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We Are … Marshall, January 12, 2011

Office of Marshall University Communications

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Actor Jim Lucas keynote speaker at MLK celebration in Huntington

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Rick Haye named Employee of the Month

For years he’s been the man behind the camera who has photographed dozens of Marshall Employee of the Month presentation ceremonies. Now it’s Rick Haye’s turn in front of the camera as he has been named the November 2010 Marshall University Employee of the Month, according to Michelle Brown Douglas, chair of the Employee of the Month Committee.

We Are...Marshall Newsletter

The Office of University Communications publishes the bi-weekly e-newsletter, “We Are...Marshall” for the university community.

To suggest a story idea, please contact the editor, Pat Dickson, on the South Charleston campus. The current issue contains the deadline date for the next issue.

To read the newsletter online for issues prior to May 6, 2010, you need the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Important Links

- Newsletter Home Page
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- Alphabetical Lists of Profile Subjects
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Marshall research institute adds expert in bone growth and development

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He is the third senior scientist to join the Institute, which was created in 2008 through the state's "Bucks for Brains" West Virginia Research Trust Fund. Scientists at MIIR are conducting vital biotechnology research designed to improve the lives of people everywhere who suffer from Huntington's disease, muscular dystrophy, sickle cell anemia, juvenile macular degeneration and other diseases. The Institute has experienced steady growth since its inception, and recently signed its second co-development agreement with a major biotechnology company.

Read more.

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"Improving your fitness with a new group, or friends and family, is one of the best ways to stay motivated," said Heather Smith, senior assistant director of fitness at the recreation center. "Everyone should try a new fitness activity in the new year."

Read more.

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Marshall's Forensic Science Center was awarded a commendation from the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department in appreciation of providing intensive DNA training to its forensic analysts.

Dr. Terry W. Fenger, director of the Forensic Science Center, said it is an honor to receive recognition from Metropolitan Police Department Chief of Police Cathy Lanier for the collaborative effort between the agencies to develop and implement a customized DNA analyst training program conducted at the center.

Read more.

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The book's three sections - Theory and Theology, Sermon and Society in the British Empire, and Sermon and Society in America - contain a total of 16 essays on such topics as biblical criticism, Charles Darwin, the Oxford Movement, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, English Catholicism, sermon-novels and the slave trade on both sides of the Atlantic.

Read more.

Profile: Maurice Cooley

- a series on Interesting Marshall University people

When Maurice Cooley, a gifted artist, first came to Marshall as a freshman from his hometown of Lewisburg, he had every intention of majoring in art. But, in a twist that would shape his future life and eventually bring him full circle back to Marshall, he instead chose a path that led first to a B.A. degree in sociology and later a M.A. in counseling.

He's spent his life in the helping professions and since 2003 has been the director of Marshall's Center for African American Students' Programs, a role he relishes for the opportunities it offers to help nurture and support the university's community of African American students. He's also avid about getting the word out about the opportunities offered by Marshall for all prospective students.

Read more.
The next issue of We Are...Marshall will be distributed Jan. 26, 2011. Please send any materials for consideration to Pat Pickson by Jan. 24.
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In addition, there will be an exciting evening of music by local artists, poetry readings and participation by several religious leaders in the community, according to Dr. Shari Williams-Clarke, vice president of Marshall’s Division of Multicultural Affairs. Among those taking part will be Rabbi Dr. David Wucher of B’nai Sholom Congregation, Rev. Livinus Uba from the Sacred Heart Parish and St. Peter Claver Church, and Dr. Majed Khader of the Muslim Association of Huntington.

Other activities planned that day to celebrate the life and contributions of the late civil rights leader include city beautification projects in Huntington at Northcott Court Apartments and the A.D. Lewis Community Center. Volunteers, both students and community members, are encouraged to turn out from 10:30 a.m. until noon according to Clarke. Volunteers will be doing a variety of jobs at both locations.

“At Northcott we’ll be cleaning the playground, planting mulch, working in the laundry area and doing general cleaning,” Clarke said. “Then at noon we’re providing 70 brown bag lunches for the youth who live in that complex. We’ll be doing cleaning as well at the A.D. Lewis Center. I urge people to come and join us as we want to pay tribute to Dr. King’s legacy by giving back to the community.”

