

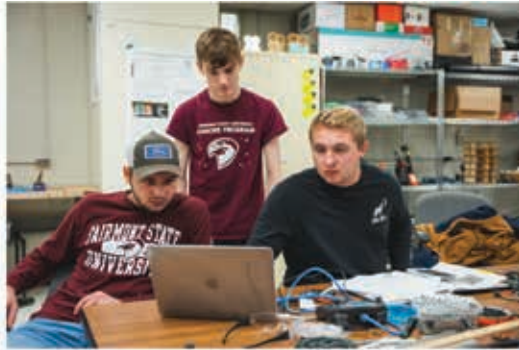


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## FAIRMONT STATE THEN AND NOW





## FAIRMONT STATE WELCOMES PRESIDENT MIKE DAVIS

During the June 29 virtual Fairmont State University Board of Governor's meeting, the Board announced the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's (HEPC) approval of Dr. Michael Davis' presidential contract. The approval of the contract by the HEPC is the final step in Fairmont State's year-long search for a new president.

"We are very pleased with the HEPC's decision to approve Dr. Davis' contract," said Board of Governors Chairman Rusty Hutson. "We look forward to welcoming Dr. Davis to campus and the future of Fairmont State with him as our president."

"My excitement to begin my new role is matched by my sincere gratitude for this opportunity," Dr. Michael Davis, president of Fairmont State University, stated. "As a higher education administrator and teacher-mentor, it's a joy to be at Fairmont State with its long-standing and genuine commitment to student success and community impact. Coalition-building is central to my strategic planning approach and leadership style, and I am eager to embed myself on campus and in the community. I am impressed by the momentum of dedicated faculty, staff and students in recent years, and I look forward to meeting more members of the Falcon family as well as working with community stakeholders."

Davis comes to Fairmont State from James Madison University (JMU) where he served as the Chief of Staff. In this role, he managed JMU's presidential priorities and directed matters of policy and institutional importance, including strategic planning, institutional research, and accreditation. His executive leadership grew from his commitment to students.

Prior to his role as Chief of Staff, Davis served as a faculty member and Director of Debate in JMU's School of Communication Studies. With debate coaching experience spanning more than 25 years, Dr. Davis leveraged alumni and external grant support to elevate JMU's Madison Debate Society to one of national renown. Dr. Davis previously taught communication studies and coached debate at Georgia State University, University of Georgia, University of Rochester, University of Louisville, Mercer University, and Syracuse University.

Davis is and will always be a communication studies scholar. As such, he relishes the opportunity to translate his academic experience in public discourse to support student success unequivocally. Mike Davis earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies from the University of Georgia. He also holds a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication and Rhetorical Studies from Syracuse University. His academic research interests center on women in the Civil Rights Movement, debate pedagogy, presidential rhetoric, and argumentation and advocacy.

To learn more about Fairmont State University President Davis, visit [www.fairmontstate.edu/about/presidents-office](http://www.fairmontstate.edu/about/presidents-office).



## SAVE THE DATES FOR HOMECOMING 2023

Thursday, September 28 through Saturday, September 30  
Learn more: [www.fsufoundation.org/homecoming](http://www.fsufoundation.org/homecoming)



## EMERITUS FEATURE: LATE 60s BASKETBALL AT FAIRMONT STATE

It's standing room only in Colebank Gym on a Saturday evening. The energy is palpable with the crowd so loud, the players can hardly hear themselves think. The players' parents all sit together and root for each player as if they are their own. A sea of familiar faces stare at the team as they cheer and stomp in hopes of another win for the Fighting Falcons. Luckily for the basketball team, Coach Retton had prepared them for this. He is well remembered by team captain Pat Sloan as saying "You're not paid to think, just make the play!"



*Coach Joe Retton with players Bill Moody (left), John Jamerson (middle), and Pat Sloan, 1969.*

### **Wayne Denham, Class of 1970**

Born in Bridgeport and raised in Pleasant Valley, Wayne Denham always knew he would be attending Fairmont State College after his high school graduation. During his time enrolled in Fairmont State, he enjoyed the family-like atmosphere and the closeness of students, staff and faculty. Whether he was walking into the Nickel for lunch or walking down the hall to Dr. Feaster's office, he always felt welcomed and had a sense of belonging. And while Wayne is very much remembered for his athletic accomplishments during his years as a Falcon, he always appreciated that the administration was sure to remember that the student-athletes were first and foremost, students.

