



FAIRMONT STATE FOUNDATION

Official Newsletter - September 2020

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Second annual Falcon Day of Giving scheduled for Oct. 29

With a goal of raising \$250,000 in one day, alumni and friends will once again have the chance to double their contribution to Fairmont State University on the second Falcon Day of Giving to be held October 29.

Fairmont State Foundation is encouraging those who want to take advantage of this opportunity to create a donation strategy, from deciding what programs they would like to support to encouraging friends, family and fellow alumni to participate.

"On just one day last year, we were able to raise nearly \$200,000 from more than 160 loyal donors who wanted to make a difference at Fairmont State University," said Julie Cryser, president of the Fairmont State Foundation. "The most successful fund raising came from departments, schools and athletic teams that developed strong strategies to make the most of the day."

Last year, the Fairmont State baseball team took full advantage of the program and was able to raise more than \$10,000 to support the Friends of Baseball account, which funds team travel and other expenses. Baseball players rallied alumni, friends and parents to log in at 12:01 a.m. on the Day of Giving.

"We raised as much money for the Friends of Baseball account in one day as we do with several of our events," said Baseball Coach Phil Caruso.

The matches and challenges and work put into gathering support ahead of the day paid off for many academic units, programs and projects.

Kestrel: A Journal of Literature & Art, a juried literary publication, is produced twice a year at Fairmont State University. *Kestrel* publishes fiction, poetry, poetry in translation, creative non-fiction, bookreviews, and visual art by established and emerging writers and artists, and is especially pleased to publish work by West Virginian and Appalachian writers and artists.

Last year, with the assistance of the Fairmont State Foundation, a graduate student sent a letter to those who had supported the publication in the past. Professors and supporters encouraged donors to give and raised more than \$3,000 for the publication.

They took advantage of matches and challenges to increase support. The money raised represents about a year's budget for the production of the publication.

"*Kestrel's* commitment to publishing high quality work from around the world and bringing contributors to Fairmont State's campus for biannual celebrations and provides students with opportunities to network with working writers and artists," said Donna Long, who is a Fairmont State University professor and editor-in-chief of the publication. (Continued on page 4.)



Scholarship created in honor of Tucker County alumnus

The parents of a former Fairmont State University student who died last year have created, with the help of several other donors, a new scholarship to support students studying occupational safety and to honor their late son's memory.

Ellen and Ronnie Shaffer topped off a scholarship fund raising effort to endow the Bradley Parker Shaffer Scholarship. The endowment will provide scholarships to Fairmont State University students studying occupational safety, preferably from Tucker County. If no student is eligible from Tucker County, first preference is for a student from West Virginia. Students must have a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average. The scholarship fund will provide about \$1,000 annually for scholarships.

"We had life insurance money in place to repay any loans borrowed for his education, which we learned would be discharged due to his death," said Ellen. "We felt the best thing to do was to give the money that would have been used to repay his loan to Fairmont State University to provide an opportunity for others to reach their goals. We could not think of a more fitting tribute to honor Bradley's memory."

Ellen described Bradley as a vibrant young man whose life was cut short at the age of 24. He was a graduate of Fairmont State University, class of 2018. He graduated with a bachelor's in occupational safety and an associate's in safety engineering technology and held the designation of a Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP).

As a student in occupational safety, Bradley fulfilled an internship requirement under the direction of the Fairmont State Safety Manager Craig Crimm.

"He was an exceptional intern and was a tremendous help with the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) program on campus," said Crimm. "He was very detailed in his work and was always eager to learn more. You couldn't ask more from an intern."

When Bradley's family notified Crimm of Bradley's death, he initiated fund raising for a one-time scholarship in memory of Bradley.

"Our hearts were so touched by his act of



Bradley Parker Shaffer

thoughtfulness in honoring the memory of our son that we decided to pass along the opportunity to friends and family to contribute as well."