Northcott Court Apartments are located at 30 Northcott Court in Huntington and the Lewis Center is at 1450 A.D. Lewis Ave. in Huntington.

Clarke says this is the third year that community projects have been undertaken to honor King and they’ve been extremely successful.

“We’re excited to be responding to Dr. King’s spirit of service to others,” she said. “He was very multi-dimensional in his thinking and I noticed there has been this trend of observing his birthday by getting people involved to do what they can for their communities. So every year we’ve been able to do something that involves both students and community members to help others.”

And, she added, “The community has been extremely supportive of these activities in the spirit of Dr. King.”

In his one-man show, Lucas, who bears an uncanny resemblance to King, chronicles the civil rights movement through the eyes of King. A student of his teaching, Lucas is an advocate of his philosophy of non-violence in civil action to effect social change. Like King, Lucas participated in demonstrations and protests to achieve integration in his home town of Lake Providence, La. In August 1983, he attended the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington which Lucas...
Marshall University Communications

said inspired him to learn and later deliver King's famous speeches, including "I Have a Dream" and "I've Been to the Mountaintop."

Lucas has performed at more than 100 colleges and universities and has taken his program to Germany, South Korea and Japan. He has numerous movie and television credits, including parts on "The West Wing," "24," "The District" and "The Wire." Currently he is starring in the critically acclaimed play, "The Meeting," a drama about the life and philosophy of King and the late Malcolm X.

For additional information about any of the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration activities, phone Marshall University's Office of Multicultural Affairs at 304-696-4677.

Photo: Actor Jim Lucas will participate in Huntington's remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jan. 17.

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Rick Haye named Employee of the Month

For years he's been the man behind the camera who has photographed dozens of Marshall Employee of the Month presentation ceremonies. Now it's Rick Haye's turn in front of the camera as he has been named the November 2010 Marshall University Employee of the Month, according to Michelle Brown Douglas, chair of the Employee of the Month Committee.

Employed since November 1978, he was nominated by Betty Cook in the College of Liberal Arts.

In her nomination she wrote about meeting with Haye and looking over some of his photos she planned to purchase. "So often, we really don't stop and appreciate the talents of employees within the university that we so very much take for granted. Looking at Rick's photos I marveled at the quality and talent he has. Each photo captures the intensity of the photo, a moment captured in time and tells its own story. If you walk the halls of Old Main and stop to look at each photo displayed you walk back in Marshall's own history as well as in the present. The story Rick captures and tells in his photos is amazing. Marshall has the privilege of its history captured in so many aspects."

And, she continues, "The amazing work he does will forever be one of Marshall's own treasures because of the history of events that he has captured in his photographs. Marshall is fortunate to have a person that has such talent and passion that is shown in his work. I hope everyone will stop and take a moment to look at Rick's work and appreciate what a legacy in photos he provides for Marshall. Marshall's history will continue to be captured every day because of the job Rick does...what an awesome job he does."

Haye was presented with a plaque and a check for $100 by President Stephen Kopp.

Photo: Rick Haye (right) receives his Employee of the Month award from President Kopp.
Marshall research institute adds expert in bone growth and development

Dr. Jingwei Xie has been named senior scientist at the Marshall Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (MIR), effective Jan. 3.

He is the third senior scientist to join the Institute, which was created in 2008 through the state’s “Bucks for Brains” West Virginia Research Trust Fund. Scientists at MIR are conducting vital biotechnology research designed to improve the lives of people everywhere who suffer from Huntington’s disease, muscular dystrophy, sickle cell anemia, juvenile macular degeneration and other diseases. The Institute has experienced steady growth since its inception, and recently signed its second co-development agreement with a major biotechnology company.

Xie has more than 10 years experience in biomaterials, tissue engineering, micro-/nanofabrication, biosurfaces, formulations, drug delivery, biotechnology and nanotechnology. In his most recent appointment as a post-doctoral research associate at Washington University in St. Louis, he developed a number of projects related to biomedical applications, including neural tissue engineering, tendon-to-bone insertion site repair and drug delivery.

