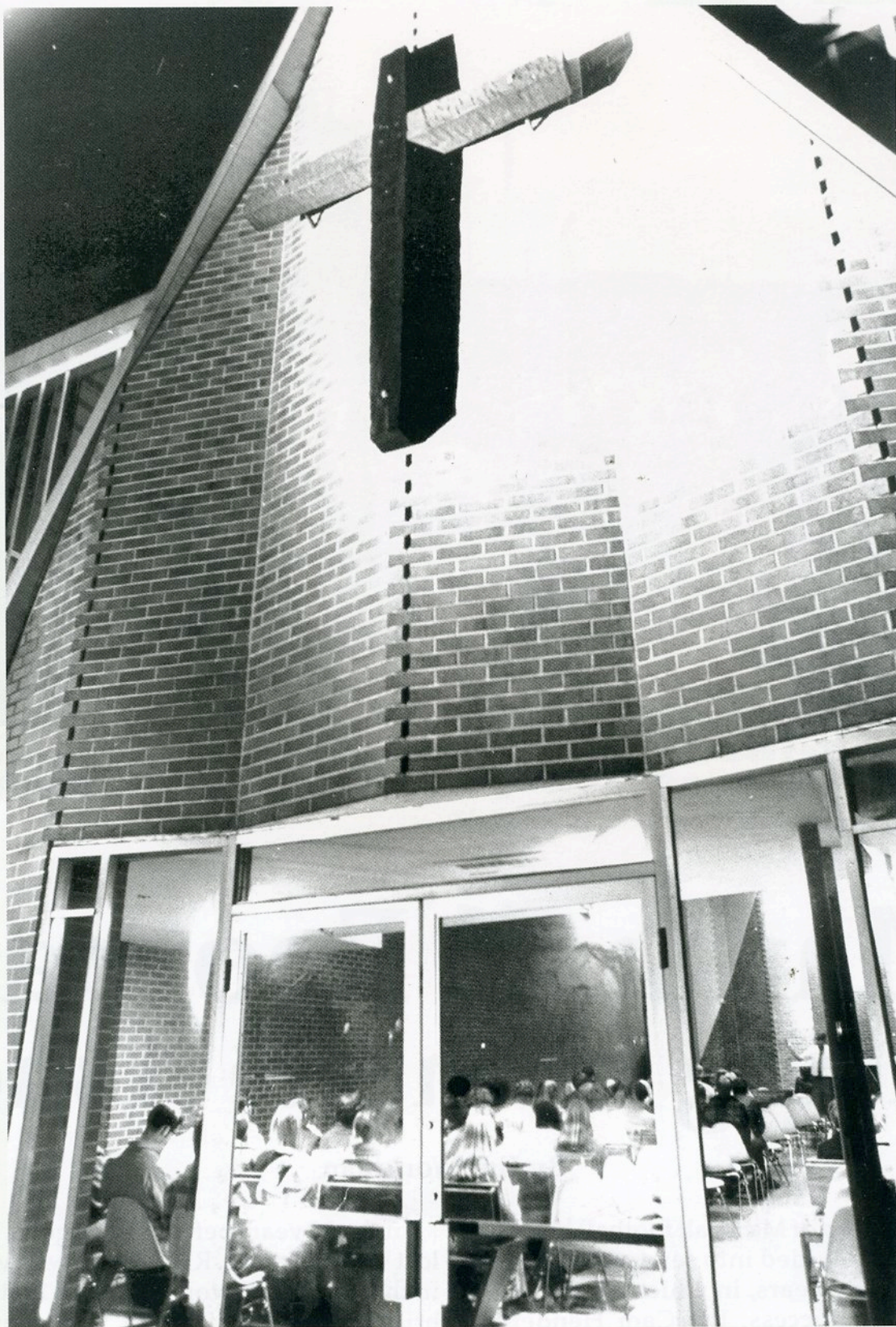
Senior linebacker Omari Cobb of Port St. Lucie, Florida, lays a rose by the fountain at the 2019 Memorial Service. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

I had a picture of the lost team on stage and saw the audience filled with children of those who died in the crash—children who became community leaders.”

Anna Williams sees leadership and more coming from the crash: “We all understand what it means to go through something tragic and look upon such a dark time and know that as a university, our choice was to rise. That was it. There was no other option. As a student here, we all walk with that in the back of our minds. In Huntington, you are always home, no matter where you are. This community is a family, and a Marshall student is never alone. That plane crash transformed that bond and gives us all an obligation to help one another.”

That obligation is not lost on surviving family members, such as Keith and Debbie, who say, “We both are humbled by the fact that Marshall continues to honor and remember. We think that is the biggest tribute you can give us—is to remember. It’s really uplifting because they don’t have to do it, but they do. If they take the trouble to do it, the least we can do is show up and appreciate it.” 🍁

RANDY YOHE has his own video production company and does freelance writing, radio work, political consulting, and music festival production. For 30 years, he was a broadcast journalist in the Huntington-Charleston TV news market. Randy and his wife, Vickie, have a website geared to inform, entertain, and inspire Baby Boomers: www.ourboomlife.com. This is his third contribution to GOLDENSEAL, his most recent being about artist Wolfgang Flor in our Spring 2019 issue.



Students grieve during a memorial service at the Campus Christian Center, November 1970.
Courtesy of Marshall University Special Collections.



Fans storm the field at a still-unfinished Joan C. Edwards Stadium after Marshall's first I-AA championship win: 31-28 over Youngstown State, December 19, 1992. All photos courtesy of Marshall Athletics unless noted otherwise.

Marshall Football Rising from the Ashes

By Jim Workman

The history of Marshall football basically can be divided into several categories: the early years, in which the Herd enjoyed spotty success; the Cam Henderson years, during which Marshall became a team to be reckoned with; a very down program from 1950 until the plane crash; the long rebuilding process after the crash; and the successes of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

In the 20 years before the tragedy, Marshall lost $\frac{2}{3}$ of its games. Rick Tolley, who was killed in the crash, had won 6 and lost 19 during his brief two years (1969-70). However, he was assembling a much more competitive team than the winless 1968 team he'd inherited. Just from a purely football standpoint, the crash erased the momentum from Tolley's two years. Marshall's program struggled

Cam Henderson (1890-1956)

Before the 1980s, Marshall's glory years on the gridiron are better known as the Cam Henderson Era. A native of Marion County, he grew up in Harrison County and attended Glenville State College (Gilmer County), excelling in all major sports. In 1923, he became head football and basketball coach at Davis & Elkins (D&E) College. He turned D&E, a small liberal arts school in Elkins that's always struggled in athletics, into a regional powerhouse, winning $\frac{2}{3}$ of its games. While his genius was more associated with basketball—he's credited with inventing the fast-break offense—he coached D&E to a state football championship in 1928. During his D&E tenure, he also upset Army, Navy, and WVU on the gridiron.

Marshall hired him away to be its basketball and football coach in 1935, and Henderson took some of his best players with him (no longer allowed by the NCAA).

On New Year's Day 1948, Marshall's 9-2 team played in its first national bowl game, the second-ever Tangerine Bowl, which evolved into the Citrus Bowl. Henderson skipped that game, though, to coach Marshall's basketball team

in a holiday tournament in Los Angeles. The Herd lost the bowl game 7-0 to Catawba.

With his health beginning to fail, Henderson stepped away from football after the 1949 season to focus solely on basketball. His 68 football wins remained a school record until broken by Bob Pruett in 2001. Henderson officially retired after the 1954-55 season as the winningest basketball coach in Marshall history—a record that still stands. One of his last basketball recruits was a slim African-American guard from Huntington. Hal Greer would become the first Black athlete to play for a traditional white college in West Virginia and possibly all of the South. Greer (1936-2018) would lead Marshall to its first NCAA Basketball Tournament appearance before going on to a Hall of Fame career in the NBA. —Jim Workman



Courtesy of Marshall University Special Collections.

under his successors (the numbers denote wins-losses-ties and coaching tenure): Jack Lengyel (9-33, 1971-1974), Frank Ellwood (10-34, 1975-1978), and Sonny Randle (12-42, 1979-1983).

Grief. Uncertainty. Expenses of fielding a team. It was unprecedented times for an NCAA football program, and it showed in the win-loss column for many years. The thought that Marshall football could one day be a success seemed like a distant dream. But that dream would eventually come to fruition, inspired by the tragic night of November 14, 1970.

It was Stan Parrish (13-8, 1984-1985) and George Chaump (33-16, 1986-1989) who first brought the Herd roaring back. Parrish led Marshall to its first winning season after the

crash, a 6-5 mark in 1984. For students at the time, that 6-5 record was like winning a national title. The Herd reached new heights in 1985, posting a 7-3-1 record with an NCAA Division I-AA ranking and playoff appearance.

After the '85 season, Parrish left to become head coach at NCAA Division I Kansas State University (KSU). His success didn't carry over to KSU, however, as Parrish's teams won just two games in three seasons before he was fired. He later earned championship rings as an assistant coach, in 1997 at Michigan, and in 2002 with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the NFL.

Chaump guided the Herd to two NCAA I-AA national playoff appearances, in 1987 and 1988. The Herd enjoyed a 10-5 record



Marshall loses a heartbreaker to Northeast Louisiana by a point, 43-42, in its first I-AA championship game, December 19, 1987.

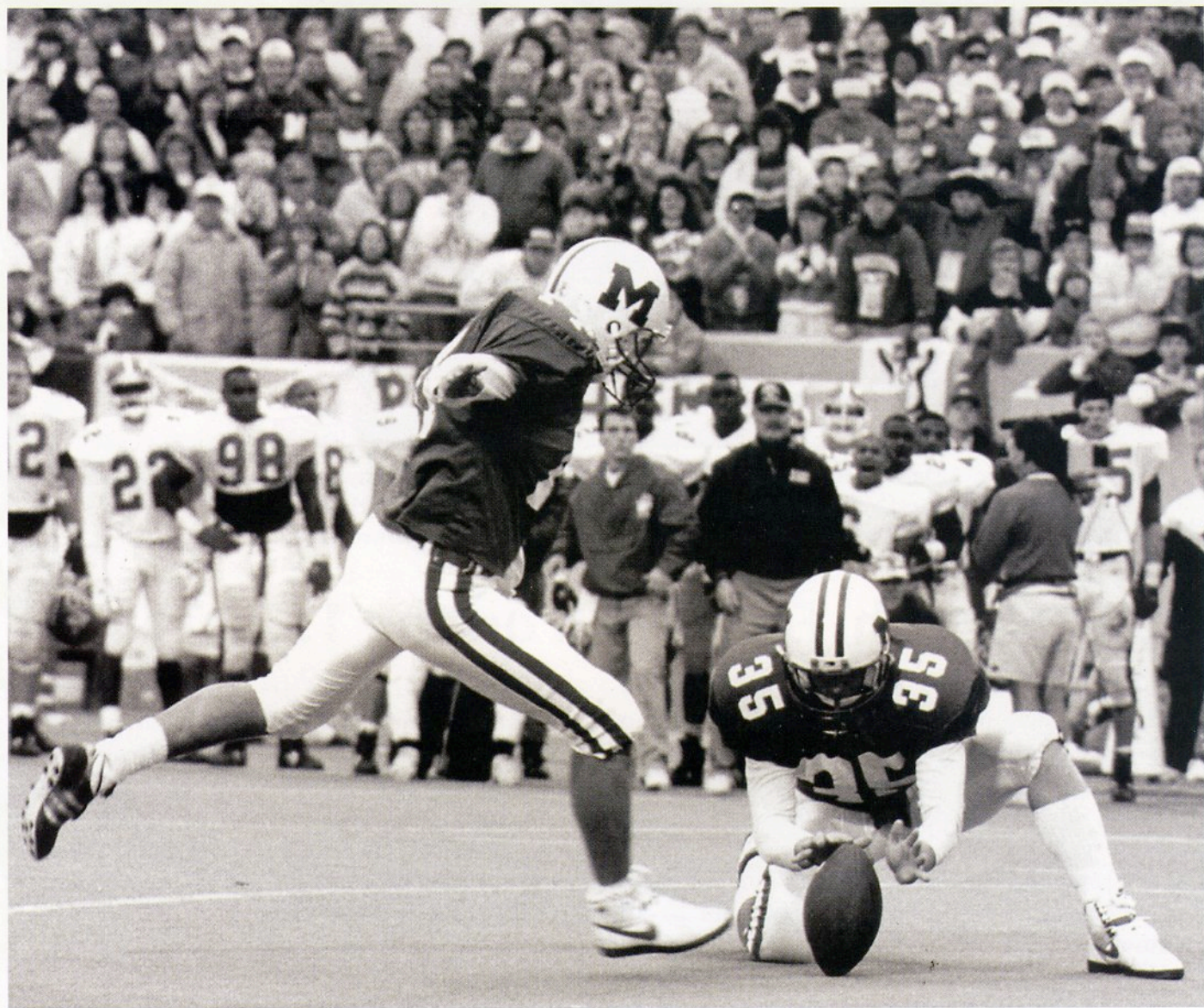
and a No. 2 national ranking in '87 and an 11-2 mark, tied for the No. 1 ranking in '88. Chaump's squad made it to the pinnacle—the 1987 Division 1-AA national championship game—but lost a heartbreaker, 43-42, to Northeast Louisiana in a nationally televised broadcast from Pocatello, Idaho.

