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Black History Month Events Launch on Campus

By **BEX LAW**
STUDENT REPORTER

With a theme of “Black Contribution in American Life and History,” Marshall University will celebrate Black History Month with events ranging from lectures to performances in collaboration with many different departments and disciplines.

Every Friday in February at 6 p.m. the MarshallU YouTube Channel will feature “Food for the Soul: A Cooking Show,” sponsored by the Center for African American Students.

At the Joan C. Edward Playhouse on Monday, Feb. 6, at 6 p.m. Mary D. Williams, educator and gospel singer, will perform “From Slavery to Freedom: The Power of Music.” This performance will feature an aural history of Black music from times of slavery and times of freedom.

The lecture “Black Resistance: Centering Voices From Within The Veil” will take place in the Shawkey Room at the Memorial Student Center on Monday, Feb. 13, at 4 p.m. Dr. Karsonya Whitehead, an associate

professor of communication and African American Studies at Loyola University in Maryland, will deliver the lecture.

The Drinko Academy’s Annual Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lecture series will continue with “The Future of Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” presented by the president of West Virginia State University Dr. Ericke S. Cage. This lecture will happen in the Shawkey Room of the Memorial Student Center on Monday, Feb. 15, at 4 p.m.

A panel discussion and performance on hip-hop music in Appalachia titled “From The Valley to the Mountaintop: Hip-Hop Appalachia” will take place at the Memorial Student Center from 4 p.m to 6 p.m on Thursday, Feb. 16.

Award-winning documentarian, photographer and author St. Clair Deitrick-Jules will host a discussion about the complexities among generations Black women and their hair with “My Beautiful Black Hair,” a presentation in Shawkey Dining Room at 6 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 20.



Black History Month events will take place across Marshall’s campus throughout the month.

Photo by Brittany Hively

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Resident Advisor Found Dead in Willis Hall



Quinton "Q" Bogner, 21 Courtesy of Brett Bogner via Facebook



Bogner was a resident advisor for Willis Hall.

Photo by Shauntelle Thompson

By **CONNER WOODRUFF**
MANAGING EDITOR

A Marshall University student and residential advisor was found dead in his dorm room over the weekend.

Quinton "Q" Bogner, Willis Hall resident advisor and a third-year secondary education major, died in Willis Hall on Sunday morning presumably due to medical issues. Bogner was a graduate of Willard High School in Willard, Missouri.

In an email to the student body sent out Sunday, Jan. 29, University President Brad Smith shared that a Marshall student had been found dead early Sunday morning in their residence hall dorm room, according to

the Marshall University Police Department.

The 21-year-old Bogner had received a heart transplant around 2014, as mentioned by the American Heart Association of Missouri's Twitter account.

Bogner's father, Brett Bogner spoke about his family's loss in a public Facebook post.

"We are doing what most parents should never have to do," Bogner said. "We are all heartbroken and at a loss of words."

Bogner had celebrated his 21st birthday during last week of December.

Bogner was also active in religious life on campus with President Smith sharing that counselling will also be available

at the Campus Christian Center.

Smith also encourages all students who are unsettled by the news to reach out to the counseling center. Hours are Monday, Thursday and Friday from 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Prichard Hall.

"When things like this happen, we may experience a range of emotions and reactions – shock, sadness, fear and even anger," Smith said. "These reactions may ebb and flow in the coming days and are normal in processing such tragedy and loss.

School Where Boy Shot Teacher Reopens With Added Security

By **BEN FINLEY** and **DENISE LAVOIE**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (AP) — The Virginia elementary school where a 6-year-old boy shot his teacher reopened Monday with stepped-up security and a new administrator, as nervous parents and students expressed optimism about a return to the classroom.

Richneck Elementary School in Newport News opened its doors more than three weeks after the Jan. 6 shooting. Police have said the boy brought a 9 mm handgun to school and intentionally shot his teacher, Abby Zwerner, as she was teaching her first-grade class. Zwerner, 25, was hospitalized for nearly two weeks but is now recovering at home.

Several police cars were parked at the school as teachers arrived.

The sign in front of the building read "Richneck Strong" and was framed by two red hearts. Other signs along the sidewalks read, "We are praying for you," "You are loved" and "We believe in you."

Students were greeted by a line of police officers, Mayor Phillip Jones, and other adults who gave them high-fives as they walked into the school.

Jennifer Roe said she and her fourth-grader, Jethro, saw a therapist after the shooting.

"He's excited to get back to school. He's missed it," Roe said.

"There are concerns, of course," she said. "We talked through it. His therapist gave me a thumbs-up and said he's good."

Jethro said he still had some concern "it might happen again," but that the increased security made him feel better.

"I'm still a little nervous, but I've calmed down a lot," he said.

Melissa McBride, who brought her fourth-grade twins to school, said one of them wasn't sleeping that well after the shooting, but the children felt better after attending an open house at the school last week.

"It was huge to see their friends and everybody being happy," she said.

McBride said she was comforted when she saw the twins "going into school with no hesitation," but that she was still "a little nervous."

Many parents walked their children in, but Jordan Vestre said his third-grader, Jaxon, asked if he could walk in alone. Vestre said he gave Jaxon a hug and "stood back a little teary-eyed and watched him high-five all the police officers and the mayor."