The goal of MIR is to develop a focused program of pioneering research dedicated to producing patentable scientific breakthroughs and creating new high-tech businesses based on those discoveries. The Institute is building on existing areas of research strength at Marshall and providing opportunities for collaborations with scientists already working at the university. Xie’s group at the Institute will focus on biotechnology and will collaborate with researchers at Marshall’s new Center for Diagnostic Nanosystems, where scientists are working to apply advances in nanotechnology to improve the accessibility and capabilities of rural health care resources.

“I am most pleased to welcome Dr. Xie to MIR,” said President Stephen J. Kopp. “He is an extraordinarily creative scientist with a strong background in one of today’s fastest-growing scientific disciplines. With his addition to the team at MIR - along with a growing portfolio of contracts with biotechnology companies - we are rapidly approaching critical mass.

“Our strategic commitment to hiring the brightest, most talented researchers we can find is paying off. I am confident in our vision for the Institute as an economic development engine and remain energized about the possibilities ahead of us.”

Dr. Eric Kmiec, director of MIR and the institute’s lead research scientist, added, “Dr. Xie is truly a transformative hire for us. Not only does he come from one of the most respected nanotechnology labs in the country, but his work to develop devices to aid in bone growth and development will complement the genetics work currently under way at the Institute and allow us to move into exciting new areas of discovery.”

Kmiec said that in addition to working with colleagues at the Center for Diagnostic Nanosystems, Xie also will collaborate with researchers in the university’s College of Science and College of Information Technology and Engineering.
Xie said, "My specialty, tissue engineering, is a multidisciplinary field that combines biological sciences, materials sciences, pharmacology, engineering principles and surgery to develop constructs for restoring, replacing or regenerating defective tissues or organs. It is a good fit with the interdisciplinary research focus at MIIR, and I look forward to collaborating with faculty members in all departments at Marshall.

"I am also enthusiastic about the opportunity to build relationships with biomedical and pharmaceutical companies to develop commercial products."

Prior to joining Washington University in 2007, Xie was a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Washington in Seattle and a research fellow at the National University of Singapore. He is the co-inventor on two patents, was co-investigator of a National Institutes of Health-funded pilot project and has co-authored more than 30 peer-reviewed journal articles.

Xie has bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Nanjing University of Technology in China. He earned his doctorate in chemical and biomolecular engineering from the National University of Singapore.

The West Virginia Research Trust Fund was created two years ago to stimulate and accelerate world-class research at the state’s two research universities, with the goal of advancing new enterprise development in the high-technology sector. For a limited time, Marshall University can tap into the fund to double private gifts that support research initiatives — like MIIR — that are linked to economic development, health care and job growth. For more information about how to support research at Marshall and automatically double your gift through the trust fund, visit www.marshall.edu/b4b or call toll-free 1-866-632-5386.
Recreation center offers public fitness classes, demos and ‘freebies’ Jan. 13

Community residents are invited to start the new year with friends, fitness and “freebies” with a no-charge visit to the Marshall Recreation Center on the Huntington campus Thursday, Jan. 13.

"Improving your fitness with a new group, or friends and family, is one of the best ways to stay motivated," said Heather Smith, senior assistant director of fitness at the recreation center. "Everyone should try a new fitness activity in the new year."

Visitors will be able to experience all the recreation center has to offer, including a climbing wall, sport courts, fitness machines and an aquatics center with a vortex pool, all of which will be available Thursday. In addition to use of the facilities, demonstrations and classes will be open to everyone. Those who attend a class will receive a free biodegradable water bottle.

Current members of the recreation center can get one free month of membership for each person they bring Thursday who signs up for a three-month membership, which also will be discounted 15 percent.

Also, students, faculty and staff members may sign up for the Faculty/Staff Fitness Challenge and earn great prizes. Membership isn’t required for the fitness challenge, which begins Jan. 17.

Here is the schedule of the recreation center’s group fitness and instructional programs:

12:15 to 12:45 p.m. - C.U.T. (Cross-training Under Thirty)
5:15 to 5:45 p.m. - Express Spin
5:45 to 6:15 p.m. - Hatha Yoga
5:45 to 6:15 p.m. - Sport Circuit
6 to 7 p.m. - Spin-60
6:30 to 7:30 p.m. - Zumba
7:15 to 8 p.m. - Butts and Guts
7:30 to 8:15 p.m. - Spin-45
8 to 9 p.m. - Zumba

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Marshall's Forensic Science Center was awarded a commendation from the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department in appreciation of providing intensive DNA training to its forensic analysts.