The next year, No. 6-ranked Herd lost to No. 4 Furman in the second round of the 1988 playoffs. Furman, a Southern Conference rival at the time, went on to win the I-AA national championship that year. In his final season, Chaump's Marshall team went 6-5 before he left to become head coach at Navy,

where he'd post five losing seasons before getting fired.

It was Jim Donnan who took the Marshall football program to greater heights after becoming coach in 1990. During his time at Marshall (1990-95), he won 64 and lost 21 and captured the school's first I-AA national championship in a 31-28 last-minute thriller against Youngstown State in 1992. He became a College Football Hall of Fame inductee and a Marshall Athletics Hall of Fame member.

Donnan was a much sought-after head coach candidate before arriving in



Willy Merrick, who lettered three times in both football and soccer at Marshall, kicks the winning field goal against Youngstown State in 1992 to win the I-AA national championship, 31-28. Merrick is now the head men's soccer coach at Ohio Dominican.

Huntington, having had massive success as an offensive assistant at the University of Oklahoma. But the timing had never been right to leave Oklahoma, particularly since his son Todd, a promising quarterback recruit, was still in high school. But when the Marshall job opened, Athletic Director Lee Moon arranged a meeting in Texas with Donnan, who accepted Moon's offer and brought along Todd, who'd also become a member of Marshall's Athletic Hall of Fame.

"I was very intrigued about the fact that Marshall had a plan to build a new stadium,

and I had a pretty good roster coming back," Donnan says. "I had always wanted to be a head coach. I had a couple of chances that I didn't take earlier in my career. But there was the challenge of coming [to Marshall] and building the new stadium. It turned out pretty good.

"Coach Chaump left us some good players at Marshall. We were well on our way; it wasn't like we had to rebuild. Marshall was kind of a plum for anybody to get because it was a national name. Few I-AA schools [had] a TV contract and Nike contract. Anybody that got



Dave Walsh and Lydia Ko, LPGA standout, at the 2019 Toyota-West Virginia Special Olympics golf fundraiser at Sleepy Hollow Golf Club in Hurricane (Putnam County). Courtesy of Dave Walsh.

Dave Walsh, Freshman on the 1970 Team

Dave Walsh was a freshman on Marshall's football team in 1970. At the time, freshmen weren't eligible to play in NCAA varsity games. So, although he was part of the Thundering Herd, he didn't make the trip to East Carolina in November 1970.

"I remember when we came in that August," Dave says. "[The varsity players] sent us all down to get haircuts. They shaved our heads, the typical things that you do. But four months later, [those same players] were gone. They left on a Friday, and we never saw them again.

"When it first happened, I was sort of like, 'Are we going to keep playing?' 'Am I going to have to leave?' But as time went on, you kind of realized, 'This is what we're doing.' When I think of people that lost their family members, it's just unbelievable. I lost guys that I knew for four months. But some lost family, their role models."

Dave recalls the night he received news of the crash: "At the time, I was 18, so my reaction was probably different than what it is now, when I can put it all in perspective. It hits a lot harder."

He participates in the Marshall Memorial Services on campus and has spoken at several

Seeing the movie *We Are Marshall* in 2006 brought new emotions to him: "In the scene where you see the coach standing up in the plane on the return trip, I was [imagining] sitting there, you know, straightening up my tie or whatever. Then the screen goes black for about five seconds [in lieu of reenacting the crash]. When I saw that, I realized, 'That's what happened.' I said, 'My God, that's when my teammates lost it, right there.' Until I saw that movie, I had never cried. It's crazy because I knew what was coming."

Dave grew up in Virginia but came to Huntington to play football at Marshall. He's now a retired sportswriter, ending his 42-year journalism career—mostly at the Huntington *Herald-Dispatch*—in 2017. He's active in the community, organizing a local golf tournament and an auction that provides college scholarships annually.

"I'll do my best to keep it going and keep their memories alive," Dave says. "Every year, the fountain ceremonies get bigger and bigger. So many that made contributions to Marshall University through the football program are gone. But they're not going to be forgotten."

—Jim Workman



In his four years as head coach (1986-1989), George Chaump helped Marshall turn the corner in football, winning $\frac{2}{3}$ of its games during his tenure. "Chaumpin' at the Bit" was the team's motto.

the Marshall job was getting a plum because of the fan base. Whichever league they went into, they'd be leading them in attendance."

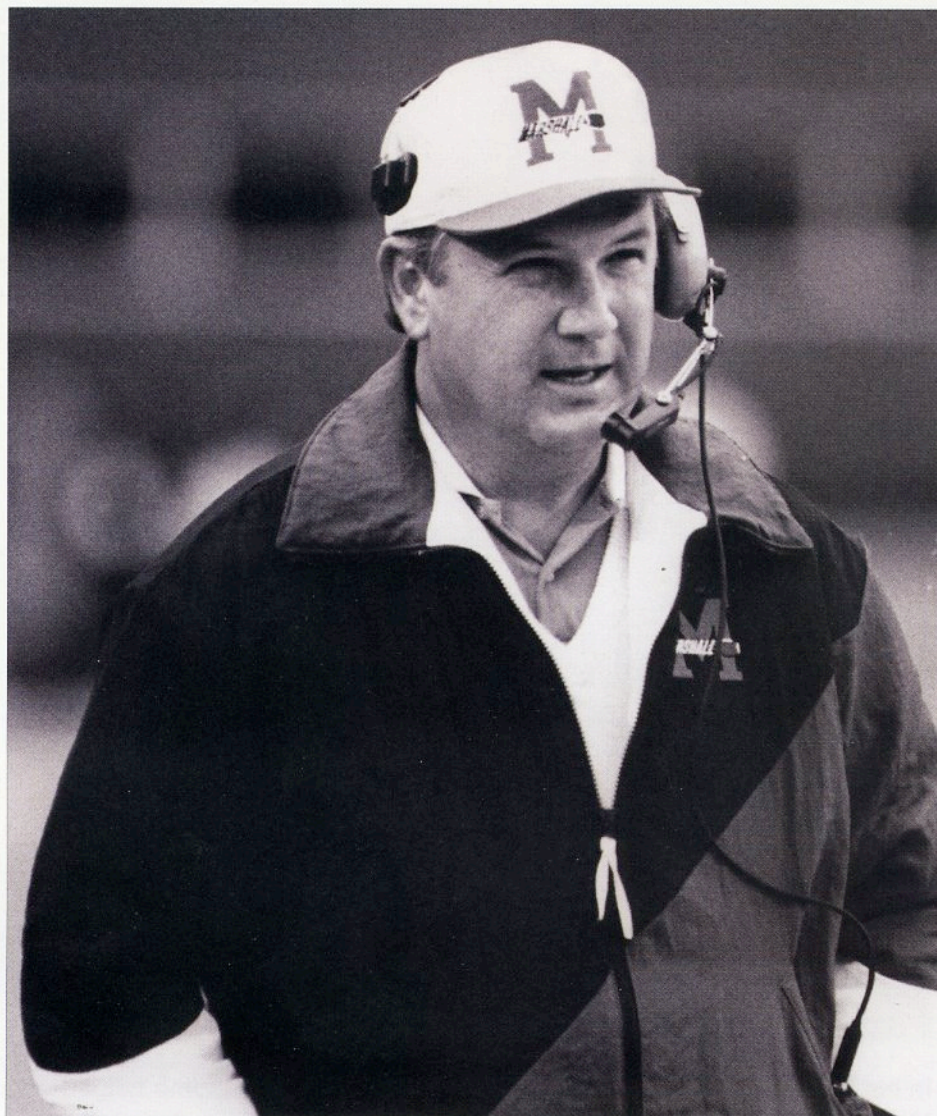
Marshall wasn't close to Oklahoma's level, but it had potential, which few football programs of Marshall's size had.

"We had great attendance and built us up a cable TV package, which for a Division I-AA program was unheard of," Donnan says. "All our games were on cable throughout the South and up through the Northeast. That really helped us as far as getting in the homes of a lot of recruits. They knew that if they came to Marshall, the games will be on TV."

It was a great combination of right place, right time. For the coach and Marshall. But

success is a double-edged sword for midsize schools like Marshall. Lose too many, and the coach gets fired; win too many, and he moves on to a higher-profile job, like the University of Georgia, which enticed Donnan from Marshall in 1996.

"I didn't look at Marshall when I went there as a stepping-stone job," Donnan says. "I was 45 years old when I left Oklahoma. I looked at it more of a 'build it and stick around.' I felt good about Marshall, and I had turned down a couple of chances to go somewhere else before, but not near the job Georgia was. I really wrestled with it. . . . I knew that it was going to be a tough fight at Georgia because they were going on probation at the time.



Head Coach Jim Donnan took Marshall football to the next level, winning the 1992 I-AA national championship.

"We had a long way to get it back at Georgia, but we got it back," Donnan explains. "We got into the Top 15 the last four years, but you know, we just couldn't get over the hump against those Florida and Tennessee teams. Those rival teams, they were just too far ahead of us."

The Georgia Bulldogs did win four bowls under Donnan. But his times in Huntington still bring him very fond memories.

"It couldn't have been a better time for me [at Marshall]," Donnan says. "I would have liked to win a couple of the close national championship games that we lost, but overall, it was a time that I'll never forget. And I

made a lot of lifelong friends that I still talk to. I miss Huntington. Marshall was a very difficult place for me to leave because we had such a good team, and we worked so hard."

And Donnan always made sure his teams were aware of *The 75* and what it meant to be a Marshall football player. "When the seasons started, we spent a few minutes talking about what it was like to be a Thundering Herd player and that legacy," Donnan explains. "It was very much a tradition, to honor the people who came before."

Donnan set the table nicely for Bob Pruett, who went 94-23 as head coach from 1996-2004. Marshall President J. Wade Gilley reached

Sportscaster Frank Giardina on the Rebuilding

Frank Giardina arrived on Marshall's campus as a freshman in fall 1972. The recent DuPont High graduate aspired to be a sports broadcaster, so he immersed himself in the athletic department and soon became a student volunteer. He even lived in the athlete's dorm, where his neighbors were all student-athletes, mostly football players.

Some in the dorm had lost teammates and coaches on November 14, 1970. Others had arrived after the crash to help rebuild the program.

"I jumped right into the aftermath of it," Frank says. "It was the second year after the crash. Hodges was where all of the football players lived. What Marshall did at that time was very difficult."

Success on the football field proved to be difficult for a program that basically started anew.

"There was no NCAA Division I-AA level then," Frank notes. "So, it was all Division I. Marshall was not in the Mid-American Conference (MAC) at the time, but it was really playing a MAC-type schedule. It was hard to compete."

Frank started working full-time for the athletic department during his senior year, 1976. He became the broadcasting "Voice of the Herd," working Marshall football and men's basketball games from 1978 to 1986. He witnessed a unique time in college football history, firsthand.

"Even though the football players weren't winning in the 1970s, they bonded with the community through the tragedy," Frank says. "It was very unusual. I think everyone thought they were there for a higher purpose, not just playing football. That kept the guys going, and it kept the football program going."

That same pride was still evident decades later. One of Marshall's most recognizable sons is Chad Pennington, who didn't come along until 1995. But Chad became a worthy off-the-field spokesman for Marshall, during and after his glory days as a record-setting Thundering Herd quarterback.

"Chad was able to develop a leadership skill at Marshall that's kind of rare," Frank explains, adding that the quarterback's appreciation of Marshall history and the legacy of *The 75* honed his leadership and communication skills.

According to Frank, building back Marshall football was a long-term team effort.

"Every coach that came to Marshall left it better than they found it," he states. "People can look at the success that came, especially with the new stadium. But it was a process. Marshall has a lot more going for it than a lot of other mid-major [football programs] in the nation. Sometimes we beat ourselves up about low attendance, but it's still better than a lot of places."

"Jack Lengyel found the program in shambles, and he gave it structure. And Marshall went into the Southern Conference. Sonny Randle came in, and Marshall became more competitive. George Chaump came in and took it to yet another level. Jim Donnan really took it to another level, and into the new [Joan C. Edwards] stadium."

"Every coach there, really, none of them were failures," Frank says. "It's easy to look at win-loss records and say, 'This guy was successful, and this guy was not.' But none of them were failures because they all left it a little better."