After those contributions were made, the Shaffers added the additional funds required to permanently endow this scholarship. They also provided funding to allow the first scholarship to be given for the 2020-21 year.

"Because Bradley was unable to live out his passion for workplace safety, it was important to our family for Bradley's vision to be extended to a student who also had the same desire," Ellen said. "By establishing this scholarship, we hope to continue Bradley's legacy of reaching out to care for others. Hope for the future is given by sharing his legacy and his story."

The Shaffers said they also want to thank those who contributed to Bradley's scholarship fund.

"I extend to each of you a sincere 'thank you'. Whether you gave \$5 or \$1,000, he would be so proud to know you thought enough of him to give to this fund to help his memory live on," Ellen said.

"We are so appreciative of this gift to support occupational safety students," said Julie R. Cryser, Fairmont State Foundation president. "Out of tragedy, the Shaffers and other donors have created a legacy for Bradley that will assist future students for years to come."

Fairmont State offers both a two- and four-year degree in occupational safety.

Art Professor, students create mural in Palatine Park

Even with changes due to COVID-19, Fairmont State University's Joel Dugan, chair of the Department of Architecture, Art, and Design, and a group of students were able to complete their public mural project in Palatine Park in just 10 days.

Dugan said he presented the idea last November to the Marion County Commission as a public art piece, asking for help funding the project and providing materials. While the ground up to the wall is owned by the county, the wall is owned by the city.

"This was very unique that we haven't had the City, University, and County collaborate at this level. Everything went well with getting the unanimous support and we got everything on the books for a course in the spring," Dugan said. "It was a public art course as a temporary class with the hopes of painting the mural at the end of the spring semester."

Before leaving due to COVID-19, Dugan said the students had seven and a half weeks to research content on public art and develop a sketch. The students have primarily only created work for themselves as the primary client, not for the general populous, so they had to look into iconography and liked the idea of a type of human experience.

"The students wanted to focus on people who are often overlooked, those who are in trade work," he said. "Students selected the figures and presented research proposals to the class. We had 12 students but at the end only five were able to be there to paint the mural."

The figures are luminaries or people who saw change in society and had the ability to transform the community where they lived. Dugan said these people say some type of transition or significant awakening take place during their lifetime.

The figures in the mural include:

- Johnnie Johnson - rock 'n' roll legend
- Col. George S. "Spanky" Roberts - the first African American military pilot from West Virginia
- Julia Pierpont - the wife of Francis Pierpont, the originator of Memorial Day
- "Aunt Hat" Wilson - thought to be the last slave born in West Virginia
- Coal Miner - a tribute to all the coal miners in West Virginia



"The public support was so amazing," Dugan said. "To see people come by daily, honk their horn or sit in their cars and yell encouraging support, it was incredible. We don't live in an area with a lot of art venues, but this allowed the students to really blossom so much."

Tom Mainella, Fairmont City Council member, said Dugan brought the idea to commission and everyone was in favor with it.

"We provided some financial help. It didn't get done in the spring like it was expected to but the students persevered and they got it finished," he said. "It's just beautiful. We are very happy how the project went and how it came to fruition."

The project is a wonderful example of how the three entities can put their heads together and do something positive, Mainella said. He looks forward to other projects they might be able to accomplish in the future.

"There's still a lot of wall over there and hopefully we will be able to do some more with Fairmont State and the Art Department to get more of that wall painted," he said. "What they did was really beautiful. I, as a citizen, appreciate the efforts and on behalf of the City Council, we are very happy we were able to contribute financially and legislatively to make it happen."

Marion County Administrator Kris Cinalli said the County Commission is excited to have the University as a partner.

"This was a great way to add an awesome amenity to the park that pays homage to the past with a nod towards the future," he said. "We're hoping it's only the beginning for projects like this," Cinalli said.

