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Across-the-board excellence soars to new heights

Western Michigan University may have started out normal, but it didn’t stay normal for long.

After all, why be ordinary when you can be extraordinary?

That philosophy has been a cornerstone of the institution since it was founded at the dawn of the twentieth century as a regional preparatory school for teachers. Western Michigan Normal School, as it was named then, soon advanced to the head of the class, earning a reputation for consistently training large numbers of exceptional teachers.

Not content to rest on their laurels, the institution’s visionary leaders made sure “the normal” kept up stride for stride as America grew and confronted new challenges. They broadened academic programs, built new and exciting partnerships, researched innovative education strategies, and did a whole lot more. In short, wherever possible, they pushed the so-called “envelope.”

As WMU spread its wings and began to soar, it blossomed into a comprehensive, nationally ranked university that today numbers among the best higher education institutions this nation has to offer. Decades of decisive action and old-fashioned hard work propelled WMU to the unprecedented level of excellence and renown it currently enjoys. Now, with the next millennium fast approaching, University leaders are setting their sights even higher.

“As a university, we continue to grow in stature,” President Diether H. Haenicke said during last fall’s “State of the University” address. “We’re an ascending national university, poised to rise to the next level in everything we do.”

Clearly, words like “average,” “ordinary,” and “normal” haven’t suited WMU for a long time. The list of its national rankings and outstanding accomplishments just keeps growing.

In 1996, for example, U.S. News and World Report placed WMU in the “major leagues of American higher education” for the seventh consecutive year. This was the same year the University distinguished itself by:

- Enrolling yet again some of the most academically talented freshmen students in the state and nation.
- Hiring nearly 100 superbly qualified new faculty members.
- Achieving new records for grant funding and private support.
- Beginning construction of one of the most sophisticated science research complexes in the Midwest.
- Leading all Michigan universities in the number of undergraduate international students.
- Playing host to scholars from around the world at acclaimed WMU-sponsored international conferences.

The University has earned its reputation as a quality, national institution. Its students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends built a foundation of excellence that has stood the test of time. Maintaining the momentum to climb higher mountains will be the next great adventure.

The future is filled with unbelievable opportunities, Haenicke said in last year’s “State of the University” address. But it’s also filled with potential obstacles, he warned.

“Our rise to the level of national recognition has brought along the joy and challenge of competing on the national level—competing for faculty, for research funds, and for students,” he said.

Although Haenicke noted that WMU is doing well in all three of those categories, the president stressed that the University can’t afford to become complacent, especially in the area of service delivery.

“Our students and their parents look at quality and price; quality and convenience—that is, flexibility and accessibility,” he said. “We’re to be held accountable for how we spend the public tax dollar, how we spend our time, how much our students learn in our classes, and we have to convince a critical public why we should have lifetime appointments or tenure when that isn’t a way of life anymore for most other Americans.”

But unlike many of its sister institutions, he added, WMU is on the rise and making dramatic progress.

Behind us lies another banner year,” he said. “We’re moving forcefully forward on the national scene. We are indeed an ascending national university. There seems to be no limit to what we can do if we resolve to do it together.”

See related story starting on page 3
State appropriations process continues

WMU seeking recognition for its unique status

Western Michigan University continues to seek a mid-tier funding floor that would recognize its unique status as Michigan's only public Doctoral I institution, officials said after the state Senate approved a 4.5 percent increase in state appropriations for WMU and most other public universities.

"We are pleased with this increase and that it is substantially above what was originally recommended," said Keith A. Pretty, vice president for external affairs and general counsel. "But we continue to seek recognition of our status as the state's fourth largest and most complex university."

The executive branch's initial recommendation was for an across-the-board 2.5 percent increase while the House of Representatives approved a 5.5 percent increase for higher education. Final action was not expected before the end of June.

At 4.5 percent, WMU's increase will be $4.7 million, for a total appropriation of $104.8 million for the state's 1997-98 fiscal year that starts in October. WMU seeks a percentage increase that is greater than the one recommended for most institutions, because of its unique status.