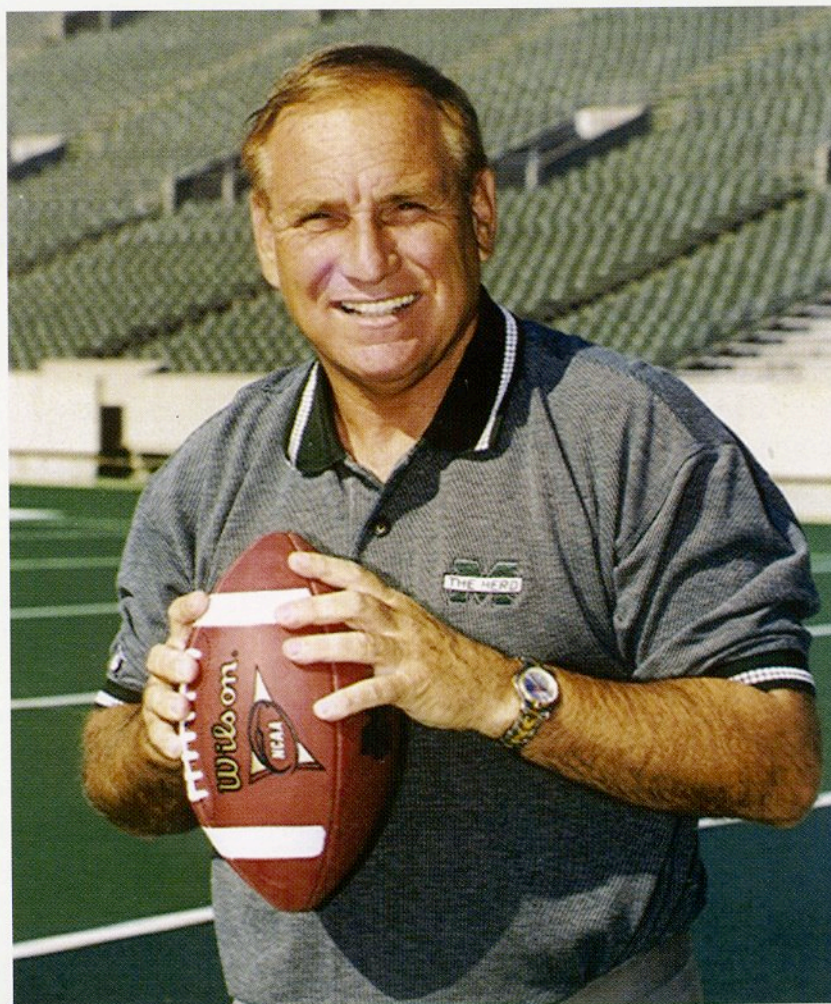
You might notice that Frank uses *we* a lot in describing his relationship with the university.

"I appreciate what's happened," he explains. "I understand the tragedy. I understand the bond with the community. It's my alma mater. Marshall treated me well. It was a great time in my life, and I have fond memories. When I run into people that coached there or people I worked with, you have a little bond because you know what the program went through."

—Jim Workman



Photo by Jim Workman.



During his nine years as head coach, Beckley native Bob Pruett won a I-AA national championship (1996), helped Marshall transition to the I-A level, and became the school's winningest football coach.

out to Pruett when Donnan accepted the Georgia job.

"You know, Marshall didn't lose a game for almost two seasons after we left," Donnan recalls. "Coach Pruett did a great job. We left them some good players."

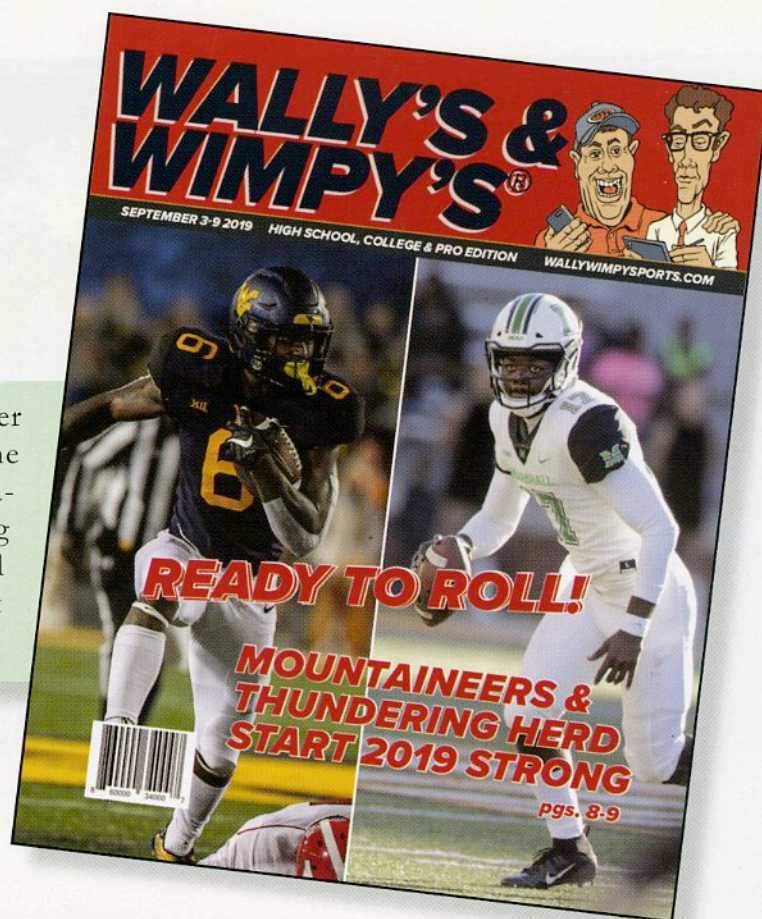
Pruett, a Beckley native, was a popular choice to replace Donnan. He was a former Herd player who'd built an impressive resume as an assistant at Marshall, Wake Forest, Ole Miss, Tulane, and the University of Florida, where he also honed his skills as an ace recruiter. Right out of the gate, Pruett's 1996 squad went 15-0, winning the NCAA I-AA national championship with future Pro Football Hall of Fame wide receiver Randy Moss, a native of Rand (Kanawha County),

and running back Doug Chapman leading the way.

That team was talented enough to red-shirt sophomore quarterback Chad Pennington, who sat out that season. Instead, Pruett brought with him Florida transfer quarterback Eric Kresser, who quickly learned that Moss could catch anything and leave defenders looking up in his dust. Soon, Moss would become a first-round pick of the Minnesota Vikings, and Pennington would go in the first round to the New York Jets.

In 1997, Marshall joined the Mid-American Conference, making the leap to NCAA Division I. That season opened with a long-anticipated cross-state-rival game at WVU. Despite WVU's manpower,

Our author, JIM WORKMAN, is publisher of *Wally's & Wimpy's Sports Digest*. The newspaper has been a West Virginia-based publication for 30 years, covering high school, college, and professional sports. You can visit the website at WallyWimpySports.com.



particularly Amos Zereoue's running dominance, Marshall actually led briefly in the fourth quarter before falling to the Mountaineers 42-31.

But the game served notice that Marshall could compete at the Division I level. Pruett's teams went 10-3, 12-1, 13-0, 8-5, 11-2, 11-2, 8-4, and 6-6 during their first eight seasons in Division I ball. They were 5-2 in bowl games in that span, including a string of five consecutive postseason victories.

The unbeaten 1999 team was ranked No. 10 nationally in both the Associated Press and Coaches' polls. With 94 victories in nine seasons, Pruett is Marshall's winningest coach in history but just one season shy of the required 10 to be eligible for the College Football Hall of Fame.

Mark Snyder, a native of South Point, Ohio, and former Marshall player, took over as Marshall head coach from 2005 to 2009. Snyder had been an all-Southern Conference linebacker on Marshall's 1987 I-AA national runner-up team. But as head coach at

Marshall, he was able to post only a 22-37 record. Snyder has enjoyed an incredibly successful career as an assistant coach, however, at Youngstown State, Minnesota, and Ohio State (prior to Marshall), and at South Florida, Texas A&M, Michigan State, and Florida State (since).

Hurricane (Putnam County) native Doc Holliday has been the Herd head coach from 2010 to the present. He's had success, with a 78-51 mark through the 2019 season and a 6-1 record in bowl games. He's won two Conference USA East Division titles and one conference championship, in 2014, when he was named conference Coach of the Year. Marshall won six straight bowl games during the 2010s.

"I follow Marshall a little bit more now because of having some former assistants on the current staff," Donnan reflects. "Doc has always been really good to me. . . . I've gone back to several of the [Marshall Athletics] Hall of Fame ceremonies. Fortunately for me, they inducted me too." 🌿



Entrance to Marshall University with Old Main (the oldest part of the building was built in 1868) in the background.
Photo by Jim Workman.

The Legacy Continues

By Stan Bumgardner

I started at Marshall in August 1983. Not quite 18, it was my first extended stay from home—albeit only 50 miles away—and my first experience at having a modicum of independence. I lived on the 13th floor (no, they didn't skip 13) of the Towers East dorm in a room a former resident had christened "The Swamp," in honor of Hawkeye Pierce's

grungy Army tent on the show *M*A*S*H*. I did my share to uphold that tradition.

At the time, I loved to read history for fun, never dreaming I'd someday make a meager living at it. A series of great professors at Marshall and later West Virginia University clearly showed me how little I really knew or could ever understand about history.

I was aware of the 1970 plane crash but didn't know much about it. As with most eighth-graders who took West Virginia history back then, our school year ended about the time we got to 1900. So, I knew stories about the frontier, the Civil War, and our convoluted Statehood Movement but very little about 20th-century West Virginia history.

I still remember my first day at Marshall, walking across campus to Smith Hall, where most of my classes were held. I recall three things very distinctly: 1. The other students all looked like they were twice my age. 2. All the coffee on campus tasted like it'd been brewed by Cam Henderson himself in the 1930s. 3. To get to nearly any class, I had to pass by the Marshall Memorial Fountain.

I knew why the fountain was there and eventually what each part symbolized, namely the 75 spires at the top. But I don't remember talking much about the crash with fellow students. It just didn't come up in my circles.

Even at football games, played in a crumbling Fairfield Stadium before sparse (to put it mildly) crowds, the crash wasn't mentioned in the 1980s. As noted elsewhere in this edition, school leaders had seriously considered disbanding the entire football program due to a slew of losing seasons but also, perhaps, to distance the university farther from an unspeakable tragedy.

When it really hit home for me was in my freshman speech class. We had to get up in front of other students and recite a speech we'd written. Being not quite 18 and living in "The Swamp," I was full of Hawkeye Pierce's sarcasm (and still am). I delivered what I thought was a funny talk about making a peanut butter sandwich. It was all tongue-in-cheek, and I got a few chuckles. Sitting beside me was Courtney Proctor (now Cross), who was up next. Courtney followed up my irreverent presentation about sandwich-making with a speech about how it felt to lose both her parents, Herbert

Dickerson Proctor and Josephine Courtney Phillips Proctor, in the plane crash when she was only six years old. To say the least, I was quite embarrassed by my speech and very humbled by hers.

In that moment, I realized how closely Marshall and Huntington were intertwined. This wasn't just a tragic event from 13 years before; it was a pivotal moment that had changed lives forever and left a very sad but lasting legacy for the school. The crash wasn't part of the ancient past.

It took me time, but I eventually recognized that the fountain was sacred ground and that *The 75* would never be forgotten. As the Rev. Steve Harvey, current football team chaplain, notes of the fountain's design, "75 spires rise toward the heavens."

Yet, other than the fountain, I didn't see much public acknowledgment of the crash or *The 75*. I recently spoke with some friends from that time. Their recollection was similar. But, I wondered, was that just because of who we were? Specifically, I mostly hung out with friends I already knew from Charleston, the denizens of a good local Tex-Mex eatery with cheap beer called Hulio's, and the people I met in the dorms, mostly students from Jackson, Logan, and Mason counties, but few Huntingtonians.

So, I contacted my cousin Myra, who started at Marshall a few years before me. She remembers a different experience because she lived in a sorority house. Myra's friends at the sorority talked about the crash a lot because many of her sisters were from Huntington and knew someone, directly or indirectly, on the plane. She and her friends cried every November 14 when the fountain was turned off because they understood the profound significance of the moment: 75 people who died far too early in life.

She also had a friend who took her up to the "J School" (School of Journalism). In Myra's recollection, the J School's "hallway was pretty much a tribute to the crash and the families who lost loved ones."



Color guard at the 2019 Marshall Memorial Service. Red Dawson, an assistant coach who missed the plane flight in 1970 to make a side recruiting trip, is wearing a chapeau with his hand over his heart in the front row. All photos by Steve Brightwell unless noted otherwise.

Just imagine, in a city of nearly 75,000 residents in 1970, nearly everyone in Huntington knew one of *The 75* or knew somebody who knew one of them. While Huntington isn't technically a small town, it still has that "Small Town, West Virginia" vibe, and relationships are tightly knit.

Last year, our photographer, Steve Brightwell, and I went to the 49th annual Memorial Service. From the services in the 1980s, I recall only a small smattering of people around the fountain each year on November 14. On November 14, 2019, though, hundreds showed up. Speakers included the university president, current students, and leaders of the athletic department such as Athletic Director Mike Hamrick and a genuinely emotional football Head Coach Doc Holliday. Then, Dr. Matthew Ralsten paid tribute to his

parents, Murrill and Helen Ralsten, both of whom were killed in the crash. Members of the school band and chorus performed as hundreds sat or stood in hushed silence. This was a very different type of service than what I remembered.