Dr. Terry W. Fenger, director of the Forensic Science Center, said it is an honor to receive recognition from a police department chief for the collaborative effort between the agencies to develop and implement a customized DNA analysts training program conducted at the center.

The purpose of the "DNA boot camp" training program was to prepare four forensic analysts to become qualified to perform DNA analysis on evidence. Peter Newsham, Assistant Chief of Police of the Metropolitan Police Department, said the department was very excited to have its DNA examiners trained at the Forensic Science Center.

"Marshall University is recognized for its world-class DNA training program, and the training our examiners have received will give the Metropolitan Police Department’s lab a great start," he said. "The courts, prosecutors and the law enforcement community will know that our examiners have completed the best training program that is available."

The Metropolitan Police Department requested assistance from Marshall's Forensic Science Center because it is in the process of expanding its capabilities. The District of Columbia is building a Consolidated Forensic Laboratory to be completed in 2012 that will house the public health lab, the chief medical examiner's office and the police department's crime lab. Training the forensic examiners helped with preparation for a seamless transition into the new facility.

In April, Fenger kicked off the first phase of the training program at the current Washington, D.C., lab facility by providing a week of Instruction on molecular biology, focusing on DNA.

The training was made possible by National Institute of Justice cooperative agreements in support of training forensic analysts and assisting the state and local crime laboratories with critical needs.

Photo: Dr. Terry Fenger, director of the Forensic Science Center.
In Memoriam: Dr. Patricia Logan

The Marshall University community is extending its condolences to the family of Dr. Patricia Logan, Associate Professor of Information Systems in the College of Information Technology and Engineering and member of the Graduate Faculty, who died Dec. 13.

She taught graduate courses in computer security, networks, Information security, and IT disaster recovery planning. She was an avid researcher and published in the areas of Information security education, computer forensics, network security, and security in healthcare Information systems. She was also actively involved in Marshall's ADVANCE program, funded by the National Science Foundation.

She was the wife of Stephen Logan; mother of Miles, Aaron, and Adam Logan; and grandmother of Benjamin and Avi.

A private graveside service was held on Dec. 15 at King David Memorial Gardens, Falls Church, Va.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Logan's two favorite charitable organizations: West Virginia Public Broadcasting, 600 Capitol St., Charleston, WV 25301-1223 or www.donorschoose.org.

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The 25th Annual Student Juried Exhibition, featuring artwork created by undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Art and Design, is now on display in the Birkie Art Gallery. The exhibition opened Jan. 10 and runs through Friday, Feb. 4.

In a juried exhibition, art is submitted and pieces to be exhibited are chosen by jurors, said John Farley, Marshall University graduate and director of the Birkie Art Gallery. He emphasized the eclectic nature of the show.

"In a great juried exhibition there is a little something to suit everyone's personal aesthetic," Farley said. "It is a place one can visit for recognizable, palatable staples, however, the viewer may also encounter something a little less familiar and, in this way, begin to broaden one's own visual sensibilities."

Jurors for the 2011 exhibition were Jeff Barnes, president of the Barnes Agency, a full-service marketing, advertising and public relations firm based in Hurricane; and Jenine Culligan, the senior curator at the Huntington Museum of Art.

"It is an honor for me to serve as juror of this year's Annual Student Juried Exhibition," Barnes said. "Both the Birkie Art Gallery and the Marshall University Department of Art and Design have an outstanding reputation and I enjoyed very much the process of reviewing and evaluating outstanding artistic examples of student work."

Prior to establishing the Barnes Agency, Barnes worked in an executive marketing capacity in several regional health care systems.

With more than 25 years of experience working in museums, Culligan has organized exhibitions and worked with art from all time periods, a variety of styles and from many countries. Her specialty is American art, from the late 19th century up to contemporary.

"Every year we select two arts professionals with different, complementary areas of expertise from within the Tri-state area to jury the competition," Farley said.