"The current proposal includes a floor for the state's master's-level institutions to assure that their funding does not fall below $4,537 per student," Pretty said. "Yet no such floor has been established for doctoral and research institutions."

These designations are based on categories established by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Carnegie Foundation provides the nation's only comprehensive classification of more than 3,600 institutions of higher education. In addition to Michigan's only public Doctoral I university, WMU is the largest such institution in the nation.

"We are Michigan's fourth-largest university and the fourteenth in the level of tuition and fees it charges its students," Pretty said. "Our hope is that we will receive from the Legislature some consideration each year that we are, in fact, far behind in funding." Pretty said.

"Neither can the University afford to remain thirteenth in the level of tuition and fees it charges its students," he said. "The issue is not so much the percentage of increase that tuition and fees are raised as it is the actual additional cost to students in comparison with others who have similar credits and have been evaluated and assist director of alumnus relations.

Honors, awards, and notable recognition


Dr. Alan D. Poling, professor of psychology, has received the 1996 Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award. The award is WMU's highest honor for an individual faculty member. Poling joined WMU in 1983.

Dr. Michael K. "Bud" Bender has been named assistant vice president for external affairs and director of development. Since 1991, Bender had been vice president and executive director of the Borges Foundation in Kalamazoo. Previously, he worked for the University of Missouri at Columbia, serving as development director for its law school.

Bender succeeds Alvin Beach, WMU's director of development since 1979. Beach is serving as director of development for its law school. Bender is a former Department of Mathematics and chairperson of the faculty who conducted exceptional research and long served his department. Cornish joined WMU in 1987. She is a former Department of Dance chairperson who collaborated with a professor of dance, the award is WMU's highest honor for a faculty member. Poling joined WMU in 1983.

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The exceptional business as usual at WMU

Teaching and Research

Some of the most respected and innovative academic programs in the United States have been introduced or refined by Western Michigan University.

A pioneer in several important disciplines, WMU is recognized as a comprehensive, national university. It has also earned an international reputation in fields as diverse as blind rehabilitation, paper science, medieval studies, graph theory, and substance abuse treatment.

Graduating with a WMU degree helps pave the way for success in today's competitive marketplace. And the six academic colleges that bestow these degrees aren't about to slow their ascent to even higher levels of excellence.

College of Arts and Sciences

WMU's largest academic unit, the College of Arts and Sciences, offers more degree programs to more students than any other college and supports the largest collection of laboratories and research centers on campus.

In recent years, the college has instituted several quality-oriented initiatives at both the undergraduate and the graduate level. These initiatives not only preserve and advance excellence, they also ensure students are well prepared to address today's changing world.

For instance, the college's revised Liberal Education Curriculum requires undergraduate students to explore areas such as responsible decision making, critical thinking, social pluralism, and formative ideas as well as the more traditional liberal arts fields.

A few other Haworth College of Business contributions to WMU's academic excellence include:

- Resuming the master of business administration degree program so it's more "user friendly" and responsive to today's business environment.
- Sponsoring international trade conferences and setting up its own student exchange programs with universities abroad.
- Offering the country's first undergraduate major in integrated supply management, which has been nationally recognized for its bold innovation and practicality.
- Bringing the first master of business administration degree live by satellite to individuals and companies across Michigan.

College of Education

The College of Education is one of the largest preparers of education professionals in the United States. In Michigan alone, more than 8,000 alumni are teaching and nearly 1,000 others are serving as school administrators, supervisors, and counselors.

Committed to the ideal that learning is a lifelong process, the college offers comprehensive programs for educators at all levels as well as a variety of non-teaching programs. All of these academic programs are fully accredited, attesting to the stature of each curriculum.

Research conducted by the college's faculty and students often impacts education at both the state and the national level. This research emphasizes applied experiences and prepares students to work in a culturally diverse, ever-changing technical society.

