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We Are ... Marshall, June 23, 2000

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We Are...Marshall!

THE NEWSLETTER FOR MARSHALL UNIVERSITY • JUNE 23, 2000

Jazz-MU-Tazz Arrives This Weekend

Just in time for the hot summer weather, some cool jazz with something for everyone will set toes tapping for Marshall's Jazz-MU-Tazz summertime jazz festival which began June 22 and will run through June 25. Highlighting the festival this year is an all-jazz Mountain Stage radio show live at Huntington's Riverfront Park, jazz cruises on the PA Denny showboat, nights of hot jazz cabaret and a gospel jazz brunch. Mountain State's Larry Groce will serve as host to renown jazz artists.

After selling out last year, An Evening of Jazz Cabaret returns this year, Friday, June 23 at the Black Box Theatre in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center. Music lovers can enjoy classic jazz and cabaret-style music in a setting reminiscent of the famed jazz club that was home to such legends as Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald. Larry Groce will host the evening which will feature performances by West Virginia's own jazz star, Bob Thompson, New Orleans party band Astral Project and the Johnny Nocturne Band. Tickets are \$25 with doors opening at 7:30 p.m.

Jazz lovers can take their music on the river June 24 with three one-hour-long daytime cruises for the entire family and a romantic sunset cruise. The P.A. Denny Showboat will be docked at Harris Riverfront Park's 12th Street entrance where tickets can be purchased one hour prior to each cruise. Daytime cruise times will be 10-11 a.m., 12-1 p.m., and 2-3 p.m. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Free advance tickets for children are available at WSAZ-TV, WKEE Studios and The Herald-Dispatch. Organizers say the advance tickets do not guarantee space on the boat as rides are filled on a first come, first serve basis. Boarding will take place one-half prior to each cruise.

Smooth jazz will be combined with cool river breezes for the sunset cruise which runs from 5-7 p.m. with plenty of time to arrive back at Riverfront park to enjoy the Mountain Stage concert at the amphitheater. Tickets are \$20 and includes a reserved seat for Mountain Stage. Boarding begins at 4:30 p.m.

Gates for the concert open at 5:30 p.m. Marshall's student jazz ensemble performs at 6:30 p.m. and Mountain Stage's all jazz show begins at 8 p.m. No advance tickets are necessary. Donations will be accepted at the gate. The public is invited to bring a

picnic or use the concessions available at the amphitheater. In case of rain the event will move to the Huntington Civic Arena. Coffee and dessert items will be available after the show at the P.A. Denny sidewalk cafe.

On June 25, the Gospel Brunch Jazz Cruise will take place on the Denny from 1 to 3 p.m. The showboat will become a floating restaurant with a Sunday brunch providing both gospel and jazz sounds. Music will be provided by Bob Thompson with a special guest to be announced. Tickets are \$15 and boarding begins at 12:30 p.m.

Jazz-MU-Tazz is sponsored by the Marshall Artists Series, MU's College of Fine Arts and Department of Music, WSAZ-TV, The Herald-Dispatch, Lamar Advertising, Setzer's World of Camping and Atlantic Star Communications.

Rachel Wright Receives Employee of the Month



Rachel Wright

Rachel Wright, accounting clerk with the Marshall University Foundation, has been selected as Marshall's Employee of the month for June, according to Bill Burdette, chairman of the Employee of the Month Selection Committee.

Wright, who lives in Ironton, Ohio, has been employed at MU since 1997. She was nominated by Sharlee Henry, program assistant, and Martha Woodward, executive director of CAE.

In her letter of nomination Henry wrote, "...I deal with Rachel on a weekly basis concerning invoices for students studying abroad and all other university related expenses for the Yeager and/or Honors programs. Rachel has always met our volume of work and deadlines which are set by other

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Research Award Honors Betty Cleckley

A research award honoring Dr. Betty J. Cleckley, vice president for Multicultural Affairs and International Programs, has been established by the Gerontological Health Section of the American Public Health Association APHA/GHS to recognize individuals in aging and public health who have made a significant difference in the lives of older people who are members of minority groups.