The Birkie Art Gallery is open Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Mondays from 6 to 8 p.m.
Choral Union resumes rehearsals

The Marshall University Choral Union has welcomed back Dr. David Castleberry as its director for the Spring 2011 season, with rehearsals now taking place on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. in Smith Music Hall, Room 150. Formerly, the choir rehearsed on Monday evenings.

Castleberry, who directed the ensemble from 1990-2009, said he is excited to be returning to the choir. "The chance to assemble all our choral ensembles for Carl Orff's 'Carmina Burana' this spring, together with the Huntington Symphony, will be a thrilling opportunity for our singers and the community. Orff's choral masterpiece has been heard in motion pictures, commercials, and in countless performances throughout the world."

Castleberry said "Carmina Burana" is one of the most exciting and recognizable pieces of choral music in existence.

The performance will take place on Saturday, March 12. After the completion of the "Carmina Burana" project, the Choral Union will prepare a collage concert, together with the Marshall University Chorus.

New singers are invited to join the Choral Union for the spring semester. Some previous choral experience is helpful. For further information, call ext. 6-2963.

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E-Mentors sought for West Virginia high school students

The Education Alliance is asking Marshall University community members to consider becoming an "e-mentor" for West Virginia high school students in order to reduce the number of high school dropouts.

WV eMentoring is an online, career-based mentoring program for secondary students. Mentors from all types of careers are needed. Mentors should have jobs that require some kind of postsecondary education - on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs, vocational or professional school, or two-year, four-year, or graduate degrees.

Obligations as an eMentor will include:

- Completing the online WV eMentoring training program.
- Completing a background check. There is a cost of $9.95 for the background check.
- Creating a Mentor Profile,
- Completing 10 curriculum activities as directed on the website, which takes about two hours.
- Interacting with the student mentee via e-mail once a week, which takes about 15 minutes each week through a 10-week period. All correspondence is done online through the WV eMentoring system and not through personal email accounts.

Further Information is available on the Education Alliance website at www.educationalalliance.org.
Visiting professor edits book on 19th century sermons and religion


The book’s three sections - Theory and Theology, Sermon and Society in the British Empire, and Sermon and Society in America - contain a total of 16 essays on such topics as biblical criticism, Charles Darwin, the Oxford Movement, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, English Catholicism, sermon-novels and the slave trade on both sides of the Atlantic.

The compilation is expected to have a broad appeal for historians, scholars and students, as well as preachers and scholars of religion. It includes representations of a multitude of traditions including the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, English nonconformity and Judaism, as well as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ellison received his Ph.D. in English from the University of North Texas and taught in Texas for many years. His family came to West Virginia in 2009 when his wife, Lori Ellison, joined the Counseling Department at Marshall. During their first year, he was an adjunct in the English Department and now serves as a visiting assistant professor, teaching primarily freshman composition and British literature.

Ellison said the goal of "A New History of the Sermon" was to publish interesting essays on preaching in Britain and America during the 19th century.

"I had the great pleasure of collaborating with new and established scholars working on a tremendous variety of topics," he said. "This broad scope means that the collection should appeal to students and professors across the academic spectrum; it is my hope that it will help to generate interest in sermon studies, a field that has seen a significant amount of growth in recent years," Ellison added.

Dr. David J. Pittenger, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said he is pleased with Ellison’s efforts.

“We are extremely fortunate to have the depth of talent that Dr. Ellison brings to our college and the classroom,” Pittenger said. “His new book is a representation not only of the department’s commitment to faculty scholarship, but of the broad, varied, and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary literary scholarship. I am proud to have Dr. Ellison contribute to the intellectual well being of our students.”
Profile: Maurice Cooley

When Maurice Cooley, a gifted artist, first came to Marshall as a freshman from his hometown of Lewisburg, he had every intention of majoring in art. But, in a twist that would shape his future life and eventually bring him full circle back to Marshall, he instead chose a path that led first to a B.A. degree in sociology and later a M.A. in counseling.

He's spent his life in the helping professions and since 2003 has been the director of Marshall's Center for African American Students Programs, a role he relishes for the opportunities it offers to help nurture and support the university's community of African American students. He's also avid about getting the word out about the opportunities offered by Marshall for all prospective students.