A few other College of Education contributions to WMU's academic excellence include:

- Earning praise from the National Council for Accreditation of Teachers for having an Intern Teaching Program that's exemplary and a model for the rest of the country.
- Directing one of the largest projects in Michigan to connect schools to the Internet and other worldwide computer resources.
- Implementing one of the first early intervention programs to reduce reading failure in the country and the first such program in Michigan.
- Strengthening graduation standards, such as being one of the nation's first universities to require a science/mathematics minor for all elementary education majors.

College of Engineering and Applied Sciences

With a commitment to academic excellence and hands-on learning, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences continues to gain national recognition. In 1996, for example, U.S. News and World Report ranked the college in the nation's top thirty undergraduate engineering programs among comparable institutions. In addition, employers consistently commend WMU engineers for their scientific knowledge and willingness and ability to work as part of a team.

The college maintains close relationships with business and industry, ensuring that it keeps pace with scientific advances and that its programs and equipment are relevant and up to date. These relationships are most visible in WMU's laboratories, where industry scientists team up with faculty members to develop new products and unravel scientific mysteries.

A few other College of Engineering and Applied Sciences contributions to WMU's academic excellence include:

- Housing both paper and printing pilot plants on the same campus, making WMU the only university in the world with this superior technical capability on site.
- Developing special customized programs for Michigan employers, such as the bachelor's degree in manufacturing engineering that's offered only in Muskegon.
- Serving as a partner on more than twenty student organizations, giving budding engineers an opportunity to learn more about various careers and to rub shoulders with professionals in their field.

College of Fine Arts

The College of Fine Arts has always been on the cutting edge of education in the visual and performing arts. The first college of fine arts in Michigan, it maintains this edge through quality instruction and superb facilities.

The college's four acclaimed, nationally accredited units offer exceptional programs in art, dance, music, and theatre. And they provide some of the best facilities...
Continued from page 3

in the country for teaching, performing, and exhibiting.

These state-of-the-art facilities frequently serve as models for other schools seeking to upgrade their buildings.

Fine arts students also have access to a wealth of internships, student organizations, and performance opportunities to help round out their educational experiences. On the college alone, students and faculty members present some 1,200 performances and exhibitions each year to audiences totaling more than 400,000.

WMU's academic excellence includes:

- Graduating the largest single group of art teachers in Michigan and producing one of only three undergraduate programs in the state accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

- Offering the largest of Michigan's two accredited dance programs and representing the only university to have both a faculty- and student-choreographed dance selected for performance at the 1996 International Jazz World Congress.

- Having its theatre department selected to compete in American College Theatre Festival regional competitions more times than any other school in Michigan.

- Being home to the internationally acclaimed vocal jazz group, Gold Company, which has received outstanding performance citations from Down Beat magazine for the last fifteen years and was the only university vocal jazz ensemble in the world invited to perform at the 1993 World Symposium on Choral Music.

**College of Health and Human Services**

The College of Health and Human Services is WMU's strongest academically; yet, it makes an enormous impact because of its long tradition of promoting innovative professional education, cutting-edge research, and practical experiences for students.

That tradition began in the early part of the twentieth century and remains an integral part of the college's seven schools and departments. For alumni, the emphasis on innovation, research, and practical experience translates into exceptionally high job placement rates.

The high demand is due in part to the college's state-of-the-art clinical facilities, where students gain experiences working directly with clients under the watchful eye of the latest technology common in today's business world.

Additionally, while major projects have garnered most of the limelight, dozens of smaller, less noticeable enhancements have spruced up campus and contributed to the comfort and health of students. For instance, WMU has:

- Remodeled heavy-traffic offices to improve service.
- Improved accessibility for handicapped students.
- Mounted a $320 million construction project to build for the twenty-first century and beyond.
- Ascended its high-quality national institution wouldn't have been possible without such a well-planned investment in its future.

- Those forecasts have led to a rich mix of modern classrooms, cutting-edge laboratories, stately historic buildings, and sophisticated computing and communication facilities, all in beautifully landscaped surroundings.

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  - Remodeled heavy-traffic offices to improve service.
  - Improved accessibility for handicapped students.
  - Wired all of campus for data hook up.
  - Installed brown and gold flags, banners, and signs.
  - Installed more outdoor lights and emergency call boxes.