Vestre said his son "fully understands what happened." But he added: "How do you talk to an 8-year-old about a school shooting? It's ridiculous."

Eve Parham said her fourth-grade granddaughter was very excited to return to school, particularly to her archery class. Parham praised the additional safety measures, including the planned distribution of clear backpacks to students.

There were two other shootings in Newport News schools in the 16 months before the Richland shooting. Two 17-year-old students were wounded when a 15-year-old boy fired shots in a crowded high school hallway. Two months later, an 18-year-old student fatally shot a 17-year-old in the parking lot of a different high school.

Simon Perry, Professor Emeritus, Dead at 92



Dr. Simon Perry

Courtesy of MU Online

By SARAH DAVIS
STAFF REPORTER

Dr. Simon Perry, professor emeritus of Marshall's political science department, died on Friday, Jan. 27 at the age of 92.

Perry began teaching at Marshall in 1961 after receiving his Ph.D in political science from Michigan State University, according to his biography on Marshall's website. Perry had previously served as the political science department chair before retiring in 2010. He was also recognized as one of the longest serving faculty member at Marshall.

Perry also received many awards in his career, including the Distinguished West Virginian Award in 1988 and the College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Teacher Award in 2001 and 2004. Perry was also named one of the five 2007 "Living Legends" in Marshall Magazine, a selection made by alumni, colleagues and students.

Marshall's constitutional law center, the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, was named for him in 2010.

Dr. Patricia Proctor, pre-law

advisor and founding director of the Simon Perry Center, described the loss as a profound one.

"We have lost an incredible, great man," she said.

"Dr. Perry was a brilliant professor with a hunger for knowledge and an intellectual curiosity that never waned," Proctor said. "His students—and I was one—were the beneficiaries of this; he was deeply thoughtful and pushed students to challenge their preconceptions, open their minds and grow as critical thinkers and as human beings."

Speaking of the impact he had on those he worked with, Proctor said, "He influenced my life. He provided the intellectual challenges that prepared me for law school and a legal career," she said.

Proctor also highlighted his character.

"He also was kind-hearted, an advocate for what was right, not afraid to call out prejudice in all forms and to stand up for people marginalized by society," she said. "I and so many others are better for having him as part of our lives."

West Virginia Advances School Mandate on 'In God We Trust'

By LEAH WILLINGHAM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Public schools in West Virginia may soon be required to display the phrase "In God We Trust" in every building if a bill passed by the state Senate on Monday becomes law.

The bill was introduced by Republican Sen. Mike Azinger, who said he wants to give kids in schools something to look up to and let them know it's OK to "say God" in school.

"We know there's a lot of kids that have problems at home, tough times at home that we don't know anything about," Azinger said,

speaking on the Senate floor. "Maybe they'll look up one day and say, 'In God We Trust' and know they can put their hope in God."

The bill is now heading to the West Virginia House of Delegates. It requires public K-12 schools and public institutions of higher learning to display the official U.S. national motto on durable posters or in frames placed in a "conspicuous place" in each building.

The displays must also contain images of the U.S. national and state flags but can't depict any other words, images or information. They must be either be donated or purchased from private donations.

Similar laws have been passed in Texas, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia and several other states. Mississippi was the first state to pass a law mandating "In God We Trust" be displayed in public schools back in 2001.

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a law making "In God We Trust" the official U.S. national motto July 30, 1956, two years after pushing to have the phrase "under God" inserted into the Pledge of Allegiance.

"It was adopted during a time of disunity in America, at a time that unity was needed," Azinger said Monday. "And I think that's where we are in America in many ways."

SGA Presents New Way to Earn Community Service

By EMMA JOHNSON
STUDENT REPORTER

Adopt-a-Spot — a program to enable students to gain community service hours by helping keep the campus clean each month — was set by the Student Government Association at its meeting last week.

"It is a group thing," senator Nick Taylor, the one who introduced the resolution that created the program, said. "If anyone has any other organizations that need community service hours, you can get them by participating in this."

In other business interim senator Michael Borsuk then discussed his support for the West Virginia Legislature's House Bill 2412,

which will declare November 14th a special memorial day in remembrance of the plane crash that happened on Nov. 14, 1970.

All senators showed support for this bill with it being a unanimous vote of support.

SGA then went into session to discuss Senate Bill 10, also known as the "Campus Self-Defense Act."

Senator Makena Rauch then made a motion to discuss the dates for this semester's election.

Fillings for the upcoming election will be on Mar. 20; campaigning will begin right after the filling meeting, and the election will be on Mar. 30.

Another resolution was brought

to the floor to be discussed that would allow textbooks to be more affordable for Marshall students.

The Textbook Affordability Committee has been working with faculty to lean towards more affordable options when it comes to buying textbooks.

"We're trying to push them [faculty] to different books that are more cost effective for students," Rauch said.

The meeting concluded with Raunch discussing how the College of Liberal Arts will be getting more internship opportunities for their students.

Students Share Mixed Reactions to Campus Carry Bill

By **LYDIA MONTAGUE**
STUDENT REPORTER

Mixed reactions from students have greeted news that a new state law might enable people with concealed carry permits to bring firearms onto college campuses.