"Our center, established in the 1960s, offers approximately 30 programs, initiatives and learning experiences each year," he says. "Among those programs, and one we're very proud of, is the Annual Outstanding Black High School Student Scholars’ Weekend program, which is geared toward seeking out the most academically advanced juniors and seniors from schools all over West Virginia as well as the metro areas of Ohio and Kentucky. Schools work with us to identify students and then we invite them and their parents to come to the Huntington campus for a special weekend each year in November. We usually average 100-125 students plus their parents and they have a fantastic experience. We plan the activities with the Division of Multicultural Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Deans, while many other faculty and administrators fully participate. The students stay on campus with our university students. During their stay, we have a carefully constructed series of learning exposures, to include a parent and student track, in addition to an annual awards banquet. It's a wonderful way to showcase who we really are at Marshall and we've found that over 50 percent of the students who participate in this program eventually enroll here."

Cooley's penchant for nurturing and encouraging others got off to a quick start after he received his undergraduate degree. Just a week after graduation he was drafted into the U.S. Army and was assigned as a 91G-2D-Social Work/Psychology Specialist, working in various Army outpatient psychiatric clinics. Stationed at times in South Carolina, Texas and Alabama, eventually he spent 12 months in Seoul, South Korea, working in a large American hospital outpatient psychiatric clinic. Following his Army stint, he completed his graduate degree at Marshall and went to work for the Prentera Center for Mental Health Services in Huntington, where he spent the next 26 years.

"During my first eight years at Prentera I was employed as director of Emergency and Diagnostic Services. Our division was responsible for 24-hour emergency calls, hospital admissions, psychiatric court-ordered commitments, and rendering complete diagnostic workups for children, adolescents and adults entering outpatient treatment programs," he says.

For two years, from 1986 to 1988, he took part in and completed certification in an off-campus course of study with the Boston University Center for Rehabilitation Research and Training in Mental Health which included extensive training in psychiatric rehabilitation practitioner training. These skills helped him move into the position of program director of community support services at Prentera, focusing on treatment services for adults with serious and persistent mental illnesses. He was employed as the director of this division for about 14 years. Later he continued to offer outpatient psychotherapy to an assigned caseload of adults that included individual, family and marital therapy while also employed as the Director of Marketing and Corporate Development, which lasted for about 4 years.

During this time Cooley took on a new challenge when he was tapped to become one of the first divorce custody mediators in the state, assigned to Cabell, Wayne and Putnam counties. He was one of approximately 20 people throughout the state who first took training, and were eventually certified by the West Virginia Supreme Court, to
become mediators. “Prior to the change in divorce-custody laws in West Virginia, typically when couples divorced and there were custodial disputes, such cases were litigated at the court level. New legislation at that time made it possible to mediate rather than to litigate, following the West Virginia Supreme Court’s study on the effectiveness of mediation vs. litigation”, he explains.

He returned to Marshall once again in 2003 when he accepted the position as Director of the Center for African American Students’ Programs, and his counseling background has been a real asset in this job, he says. “Our goal quite simply is to help as many students as possible to be successful and we are deeply and sincerely committed to doing that. We attempt to establish as many personalized relations with students as we possibly can. Some seek us out, some we seek out, after learning about challenges or barriers that they may have [that might] interfere with their academic success. However, students soon realize that we will do all that is necessary to enhance their success. If students are having problems—and there are many, many types of problems—and if we can’t adequately resolve their issue here, we will refer them to the proper university or community resource where they can get the attention they require. While my counseling background is invaluable, if an individual is in need of prolonged counseling I refer them to our professional counseling center on campus.”

The center’s quarters may be small but that only adds to the sense of casualness and informality, Cooley says. The center, also employing an administrative assistant and three graduate students, is a beehive of activity but it’s a comfortable and welcoming place with an average of 25 to 30 students dropping by daily. Some come to discuss an issue or circumstance, but fully half come by just to hang out, chat and socialize, he says. There are amenities to help with their classes—the center has some computers and students have the use of a fax machine and telephones. “Students see it as a resource center, and a way to get caught up with one another, it’s a place where they’re accepted and can say whatever’s on their mind. Our goal is to give students ample attention to support them through graduation and prepare them for successful lives. Many go on to graduate school and we follow their progress there as well.”