SAFE program offers students immediate financial assistance

More than 30 Fairmont State students have received just over \$4,500 in Falcon Student Academic Financial Emergency (SAFE) assistance since the program's inception in late April.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, nearly \$20,000 has been raised in recent months to support students. Most of the funds were utilized to purchase food as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic that shut down the University in March to on-campus teaching and lead to a state shutdown for all non-essential businesses for about six weeks.

Fairmont State University created the Falcon SAFE program to provide limited, one-time financial assistance to enrolled students who are unable to pay immediate, essential expenses because of temporary hardship related to emergency situations.



FALCON SAFE PROGRAM
STUDENT ACADEMIC FINANCIAL EMERGENCY

"This global crisis has changed all our lives," Mirta M. Martin, president of Fairmont State University, said. "But for many of our most vulnerable students, the impact has been devastating. SAFE funds are doing just what we hoped – helping Falcon students meet essential needs, and mitigating the impact on their educational aspirations. This is what being a part of the Falcon Family is all about. I'm humbled, but not surprised, by our community's generosity."

President Martin and her husband made the initial leadership gift to jumpstart the SAFE fundraising campaign. Members from the Board of Governors, Foundation Board and Alumni Association also joined in the effort, as well as dozens of alumni and friends of the university.

The Fairmont State Foundation lead the fundraising efforts, including pivoting the annual fund campaign to assist with raising dollars for the Falcon SAFE program and sending out fund requests through social media and email.

"We were not surprised by the overwhelming support of our Falcon Family who are facing financial difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and other emergency situations where they may need help," said Julie Cryser, President of the Fairmont State Foundation. "We have a strong and loyal donor base who are supportive of our students, especially in a time of need. We want to thank everyone who has contributed to this fund to ensure our students' safety."

Donors may still give to the Falcon SAFE program at www.fairmontstate.edu/givesafe. The university is still accepting student applications for Falcon SAFE funding by visiting www.fairmontstate.edu/SAFE.

Second Annual Falcon Day of Giving (Cont'd from page 1)

Fairmont State faculty, alumni and friends can also sign up to be social media ambassadors for the day. A complete toolkit and suggested posts will be provided to volunteers who want to share and encourage others to give.

Jessica Sharps served as a social media ambassador last year, sending social media posts leading up the event and on that day to encourage people to give. She reached hundreds of friends and alumni to encourage them to log in and take advantage of the matches and challenges.

"I've been a member of the Falcon Family for nearly 15 years and know that the Falcon spirit runs deep within our region, as well as throughout the state, and even the world," said Sharps. "I encourage anyone who loves to use the power of social media to share information and encourage others to participate in this year's Day of Giving as an ambassador."

Falcon Day of Giving matches and challenges

Donors have contributed more than \$125,000 to the Fairmont State Foundation in advance of Oct. 29 to create matches and challenges for various programs, schools and athletics. Those matches and challenges include:

Sponsored by Rogers Electrical Contracting Company

- Academic Program Dollar for Dollar Match \$10,000
- Athletic Program Dollar for Dollar Match \$10,000
- Women's Basketball Dollar for Dollar Match \$5,000

Sponsored by The Mike Ross Family Foundation

- Academic Scholarship Match (\$10,000)
- Athletic Scholarship Match (\$10,000)

Sponsored by Tom and Lori Kliethermes

- Academic Scholarship Match \$10,000
- Athletic Scholarship Match \$5,000

Sponsored by Robert "Buck" Thompson

- Women's Tennis Dollar for Dollar Match (\$7,500)
- Men's Tennis Dollar for Dollar Match (\$7,500)

Sponsored by Middletown Properties, Inc.