Steve and I—planning for this issue of the magazine—wanted to take some photos of key locations related to the crash. After the service, Marshall student Buffy Six took us on a tour of relevant places, primarily the actual crash site and the graves of players, identified and unidentified, at Spring Hill Cemetery. Everywhere we went, people were already there, reading the highway historical marker at the crash site or paying homage in the cemetery. That's where we met Sheila Nash, sister of Brad Nash, one of the six bodies never identified. She was holding vigil at the cemetery's memorial.



Marshall student Buffy Six, originally from Braxton County, and her friends volunteered to help clean up the Marshall plane crash site before the 2019 Memorial Service.

A couple of things quickly became apparent to me. For one, the whole city and the Marshall community embraced the legacy of the crash much more than I recall from nearly 40 years ago. But another thing struck me even more. Here was a bright, affable 22-year-old student, Buffy Six, who understood the legacy of *The 75* better than I ever have.

Buffy grew up in Sutton and graduated from Braxton County High School in 2016. Following in the footsteps of her mom, Janet Six, Buffy wanted to attend Marshall. As a proud daughter of Marshall, Buffy learned about the crash and its significance from her mom but really got interested after *We Are Marshall* came out.

But the deciding factor for her was during a visit to Marshall while still in high school: “[I] was able to sit next to the fountain. I could feel just how much those 75 people meant

to the whole community, not just Marshall. People see Marshall as just a university, and I used to before I learned the history. Marshall is more than classrooms, dining halls, and dorm rooms. It’s a community that suffered a great loss but came together stronger and full of love for one another. Even if you didn’t personally know any of *The 75*, you are almost guaranteed to meet a family member, roommate, or friend on campus.”

Since enrolling in Marshall in fall 2016, she’s never missed a Memorial Service. She and her friends started looking around and decided more could be done to honor *The 75*. The actual crash site and highway historical marker is located on a lonely dead-end stretch of road near Tri-State Airport. Despite the importance of the place, its remote locale has made it a natural party site. So, in 2019, the weekend before the Memorial Service, Buffy



Buffy Six (right) talks with Sheila Nash at Spring Hill Cemetery, November 14, 2019. Sheila's brother Brad was killed in the crash and was one of the six players never identified.

rounded up some fellow students "to clean up the crash site before the families came to visit for the anniversary. Months before, I'd visited the site with my mom, and we noticed the amount of trash alongside the road and that the Marshall flag was tattered. I talked to Ginny Painter [the school's senior vice president for Communications & Marketing]. We were able to get the physical plant to replace the mulch, greenery, and flags, while I and four other students cleaned up the roadside trash. I wanted the site to look as best as it could for the families, and I wanted them to know that current students who never knew their loved ones still care. I wanted them to know that as a part of the Marshall family, they will always be loved, and they will always have a place to call home."

Listening to Buffy talk proudly and emotionally about the crash's legacy got me thinking about *sympathy* vs. *empathy*. In my day at Marshall, we were certainly sympathetic to those who'd lost loved ones. Who wouldn't be? But, in my day, I don't think I ever felt the empathy that Buffy and her fellow students feel toward each and every one of *The 75*. No matter what happens the rest of our lives, Marshall students and alumni will always have a bond—"the glue," as Pat Daugherty calls it—because of *The 75*. It's much like having a family. If you're like me, you often forget family members' birthdays or anniversaries. But, for the remainder of my days, I and anyone ever associated with Marshall will never forget November 14 and what it represents.

Buffy expresses this sentiment much better than I can: "Going to visit the memorial and the cemetery is more than just paying respect. It's putting yourself in the families' shoes and feeling that loss. It's something that most of us could never imagine. Parents didn't just lose a son; they also lost his friends, who'd probably had dinner at their table. They lost his mentors, who would've consoled them

when they were experiencing homesickness. They lost a whole gained family. Being someone from a small town, I know how much sports families bond together. It's more than supporting your child on the sidelines. It's planning end-of-season barbecues, it's babysitting younger siblings, it's maybe even spending Thanksgiving together. [The crash] wasn't just about losing a son, but an entire family. For some, it was their only family. Going to the service, visiting the crash site, sitting by the fountain, it's all a part of knowing and understanding that type of loss. In a way, it's what drives me to be a better student. Those players didn't get their diplomas. They didn't finish finals. They didn't apply for jobs. They didn't get the chance. And now, as a student, walking the same campus and the same halls, they deserve that I do my best and study my hardest."

I wish I would've appreciated this feeling more when I was at Marshall or that I had anywhere near Buffy's wisdom at age 22 (or now, for that matter). "*Walking the same campus and the same halls, they deserve that I do my best and study my hardest.*" That remark displays a level of empathy I still strive for. Thank goodness for Buffy and her generation. She reminds me of a favorite quote by Franz Kafka: "Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old."

Buffy and her colleagues feel a sense of responsibility to *The 75* that I never fully grasped in my youth. History is filled with life lessons that can guide and inspire us, but how many of us just miss them as they pass by? Fortunately for us, for Marshall, and for Huntington, young people such as Buffy Six understand those lessons that I somehow missed. Down deep, I feel much better and relieved when I realize the legacy of *The 75* is now in the hands of young people who truly empathize. ✱

The 75

All photos courtesy of Marshall University
Special Collections.

Cemeteries of players known to be buried in West Virginia are noted.

Players and Coaches Killed in the Crash



Jim "Jimo" Adams, age 21, offensive lineman, from Mansfield, Oh., survived by daughter, Patty Smith, who he never met.



Mark Andrews, age 20, offensive lineman from Cincinnati.



Mike Blake, age 19, offensive lineman, Huntington East High grad, survived by a daughter, Michelle Frances Michael Blake White. Buried at Union Ridge Cemetery (Cabell County).



Dennis "The Menace" Blevins, age 22, wide receiver from Bluefield (Mercer County), buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in Bluewell.



Willie Bluford Jr., age 20, linebacker from Greenwood, S.C.



Deke Brackett, age 59, assistant coach, had been a College Football Hall of Fame quarterback at the University of Tennessee (1931-33).



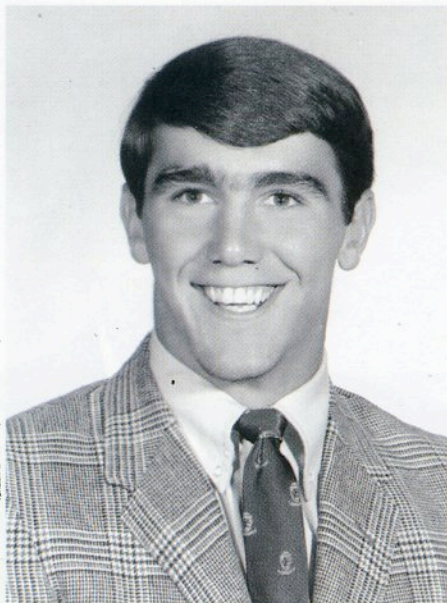
Larry "The Governor" Brown, age 21, nose guard from Atlanta.



Tom Brown, age 22, nose guard from Richmond, one of six unidentified bodies interred at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Al Carelli Jr., age 27, offensive line coach originally from Somerdale, N.J., survived by wife Martha.



Roger Childers, age 21, defensive player from St. Albans (Kanawha County), buried at Cunningham Memorial Park in St. Albans.



Stuart "Gator" Cottrell, age 19, defensive back from Eustis, Fla.



Rick Dardinger, age 22, center from Mount Vernon, Oh., student body representative on the Marshall Athletic Committee.



David Debord, age 21, offensive tackle from Quincy, Fla.



Kevin Gilmore, age 21, halfback from Harrison, N.J., one of six unidentified bodies interred at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Dave "Grif" Griffith, Jr., defensive end from Clarksville, Va., one of six unidentified bodies interred at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Art "Artie" Harris, Jr., age 20, fullback from Passaic, N.J.



Robert "Bob" Harris, age 20, backup quarterback from Cincinnati.



Bobby Joe Hill, age 19, defensive back and wide receiver from Dallas.



Joe Hood, age 20, halfback from Tuscaloosa, Ala.



Tom Howard, age 20, offensive lineman and punter from Milton (Cabell County), buried at Graham Cemetery (Mason County).



Charles Kautz, age 45, assistant coach and acting athletic director, Huntington native, buried at Spring Hill Cemetery, survived by wife Lucy and three daughters.



Marcello Lajterman, age 19, kicker from Lyndhurst, N.J.



Rick Lech, age 21, defensive back from Columbus, Oh., and also member of the baseball team.



Frank Loria, age 23, defensive backs coach from Clarksburg, buried at Spring Hill Cemetery, survived by his wife and children.



Gene Morehouse, age 48, originally from Newark, N.J. and former Beckley resident, sports information director and radio announcer, buried at Spring Hill Cemetery, survived by his wife Genevieve and children Mike, Steve, Keith, Gene, Gail, and Karen.



Jim "Shorty" Moss, age 29, offensive coordinator, Huntington East High grad and captain of the 1962 WVU football team, buried at Woodmere Memorial Park, survived by wife and two-year-old daughter.



Barry W. Nash, age 19, player from Henderson (Mason County), originally from Man (Logan County), one of six unidentified bodies interred at Spring Hill Cemetery, survived by numerous family members.



Pat Norrell, age 23, offensive lineman from Hartsdale, N.Y., buried at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Bob Patterson, age 21, offensive lineman from Louisburg, N.C., buried at Highland Memory Gardens in Chapmanville (Logan County).



Scotty Reese, age 21, defensive end and linebacker from Waco, Tex.



John "Jack" Repasy, age 20, wide receiver from Cincinnati.



Larry Sanders, age 20, defensive back from Tuscaloosa, Ala.



Alan Saylor, age 19, defensive end from Cuyahoga Falls, Oh., buried at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Jim Schroer, age 28, head trainer, from Cincinnati.



Art Shannon, age 21, linebacker from Greensboro, N.C., buried at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Ted "Shoe" Shoebridge, Jr., age 20, starting quarterback from Lyndhurst, N.J.



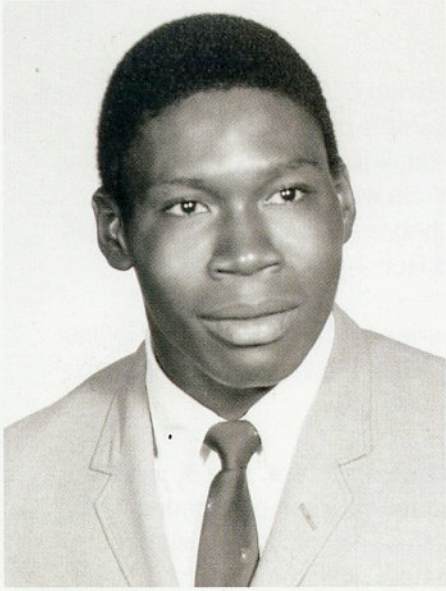
Allen Skeens, age 19, team walk-on from Ravenswood (Jackson County), one of six unidentified bodies interred at Spring Hill Cemetery.



Jerry Stainback, Jr., age 23, linebacker from Newport News, Va., survived by wife.



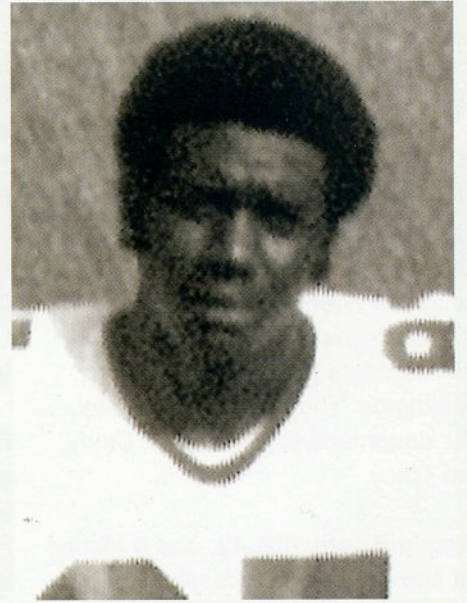
Rick Tolley, age 30, head coach, grad of Mullens High (Wyoming County) and Virginia Tech, buried originally at Roselawn Memorial Gardens in Princeton and then re-interred at Spring Hill Cemetery, survived by wife Mary Jane.



Robert VanHorn, age 19, defensive tackle from Tuscaloosa, Ala.



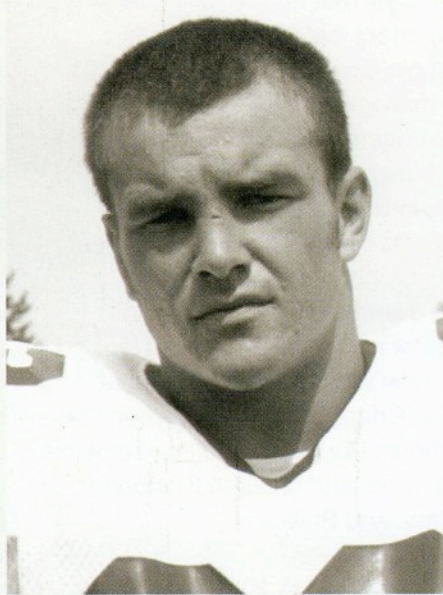
Roger Vanover, age 20, tight end from Russell, Ky.