“I don’t know if I feel safe with a bill being applied on campus where anybody can just carry a gun,” Marshall senior Macy McElhaney said.

“Personally, I do not agree with it because of my concerns with personal safety,” she added. “There are many other things that you can carry for protection.”

On the other side of the argument, Marshall freshman Will Raines said he thought the permit requirements made the bill reasonable.

“I think that if you are of legal ability to carry,” he said, “and you have gone through your handgun training courses, and you carry a concealed carry permit, I don’t see a problem with carrying on campus.”

The bill — SB 10, called the “Campus Self-Defense Act” — would take effect Jul. 1, 2024, if passed by the House of Delegates and signed into law.

The bill will include multiple exceptions. Concealed carry at public campus events and stadiums will not be allowed under any circumstance. Private offices, sponsored events, areas used by law enforcement and daycare facilities are also included on the list of prohibited areas. However, students like Marshall freshman Bella Thompson feel that it will cause

more harm than good, especially to women.

“Particularly for women, you’re already scared that someone is going to come at you on campus, and if that person is carrying a legalized concealed gun, that’s even scarier. On campus, there’s a reason why there are security towers. There’s a reason why we’re told to carry pepper spray which, just based on precedent, is all I think you would really ever need,” Thompson said.

Thompson’s opinions were echoed by several other female students, including McElhaney.

“As a woman, when I walk anywhere, my mom always says, ‘Do you have pepper spray?’ or ‘Do you have your taser?’ so there is obviously already widespread concern for safety on college campuses and adding guns might not be the best option,” McElhaney said.

The bill will not only be affecting Marshall’s campus but schools across the state as well. Reagan McLean, a sophomore at the University of Charleston, says that she was shocked when she initially discovered it had passed.

“I understand why students may want to carry concealed weapons because West Virginia areas can feel very threatening at times. However, I don’t think that I agree because of the increased rates of school shootings and gun violence. I think the state should educate students that are worried about their safety in other ways so they can stand up for themselves in public,” McLean said.

The Self-Defense Act states

that only those who are licensed and have a legal permit will be able to carry weapons on campus, and no one will be allowed to open carry.

While McLean sees the bill from multiple angles, it is opposed by Marshall senior Essence Clerkley, who said she had experienced gun violence in her own lifetime more than once.

“My first reaction was definitely, ‘Wow. The world we live in never learns truly.’ Never once does adding violence to a situation ever make it better. My heart breaks a little because I am a product of an environment where guns are picked up to solve the issue. I’ve had multiple classmates and friends shot over meaningless situations. I just don’t feel guns are the answer. They take more than they give. I know that they want to promote the students’ safety outside of campus, but there are always more ways to solve a problem,” she said.

Several university presidents, including Marshall President Brad Smith, have made statements against the bill, sharing their concerns as well. In a letter sent to the West Virginia Senate Judiciary Committee, Smith and West Virginia University President Gordon Gee wrote, “We believe that our boards of governors are best suited to decide whether guns should be permitted on campus. We therefore do not support statewide campus carry.”

SGA Convenes for Campus Carry Senate Bill



SGA meets in the Memorial Student Center.

Photo by Matt Schaffer

By **EMMA JOHNSON**
STUDENT REPORTER

Senator Nico Raffinengo took the floor during last Tuesday’s Student Government Association meeting to share his resolution against Senate Bill 10, or what is known commonly as the “Campus Self-Defense Act.”

“We should value equipping our students with knowledge over a nine-millimeter,” Raffinengo said when concluding his speech.

The Campus Self-Defense Act passed the West Virginia State Senate on Tuesday, Jan. 24, leading the Student Government Association to hold a session so all representatives could vote on their reflection of this act.

Interim senator Michael Borsuk then took the floor to state his thoughts and asked for a recall vote.

“The truth of the matter is that there are students [who] support this bill but may not want to voice their opinion,” Borsuk said.

Once both senators took the floor to state their reflections,

Isabella Griffiths, the student body president, then took the floor to read the statement that Marshall President Brad D. Smith and West Virginia University President E. Gordon Gee released together on Wednesday.

This reading then caused other members of SGA to ask for a recall vote.

Twenty-one senators voted Yea, 10 voted present and 1 voted Nay on the reflection to send to the West Virginia Legislature.

After the meeting concluded, both Raffinengo and Borsuk shared more on why a recall vote was held.

“I wanted to make sure that there was not a unanimous approval of it because we as the student senate represent the will of the student body,” Borsuk said.

“I think the votes speak for themselves with the number of positive votes that want to strike down campus carry,” Raffinengo said.

This reflection will be sent to the West Virginia Legislature to show what the student body at Marshall University wants when it comes to Senate Bill 10.

Marshall Greek Life Joins in Day of Service

By **BETHANY JARRELL**
STUDENT REPORTER

This year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service motivated student volunteers to demonstrate faith in their community.

Sororities and fraternities participated in multiple community projects in observance of the holiday. Chapters spent the day at a clothing drive and cleaning up the community.

The projects were hosted by the Center for African American Students and the Huntington-Cabell branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in honor of the holiday. The events took place at the local Second Coming Family Life Church and the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church.