- Academic Scholarship Match (\$5,000)
- Football Dollar for Dollar Match (\$5,000)

Sponsored by William M. and Lois Muto Laughlin

- Athletic Scholarship Match (\$2,500)
- School of Business & Aviation Dollar for Dollar Match (\$2,000)
- School of Education, Health & Human Performance Dollar for Dollar Match (\$2,000)
- School of Nursing Dollar for Dollar Match (\$2,000)
- College of Liberal Arts Dollar for Dollar Match (\$2,000)
- College of Science & Technology Dollar for Dollar Match (\$2,000)

Sponsored by John and Cindy Ebert DBA McDonalds

- Men's Basketball Dollar for Dollar Match (\$7,500)

Sponsored by David and Noel Goldberg

- Board of Governors Chairman's Challenge (\$5,000)

Sponsored by Jennifer and Scott Kinty

- Foundation Board Chair's Match (\$5,000)

Sponsored by Gary and Renee LeDonne

- Academic Happy Hour Challenge (\$5,000)

Sponsored by the Roger Lehosit Family Foundation

- Falcon Fund Greatest Needs Match (\$5,000)

Sponsored by an Anonymous Donor

- Academic Scholarship Match (\$5,000)

Sponsored by Dr. Mirta and John Martin

- Studio Arts Dollar for Dollar Match (\$1,000)
- Baseball Dollar for Dollar Match (\$1,000)
- Marching Band Dollar for Dollar Match (\$500)

Sponsored by an Anonymous Donor

- Dr. J. Robert Baker Honors Program Fund Dollar for Dollar Match (\$2,000)

Sponsored by Brad Hibbs

- Wrestling Program Dollar for Dollar Match (\$1,000)
- Football Program Dollar for Dollar Match (\$1,000)

Sponsored by Foundation President Julie R. Cryser

- Dollars for Donors Lunch Time Rush (\$1,000)



For more information about matches and challenges, please visit <https://falconsgive.fsufoundation.org/prizes>

We look forward to your participation in the second annual Falcon Day of Giving!

Contact us

www.fsufoundation.org | 304-534-8786 | fsf@fsufoundation.org



**FAIRMONT STATE
FOUNDATION**

University receives grant for campus sustainability projects

Fairmont State University's Creative Sustainability Council (CSC), a campus organization focused on sustainability initiatives for the University and community, has been awarded a grant of \$27,120 from the Appalachian Stewardship Foundation (ASF) to implement two sustainability initiatives on campus this summer.

The CSC, a group of students, faculty, and staff whose goal is to enrich and extend sustainability practices on campus, is guided by Dr. Erica Harvey, Abelina Suarez Professor of Chemistry at Fairmont State University. Harvey is using her Suarez professorship to support student-centered sustainability initiatives that are fun and community-building, in addition to being practical and impactful.



The first initiative, a glass recycling program, will introduce a glass crusher to campus. This equipment converts glass waste like pasta sauce jars and soda bottles into sand that can be used for a variety of applications. Glass waste generated on campus by employees and students will be converted to sand for use in campus landscaping projects, offsetting the expense of buying sand each year. Community members will be able to use the crusher to recycle their own glass waste into sand, which they can take home and use for personal projects.

The second initiative will introduce a composting program on campus. With over 3,800 students, Fairmont State University's dining hall generates around 100 pounds of total food waste per day. To reduce the amount of waste being hauled to landfills in half, two commercially available, in-vessel systems will be installed behind the Falcon Student Center. The combination of food waste and carbon source materials (yard and grounds waste) in the vessels are anticipated to generate 18 tons of compost and greenhouse gas reductions of approximately 7.5 metric tons per year.

The Appalachian Stewardship Foundation was created as a result of a settlement with Longview Power that set up a mitigation fund to correct the damage to the environment caused by the mining and burning of coal. To date, ASF has awarded more than 1.3 million dollars in funds to promote their mission.

Campus highlights

Alumnus appointed to Board of Governors: Governor Jim Justice has announced the appointment of Fairmont native Jason Pizatella to the Fairmont State University Board of Governors. In a related announcement, Gov. Justice reappointed Deborah Prezioso and Wendy Adkins.