And it is to honor graduates that the annual Donning of the Kente ceremony, a program that is close to Cooley’s heart, takes place. Held shortly before the May Commencement, the ceremony in which African American students are donned with a kente cloth has deep meaning and is continuing to grow in numbers each year, he says. “The Donning of the Kente is a wonderful old ceremonial experience with its roots in Africa. It has grown to an average of 90 to 100 graduating student participants and is well attended by all deans, university president, academic affairs and other representatives from both the academic and administrative communities. It’s a mark of achievement and an opportunity for the graduates to see that they’re recognized and appreciated by the university community, while connecting with the richness of their African heritage.”

Cooley is justly proud of the Society of Black Scholars, for which he serves as founder and director, as well. The requirements for membership are rigorous—students must maintain a minimum cumulative 3.0 grade point average, volunteer for community service work each year and attend a number of art, cultural and growth-oriented events that are designed especially for them. “They’re a super group, and a good share of the highest performing African American students at Marshall. Most go on to graduate schools. For instance, from the last graduation class, three were admitted to medical schools, two went to law schools and several were admitted to other types of professional schools.”

Modest about his own achievements, actually Cooley has always been a high achiever with an abundance of talent in an astonishingly diverse array of endeavors. Take art, for instance. Although he took another career track his freshman year at Marshall, art is still a large part of his life and these days he’s an enthusiastic watercolorist with a studio in his home who paints for his own pleasure, dotting the family home with his works and giving his art as gifts to special friends. And for the past several years, he’s even designed the family Christmas cards using some of his favorite scenes. His work is good enough to have been exhibited in shows and reluctantly he’s sold some pieces but that isn’t why he paints, he says. “I don’t really want to exhibit or sell my work; I just paint for fun and relaxation and I’d much rather give my pieces away.”

Right now the Cooley family is excited about the new addition of a grand piano, a once-in-a-lifetime dream purchase, bought recently from a Marshall staff member. Cooley has been playing piano by ear for most of his life, a pastime he picked up when his younger sister, who was taking piano lessons, soon abandoned them and the piano his parents bought her. Unwilling to see the piano sit idle, he began doodling around on it and, once again, tapped into a talent he didn’t know he had. He was thrilled when his son, Luke, now 16 years old, exhibited an interest in piano and, at his parents’ suggestion, has been taking lessons for the past 6 or 7 years, now from the Marshall music department. “He plays really well and can read music while I can’t read a single note,” Cooley says proudly. The only problem with the cherished grand is that “now Luke wants to spend all his time playing instead of studying.”

A lifelong avid skier, Cooley felt fortunate to grow up in Lewisburg, which is close to nearby ski slopes. “I skied all through college, going home almost every winter weekend so I could ski on Saturday and Sunday.” His family, which in addition to Luke also includes his wife, Deborah, a former manager of Macy’s at the Barboursville Mall and now an administrator for the Campbell Woods law firm in Huntington; and daughter McKenzie, now a freshman pre-law student at Marshall and of whom Cooley is deeply proud; are casual skiers, he says, who do join him from time to time on the slopes for a bit of family fun.

Cooley is equally passionate about tennis, which he attempts to play several times a week, particularly in fair weather. He’s played since high school and, with modest understatement, admits that “I’m a pretty decent player.” He and Luke like to hit the golf course and just like the piano, “Once again he’s surpassed me, and I am a pretty competitive guy,” he says, laughing. “But we just enjoy the time together.”
Both his professional and personal lives are abundantly full and he wouldn’t have it any other way. On the Huntington campus he’s a member of numerous committees and groups, including membership on the planning committee for the annual celebration and tribute to the life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Deeply spiritual, Cooley’s an active member of the First Baptist Church in Huntington, where he’s a deacon and also sings in the choir. “I love the church; I love the Lord; everything comes together because it is all about the gifts you have and utilizing those gifts to serve others so that your life will prosper and render fulfillment.”

For all of his life, Maurice Cooley has striven to achieve balance and it’s apparent he has done so. “I love what I do here at Marshall. I look forward to coming to work every day. It’s comfortable and natural for me; I’m excited about what we do here. But I give credit to God for all the things I have. These things did not come from me; I didn’t generate them; I am just the conduit.”