Hannah McCorkle, vice president new member education of Alpha Chi Omega, spent her Monday afternoon volunteering at the community cleanup. She worked on the block of 12th Street and 10th Avenue. McCorkle saw her service to Huntington as a rewarding experience and plans to stay involved.

"Seeing this instant transformation from trash everywhere to clean streets reminded me that little things have a big effect," McCorkle said.

Dr. Karen Bradwell, associate pastor of Second Coming of Life Church, said she was there to help the families of the Huntington community as she organized clothing donations. Bradwell encouraged the student volunteers to "continue as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached, to walk in character and hope and to be a blessing to others."

The Alpha Chi Omega chapter said in a statement, "We always love to give our services to the community and help out in any way we can."

Raevyn Page, a member of Alpha Chi Omega, participated in the cleanup and said to her, this project was especially heart touching because this was the neighborhood she was raised in. "Seeing everyone come together to help better the community I have known since I was a child was truly amazing," Page said.

Marie Wilhelm, new member educator of Sigma Sigma Sigma, appreciated being able to surround herself with the community for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Wilhelm said she is thankful to be progressing from the pandemic which isolated so many. She looks forward to the community connecting again.

"Being able to participate in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service made me appreciate how we are now able to get back into providing service to our communities. This project allowed people from all organizations to come together for a greater purpose," Wilhelm said.

Alexis Hudson, member of Alpha Chi Omega and Day of Service volunteer, spent the day at the Second Coming of Life Church sorting clothes and toys for families of the neighborhood. Hudson said the event helped her chapter get in touch with the community they're surrounded by. She referred to her service as a privilege to not only her but the sorority as well.

Spring Graduate Reminisces on University Experience

By **ABIGAIL CUTLIP**
STUDENT REPORTER

After the COVID-19 pandemic cut her freshman year short, a Marshall secondary education major says that she still enjoyed her time at the university.

In fact, Maddi Mace, a spring 2023 graduate from South Charleston, credits the university with her experience of returning to a sense of normalcy after an unconventional start to her four-year college career.

"It was a really different experience," Mace said. "But I think Marshall did a really good job with integrating everyone back into in-person school so that we were able to have a more regular time. I'm happy that I get to end here on a positive note and have the in-person time and in-person class and all that stuff that I was expecting when I started here."

Mace went on to say that she chose to go to Marshall because her mom also attended the university.

"She was really excited to bring me down here when I was in high school and show me the campus and all the buildings and stuff," Mace said. "I went to two Green and White Days just to get a feel for everything."

Mace also said that she spent a lot of her time at Marshall being indecisive about her future career. She wishes that she could tell her freshman self to focus on the career path she wanted: education.

"I think it's weird that we have to pick what we're going to do with our

whole lives as soon as we graduate high school," Mace said. "I spent a lot of time changing my mind when I knew I really just wanted to stay with teaching."

Mace said that her favorite moments have been the "random things with my friends: like being here with everyone all the time; getting to just randomly go hang out in each other's rooms; go

shopping whenever we feel like it or, if you want to go get food, there's always somebody that you can go with to the student center and get food."

Spring graduates like Mace are currently submitting their graduation applications that are due by Jan. 27.



Maddi Mace is a Marshall senior set to graduate this spring.

Photo By Abigail Cutlip

Men's Basketball Dominates Georgia State 103-65

By **CHAYCE MATHENY**
SPORTS EDITOR

Men's basketball defeated Georgia State 103-65 Saturday night, Jan. 28. After a crushing loss to ULM in double overtime Thursday, the Herd put on a solid offensive and defensive performance against the Panthers.

Marshall shot 56 percent from the field and forced 23 turnovers.

Junior Andrew Taylor was the game's leading scorer with 20 points.

"A lot of it was focusing and taking care of what we were doing," Taylor said. "I feel like Thursday maybe we weren't speeding the other team up as much as we needed to defensively. Tonight, we had our foot on the gas and kept it there and got a 40-point victory."

Marshall had five other players in double figures. Senior Taevion Kinsey had 18 points, sophomore Obinna Anochili-Killen had 18 points,

freshman Micah Handlogten had 11 points, junior Kamdyn Curfman had 11 points and freshman Jacob Conner had 10 points.

"Shout-out to the fans for coming here and selling out this event," Kinsey said. "I think it made it real hard for them to come out here and play. I don't think they really expected it like that."

Herd men's basketball coach Dan D'Antoni said his team needs to keep

this energy moving forward.

"We had the energy that we've been missing a little bit," he said. "We just can't let up. We've got to play like a champion every week – every practice, every game, regardless of what happens."

Marshall's largest lead was 49 points. Georgia State's leading scorer was sophomore Jamaine Mann with 12 points.

The Panthers shot 32 % from the

field and 15% from the three-point mark.

Next, Marshall will go on the road against Appalachian State Thursday, Feb. 2, at 6:30 p.m.

More photos can be found on page 12



Junior Kamdyn Curfman passes to teammate Wyatt Fricks.

Photo by Shauntelle Thompson

Women's Basketball Rolls Over the Red Wolves



Roshala Scott prepares to shoot the ball.