The winner is expected to attend ALPA's annual meeting in Atlanta in October, 2001 to receive recognition at the GHS Awards Session and to present findings in a GHS paper sessions. In addition, there may be two honorable mentions.

The criteria for selection are the importance of the topic; rigor of the design, analysis and conclusions; quality of writing, and the potential benefit to the field.

A goal of the award program is to recognize individuals and their research efforts who have the potential to improve the health and functional status of older people who are members of minority groups. The award criteria maintains that minimizing health status disparities and improving access to health and

long term care services are imprint issues for minority groups in this country.

Tribute is paid to Cleckley for her work in improving access of minority group members to higher education and to quality health and long term care services. She is active in civic and professional organizations, such as the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services and the state Human Rights Commission. She serves on the Martin Luther King, Jr. State of West Virginia Holiday Commission, the Board of Directors of Cabell Huntington Huntington Hospital Foundation, and the Center for Aging and Health Care in West Virginia, Inc. In 1998 Governor Cecil Underwood presented her with the "Governor's Living the Dream Award." She is a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and is a long time member of the American Public Health Association and the National Association of Social Workers.

Networking Classes Offered to Advantage Valley Region

Marshall University Graduate College and Strictly Business of Huntington have formed a partnership to offer an on-going series of computer technology training classes to the Advantage Valley region.

Certified instructors and engineers from Strictly Business will conduct the classes and the Graduate College will provide state-of-the-art facilities.

"We are very happy to partner with Strictly Business," Martha Pierson, program coordinator for the MUGC Computer Learning Center, said. "This partnership will allow the MUGC Computer Learning Center to expand its customer base and provide additional training opportunities for the Learning Center."

The goals of the partnership include reducing training costs for employers, especially the high costs of sending staff out of the area for training; providing training in critical technical areas; and increasing the pool of qualified employees.

Classes will be offered in both network administration and application development, with Essentials of Microsoft Networking to be offered June 28 and 29.

Additional classes to be held include Windows NT Administration; Windows 2000; SQL Server Administration; Network+ Certification; A+ Certification; Exchange; and Internet Information Server. Application Development classes will include Cold fusion, Microsoft Visual Basic, SQL Programming, and Java.

For additional information contact Dennis Michael, marketing manager of Strictly Business at 888-529-0401, or Martha Pierson at (304) 746-2062.

Photoshop Class Offered

The Continuing Education and Economic Development Department of MU's Community and Technical College will offer "Mastering Adobe Photoshop" beginning July 10 and ending August 14 from 6:30 to 8:20 p.m. Instructor Jenette Reed will teach students the basics of being creative with Photoshop by controlling contrast, brightness and removing unwanted images from pictures. The cost is \$119 and it will be taught in Cabell Hall Lab 201. Additional computer classes will be offered later this summer. To register, or for more information, contact the Division of Continuing Education and Economic Development at ext. 3113.

We Are...Marshall!

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Send story ideas to Pat Dickson, Editor, *We Are...Marshall!*, 110 Administration Building, South Charleston Campus, or send by e-mail to pdickson@marshall.edu.



Profile: Virginia Spence

A series on interesting Marshall University people.



Virginia Spence

Some people see life in tidy shades of black and white, while others view it as a gloriously Technicolored extravaganza. Put Virginia Spence firmly in that second category.

And now, after having been an indispensable fixture in the Graduate College's library for the past 30 years, the college's longest term staff member is planning to retire at the end of June. And this time, she insists, she's really going to do it.

Actually, Spence's retirement talk has gone on longer than a rock band's farewell tour. "I've been retiring for the past 12 years," she laughs, but swears this time is different.

She began her odyssey with the college at a small building in Nitro, while the institution was then the West Virginia University Kanawha Valley Graduate Center, beginning a career with a college which has had more names than Elizabeth Taylor.

