Marshall receives $2.5 million BrickStreet Foundation gift for research

Marshall University has received a $2.5 million gift from the BrickStreet Insurance Foundation Inc. to establish a research endowment.

The donation is expected to be matched through the state’s “Bucks for Brains” West Virginia Research Trust Fund, for a total benefit to Marshall of $5 million.

Proceeds from the endowment will be used to support research at the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, particularly projects related to occupational and environmental health.

Greg Burton, president and chief executive officer of BrickStreet Mutual Insurance Company, presented the donation to university representatives Jan. 3 at the company’s headquarters in Charleston.

“Through the leadership and vision of our board, BrickStreet has set up a foundation focused on giving back to the community in which we live,” said Burton. “Through this partnership with Marshall University’s Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, BrickStreet is proud to support their continued research efforts. Many of our employees are Marshall graduates, so our partnership with the university runs deep and I know this investment will be used to not only strengthen the university’s research efforts in occupational and environmental health, but also to continue to fulfill its mission to improve the health and wellness of our communities.

“As one of the largest workers’ compensation providers in the region, we understand that the graduates of the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine will be our future partners in continuing to improve occupational health across West Virginia.”

President Stephen J. Kopp, thanked BrickStreet for the contribution, saying, “We are very pleased and proud that BrickStreet has chosen to make this gift commitment in support of endowment-based biomedical research focused on some of the most pressing occupational and rural health problems confronting our state and region. The Marshall University School of Medicine is a leader in
rural medicine and the support provided by BrickStreet will be amplified by matching support from the West Virginia Research Trust Fund. This research endowment fund offers great promise to help improve the health and wellness of our rural communities.”

Dr. Joseph I. Shapiro, dean of MU’s medical school, added, “I couldn’t be more pleased to receive this generous gift from BrickStreet. It will most certainly benefit thousands of West Virginians. With this gift, Marshall researchers will conduct work that will span the spectrum from basic molecular research to practical, workplace-based research, finding both laboratory and clinical answers to help improve the quality of life for those in our state and region. BrickStreet has provided us with the necessary funding to get these projects under way and we can’t wait to get started.”

Last year, BrickStreet donated $300,000 to Marshall to support athletics, academics and research. A portion of that gift was matched by the state’s trust fund.

The state legislature created the West Virginia Research Trust Fund in 2008 with an initial appropriation of $15 million for Marshall. The university can tap into this fund to double private gifts that support specific research initiatives linked to economic development, health care and job growth.

Amber Bentley named Employee of the Month

Amber Bentley, academic adviser in University College, has been named the Marshall University Employee of the Month for September, according to Michelle Brown-Douglas, chair of the Employee of the Month Committee.

Employed at Marshall for more than 12 years, Bentley was nominated by Chris Adkins, who wrote in his nomination: “Amber is wonderful when working with her advisees. She always goes well above and beyond the call of duty to ensure students get the service they need. She also single-handedly organized the adviser chats, which are having a huge positive impact on advisers across campus.”

Bentley received a plaque and a check for $100 presented by Matt Turner, Chief of Staff.
New lecture series to examine the history and culture of West Virginia

Four regional scholars will present talks on the forces that shaped the commerce and identity of West Virginia in a lecture series at Marshall University sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts.

“The History and Culture of West Virginia: A Lecture Series” features one event per month from January through April. Each lecture takes place at 7 p.m. in the Marshall University Foundation Hall, home of the Erickson Alumni Center.

“Farming, railroads, river boat commerce and the Civil War have each defined this great state,” said Dr. David J. Pittenger, dean of the College of Liberal Arts. “The speakers in this series are expert in their fields and have done much to preserve our history and tell compelling stories. Each lecture will be an interesting glimpse into the past.”

All four lectures are free to the public.

Here is the schedule for the lecture series, along with a brief look at each speaker:

Tuesday, Jan. 22 – Gerald W. Sutphin will speak on “Steamboats, Rivers and West Virginia.” He is a native of Mullens, W.Va., and a graduate of Marshall. After completing degrees in art and journalism, he served in the U.S. Army, and then returned to Huntington to begin work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For the next 18 years he specialized in creation and presentation of various exhibits the Corps sponsored.

During this time, he began to learn about the history of riverboats that navigated the river systems feeding the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. His accumulated expertise has allowed him to write numerous articles and book chapters on the topic. He also has overseen the creation of various exhibits at the Smithsonian and The Huntington Museum of Art. One of his most recent contributions is a chapter in the book, *Full Steam Ahead: Reflections on the Impact of the First Steamboat on the Ohio River, 1811-2011*, copies of which will be available for sale at the presentation.