Courtesy of HerdZone

By **LUKE HAMILTON**
STUDENT REPORTER

Marshall's women's basketball dominated Arkansas State last Saturday with a 71-59 road win in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Marshall had the lead going into the second half, unlike in their previous two wins after a hot start by Roshala Scott. Scott scored 25 points and her 1,000th career point to lead the way for the Herd.

Roshala Scott hit her first five shots in the first quarter, with the 1,000th point coming from a mid-range jump shot. Junior guard Abby Beeman filled the stat sheet with 14 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists. The backcourt duo of Scott and Beeman was a struggle for the Red Wolves to handle on Saturday night, scoring over half of The Herd's points.

"Today was our most complete

performance in a while," head coach Tony Kemper said.

Kemper complimented the Herd's offensive consistency by saying, "I thought it was pretty steady and stable."

Marshall stayed consistent by outscoring the Red Wolves in all four quarters.

Arkansas State outrebounded the Herd by two, but Marshall's offense was too strong to contain on the defensive end. The Red Wolves leading scorer, Izzy Higginbottom, had 18 points going a perfect four for four from the line. However, the Red Wolves struggled from outside, shooting seven more missed three-pointers than the Herd.

The Herd is now 12-9 overall, and an even 5-5 in Sun Belt Conference play. The Thundering Herd hopes to increase its win streak to four when returning home on Thursday to take on Appalachian State at 6 p.m.

Two Marshall Swimmers Receive Conference Awards

By **LYDIA MONTAGUE**
STUDENT REPORTER

Two members of the Marshall swim team received Missouri Valley Conference awards for their performances in a dual meet last weekend.

Paige Banton and Mia McBride received honors on Jan. 25 after a team victory against Duquesne.

After winning seven events during the meet, Banton was named MVC Swimmer of the Week. She placed first as a member of the 400 Medley Relay

and also broke the record time with her team, clocking in a 1:01.69 time.

She finished first in the 100 Individual Medley (57.36), which places her second in the MVC for that event. She put up another record-breaking time in the 50 Breaststroke with a personal record that also put her in second place in the MVC. She also finished first in the 200 Medley Relay, the 100 and 200 Breaststroke, and the 200 IM with a season-best of 2:08.16.

McBride earned the title MVC Freshman of the Week for the third time this season. She put up five first-

place finishes against Duquesne and started the meet by breaking the pool record as the first swimmer in the 400 Medley Relay. She then finished first in the 50 Freestyle and 50 Backstroke. Her time in the 50 Backstroke (25.82) put her in third in the MVC. She placed first in the 200 Medley Relay and the 100 Backstroke on Saturday.

The team, including Banton and McBride, will make their way to Iowa City, Iowa, for the Missouri Valley Conference Championships on Feb. 15 - 18.

Marshall Track and Field Closes Out Strong Weekend in Louisville

THE PARTHENON

The Marshall track and field teams concluded the Lenny Lyles Invitational Saturday. The Thundering Herd set two more school records Saturday.

Senior Abby Herring broke her own record in the mile, racing a 4:53.09, beating her own time from the Marshall Classic earlier in the month. Kyle

Mastin broke a record from 2017 set by Barkley Castro, racing a 2:12.34 in the 800.

"It's been a while since we have broken four records at one meet," Head Track and Field Coach Jeff Small said. "We faced great competition this weekend including seven Power-Five teams, and I

was really proud of how well our team performed."

Other weekend high marks for the team included Krista Perry setting the fourth all-time best mark in the indoor pentathlon with 3,561 points. Mikah Alleyne scored a fourth place finish in her season-debut in the 400 as well.

COVID-19 Deaths in the US Continue to Be Undercounted, Research Shows, Despite Claims of 'Overcounts'

By **ANDREW STOKES**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, a recurring topic of debate has been whether official COVID-19 death statistics in the U.S. accurately capture the fatalities associated with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Some politicians and a few public health practitioners have argued that COVID-19 deaths are overcounted. For instance, a January 2023 opinion piece in *The Washington Post* claims that COVID-19 death tallies include not only those who died from COVID-19 but those who died from

other causes but happened to have COVID-19.

Most scientists, however, have suggested that COVID-19 death tallies represent underestimates because they fail to capture COVID-19 deaths that were misclassified to other causes of death.

We are part of a team of researchers at Boston University, University of Minnesota, University of California San Francisco and other institutions who have been tracking COVID-19 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. A major goal for our team has been to assess whether the undercounting of COVID-19 deaths has occurred, and if so in which parts

of the country.

Examining excess deaths

One way to examine the issue is to look at what population health researchers call excess mortality. It's a measure which, in this case, compares the number of deaths that occurred during the pandemic to the number of deaths that would have been expected based on pre-pandemic trends.

Excess mortality captures deaths that arose from COVID-19 directly or through indirect pathways such as patients avoiding hospitals during COVID-19 surges. While determining a cause of death can be a complex process, recording whether or not someone died is more straightforward. For this reason, calculations of excess deaths are viewed as the least biased estimate of the pandemic's death toll.