Learning from her niece that the center was in need of part-time help, she applied and was interviewed by new library director Louis Gill who, not unexpectedly, queried her about her typing skills. Spence's typing skills are legendary—she doesn't have any. So when Gill asked her if she could type, she replied honestly, "no." When he asked her if she would be able to type someone's name on a form or on an envelope, she said, "Yes, if you're not in a hurry to get it." He hired her anyway.

Actually it's this lack of keyboard skills—if you don't count some leisurely two-fingered hunt and peck—that has kept her from retiring before now. "I've always said I couldn't retire because I couldn't type the letter of resignation or the forms," she declares mischievously.

It's her irrepressible sense of humor and her penchant for fun that has endeared her to a generation of staff and students. "I don't take life too seriously," she maintains. She loves beautiful things and seeing people have a good time and she has a talent for creating both. Life is a gift, she believes, to be shared joyously with other. And even several serious illnesses have not dampened her high spirits.

She has had 13 major operations over the past few years, survived breast cancer 20 years ago, lost 18 inches of her colon and has suffered through recurring back problems. I've had all the "dectomies," she says, "beginning with a tonsillectomy and working on down." Years ago she and the then college library director, Sue Forrest,

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Rachel Wright

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universities and many travel programs and agencies. I know her duties are demanding and stressful, having to deal with all departments at MU associated with the Foundation Office, but Rachel's attitude and commitment is one that is positive, confident and reassuring."

She goes on to say, "Rachel continually checks on the status of work we send her way and informs us if anything needs to be added, changed, or corrected in order to get the job done in a time-efficient manner. She is well-informed in policies of the MU Foundation when questions arise or problems occur. She can answer questions quickly and work through the problems diligently. When she promises to follow through on a particular job, she does and that alone is assuring and brings a smile to your face!"

In nominating her, Woodwind writes, "Rachel is the model of what an administrator depends on—helpful, knowledgeable, dependable, efficient, friendly. She handles our Foundation accounts and it can get complicated sometimes. She promptly answers, or gets the answers to, any questions and completes the task. We would be in the dark without her."

Wright received a plaque and \$100 for being named Employee of the Month and will be eligible

Online Course Costing System Developed

In an effort to help determine online education costs, Brian M. Morgan, director of MU's Center for Instructional Technology, has developed an interactive worksheet to help administrators calculate the price tag for creating an online program.

His work was featured in a story appearing in the June 8 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The World Wide Web site queries users about their institutional environments and their plans for distance education. The site then generates a spreadsheet with cost and revenue projections for the first seven years of the online program. Users have the ability to change variables and get new estimates as needed.

The site, according to the *Chronicle*, features a statement saying that it provides only rough estimates and should not be used to make final budget decisions.

Morgan created the site as part of his master's thesis in technology management at Marshall. The thesis represented more than a year of research into the costs of distance education and is available on the web site.

Virginia Spence

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made a pact to donate their bodies to medical science.

"I didn't know I would be making my donation on the installment plan," she deadpans. "When they get this cadaver, are they going to be surprised!" But she's doing fine these days and has no intention of making any more "donations."

And she's not a bit coy about her age—she's 77—after all why should she be—she has more *joie de vivre* than a gaggle of 22-year-olds.

When she began work in the library on August 31, 1970, it was in a building with a colorful past. Formerly the facility had been a tavern nicknamed by the locals, for whatever reason, the Pig's Ear, the origins of its name mercifully having been lost in the mists of time. There were also sly whispers that the place had once been a thriving brothel. But at the time Spence joined the library it was a strictly straightforward, no-nonsense kind of building, with room enough on two floors for both the library and several academic offices. The library was rudimentary, to say the least. Books were stacked on the floor when the limited shelf space ran out and there was no card catalog. Books were maintained on shelves, arranged first by authors and later by titles, allowing students to browse until they found what they wanted. Spence worked alone most weekends and sometimes found herself with some unexpected duties which she handled with her usual aplomb.