Bamberger named Athletic Director: Fairmont State University announced that Greg Bamberger has been named the new Director of Athletics to lead the Fighting Falcons Athletics Program. No stranger to DII administration and the Atlantic Region, Bamberger has just completed his 15th year as the Director of Athletics at Kutztown University, a member of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference.

Director of Road and Grounds receives award from Arts and Humanities Commission: Fairmont State University's Jamie Colanero, Director of Road and Grounds, was recognized by the Fairmont Arts and Humanities Commission with an award for landscape design.

Alumnus named Executive Director of Advising and Career Success: Fairmont State University is happy to welcome John Devault as the Executive Director for Advising and Career Success. A Fairmont State graduate himself, Devault says the University played a large role in helping him become the person he is.

A West Virginia novelist gives back



A novelist can spend years writing a book, putting her heart and soul into crafting every last sentence. And then it finally gets published and she does her best to promote the book far and wide. That is, unless, the writer finds herself publishing a book during a pandemic.

That's exactly what happened to Fairmont State alumnus Donna Meredith, whose sixth book was released back in March – just as everyone began sheltering in place. Her public speaking events were cancelled, and book signings were indefinitely postponed.

Our interview with her on a recent fall morning was taking place over video chat. "Zoom is great," she said. "I put on this" – she points to her light blue blouse – "and you think I'm dressed like a

businesswoman. But down here" – she lifts her laptop to show her legs – "I'm just wearing running shorts."

Whether it's on Zoom or in the pages of her new novel, Meredith knows how to paint a picture and tell a story. "Buried Seeds" is the tale of two West Virginia women, separated by time but bonded by family. Half of the book takes place in 1903 where we meet Rosella, an activist working to win the right for all women to vote. The other part of the story takes place in 2017, when Rosella's great-great-granddaughter Angie is working to achieve better pay and healthcare benefits for teachers in the Appalachian state. Meredith used the real-life West Virginia's teachers' strike – which made national headlines – as fodder for her Harrison County-set book.

"I really related to the teachers and was so proud of them when I heard that they walked out and they stayed out until they got what they wanted," said Meredith, who herself was an educator for three decades. "It was just so inspiring to see teachers standing up for education and their students and their families."

As her way of giving back to the cause, Meredith is donating the proceeds from her book to help fund scholarships to those in need. A quarter of the profits are going to the Falcon Fund, a discretionary fund that can offer financial assistance to students at FSU. That kindness seems to have led to some good karma: the novel recently won the gold medal for adult fiction from the Florida Authors and Publishers Association.

A native of Clarksburg, Meredith was always attracted to the written word. In high school, she served as editor of a literary magazine. At Fairmont State, where she double majored in English and journalism, she was the features editor at the student newspaper. She graduated in the class of 1974 and spent her career teaching high school students. Eventually, she retired to the warmer weather of Florida and began a new life as a published author.

Three of her novels are set in her home state. "It's my roots," she explained. "So that's what formed me. It's important to me to show that there is a West Virginia filled with people who are not backwoods. The stereotypes are just pretty annoying sometimes – the things that people think. But there's a whole other part of the state. There's a lot of educated people, a lot of wonderful, warm, friendly people who turn out to support their neighbors when there's a loss, when there's an illness. I tried to show that in this book -- that there's that whole beautiful connection in West Virginia between the people and the love they have for each other and for their state."

When she's not writing books, Meredith and her husband John have been traveling the country in their RV. "Who knew New York State had so many waterfalls?" she asked as she retold the story of the time they visited 12 waterfalls in one day. "Gosh, it's gotten us outside in seeing the world in ways that I never would have been able to see it any other way."

As we wrap up our Zoom call, her terrier mix, Lucca, crawled into the frame. Asked where she sees herself in five years, she's quick with a response. "Well, alive – that would be the first thing," she said with a laugh. Meredith also hopes to work on a book about contemporary West Virginia writers. She lists off names of former colleagues and mentors – Lee Maynard, Chuck Kinder, Zoe Ferraris. Perhaps she could add more to that illustrious list: her own



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