As a general rule of thumb – with some important caveats that we explain below – if there are more COVID-19 deaths than excess deaths, COVID-19 deaths were likely overestimated. If there are more excess deaths than COVID-19 deaths, COVID-19 deaths were likely underestimated.

In a newly released study that has not yet been peer-reviewed, our team found that during the first two years of the pandemic – from March 2020 to February 2022 – there were between 996,869 and 1,278,540 excess deaths in the U.S. Among these, 866,187 were recognized as COVID-19 on death certificates. This means that there were between 130,682 and 412,353 more excess deaths than COVID-19 deaths. The gap between excess deaths and COVID-19 deaths was large in both the first and second years of the pandemic. This suggests that COVID-19 deaths

were undercounted even after the pandemic's chaotic early months.

Major studies have also concluded that excess deaths exceeded COVID-19 deaths at the national level during the first two years of the pandemic. And preliminary analyses by our team have found that the gap between excess deaths and COVID-19 deaths has persisted into the third year of the pandemic. This suggests that COVID-19 deaths are still being undercounted.

Making sense of the discrepancy explaining the discrepancy between excess deaths and reported COVID-19 deaths is a more challenging task. But several threads of evidence support the idea that the difference largely reflects uncounted COVID-19 deaths.

In a recent study, we found that excess deaths peaked immediately before spikes in reported COVID-19 deaths. This was the case even for excess deaths associated with causes like Alzheimer's disease that are unlikely to rapidly change due to patients avoiding hospitals or other changes in behavior during the pandemic.

This finding aligns with the observation that COVID-19 deaths may go unrecognized – and be misclassified to other causes of death – at the beginning of COVID-19 surges. At this time, COVID-19 testing may be less frequent in the community, among medical providers and among death investigators. If excess deaths were not caused by COVID-19, they would instead either remain relatively constant during COVID-19 surges or they would peak afterwards when hospitals were overcrowded and deaths may have resulted from health

care interruptions.

Excess deaths related to external causes of death such as drug overdose also increased during the pandemic. However, a preliminary study found that the scale of this increase was small relative to the overall increase in excess deaths. So deaths from external factors alone cannot explain the gap between excess and COVID-19 deaths.

This evidence is worth considering in light of the prominent opinion piece in the *Washington Post* mentioned earlier, which suggests that the U.S.'s tally of COVID-19 deaths is a substantial overcount. The author argues that in some hospitals, widespread COVID-19 testing has led patients with COVID-19 who died of other causes to still have COVID-19 included as a cause on their death certificate. There is a fundamental misunderstanding, however, in generalizing these hospital deaths to the entire country.

One reason this overgeneralization is flawed is because hospital deaths are distinct from out-of-hospital deaths. In out-of-hospital settings, COVID-19 testing is often lacking and death investigators have less training and less information about the deceased. In fact, our research suggests that COVID-19 deaths are largely undercounted in out-of-hospital settings.

Investigative reporting among coroners in rural areas has also revealed significant variability in out-of-hospital cause of death assignment. Some coroners have even gone on record to state that they do not include COVID-19 on death records if it contradicts their own political beliefs or if families wish for it to be omitted.

The Parthenon, Marshall University's student newspaper, is published by students Wednesdays during the regular semester and every other week during the summer. The editorial staff is responsible for news and editorial content.

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Director Describes 'Steel Magnolias' as Authentic and Accessible



Courtesy of the MU School of Theatre and Dance

By **BEX LAW**
STUDENT REPORTER

Director Leah Turley predicts that audiences will enjoy the authenticity of the School of Theatre's upcoming production "Steel Magnolias" by Robert Harling.

The show is about the life of M'Lynn, mother and bride-to-be, and her daughter Shelby, with the plot unfolding in their friend Truvy's hair salon. Throughout the show, the actresses have their hair done in real time while also processing the highs and lows of

life as women.

"There are no mirrors while the actors are doing hair or getting their hair done," Turley said. "So the audience has a secret door into what is happening on stage without constrictions. How a woman looks at herself in the mirror is now open to the audience. It's a universal experience without barriers."

The director went on to say these attributes will help the production reach audiences despite the show's reputation as a "chick show."

"All plays are about families, be it biological or created families," Turley said. "And this show is

important because it's a pop culture icon. But it is also relevant because you see women you know in your life mirrored on the stage. It is a show that mirrors our community and centers around mother-daughter relationships."

Turley described the show as a "practical play," as it does not feature special effects but rather "real life experiences unfolding in real time."

She also expressed her pride in the cast saying, "It's kind of a dream cast to be honest."

Turley went on to say that she chose to direct the show because

she performed in it at Marshall in 2006. It was her first performance since her mother was diagnosed with uterine cancer, so the topic hit home for her.

"Steel Magnolias" will perform nightly at 7:30 p.m. from Feb. 15-18 and Feb. 22-25 in the Francis-Booth Experimental Theatre in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$20 at the door, \$15 for seniors 60+ and employees and Marshall University students receive free admission with a valid student ID.

The School of Theatre and Dance Opens Contemporary Dance Company

By **BEX LAW**
STUDENT REPORTER

A new contemporary dance company has formed "for students to find a safe place for expression and experimentation through movement and creativity," says one of the group's founders.