Freddy Wilson, age 19, tight end from Tuscaloosa, Ala.



John Young, age 20, tight end from Buckhannon (Upshur County), buried at that city's Heavner Cemetery.



Tom Zborill, age 21, nose guard from Richmond, one of six unidentified bodies interred at Spring Hill Cemetery.

Team Supporters, Flight Crew, and Others Killed

Capt. Frank Abbott, age 47, was the flight pilot from Atlanta.

Charles "Red" Arnold, age 42, and his wife, **Rachel**, age 47, were team supporters. He was a Huntington insurance agent. She was an Army Nurses Corps vet. Both are buried at Woodmere Memorial Park in Huntington. They were survived by four daughters: Cathy, Robin, Cindy, and Tracy.

Donald Booth, age 42, was a Marine vet and IBM data processor who volunteered to film Marshall games. He was survived by his wife, Anna, and is buried at Spring Hill Cemetery.

Dr. Joseph Chambers, age 44, and his wife, **Peggy**, age 43. Dr. Chambers was a team physician, originally from Beckley. She was a graduate of Charleston High and Julliard School of Music. Both are buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park in Barboursville. They were survived by three daughters: Tara, Debbie, and Cindy (the latter two were Marshall cheerleaders who stayed home due to lack of seating on the plane).

Danny Deese, age 26, was a flight crew member from Charleston Heights, S.C.

Gary George, age 20, was a sports information student assistant from Beckley. He's buried at Sunset Memorial Park in Beckley. He was survived by his wife, Kay.

Dr. Ray Hagley, age 34, and his wife, **Shirley**, age 35. Dr. Hagley was a team physician and a graduate of Huntington High and Marshall. She also was a Huntington High grad. Both are buried at Woodmere

Memorial Park in Huntington. They were survived by children Denise, Kimberly, Deborah, Karen, David, and Douglas.

Arthur Harris, Sr., age 53, was the father of player Art Harris, who was also killed in the crash. Both were from Passaic, N.J.

Emmett "Happy" Heath, age 42, and his wife, **Elaine**, age 42, were team supporters. He was from Oak Hill (Fayette County) originally and was a sales rep for Jantzen Sport Clothing. She was from Pittsburgh originally and was president of Midas Mufflers in Huntington. Both are buried at Spring Hill Cemetery. They were survived by children Jeff, Kathy, Holly, Kevin, and Shannon.

James Jarrell, age 37, and his wife, **Cynthia**, age 34, were team supporters. He was from Hamlin (Lincoln County) originally and was the manager of Guyan Lumber. She was originally from Indianapolis. Both are buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park in Barboursville. They were survived by sons Scott and James.

Ken Jones, age 43, was sports director at Huntington's WHTN-TV (now WOWK). He's buried at White Chapel Memorial Gardens in Barboursville. He was survived by his wife, Lori, and children Kristopher, Jeffrey, and Phillip.

Jeff Nathan, age 20, was sports editor of the school paper, *The Parthenon*. He was from Parkersburg and is buried in that city's Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Dr. Brian O'Connor, Jr., age 32, was Marshall's director of Admissions. He originally was from Staten Island, N.Y. He was survived by his wife, Katherine, and children David Brian and Ruth Ann.

Charlene Poat, age 28, was a flight attendant. She originally was from Paducah, Ky.

Michael Prestera, age 60, was a former Big Green president and a delegate-elect to the legislature. He originally was from Bradford, Penn. Buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park. He was survived by his wife, Nancy, and sons Gene, Michael, and Robert.

Dr. Glenn Preston, age 47, and his wife, **Phyllis**, age 45. He was the team dentist and a Huntington High and Marshall grad. She was a Huntington native. Both are buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park. They were survived by daughters Jennifer, Carolle, Kimberly, and Beverly.

Dr. Herbert D. Proctor, age 43, and his wife, **Courtney**, age 42. He was a team physician, originally from Landisburg (Fayette County). She was a Fayetteville High grad. Both are buried at Huse Memorial Park in Fayetteville. They were survived by children Margaret, Patricia, Courtney, James, and John.

Murrill Ralsten, age 39, and his wife, **Helen**, age 32, were team supporters. He was a Greenbrier Military Academy and Marshall grad and a Huntington city councilman who ran a clothing store. She was originally from Weirton. They were survived by children Murrill III and Mollie.

Jerry Smith, age 28, was the flight crew first officer from Stone Mountain, Ga. He was survived by his wife, Linda, and son, Scott.

Donald Tackett, Jr., age 23, was a student trainer from Dingess (Mingo County). He was a Lenore High grad and is buried at McCloud Cemetery in Dingess.

Patricia Vaught, age 27, was a flight attendant from East Point, Ga.

Parker Ward, age 36, was a team supporter and Huntington auto dealer. He's buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park. He was survived by his wife and children Parker Jr., Stephen, Elizabeth, and Sharon.

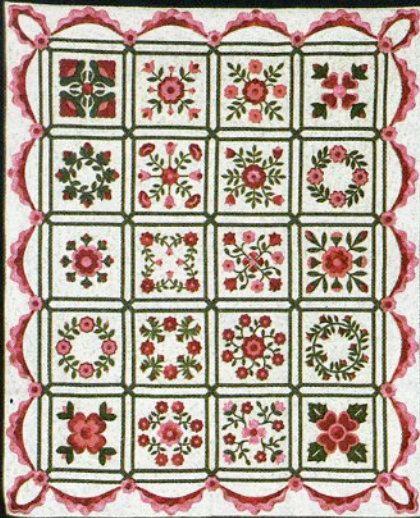
Norman Weichmann, age 49, volunteered to film games. He lived in South Point, Oh., and managed the Pigments Division/Chemetron in Huntington. He's buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park. He was survived by his wife, Jane, and daughters Cynthia and Katherine.



Head Coach Doc Holliday and the team chaplain lead Marshall's players in prayer at sunrise at the Spring Hill Cemetery memorial. Each year, Holliday's players run the steep hill to the cemetery as a reminder to "never forget." Photo by Chuck McGill, courtesy of Marshall Athletics.



Quilts and wall hangings on display at the Culture Center in Charleston. Photo by Steve Brightwell.



Quilts and Wall Hangings 2020

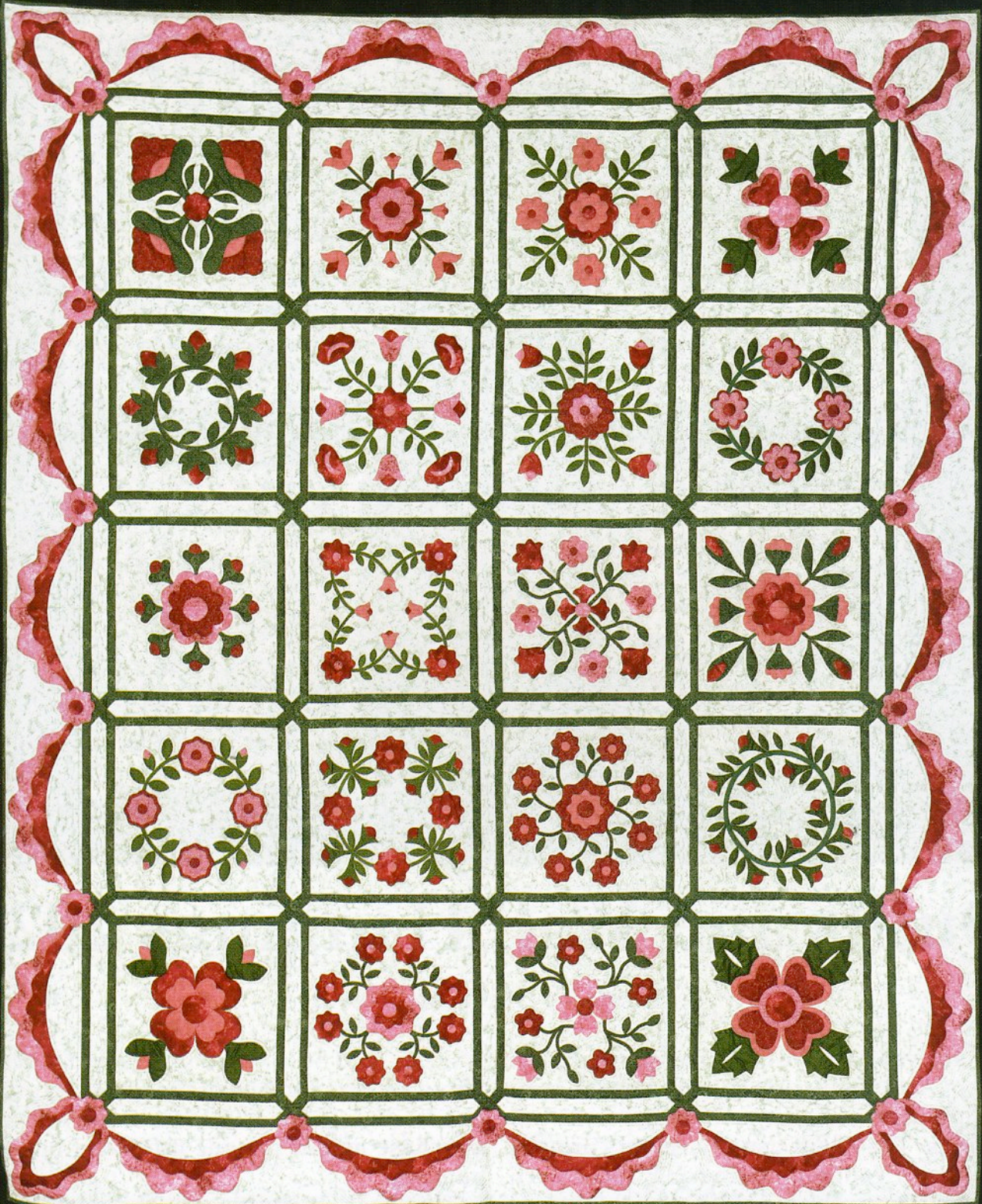
Photos by Steve Brightwell

Each year, the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture & History hosts a competition of homemade quilts and wall hangings. The event usually centers around the annual Vandalia Gathering, held each Memorial Day weekend. Although this year's Vandalia was postponed, the department still sponsored the quilt/wall hanging competition.

There were three categories of quilts: pieced, applique, and mixed/other. Each category had a 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-place winner. There was also a category for wall hangings with

1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-place winners and a Best of Show awarded to one of the quilts (typically one of the 1st-place winners) as well as a purchase award for one quilt and one wall hanging.

This year, 36 quilts and 22 wall hangings were entered into the competition. All 58 were displayed this summer in the Culture Center Great Hall in Charleston. While many may have missed the exhibit this summer, we present for you here a gallery of the 1st-place winners in each category. —ed.



1st Place, Applique and Best of Show: Marie C. Wiley, *Rose Sampler*



1st Place, Pieced: Carolyn Bucklin Mullins, Daniels (Raleigh County), *Pineapple Crazy*



1st Place, Wall Hanging: Linda Vaughan, Caldwell (Greenbrier County), *A Simple Country Sampler*



1st Place, Mixed/Other: Deborah Curtis, Elkins, *Nocturnal Gaze*

The Ghosts of West Virginia

By Stan Bumgardner

Texas-born singer-songwriter Steve Earle has a new album of original material, based largely on *Coal Country*, a new play—with music by Earle—inspired by the 2010 Upper Big Branch (UBB) Disaster, which killed 29 miners in Raleigh County. He and his longtime band The Dukes have spun these songs and others off into the album *The Ghosts of West Virginia*.

First, a disclaimer: I've been a Steve Earle fan for more than 30 years. But this article isn't really a critique of his music or even this album; although, at times, it's impossible to separate his words from the music. Rather, I focus on the lyrical content and what it means to live in Coal Country. Some of our homegrown singer-songwriters, particularly Hazel Dickens, have captured that culture better than Earle does; however, he has a unique way with words (some of which aren't G-rated). More to the point of this article, he's a world-known musician who's been nominated for multiple Grammy Awards. As such, *The Ghosts of West Virginia* will reach audiences who've never heard of the UBB Disaster or possibly even West Virginia. So, it deserves special attention from those of us who spend our lives trying to describe who we are and what we're all about as West Virginians.

The album begins with an a cappella blend of a spiritual and a work song. The chorus repeats the song's title, "Heaven Ain't Goin' Nowhere," an old-time phrase for telling someone to "stop and smell the roses" or slow down and do the job right the first time. Earle's song becomes like a prayer that miners say to themselves as they go under ground to earn a living.

Back bent double by a ponderous load
I reckon Heaven ain't goin' nowhere



In this song, he captures the religious nature of our people and the concept of fatalism—the inevitability that life is left in God's hands—among coal families:

Don't worry 'bout putting nothing away
Money's no good come the Judgment Day

The second song, "Union, God, and Country," is Earle's catchiest here and could be one of the great blue-collar anthems of the 21st century.