The state Library Commission donated a copy machine which, Spence says, "surely came over on the ark." Frequently the machine would chew up paper resulting in lots of smoke and occasionally even a small fire which she would have to extinguish. She assumed firefighting came under the heading of "other duties as assigned."

After a move to another Nitro location, in 1972, the library headed east to the WV State College campus to take up headquarters on the second floor of Hill Hall, a converted dormitory.

If she fought fire in Nitro, she had to cope with water in Institute because extensive renovations were still underway and she says the bathrooms would sometimes overflow—invariably on her weekend shift. She took it all in stride, as usual. Wielding a mop and pail was all just part of the job, she figured.

In 1972 what had been a WVU Center officially became the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies and the library, now professionally organized with thousands of books and other materials moved to shared quarters with the West Virginia State College library, an alliance that lasted until the Graduate College library's final move in 1998 to new quarters on the South Charleston campus.

During her tenure at the college, one of her favorite things was to help put on periodic covered dish luncheons for staff and faculty, mostly around holiday times. A talented, self-taught floral designer, she delighted in decking out every table and the walls as well, with her own lavish decorations, all artfully placed. She has long been the chief decorator for her church and volunteers her talents to other groups as well.

Staff members loved walking into her themed holiday wonderland. These were fun times and her theory is that atmosphere is fully important as food. She was a guiding force behind the annual Ugly Tie Contest, held at Halloween and named for a good natured former dean, who won the contest three years running without entering.

And then there were the pumpkins. Just like Cinderella's godmother, she changed pumpkins from mundane orange globes into works of art, creating a coy boy and girl, a western honcho complete with 1/2 gallon hat and neckerchief, or a winking seductress as well as dozens of other characters, all displayed at the October luncheons. One year there were even some that bore an uncanny resemblance to some staff members. And to add to the fun, Spence could always be counted on to show up in costume dispensing goodies, Granny Goodwitch at Halloween and a candy cane wielding Santa's Elf at Christmas.

She loves holidays and all their hoopla and for most holidays her artfully bedecked home, decorated from porch to roof and spilling out into the yard, reflects it. In fact, her house has been the subject of newspaper and television stories and it has become so well known people regularly bring their children by to see it. She briefly suspended her decorating one year after vandals destroyed or stole most of her creations. But because of outrage throughout the community and the pleas to resume, she couldn't resist and the next year, to the relief of the town, the decorations were back up and the tours were on again. No one has bothered anything since.

And now that she'll have more free time, will she indulge in that most favored of all retiree pastimes—travel? "Oh absolutely not," she scoffs. "I'm going to stay home, enjoy my house, work in my garden and sleep late every morning!" But one big plus is that she will have more time to spend with her daughter, Dorothy who lives in Morristown, Tennessee and her granddaughter Tricia, who just received a master's degree from the University of Tennessee.

Actually it was her aging car that brought about her momentous decision to retire. "It gave out before I did," she says, not too regretfully. A second car, a gift from a niece, isn't doing too well either. Besides, she was getting fed up with the daily commute and frustrated by increasingly rude drivers. "I was beginning to get road rage," she confides with a perfectly straight face, an event about as likely to happen, to those who know Spence, as meeting up with a flock of killer butterflies.

So now as June 30 approaches, the dreaded retirement paperwork has been filled out, neatly typed after all. There's a big reception planned in her honor at the library on June 26. "I have wonderful friends here and I've always gotten along great with the people I've worked with and I'll certainly miss that." But she'll only be a few miles down the road and she'll finally have more time for her hobbies and leisure time activities. Retirement this time is really looking better and better, she says and she's really going to do it. And you can put that down as a definite maybe.

Next Issues

The next issue of *We Are...Marshall!* will carry an issue date of July 14, 2000 and will be a special issue dedicated to the Employee of the Year program.

The next regular issue of *We Are...Marshall!* will carry an issue date of July 28, 2000. Deadline is July 21. Articles or other materials for consideration should be sent to Pat Dickson, editor, at the South Charleston campus or by e-mail to pdickson@marshall.edu.