"I want everyone to feel like they don't have to say goodbye to the creative and movement-filled part of their life," MaShawn Morton said, who along with Shelby Nelson-Burcham and Dr. Robin Riner, has formed the dance and movement club in Marshall's School of Theatre and Dance.

Students in the club should feel "they still participate and hold on to dance even though they are in academics now," Morton said. Nelson-Burcham

and Morton both expressed concern that movement and dance are underrepresented at the collegiate level, and Nelson-Burcham said she hopes that "students of all majors and pathways will come together to find joy and see themselves as artists."

Riner said this club can be whatever the members want it to be. She said, "We will have opportunities for them to learn choreography from us and visiting choreographers, perform, attend festivals and create their own work at Marshall and elsewhere."

The Marshall Contemporary Dance Company meets every Monday and Wednesday from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in room 224 at the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse. Morton stressed that people who are "hungry for dance, movement and creativity" should feel encouraged to "drop in"

whenever they are available. There is no audition process, and every level of experience from beginner to advanced are welcome.

Riner has been a professional dancer for many years, including during the time she was pursuing a B.A. in Anthropology from NYU and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from UCLA. She continues to teach dance at 4th Avenue Arts in Huntington and performs with the Jeslyn Dance Gallery. Morton has been a professional dancer for 20 years after receiving his BFA in Dance from Point Park University. Nelson-Burcham is a self prescribed "dance artist and teaching artist," graduating from University of the Arts and is passionate about making performing art more accessible in Appalachia.

mcDC

Inaugural meeting and open class
January 23
2:30-4:30 pm
JCE Playhouse
Rm 224

conleyr@marshall.edu
for more info

Marshall Contemporary Dance Company

Courtesy of the MU School of Theatre and Dance

'When Does This Stop?'

2023's Alarming Bloody Start

By **MARYCLAIRE DALE**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

In a country with more guns than people — and one emerging from three years of isolation, stress and infighting amid the pandemic — Americans are beginning 2023 with a steady barrage of mass slaughter.

Eleven people killed as they welcomed the Lunar New Year at a dance hall popular with older Asian Americans. A teen mother and her baby shot in the head in an attack that killed five generations. A 6-year-old shooting his first-grade teacher in the classroom. The list goes on.

"We've been through so much in these past few years, and to continue to see case after case of mass violence in the media is just overwhelming," said Apryl Alexander, an associate professor of public health at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. "When does this stop?"

The carnage over eight days in California, where the dance hall victims Saturday night were among two dozen people killed in three recent attacks, brought painful reminders to families of last year's school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. On Tuesday, several Uvalde families and parents traveled more than three hours to their state's Capitol to renew calls for tighter gun laws, even if they have little chance of winning over the Republican-controlled Legislature.

In 2022, the United States

marked its first deadly gun rampage of the year on Jan. 23 — a year ago Monday. By that same date this year, six mass killings have claimed 39 lives, according to a database of mass killings maintained by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

"People are dying every day. This shouldn't be happening," said Veronica Mata, whose 10-year-old daughter Tess was among the 19 children and two teachers slain in Uvalde. "If it takes us coming every week, then we are going to do it until we see something change."

Americans have come to endure mass shootings in churches and grocery stores, at concerts and office parks, and inside the homes of friends and neighbors. The violence is blamed on hatred toward other communities, grievances within a group, secrets within families and bitterness among colleagues. But it often ends when a man with a grudge grabs a gun.

Sometimes, it's not clear whether a grudge is even part of the equation.

"There was no apparent conflict between the parties. The male just walked in and started shooting," Yakima Police Chief Matt Murray said after three people were shot dead at a Circle K convenience store in Washington state early Tuesday, adding to the national grief.

Gun sales in the U.S. hit historic highs as the coronavirus pandemic took hold, the economy stalled and

people took to the streets to protest police brutality and racial injustice. Nearly 23 million firearms were sold in 2020, according to industry analysts. The surge largely continued the following year, with sales spiking 75% the same month that a mob attacked the U.S. Capitol, before dipping to about 16 million this year.

Experts believe there are 393 million guns in private hands across the United States, which in 2022 was a country of 333 million people.

Some Americans say they don't feel safe anywhere. A third avoid certain places as a result, according to the American Psychological Association, whose most recent study shows that the majority of Americans feel stressed.

Yet there seems little appetite to address some of the potential solutions, such as teaching conflict resolution skills in schools or re-examining our societal views of masculinity, according to Alexander.

"These kids are going to turn into adults," Alexander said. "If they don't know how to handle conflict, we're going to see unfortunate events like this happen."

The bloodshed began Jan. 4, when a Utah man, investigated but never charged over a 2020 child abuse complaint, shot and killed his wife, her mother and their five children before killing himself.

The database shows 2,793 people have lost their lives in mass killings — those that involve four or more



Memorial in Monterey Park, California.

Photos courtesy of AP/Ashley Landis

victims, excluding the killer — since 2006. The recent wave of violence follows a spike in 2022, when the U.S. recorded 42 mass killings, the second highest tally in that time span.

Even gun violence that takes fewer lives, or none at all, can shock the conscience.