Wayne Denham's story is unique in that he was not an avid basketball player all 4 years of high school. In fact, he didn't even play during 11th and 12th grade but when asked to try-out for the Fairmont State Basketball Team, he was ready to do so.

Wayne gives immense credit to Dave Miller for helping him prepare to play basketball as a Fighting Falcon. Dave was team captain when Wayne joined the team and took his role of leadership very seriously. Dave took the time to help Wayne develop his skills on the court and became a mentor to his younger teammate. Wayne recalls Dave's humble approach to leading the team, "When you lose, you take the blame. When you win, you give the credit to others."

Denham followed in his mentor's footsteps and became team captain the second semester of his sophomore year. He always tried to emulate the spirit of his mentor and help in the same ways that he had been helped. Wayne remembers the team always felt cohesive and united. The attitude of unison was emphasized by Coach Retton who insisted that they succeed or fail collectively.

The team's cohesive nature brought them success and the Fairmont community supported the team in an impressive manner. Wayne recalls that some families would even take their vacation around the time of the Charleston tournament. Many will remember how the Daniel Boone Hotel in Charleston became the hub for loyal Falcons and dedicated Fairmont State fans.

After graduating from Fairmont State, Wayne went overseas to continue his basketball career. He now visits Retton Arena regularly to watch his grandson play, the third generation to play basketball as a Fighting Falcon. Above all of the lessons he learned at Fairmont State, what he remembers most are the relationships built that he still holds today.



## EMERITUS FEATURE: LATE 60s BASKETBALL AT FAIRMONT STATE

### Dr. Patrick Sloan, Class of 1969

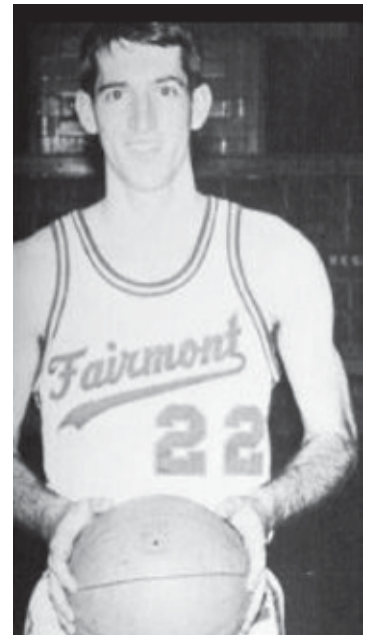
Looking back on his time at Fairmont State with fondness, Dr. Patrick "Pat" Sloan remembers the incredible impact being a student at the "College on the Hill" had on him. The relationships built and lessons learned are ones that followed him throughout his life.

Most notably, Dr. Sloan is grateful that his time at Fairmont State allowed him to meet his wife of 52 years, Carol (Priester) Sloan and the loving family that she brought with her. Carol was an elementary education major and a member of the Phi Mu sorority during her time as a Falcon. Not only was Dr. Sloan captivated by Carol, but also by the way he so quickly was welcomed and accepted by her family. Carol's father, Dr. H.G. "Jim" Priester became an important mentor to Pat. Pat describes Dr. Priester as an "outstanding man, dedicated father and superb football coach and teacher." The entire Priester family had an incredible impact on Pat both during and after his time at Fairmont State.

The immense feeling of belonging that he found with the Priester family did not end there. As he remembers it, the feeling of community and belonging could be found in every corner of Fairmont State. From being comfortable and at-home with his teammates, to walking into the Nickel and being acquainted with so many students there, he never felt out of place. In addition to playing basketball, Pat was also a member of the TKE fraternity, worked in the cafeteria for Frank Pulice, Jr. and served as President of the Student Government Association.

Dr. Sloan credits Fairmont State for giving him a tremendous foundation upon which he built his career. At the encouragement of Dr. Bill Boram, he completed his degree in psychology and went on to graduate school at Ohio University in Athens. Remembering the education he received, he stated "I never met a more dedicated, student-centered faculty than ours at Fairmont State. Many of us students were first- or second-generation students to attend college from working class families, yet the quality of my educational experience more than adequately prepared me for my graduate education and career, and I never felt inferior or inadequately prepared to perform or compete with students and colleagues from other high-ranking and well-endowed universities, including Ivy League or other prestigious institutions."