Even Buster could use a refresher course

Even Buster Bronco, WMU's resident mascot, needs a refresher course now and then. After all, he's been a bit preoccupied with $50 million in improvements to his favorite athletic and recreational stomping grounds.

The three-phase construction project was begun in 1991 and expanded and remodeled Read Fieldhouse, transformed the old Gary Physical Education Center into the new, state-of-the-art Student Recreation Center, and spruced up Waldo Stadium with permanent lights, more seating, and a gold-trimmed facade complete with lightning bolts. More athletic and recreational facility changes are described on page 5 in the "Bronco Athletics" section.

Surveying his domain today, Buster might start his tour at the heart of West Campus. In 1991 this area became an information paradise with Waldo Library's expansion and renovation in conjunction with construction of the University Computing Center.

Those two facilities give students and West Michigan residents ready access to a wealth of worldwide information resources. Their distinctive look and connecting tower also provide a feast for the eyes, especially with the 1994 addition of the Fountain Plaza and its Trustee Fountain water sculpture, which celebrates the WMU Board of Trustees' thirtieth anniversary.

A similar building boom will be visible just a few steps away by the redesigned Fine Arts Plaza. Encircled by Miller Auditorium, the Dalton Center, and the Gilmore Theatre Complex, this area offers some of the nation's best fine arts facilities. It changed markedly in 1995 when a new choral and instrumental music building, Potter Auditorium was built and again in 1995 when a $5.4 million educational wing was added to Shaw Theatre and York Arena to create the University's new School of Nursing.

**Science education becomes focal point**

Buster's tour wouldn't be complete without a stroll along the Campus Mall where WMU's main science and technology buildings are located. Here, he'd come face to face with the University's most important building project of the last decade—a $45.3 million retrofit of Wood Hall in conjunction with construction of the Science Research Pavilion.

Wood will be completed in 1998 and the pavilion in 1999. These structures will join Rood Hall and Everett Tower to form a Science Quadrangle that will transform the west edge of campus into a focal point for science instruction and research.

The pavilion will feature a 2,900-square-foot imaging center, a 3,700-square-foot animal facility, and a BL-3 biological laboratory that meets stringent requirements for conducting research with highly contagious viruses. It will be one of the few research facilities in American higher education equipped with a high volume air movement system with separate atmospheres for each of the various laboratories. It also will be the only place in the country where geology teachers and researchers have year-round, in-house access to a variety of drilled wells.

Additional surprises waiting for Buster on this part of his tour are the Lee Honors College, built in 1990 for WMU's growing population of academically talented students; the nearby Promenade, built in 1993 for special activities and a place where students can just hang out; and Schneider Hall, built in 1991 near the Fetzer Center to house the Haworth College of Business in a facility that features the advanced communication and computer technology common in today's business world.

**East Campus grows in stature, triples in size**

Dazzled by all the marvels he's been seeing, Buster might decide to head over to East Campus, WMU's original site. Surely this area couldn't have changed much! Well, WMU's commitment to building for the future is becoming visible on this historic campus, too.

Several structures, including Spindler, Vandercook, and Walwood halls, have been renovated for classrooms and offices. More of these early structures are slated for renovation, and in 1999, $5 million in enhancements will become available.

New construction is evident here, as well. The impressive University Medical and Health Sciences Center now stands near the corner of Oliver Street and Oakland Drive. This $9 million center was a joint project of Michigan State University, Borgess Medical Center, Bronson Methodist Hospital, and WMU. Dedicated in 1996, it houses many of WMU's health and human services clinics in addition to providing specialized training to resident physicians and medical students. Situated next door in the renovated E. Wilbur Building is WMU's new School of Nursing, already touted nationally for its community focus.
But changes to the fifty-five acre East Campus are only beginning. Early this year, Michigan lawmakers transferred the largest portion of WMU's Old Main to the university and permits were obtained for the new group of health facilities into a “health care corridor.”