My daddy was a miner, my daddy's
daddy, too
Union, God, and country was all they
ever knew
They worked from early mornin' 'til the
evenin' whistle blew
When they'd strike the mine, they'd walk
the line
'Cause that's just what you'd do

When you're born in West Virginia, a
miner through and through
Union, God, and country was all they
ever knew

Mining carries with it many traditions. Historically (before child labor laws), one of the earliest was a father taking his son, sometimes on his 11th birthday, into the mines. For so many who live in Coal Country, virtually their entire lives have been dedicated to work and family, with their allegiances to the United States and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and their devotion to God. But UBB wasn't a union mine, and the UMWA has claimed steadfastly that the disaster would never have happened if it was. And just to make very clear, this is a very pro-union album:

Before there was a union, the company
was king
You'd work your fingers to the bone,
couldn't show a thing
You shifted coal 'til Friday, drew your
pay, and then
You'd walk down to the company store
and give it back again

"Union, God, and Country" also hints at why it's been such a challenge to retrain miners for different jobs. Mining isn't just an occupation; it's been a way of life in West Virginia longer than anyone living can remember.

"Devil Put the Coal in the Ground," the album's third song, feels like another railroad work song. On first listen, you might think Earle's calling mining the Devil's work, but it's really the opposite. It's as though the "Devil put the coal in the ground," and miners are doing God's work by hauling it out. Mining is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Only hard-working salt-of-the-earth people can do it just so the rest of us can enjoy our TVs, computers, and air conditioning. Miners know down deep that the work will shorten

their lives: through a disaster, an accident, black lung, or just a career of back-breaking work. Yet, they still go to work every day because to them, it's one of the main reasons the Lord put them on this earth.

The one semi-non-original song is Earle's take on "John Henry," again emphasizing how West Virginians on a whole have worked harder than anyone in the nation. He even adds a few of his own verses that pertain specifically to the mechanization of mining.

The company brought in all the big
machines
Cut more coal in an hour than a shift
could in a week
John Henry could've told'em what that
means
When the company brought in all the big
machines

By 1950, when coal-loading machines started proliferating mines, West Virginia had 125,000 mining jobs. Today, our state produces nearly as much coal than ever before but with fewer than 20,000 miners. The coal culture that so many southern West Virginians grew up with started vanishing before their eyes in just a few short years. John Henry's memory keeps marching on.

The final song on side one, "Time Is Never on Our Side," is a bleak take on life and death but also one of the best tracks on *The Ghosts of West Virginia*. In this song, Earle really captures that culture of fatalism. But, against the backdrop of the UBB Disaster, Earle pushes back on this belief:

Sometimes, an hour hurtles by
Sometimes, an instant never dies
Some days crawl, and others fly
And ours is not to reason why
And woe to them that hesitate
And good things come to those who wait
Whoever told you that one lied
And time is never on our side

Earle isn't shy about his connection to people who work hard for their money. In his first song on side two, "It's All about Blood," he vents his anger toward those who take advantage of working people. He asserts that the UBB victims were little more than statistics for the coal company. Without ever mentioning the mining corporation's prominent former CEO by name, Earle makes sure we never forget the names of those who died at UBB. The song climaxes by Earle saying, and then nearly screaming, the names of all 29 victims of UBB. It's stunning and powerful.

The next song changes tone 180 degrees. "If I Could See Your Face Again," sung by Eleanor Whitmore, is a gorgeous love song from a woman to her husband who's lost his life in the mines.

If I could see your face again, black with
coal until your grin
Cuts like sunshine through the shadow
of the mountain
I'd drop everything and run like I know
I shoulda done
Every time you come home to me in the
evenin'

Few songwriters can transition from a forceful protest song like "It's All about Blood" to a beautiful love song. This is part of Steve Earle's gift.

If I could see your face again, and I knew
what I know then
I wouldn't make you work so hard to
win me
I'd surrender to your arms, wrapped
around me safe and warm
'Cause I knew you were the one from the
beginning

The next song, "Black Lung," shares the plight of miners who, if they survive until retirement, may face a problem amplified by

mechanization. I frankly expected another protest-style song, but Earle focuses on the day-to-day life of a miner suffering from black lung.

Some days are better than the other ones
Sit out on the porch when it's cool at night
Can't say there ain't them that I'm sufferin'
Every breath I take, like a 12-round fight
Grandbabies out beneath the willow tree
Hollerin' and laughin', and it sound like
fun
Can't pick'em up and hug their necks
anyway
Sorry, honey, granddaddy's down with
black lung

Through these very personal words, Earle has penned a non-protest protest song. Again, the miner who dies of black lung isn't just a statistic in Earle's portrait of West Virginia. He's a real person with a real family and real suffering.

"The Fastest Man Alive" is the next-to-last song. It's a rousing rockabilly number about West Virginia native Chuck Yeager, the first person to break the sound barrier. While Gen. Yeager deserves many accolades, including Earle's tribute, it doesn't fit on this album. Yeager never mined coal that we're aware of, and this song feels like a diversion from the others.

Finally, "The Mine" is my favorite song on the album. It is hauntingly beautiful and lyrically captures so much West Virginia history. Earle figuratively confronts us with the question so many non-West Virginians ask us: "Why didn't you leave?" And then he leaves us with this beautiful, sardonic answer:

If I was gonna travel anywhere but West
Virginia
Then I reckon I'd have done it by now
As you live here all your life, you kinda
get the mountains in ya
Ain't no way you're gettin' 'em out



Upper Big Branch Memorial at Whitesville (Boone County). Photo by Kenny Kemp.

I don't know about you, but that's why I've lived in West Virginia my whole life. The "mountains" are a metaphor here for everything West Virginia. We're very much a part of the world but still cut off from it in many ways (for good or bad). We may be geographically isolated, but so many cultures have melded together here to make West Virginia a place like no other. But we're hard on ourselves, and our work is hard. Sometimes, it takes someone from the outside to stress the things we take for granted.

Steve Earle's *The Ghosts of West Virginia* isn't just about the UBB Disaster; instead, it's much more about who we are as a

people—a working people. He underscores many of our best traits while asking, "How did we get here? And why must such good people suffer tragedy after tragedy?" It's the mountains and the people and so much more. It's how we memorialize those we've lost before their time. It's why we're angry at being taken for granted. As Earle sings, "It's about fathers. It's about sons. It's about lovers wakin' up in the middle of the night alone. It's about muscle. It's about bone. It's about a river runnin' thicker than water, and it's about blood."

The Ghosts of West Virginia is available from local record stores and online sellers. 🍁

West Virginia Books Available

By Stan Bumgardner

Death in Mud Lick

By Eric Eyre

In a sentence, this is one of the best exposés I've ever read about West Virginia on any topic. And it's no surprise since Eric Eyre earned a Pulitzer Prize (the second ever awarded to a West Virginian in journalism) for his work on our state's opioid crisis.

Even though many of us already know the basic story, Eyre unravels a mystery that leads from one overdose in Mud Lick (Mingo County), to a pill-pushing doctor, to pill-pushing pharmacies, to the pharmaceutical industry, to the federal government—all of whom knew what was happening in real-time. Thanks to Eyre's writing and investigative skills, this book reads like a cross between *The Maltese Falcon* and *All the President's Men*. Like Woodward and Bernstein, he kept following the money, which led him to a shadow web that could've been called a black market, except much of it was technically legal. Pair that with prominent state and local politicians who were conflicted six ways to Sunday, and you have a scheme that would make Lucky Luciano proud.

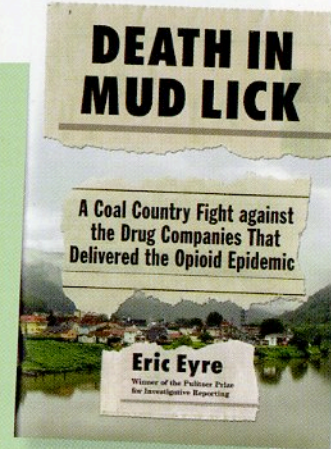
By now, the tragic story is all too familiar. Painkillers flooded West Virginia in the late '90s and early 21st century. The Mingo County town of Kermit, with 382 people, received nearly 9 million opioid pain pills in just two years. Thousands of West Virginians have died from their addictions over the last 25 years, and West Virginia leads the nation in most overdose deaths and opioid prescriptions per capita.

Many of the cases began innocently enough, often with coal miners or other laborers injured on the job. But painkillers are highly addictive and, over time, can be debilitating—physically, socially, and emotionally. In this illicit gray market, where life walks a tightrope between legal and criminal, those opioids were worth a lot of money on the street—or, in southern West Virginia, in the pharmacy parking lot. One Kermit pharmacy even sold hot dogs and refreshments in the lot, like it was a ballgame.

Eyre tracked down many instances in which the pharmaceutical industry and federal government looked the other way in the name of the almighty dollar. We've been taught to "follow doctor's orders!" from day one, and the recent COVID pandemic has reinforced it. But what many doctors and pharmacies failed to tell their patients was that painkillers are a never-ending cycle. You build up a tolerance to them, which means you continually have to take more to dull the pain. It doesn't take long before you start feeling pain in places that shouldn't even be hurting. So, you take a pill, prescribed by your doctor.

After the scope of the crisis became apparent—and guilty doctors and pharmacists began serving jail time—the supply of painkillers started drying up. Those addicted to the pills turned to ever more dangerous mixtures of synthetic opioids or heroin and fentanyl to numb the pain. The result is a slow-moving economic and healthcare disaster in southern West Virginia, where some of our nation's poorest counties exist.

Eric Eyre has directed the national spotlight on our opioid epidemic like no one else. This is a must-read to understand how and why we can't look away anymore. *Death in Mud Lick*, published by Scribner, is available from local and online sellers.

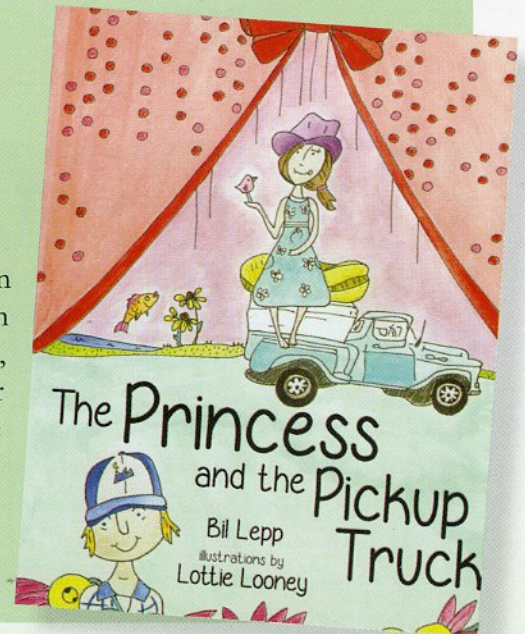


The Princess and the Pickup Truck

By Bil Lepp, illustrations by Lottie Looney

Vandalia Award recipient Bil Lepp has written a modern Appalachian adaptation of The Princess and the Pea fairy tale. In Lepp's version, the prince searches the mountains of the world, looking for his mountain princess. He then returns home to discover his real princess, who doesn't talk, dress, or act quite the way he imagined. This is an absolutely delightful children's book, with fun illustrations and humorous life lessons, such as, "Nobody but real mountain royalty can sleep on a pickup like that."

The book's available from local and online sellers.

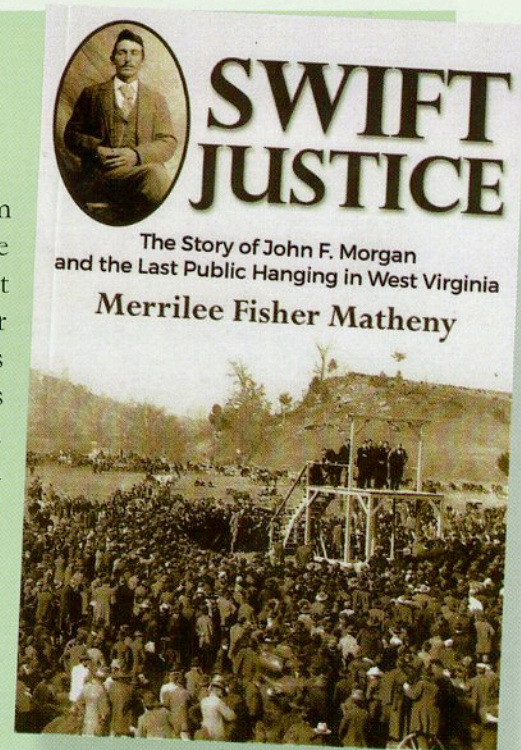


Swift Justice

By Merrilee Fisher Matheny

The hanging of John F. Morgan has fascinated everyone from historians, to genealogists, to even Flatt & Scruggs, who made one of the best-known recordings of "The Last Public Hanging in West Virginia." GOLDENSEAL ran an article about the event in our Spring 1990 issue. But it's never been covered in as much detail as Matheny does in this 235-page paperback. It delves into the actions and possible motives involved in a vicious 1897 triple murder in Jackson County. Matheny covers Morgan's brief trial and then focuses on the spectacle of a public hanging in Ripley attended by thousands. The circus-like atmosphere led the legislature to move all future executions to the private confines of the West Virginia Penitentiary in Moundsville. She concludes with an interesting look at how the nation's press historically has often depicted West Virginians as little more than barbarians, spurred largely by the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, which was relatively recent news. With the triple murder and Morgan's hanging, national newspapers, namely the New York *Sun*, sensationalized the whole affair, again depicting West Virginians as some barbarous group of people from another time rather than acknowledging public displays of capital punishment as a brutish national phenomenon.