Tuesday, Feb. 5 – John C. Allen Jr. will speak on “The Early Houses of Jefferson County.” Allen is an architectural historian living in Jefferson County. A graduate of Tulane University, he is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians and the Vernacular Architectural

A native of Harrison County, Allen’s passion is the study of West Virginia’s historic architecture. Last year, West Virginia University Press released his book, *Uncommon Vernacular: The Early Houses of Jefferson County 1735-1835*. This title won several publishing awards including the Gold Medal for Architectural Publishing and was a finalist for the prestigious Historic Preservation Book Prize. Copies of the book will be available for sale at the presentation.

**Wednesday, March 6** – Jack Dickinson will speak on “Every Bloodstained Mile: A Railroad History of Southern West Virginia.” He is a West Virginia native and a 1966 graduate of Marshall. He is the bibliographer of the Rosanna Blake Confederate Collection at Marshall.

The author of 12 books and numerous magazine articles on the Civil War, he is the 1999 recipient of the Jefferson Davis Historical Writing Award from the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the History Writer’s award from the West Virginia Department of Archives and History. Dickinson will sign copies of his book series on the history of the N&W Railroad he coauthored with his wife, Kay.

**Tuesday, April 16** – B. J. Peyton will speak on “Civil War in the Kanawha Valley.” He received his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in history from West Virginia University. He has worked as a public historian at WSWP-TV, a local PBS affiliate in Beckley, and for the National Park Service in Mississippi and West Virginia.

Peyton also served as associate director of a research institute at WVU, worked for a local historic architectural firm, and taught high school history. Peyton joined the full-time faculty at West Virginia State University in 2002, where he is currently associate professor of history and chairman of the Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences.

**Martin Luther King Day activities to take place Feb. 6**

Because of the inauguration of President Barack Obama on Monday, Jan. 21, in Washington, D.C., the Marshall University activities in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day have been postponed until Wednesday, Feb. 6. Details of upcoming Marshall events honoring King will be featured in future newsletters.
Alpha Natural Resources presents Marshall Foundation with gift of $20,000 to support engineering majors in CITE

Alpha Natural Resources, the fourth largest coal company in the United States based on produced coal revenue, has presented the Marshall University Foundation with a gift of $20,000 to support engineering majors in the College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE).

The expendable fund originally was established in 2009 as the Massey Energy Scholarship for Engineering with a five-year pledge of $100,000. Today’s gift represents Alpha Natural Resources’ continuing commitment toward the pledge.

Alpha Natural Resources acquired Massey Energy Company in 2011.

“We are very, very grateful to Alpha Natural Resources for continuing to support this scholarship,” said Dr. Ron Area, CEO of the foundation and senior vice president of development. “It is so, so important.”

Kyle Bane, human resources director with Alpha Natural Resources, presented the check to the foundation in a brief ceremony at the Marshall University Foundation Hall, home of the Erickson Alumni Center.

“We’re just trying to give back to communities we operate in,” Bane said.

According to the scholarship guidelines, the recipients of the scholarship will be West Virginia residents who are full-time sophomores with engineering majors in the College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE) and minimum GPAs of 2.5.

First preference will be given to students pursuing careers in civil engineering and/or mechanical engineering, when that program is established in CITE, who are from the following southern West Virginia counties: Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, Mingo, Nicholas, Raleigh and Wyoming.

Second preference will be for students pursuing careers in civil engineering and/or mechanical engineering, when that program is established in CITE, from eastern Kentucky, other counties in West Virginia, or other areas of the United States. The dean of CITE will select the recipients and renew the awards for up to a total of three years (six semesters) if full-time status and a minimum GPA of 2.5 are maintained, in cooperation with the Office of Student Financial Assistance. The award is for tuition/fees and related academic expenses to include books and/or room and board.

*Photo:* From left, Lance West, Dr. Wael Zatar, Kyle Bane, Dr. Lynne Mayer and Dr. Ron Area take part in a check presentation at the MU Foundation Hall, home of the Erickson Alumni
Center. West, Mayer and Area are with the Marshall Foundation, Zatar is dean of the College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE) and Bane is human resources director with Alpha Natural Resources.

Harless Center receives gift from DIRECTV

The June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development has received a $10,000 donation from DIRECTV to fund local, innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math) programs for students PreK-12.

A STEAM-themed jamboree was held last November for DIRECTV families as a result of the collaborative effort between the June Harless Center and DIRECTV. The purpose of the event was to engage all children and their families with creative hands-on, interactive technology focused on science, engineering and mathematics.

The funding will be used to continue STEAM initiatives in the Tri-state area, promoting creativity and innovative skills for students. Future events may include after-school programs, summer camps, teacher training and other outreach. DIRECTV’s gift will enable the Harless Center to provide local students and families with engaging, real-world opportunities, said Dr. Stan Maynard, executive director of the Harless Center. Their commitment spans from charitable giving to educational programming from schools to strategic partnerships that foster student learning across the Americas.