Alumni and friends across the country are marveling at how far WMU has gone global in a big way—with its students, faculty, and opportunities for international experiences. “The bottom line is that in today's global marketplace, doing business effectively requires competence in other languages and real-life experience living in other cultures,” says Dr. Howard J. Dooley, executive director of WMU's Office of International Affairs. “To meet these challenges, the University has developed a comprehensive strategy for internationalization.

President Haenicke says that the number of domestic students studying abroad for a semester or more is at least 300 per year.” Dooley says, “and to recruit new faculty with international expertise and experience at a rate of up to four to six a year, building a cadre of up to fifty new international faculty over the next decade.”

WMU is well-positioned to achieve such goals. Starting with the enrollment of its first international student a half century ago, it began making a name for itself as a major “importer” of those who are studying abroad.

More coming and going planned

Among Carnegie Doctoral I institutions today, WMU ranks among the nation's top fifty universities in terms of international population and enrolts the largest number of undergraduate international students in Michigan. This year, the University has 1,742 students from 90 countries, representing 6.8 percent of total enrollment. The largest contingent, 703 students, is from Malaysia, where the University has a “twinning” program with Sunway College. Rounding out the top five are Japan, India, Thailand, and South Korea.

The twinning program is a unique arrangement enabling students to complete the first two years of their WMU degree in their home country. The University currently has a twinning program with Hong Kong Baptist University in addition to Sunway, but WMU officials are exploring other such arrangements with universities in Singapore, Indonesia, and India.

Efforts to expand the University's role as an “exporter” of American-born students have revolved around expand-
Mayors return to school

Detroit Mayor Dennis W. Archer, B.S.'60, returned to campus March 11 to participate in the Haworth College of Business' Distinguished Speaker Series. In his presentation, "A Partnership Spirit," Archer traced the city's history and touched on the role of business and business collaborations that are integral to its revitalization.

"The Haworth College of Business provides an invaluable opportunity for us to call on from the operational demands of office and academia in order to share ideas," he said.

"The impact of managed care on the health care system is an office that is not easily comprehended. The operation is not the driving force for advancing both the human condition and the complex social organization into which we are called to serve."

Alumni Association new members

We at the WMU Alumni Association would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest members. We would like to extend our congratulations to you for your continued interest in your University through life membership in our organization.

Robert E. Adams, BBA '82, Michigan's nearly 105,000 alumni and friends, will receive a monthly alumni newsletter that contains information about University events and activities, as well as alumni news and features.

Jackson (James) H. White, BBA '63, will be appointed as the first director of the Alumni Association, a position he will assume in May 1997.

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The exceptional is business as usual

Continued from page 5

Darnell left his post as defensive coordinator at the University of Texas to take over the Bronco football program at the end of the season. He and his staff have prior experience with schools in the Southeast. Consequently, the head coach role at Western Michigan University is now filled by a man with successive experience in the MAC. Facilities number among Michigan's best. WMU's campus features some of the finest recreational and athletic facilities in the Midwest. While meeting the health, athletic, and recreational needs of students, faculty, and staff members, these top-notch facilities allow WMU's athletic teams to be competitive in the MAC. The refurbished University Arena in Read Fieldhouse provides seating for 5,800 spectators in a bright, attractive venue that serves as home to Bronco men's and women's basketball teams. The arena houses a fully-equipped weight room that is used by all eighteen varsity teams.

"It's a first-class facility for lifting and conditioning," head coach Bill Wilkinson says, "The University Arena and recreational buildings are extremely functional, especially for athletic purposes. When recruits see the place, they really get excited." Elsewhere in Read, student-athletes have access to a modernized athletic training and development area that is unmatched in the MAC. The Read upgrade also allowed Division of InterCollegiate Athletics staff to relocate. More coaches and administrators work side-by-side rather than in different buildings spread across campus. The Student Recreation Center adjacent to Read provides a space for student and faculty members looking to stay in shape. But Bronco teams also take pride in the more than sixty sports that are offered, including team sports, individual sports, and intramural training for the baseball and softball squads.