The book's available from local and online sellers.

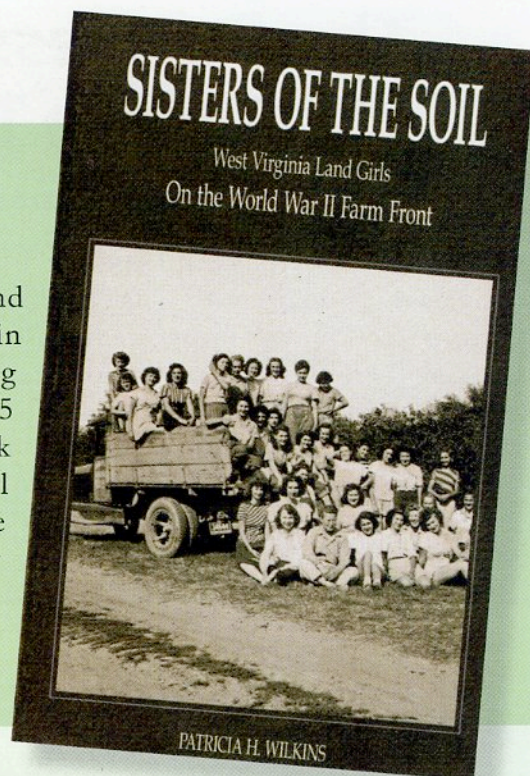


Sisters of the Soul

By Patricia H. Wilkins

This 185-page paperback emerged from Wilkins' research and an article she wrote for GOLDENSEAL [see "Farmerettes in the Field," Summer 2015]. It's the true story of how young women were recruited to be farmers from 1943 to 1945 during World War II. Wilkins talks about the culture shock for those from the city who'd never farmed a lick and rural West Virginia women who got their first trips outside the Mountain State. The book is beautifully written with many never-before-seen photos.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

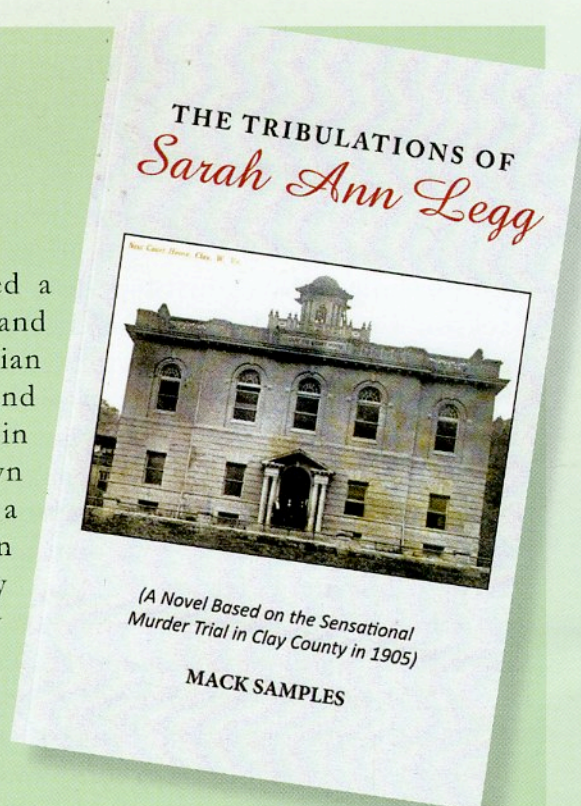


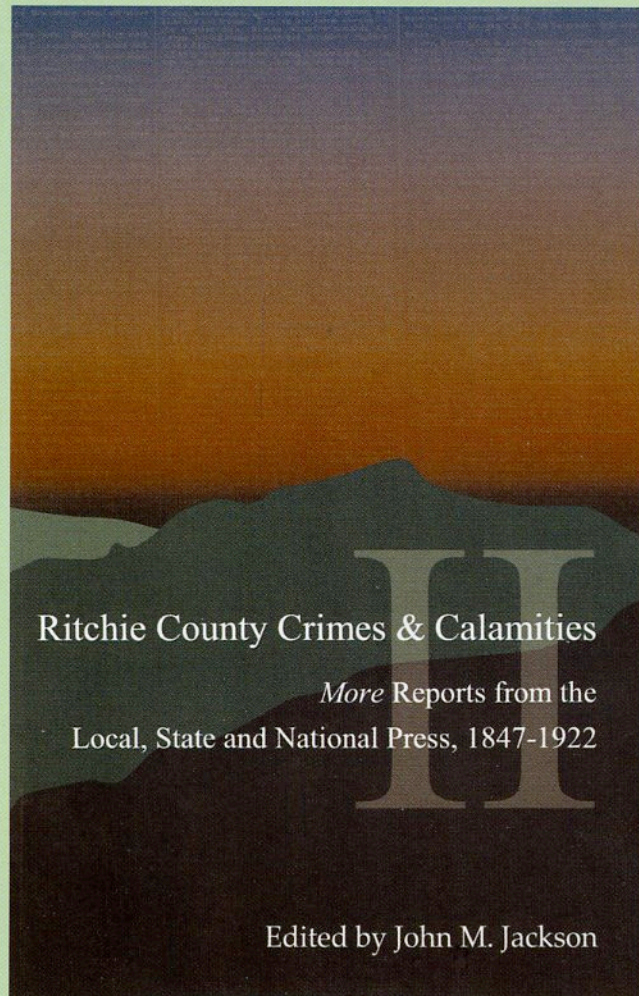
The Tribulations of Sarah Ann Legg

By Mack Samples

Samples, another Vandalia Award recipient, has penned a 143-page fictionalized account of the murder of Jay Legg and his accused murderer, his wife, Sarah Ann. A master musician and author, Samples takes a closer look at Legg's life and murder and the much ballyhooed trial of Sarah Ann Legg in Clay (Clay County). The story became somewhat well-known because it was the first time West Virginia had ever tried a woman for first-degree murder, which could have resulted in her hanging. A fairly popular folk song, "The Ballad of Jay Legg," emerged from the incident, but that tale, like many others, wavers from the truth. Fortunately, Samples has set the record straight through research, adding just enough fiction to make the book very readable.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.





Ritchie County Crimes & Calamities

Edited by John M. Jackson

Jackson builds upon his first book with *more* newspaper accounts of life in Ritchie County from 1847 to 1922. This 720-page paperback draws from local newspapers (*Pennsboro News*, *Ritchie Gazette*, *Ritchie Standard*, and *Cairo Enterprise*) to recount fascinating stories from a bustling time. Since it's based on newspapers, the stories lean heavily toward criminal activities, such as bootlegging; assaults; counterfeiting and swindling; robberies and murders; and fugitives from justice. It also includes topics such as fires, explosions, floods, and other disasters; railroad and other accidents; Ritchie County in the Civil War; "love and marriage and related catastrophes"; and illnesses. Within each chapter, he presents the events chronologically, so it reads like a history of the county from 1847 to 1922, and it's chocked-full of amusing anecdotes, such as this one from 1897: "The authorities of Ritchie County raided the 'speakeasies' of Cornwallis and Cairo. At Cornwallis five wagon loads of illicit sellers and the contents of their resorts were taken and started for Harrisville. Enroute, it is reported, everybody got full and every prisoner escaped." And to the delight of every historian and genealogist, Jackson includes an extensive index.

The book is available from online sellers.



Antietam Shadows

By Dennis E. Frye

This is one of the more fascinating accounts of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's 1862 Maryland Campaign during the Civil War. While the Battle of Antietam—located in Maryland a few miles from Shepherdstown (Jefferson County)—is the focal point, much of Lee's campaign took place in what would soon become West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. Namely, he examines "Stonewall" Jackson's seizure of the important Baltimore & Ohio Railroad line at Martinsburg before the battle and subsequent capture of a U.S. Army stationed at Harpers Ferry—the largest surrender of an American force during the war. Frye, who recently retired as the longtime park historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, knows all the ins and outs of that key battle, which cleared the way for Lee to take a stand at Antietam—the bloodiest day of the war. In this book, however, Frye, through extensive research, has challenged some of the conventional thinking about the campaign. For instance, Union commander George B. McClellan has been oft criticized for his hesitation in launching attacks on Lee. Frye, while not apologizing for McClellan's well-known indecisiveness, suggests that some of his hesitation at Antietam may have been warranted due to the potential threats against Northern cities, especially our nation's capital. But the 273-page paperback's stories about the Harpers Ferry battle and a series of significant conflicts at Shepherdstown after Antietam will likely interest our readers the most. It's also one of the more readable history books you'll ever find.

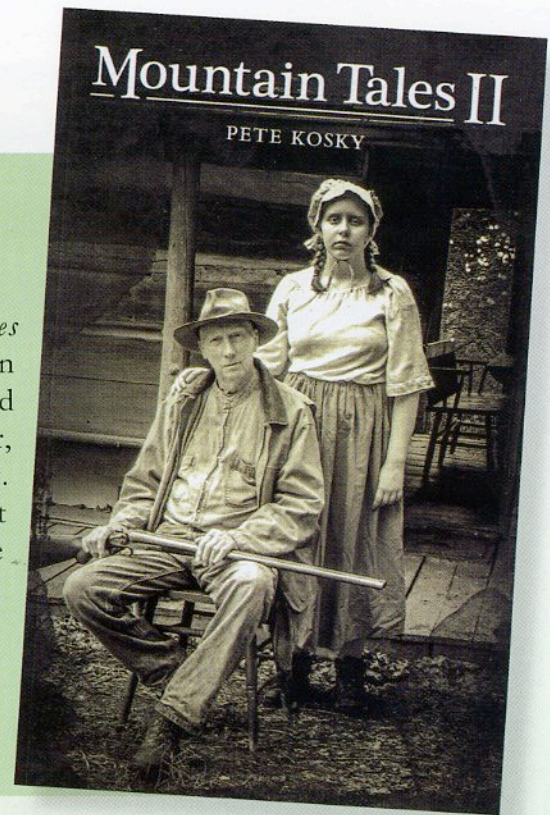
It's available from the Harpers Ferry Park Association and from online sellers.

Mountain Tales II

By Pete Kosky

Kosky follows up his original *Mountain Tales & River Stories* with a sequel that's every bit as good. Kosky is a natural-born storyteller—some true, some tall tales, and some you just kind of wonder about. Like the one about fisherman Charlie Hamer, who'd collect treasures from the bellies of the fish he'd caught. Or his chapter on outrageous bar fights. And some just about falling in love. Kosky is such a great storyteller that you're guaranteed to laugh almost all the way through the book. Fish stories, bar stories, and love stories make for the best stories—tall, short, or not.

His book is available from Mountain State Press (mountainstatepress.org) or other online sellers.



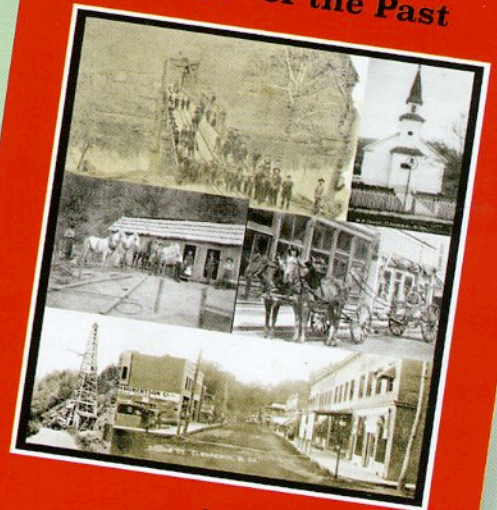
Clendenin, West Virginia

By Kim Johnson

GOLDENSEAL's former assistant editor has been busy since retiring in 2018. While playing in one of our state's most popular old-time string bands, The Modock Rounders, she also wrote this 220-page pictorial of her native Clendenin, in northern Kanawha County. She's collected hundreds of images related to Clendenin (many never before published). In the book, she looks at historic floods, including the deadly 2016 deluge; churches; businesses; and industry—namely oil and gas. But perhaps most fascinating is her 16-page chapter on the founding of Union Carbide, which relocated its headquarters from Clendenin to South Charleston a few years after its creation.

The book is available at local bookstores and other retail outlets. Or you can order directly from Kim Johnson at P.O. Box 333, Dunbar, WV 25064. The cost is \$20 + \$5 postage.