The mission of the June Harless Center is to provide leadership in education initiatives for rural West Virginia educators and students and offer a support system that addresses educational problems, sustains school improvement, and provides positive growth in all educational factors.

For more information contact Maynard at maynard@marshall.edu or Lauren French at LZFrench@DIRECTV.com.

Marshall visiting professor ‘consultant editor’ for Oxford handbook

Dr. Robert Ellison, a visiting assistant professor of English, recently served as a “consultant editor” on The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689-1901.
As the book jacket states, “The period 1689-1901 was ‘the golden age’ of the sermon in Britain. It was the best-selling printed work and dominated the print trade until the mid-nineteenth century. Sermons were highly influential in religious and spiritual matters, but they also played important roles in elections and politics, science and ideas and campaigns for reform. Sermons touched the lives of ordinary people and formed a dominant part of their lives.” The goal of the Handbook is to “demonstrate the interdisciplinary strength of the field of sermon studies and to show the centrality of sermons to religious life in this period.”

Ellison’s role as one of the three “consultant editors” included checking the citation format and other matters of house style for all 37 essays in the volume.

This collection, along with The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Susquehanna UP, 1998) and A New History of the Sermon (Brill, 2010), is part of Ellison’s effort to bring greater attention to the sermon and encourage its study through a number of disciplinary lenses.

Ellison taught in Texas for 14 years before moving to West Virginia in the summer of 2009. His research specialty is Victorian nonfiction, especially sermons and other forms of religious speech. At Marshall he has taught a variety of courses in both the English Department and the Honors College.

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School of Pharmacy receives diversity grant from Walgreens

The Marshall University School of Pharmacy has received a $10,000 diversity grant from Walgreens as part of the national pharmacy chain’s Diversity Donation program.

Half of the funding will be distributed as scholarships to students of underrepresented minority groups and to a student who embraces diversity and promotes inclusion initiatives on campus. In addition, the grant will be used to facilitate “pipeline” programs aimed at increasing the enrollment of diverse groups at the school of pharmacy.

“Walgreens has shown its dedication to ensuring the next generation of pharmacists understands the importance of being educated in a truly diverse environment,” said Dr. Kevin Yingling, dean of the School of Pharmacy. “Student body diversity better prepares our future health care professionals to treat people of all backgrounds.”

“We are so pleased that Walgreens has selected Marshall as one of the recipients for this grant,” said Dr. Shelvy L. Campbell, director of diversity programs at the School of Pharmacy. “The funding allows us to build on the diversity initiatives that are central to our mission.”
Dr. Debra Harris, a pharmacy supervisor with Walgreens, presented the school with the grant in December.

“Walgreens is excited to support diversity initiatives at schools around the country,” she said. “We look forward to working with Marshall University as it develops its new program.”

The scholarships will be available for the 2013-2014 academic year.

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*Photo:* Dr. H. Glenn Anderson, associate dean of academic and curricular affairs, accepts a diversity grant packet from Dr. Debra Harris, pharmacy supervisor, Walgreens. Also pictured are Dr. Robert Stanton, assistant dean, Office of Experiential Learning, and Dr. Shelvy Campbell, director of diversity. Photo by Rick Haye.

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**Choral Union to start rehearsals for spring semester**

Members of Marshall’s Choral Union, an ensemble dedicated to outstanding performance of choral masterworks, are once again inviting members of the Tri-State area to join them for the spring season. Rehearsals begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15.

The year 2013 marks the 100th anniversary of Benjamin Britten’s birth and the 70th birthday of Morten Lauridsen, who is still very active composing and teaching in the United States. The pieces to be performed in the spring semester include Britten’s *Festival Te Deum*, Lauridsen’s “Sure on this Shining Night,” and Edward Elgar’s *Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands*.

Directing the chorus this semester is recent Marshall University master’s degree graduate William Murphy. He has been the director of Choral Union since January 2012, with previous performances including John Rutter’s *Gloria*, Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Five Mystical Songs*, opera choruses with the MU Opera Workshop and a collaboration with the West Virginia Symphony Chorus singing Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s *Messe de Minuit pour Noel* and Charles Pachelbel’s *Magnificat*. He also is the accompanist for the West Virginia Symphony Chorus in Charleston and organist at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Huntington.

The Choral Union rehearses from 7 to 9 p.m. every Tuesday in the Smith Music Hall choir room (#150). Performances will take place later in the semester with dates to be announced.

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The next issue of We Are…Marshall will be distributed Jan. 16, 2013. Please send any materials for consideration to Pat Dickson by noon, Jan. 14.