"We have an excellent weight room," athletic director Howard Smith says, "It's a great facility, and we have never finished lower than third place, has led the Broncos to a 74-15 record and two MAC titles in the 1990s. Prominent new features include seating for 30,200, Prescription Athletic Turf, permanent lighting, a $200,000 scoreboard, an expanded pressbox, and the John G. Leafdheim Clubhouse. Nearby Track Now sports lights of its own, a 400-meter Olympic track surface, and the Alumni Track Building.

In a much-needed soccer complex was completed last year off of Portage Avenue. It serves as home for the field for the men's and women's soccer. The women's team, which debuted a varsity sport this past fall, are one of the nation's most successful soccer clubs.

However, it isn't the only campus club that excels outside of the limelight of intercollegiate athletics. For example, the men's hockey club, the Stallions, was the 1996 American Collegiate Hockey Association champion and was elevated this year from Division II to Division I. Other improvements during the last few years have involved upgrading athletic and recreational facilities that are open to large numbers of WMU students. These include beefing up what's available in residence halls, building tennis courts in Goldsworth Valley, and installing lights at some intramural fields.

Record of achievement keeps growing

WMU hockey coach Bill Wilkinson, a three-time Central Collegiate Hockey Association "coach of the year" recipient, recently recorded career win No. 200. Last season, the hockey team recorded the second most victories in a season and advanced to the NCAA championship tournament for the second time in three seasons.

The men's gymnastics team finished second nationally in team GPA last season while head coach Brigitte Laketa was named MAC "coach of the year." "It's been a very rewarding year," Coach Laketa says. "We never finished lower than third place, has led the Broncos to a 74-15 record and two MAC titles in the 1990s. Prominent new features include seating for 30,200, Prescription Athletic Turf, permanent lighting, a $200,000 scoreboard, an expanded pressbox, and the John G. Leafdheim Clubhouse. Nearby Track Now sports lights of its own, a 400-meter Olympic track surface, and the Alumni Track Building.

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WMU hockey coach Bill Wilkinson, a three-time Central Collegiate Hockey Association "coach of the year" recipient, recently recorded career win No. 200. Last season, the hockey team recorded the second most victories in a season and advanced to the NCAA championship tournament for the second time in three seasons.

The men's gymnastics team finished second nationally in team GPA last season while head coach Brigitte Laketa was named MAC "coach of the year." "It's been a very rewarding year," Coach Laketa says. "We never finished lower than third place, has led the Broncos to a 74-15 record and two MAC titles in the 1990s. Prominent new features include seating for 30,200, Prescription Athletic Turf, permanent lighting, a $200,000 scoreboard, an expanded pressbox, and the John G. Leafdheim Clubhouse. Nearby Track Now sports lights of its own, a 400-meter Olympic track surface, and the Alumni Track Building.

In a much-needed soccer complex was completed last year off of Portage Avenue. It serves as home for the field for the men's and women's soccer. The women's team, which debuted a varsity sport this past fall, are one of the nation's most successful soccer clubs.

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A message to our readers about the Westerner

Editor's note: The following letter is from Matt Kurz, B.A. '89, assistant vice president for external affairs and director of the Office of Marketing, Public Relations, and Communications.

This is the last issue of this newspaper you'll receive. It will be replaced, come fall, with a new University magazine, and it's taking shape right now:

Our University, vice president for external affairs and general counsel, preferred this target:

"We decided it was time to look at one of WMU's major publications, the Westerner, and take it to the next level. Our goal is to reflect the move of the whole University to the next level—in teaching, in research, and in public service."

To achieve that goal, we've reached out to alumni, donors, and other friends of the University as well as to students and faculty members to get their sense of what they liked about the Westerner and what they'd like to see in a new magazine.

One way we've done this is the use of focus groups in Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, and Detroit. It's been enlightening.

To give the new magazine the best possible look, we've turned to our own Design Center—one of the University's leading academic programs. Tricia Hennessy, professor of art and director of the center, has recruited a group of four top design students to help us develop this look.