Clendenin, West Virginia
Images of the Past

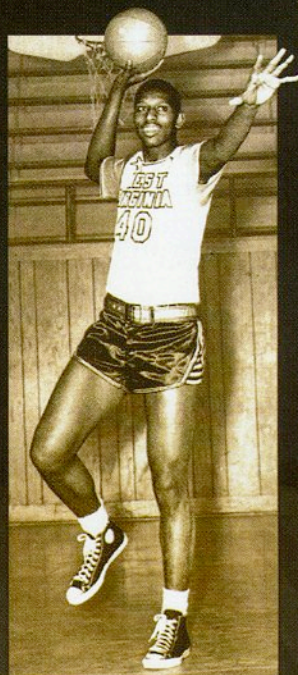


by
Kim Johnson

The Black Athlete in West Virginia

High School
and College
Sports from
1900
Through
the End of
Segregation

Bob Barnett,
Dana Brooks
and Ronald
Althouse



The Black Athlete in West Virginia

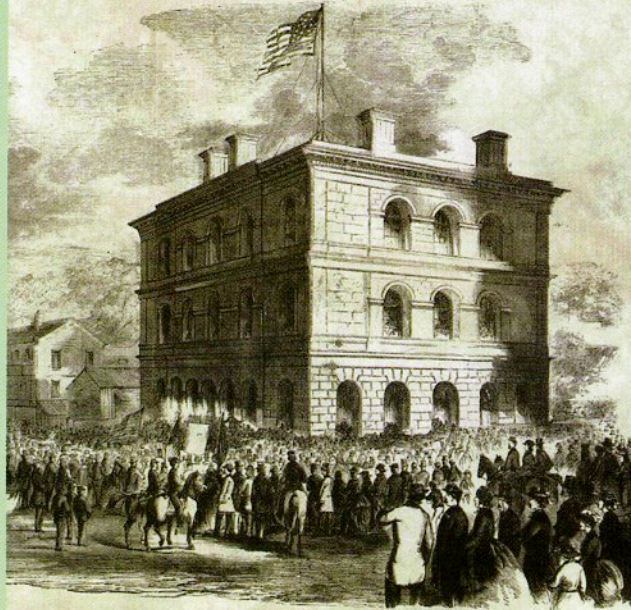
By Bob Barnett, Dana Brooks, and Ronald Althouse

Based on his many books and articles for GOLDENSEAL and other publications, Bob Barnett has established himself as West Virginia's foremost sports historian. His cowriters here are longtime WVU professors. This book examines our state's 40 Black high schools and three historically Black colleges during segregation—from sports and historical standpoints. There are fascinating looks at individual players, games, and tournaments, but this book really shines in talking about the challenges—racially and legally—of integrating schools and sports in West Virginia. The authors also highlight West Virginians who broke major color barriers, including West Virginia State's Earl Lloyd (first Black player in the NBA), Hal Greer at Marshall, and Dick Leftridge at WVU.

The 225-page paperback is published by McFarland and is available from online sellers.

SECEDING FROM SECESSION

The Civil War, Politics, and the Creation of West Virginia



Eric J. Wittenberg, Edmund A. Sargus, Jr.,
and Penny L. Barrick

Seceding from Secession

By Eric J. Wittenberg, Edmund A. Sargus, Jr., and Penny L. Barrick

Surprisingly, relatively few books have been dedicated solely to the founding of West Virginia. This may be due to how incomprehensible the political and constitutional maneuverings were. It certainly couldn't have transpired at any other point in U.S. history. This 268-page hardback tackles the legal wranglings that made West Virginia the 35th state. Since the constitutionality of our statehood was never tried before the Supreme Court, historians often point to the 1871 case of *Virginia v. West Virginia*, in which Virginia sued to, in a sense, get Jefferson and Berkeley counties back. The Supreme Court's ruling in West Virginia's favor became an after-the-fact stamp of approval on statehood. The authors look closely at this case and conclude, as their final chapter title suggests, that "The Supreme Court Settles the Issue."

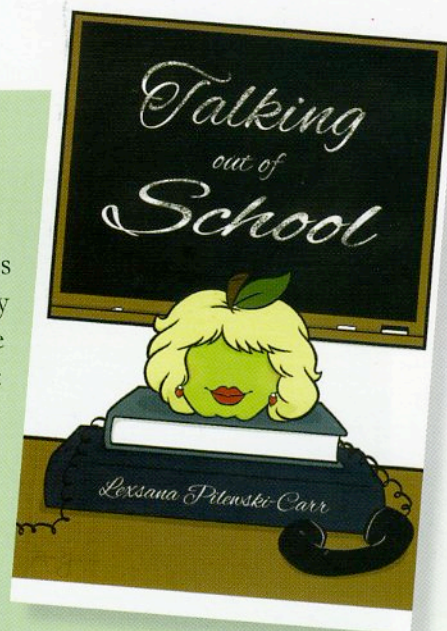
The book, published by Savas Beatie, is available from online sellers.

Talking out of School

By Lexsana Pilewski-Carr

In this delightful 303-page memoir, the author shares amusing stories from her career as a Harrison County classroom teacher. First, for any fellow editors out there, you have to love a book where the “About the Author” section begins, “Lexsana Kay Pilewski-Carr has eight pedantic syllables in her name.” I was going to quote one of the book’s many witty passages, but the Twain-like blurb on the back says it better and far funnier than I could summarize: “[The author] has broken through the mystique of a teacher’s life. She retells decades of raucous woe and hilarity (in her own mind) and will take a lie detector test to validate most of what she reports. . . . At the very least, you’ll fall on your knees in gratitude for either having a normal teaching career or not EVER becoming a teacher.” But she also writes about very touching moments, including the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated, the loss of beloved family members, and a moving tribute to a dying neighbor: “Warner [Matthey] was the kind of next-door emergency kit you always reached for, like a kitchen fire extinguisher. He didn’t wait until you were out of town to bring your paper over on a rainy day when it might get soaked. He didn’t need you to be gone on a trip to keep a watchful eye on your property, his presence a little bit like the billboard eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg in *The Great Gatsby*. He was a fixer, a sharp gardener, a homemade soup deliverer.”

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

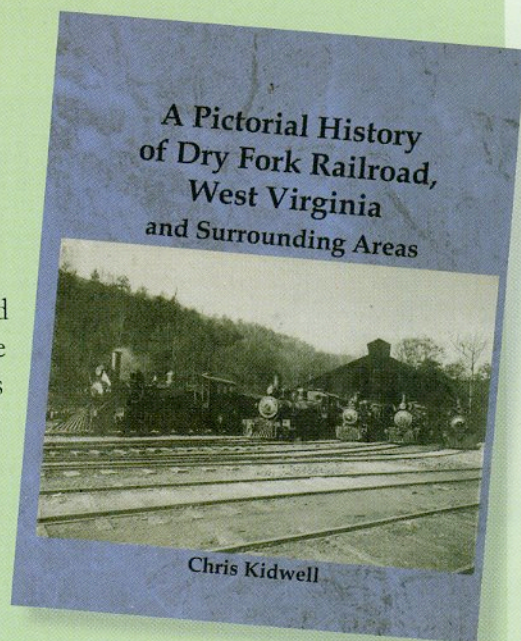


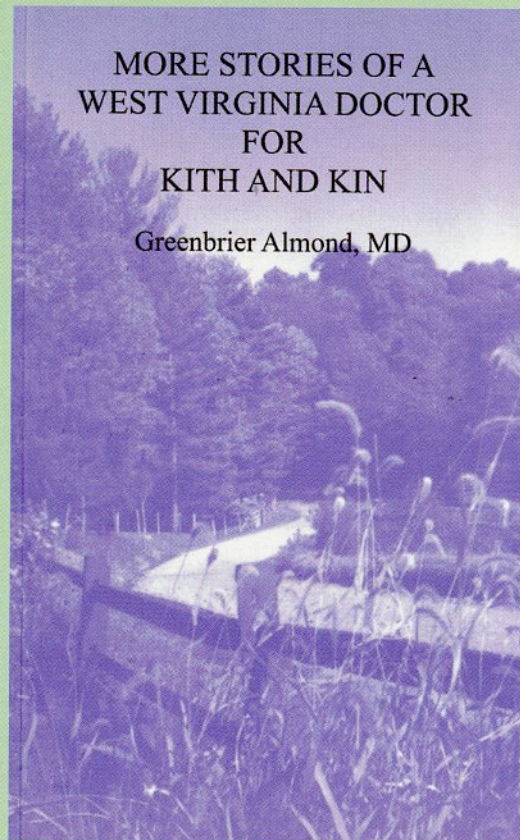
A Pictorial History of Dry Fork Railroad, West Virginia

By Chris Kidwell

It isn’t often I pick up a new book about West Virginia and find two photos of my grandmother (Leslie May Thompson) I’ve never seen before, but that was the case with Chris Kidwell’s photographic history of the Dry Fork, mostly a timbering railroad, in Randolph and Pendleton counties around the turn of the 20th century. While Kidwell covers the history of the railroad, it’s his photos of the towns along that line that make this book so special since many, like Osceola, are now ghost towns. It primarily covers the communities from just east of Elkins over to Riverton and Circleville—the two towns where my grandparents were born. As an added plus, he provides a short history of many of these towns. This 436-page paperback is a treasure trove of lost photos from a lost era.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.





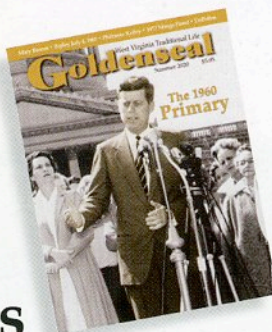
More Stories of a West Virginia Doctor for Kith and Kin

By Greenbrier Almond, MD

This 221-page paperback is another volume in a series about a father-son doctor team back when “house calls” were an everyday part of life. Almond’s book is laid out in a series of short vignettes that include entertaining tales about family, world travel, and stories of faith, but the heart of the book is in the ways of old-time medicine—not just through “house calls” but by knowing and caring for each patient on a very personal basis. At one point, the author’s father, Dr. Harold Almond, is taking his 18-year-old son, Greenbrier (the author), on a house call. Along the way, they sing the hymn “There Is a Balm in Gilead.” The father then explains, “Balm can be made from honey. . . . Germs do not grow in honey. Balm can keep the air off a wound or a burn, so lessening the pain. Balm can aid healing by giving cover while the skin grows together by secondary intention.” Minutes later, Dr. Harold Almond makes a house call on an Upshur County vet who’d lost a limb in Vietnam. Dr. Almond’s balm had worked wonders. It’s stories like this that make this such a delightful read. Dr. Greenbrier Almond saves his most touching words for his last chapter, wishing his father a happy 100th birthday in heaven: “Being a healer of wounds—those that can be seen and those that cannot—is a gift you passed on to me.”

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

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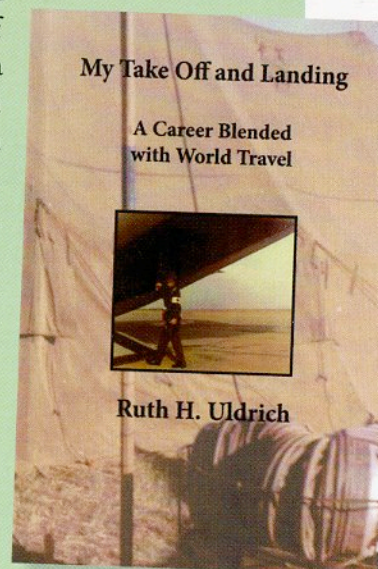
You may also order GOLDENSEAL with a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover by calling the GOLDENSEAL office at 304-558-0220.

My Take Off and Landing

By Ruth H. Uldrich

In this 124-page paperback, the author spins an absorbing autobiographical tale of growing up in Braxton County, becoming a nurse in Charleston, and traveling around the world. The first section is filled with stories of play, work (gardening), fishing, building fires, and celebrating Christmas. Uldrich has an innate love of West Virginia, which she compares to the mythical Elysian Fields, where “souls of the good went after death.” She began training to be a nurse in 1953 and writes vividly about caring for those stricken with polio, at epidemic levels at the time. Much of the rest is about her interesting world travels in the Air Force—but never with West Virginia too far behind.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

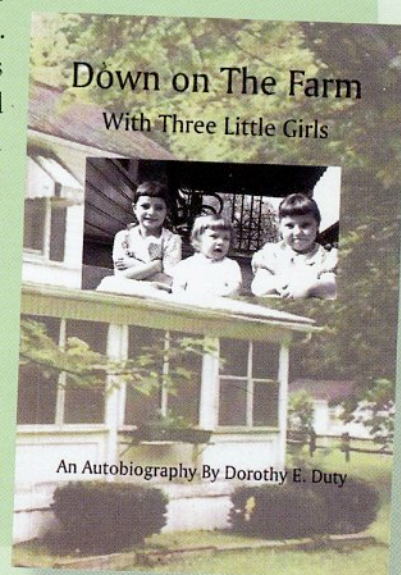


Down on the Farm

By Dorothy E. Duty

This 314-page autobiography reads almost like a GOLDENSEAL article. The author recounts her memories of growing up in Wetzel County and the family that surrounded her with love. She shares nostalgic memories related to farming and gardening, canning and butchering, cooking, church, 4-H, holidays, and what look like delicious recipes for strawberry pie and holiday soda cookies.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.





The approximate site of the Marshall plane crash looks quite serene today, with a gentle brook, a stark contrast to the night of November 14, 1970. Photo by Stan Bumgardner.

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PERIODICALS

The Marshall Memorial at
Huntington's Spring Hill
Cemetery lists the six players
killed whose remains were
never identified. Photo by
Stan Bumgardner.