That was the case in Virginia this month when the 6-year-old shot and wounded his teacher in front of his classmates. Newport News Mayor Phillip Jones said he could barely wrap his head around it. And two teenage students were killed Monday in a school shooting in Iowa.

In the Saturday night shooting in Monterey Park, 11 people died and nine others were injured when a 72-year-old man opened fire at

the Star Ballroom Dance Studio just hours after tens of thousands of revelers filled the streets nearby for Lunar New Year festivities. The gunman took his own life as police approached his van the next day.

Before people across the state could process that horror, seven farmworkers were shot and killed near San Francisco, in the picturesque coastal community of Half Moon Bay. A 66-year-old coworker is in custody.

"In the end, there are simply too many guns in this country. And there has to be a change. This is not an acceptable way for a modern society to live and conduct its affairs," San Mateo County Board of Supervisors President Dave Pine said Monday, in the wake of the mushroom farm shootings.

Marshall Receives \$1.75 Million for New Law Enforcement Forensics Training Center

By JOSEPH DICRISTIFARO
STUDENT REPORTER

The Marshall Institute for Cyber Security received \$1.75 million from a grant program to establish a Law Enforcement Training Center in Forensic Sciences, which includes digital forensics and forensic genetic genealogy.

The \$1.75 million came from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Byrne Discretionary Grant Program. The new training center will work with the West Virginia State Police Forensics Laboratory, Mountwest Community and Technical College and West Virginia Intelligence Fusion Center.

The training will be used to address the needs for state and local law

enforcement regarding forensic science techniques. The long-term goal of the training center is to help local and state law enforcement combat growing computer-based crime.

The principal investigators are Dr. David Dampier, dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences and director of the Institute for Cyber Security, and Jason Chute, the director of the Marshall University Forensic Science Center.

The new forensic science training center will give law enforcement new and improved training in technological crime techniques.

“Our law enforcement officers are rarely provided advanced training in solving computer crimes, even

as the number of crimes involving technology like smartphones and computers is constantly rising. This grant gives us the opportunity to offer that training for free to law enforcement officers and help them be better prepared for solving these types of crimes,” Dampier said.

“Acquiring the latest state-of-the-art technology in the field will not only allow us to provide training and research to law enforcement on the newest tools and techniques, but will also establish a foundation in our operational laboratory allowing us to expand our current service offerings for criminal casework,” Chute said. “Both of which will ultimately provide a safer community.”

Department of Communication Disorders to Hold Inaugural “Mandi-Ball” Event

By BEX LAW
STUDENT REPORTER

The inaugural “Mandi-Ball,” a play on the word “mandible,” will be hosted by the Department of Communication Disorders to spark interest engagement between students and alumni. The event will feature heavy hor-d’oeuvres, cocktails, dancing and trivia at the Brad D. Smith Foundation Hall on Saturday, Feb. 4 from 6 to 10 p.m.

Through this event, the department hopes to raise money to increase student scholarships.

Networking is also a prime reason for the “Mandi-Ball,” giving current students, alumni and community members a chance to reconnect and reminisce while helping establish

the next generation of speech pathologists for success while receiving their education.

The prestigious program boasts a 100% rate of graduates passing the National Praxis Exam for each of the past five years. Such accomplishments, however, come at some financial burden to students, Pam Holland, department chair and graduate program director, said.

“While the cost of a graduate degree at Marshall University is affordable, our students still leave with debt that often takes years to eliminate,” Holland said. “If we can assist in just a small way, we have made a difference.”

Those interested in the event can contact Holland by e-mailing holland@marshall.edu to purchase tickets or establishing a sponsorship.

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12:00 Noon, 5:30 pm

Confessions

Saturday 8:25 am
Saturday 3:30 pm-4:25 pm
or by appointment

Photos From Marshall's Match Against Georgia State

Continued from story on Page 6



Marshall came out victorious after their game against Georgia State.



Photo by Shauntelle Thompson

Upcoming Green and White Day Greet Prospective Students

By **ABIGAIL CUTLIP**
STUDENT REPORTER

Prospective Marshall students will have the opportunity to learn more about what campus has to offer during the upcoming Green and White Day on Feb. 4.

"They're going to see campus. They're going to see dorm rooms. They'll get to go inside the academic buildings. They get to go inside the library. They'll get to eat on campus," Buffy Six, a special events coordinator for the university, said. "We pretty much give them a full college experience in a day."

Not only will they get to experience academics, prospective students

will get to see how involved the Marshall community is with itself.

"Green and White Day is an exciting opportunity for prospective students and their families to experience the energy and passion of the Marshall community," Dr. Avi Mukherjee, provost and senior vice president of academic affairs, said.

The decision on where to attend college may be daunting for some, but both Six and Mukherjee said Green and White Day can be used for students to make a well-informed decision.

"Showing just how many people from the university come out and how many different departments

and how many different programs come out also shows that we do care about everyone, and we want everyone to learn about Marshall, and we want everyone to be able to make an educated decision on where they're gonna go to college," Six said.

Green and White Day is "a lot of fun," Six said. "I think everyone who's been to a Green and White Day can speak that it is a good time, and they do enjoy it, and they learn a lot about Marshall."

The next Green and White day following Feb. 4 will be on Apr. 1.