They've been laboring for much of the winter semester and spring session, coming up with a wide range of cover designs and inside treatments from which we can choose—for everything from letters to the editor to major features to something a little different at the back of the book. It's been wonderful to work with these bright, talented students!

The Design Center group, in turn, has been working with our magazine development team. That includes Mike Matthews and Jeanne Barron, the magazine's editors, and Michael Hefele, its art director. Dave Smith, director of graphics and design, serves as production coordinator.

We hope the new magazine will reflect the depth of our traditions as well as the height of our aspirations. We want you, our readers, to get the best possible picture of WMU as an aspiring national university whose growing reputation for academic excellence fosters both pride and commitment.

Let us know what you think. Send me a letter, a note, a fax, or an e-mail message, and tell me what you want to see in a new University magazine. Then look for the results this fall!

What do you think?

We'd appreciate your feedback. Give your response to the following questions.

What have you liked about the Westerner? What haven't you liked about the Westerner? What would you like to see in a WMU magazine?

Return your answers to the Office of Marketing, Public Relations, and Communications at:

Waldo Hall 240 West: Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3899
E-mail: kurz@wmich.edu Fax: (616) 387-8422

WMU’s 'greatest Bronco,' John Gill, remembered

John W. Gill, T.C. '23, B.A. '24, whose longtime affiliation with University athletics earned him the title of "Mr. Bronco," died March 4 in Kalamazoo. He was ninety-eight.

In 1939, Gill gave the University's athletic teams their Bronco nickname. He came to WMU in 1919 as a student and went on to become a star athlete in four sports, earning thirteen varsity letters. He had a brief distinguished high school coaching career before returning to the University in 1929 as a coach.

Gill was head football coach from 1942 to 1952 and also coached the baseball and basketball teams before being named associate athletic director in 1953. He retired from the position in 1969.

As a head football coach, Gill never experienced a losing season. In 1973, he became one of six charter members of the WMU Athletic Hall of Fame and was inducted into the Mid-American Conference Hall of Fame in 1994.

Last spring, the WMU Board of Trustees approved a resolution naming the open seating area at the top of the Stadium Clubhouse in Waldo Stadium for Gill. The John Gill Stadium Club was formally dedicated during the 1996 football season.

Student team will be catching a lot of rays during ultimate college road trip

With thoughts of summer sun and cross-country travel dancing in their heads, an exhausted but elated group of Western Michigan University students on June 11 unveiled their dream car for the ultimate college road trip.

The students, members of the design and development team for WMU's solar-powered race car, Sunseeker 97, have been working against the calendar and clock all spring. Nearly every spare moment has been devoted to getting ready for this year's Sunrayce, a 2,000-mile cross-country contest that pits WMU's vehicle against solar cars built by engineering teams from nearly forty other colleges and universities.

Sponsored by General Motors, EDS, and the U.S. Department of Energy, the ten-day race begins June 19 in Indianapolis, Indiana, and concludes in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year's team hopes its shorter, lighter, and faster Sunseeker design will allow WMU to improve its previous race record.

The University captured eighth place in the 1990 inaugural Sunrayce and came in eighteenth in 1993 and eighth in 1995. WMU achieved this nearly perfect top-ten showing while competing against teams from such schools as Stanford University, Ohio State University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston University, Yale University, and the University of Michigan.

This year, Sunseeker will tackle a route that's identical to 1995's, except that the course ends in Colorado Springs rather than Golden, Colorado. Along the way, racers will pass through or stop at solar farms, solar projects, and also coach the baseball and basketball teams before being named associate athletic director in 1953. He retired from the position in 1969.

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But those weren't the only activities on the agenda for Hunt, a graduate student in computer science, and Jones, an elementary education major. When Sunseeker and its competitors paraded into Smith Center on Pay Seven of the race, the competing teams probably won't be able to avoid seeing some of the 300 "W" posters the two distributed during their visit. But even more meaningful will be the presence of many of the children Hunt and Jones met while making educational presentations at Smith Center schools.

"We went there to show off our car and give the kids information about solar energy," Jones says. "We wanted them to learn something from our team's experience."