Pat graduated with the confidence and determination to pursue his greatest ambitions and truly lifelong friendships. The opportunity to represent the school and community during his time on the basketball court is a point of tremendous pride for him and he is very grateful for his experiences at Fairmont State. After graduation, Pat went on to serve in the United States Air Force before completing his graduate studies in Clinical Psychology. Pat is Professor Emeritus at East Tennessee State University's Quillen College of Medicine and retired from his position as Chief of Psychology and Deputy Associate Chief of Staff at the VA Medical Center, Mountain Home, in Johnson City, Tennessee. Both he and his wife Carol are enjoying their time together in retirement visiting with their children, Brian and Amy, and frequently travel back to Fairmont to visit Carol's family and their many friends that still reside in Marion County and the surrounding areas.



### *Share your emeritus story*

Would you like to share your story with us? We welcome opportunities to feature alumni stories and photographs in Fairmont State Foundation newsletters, on our website, and on social media.

If you would like to tell us about your time at Fairmont State, please call 304-534-8786 or email [marissa@fsufoundation.org](mailto:marissa@fsufoundation.org).



## Dave Cooper, Class of 1971

Dave Cooper could sum up his experience at Fairmont State as a student-athlete in one word – Basketball.

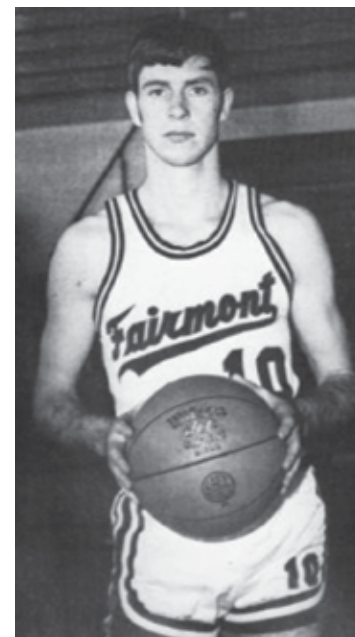
Dave never lost a game in the city of Fairmont. He recalls how robust all the athletic programs were during his time as a Falcon. The Fairmont State 1968 Yearbook named the 67-68 year “The Year of Four Championships,” as football, basketball, wrestling and baseball all had incredible seasons that year bringing home the WVIAC championships. Dave ended his college career in an undefeated season in 1971 where the team went on to the conference finals and then heartbreakingly lost to Elisabeth City University by one point in overtime in the NAIA tournament. That same year, he was chosen for the NAIA All-Tournament team.

Aside from his tremendous list of athletic accolades, Dave also has fond memories of his time off the court and as a student. He vividly remembers living on the top floor of the “Falcon’s Nest” which became something like an athletic dorm for the student-athletes. He remembers the college being an integral part of the town with an active campus, and a warm and friendly atmosphere. Basketball practice and his studies kept him busy, but he always found time to spend with friends and perhaps even the occasional trip to the dance halls like The Melody Manor or The Elbow Room.

Dave recalls having wonderful and supportive teachers. Specifically, he remembers Jim Young, Professor of Geography. Mr. Young was a fan of sports and also a fan of Dave as he always was a big encouragement to him.

After graduation, Dave returned to his hometown of Petersburg to teach until he received the opportunity to come back to Fairmont State to coach. This allowed Mr. Cooper to know Joe Retton as both a student-athlete and a colleague. Dave was excited to return to his Alma Mater to coach with Retton, as he recalls that Coach Retton had a way of getting 100% effort out of each of his players. When speaking about Retton’s unique strategies, Cooper recalled the impact that Retton had on the game of basketball with his out-of-the-box approach.

Dave’s time at Fairmont State was much more than a 4-year experience. It was a theme, a place he came back to not once but twice during his career. He chose to leave coaching to spend more time with his family, of which, his wife and all 3 children also graduated from Fairmont State. He returned one final time in 1997 as Athletic Director and remained in that position until his retirement in 2004. It would be fair to say that just as Fairmont State had a wonderful influence on Dave, Mr. Cooper also had a wonderful influence on Fairmont State.



1967-1968 Falcon Basketball: Coach Joe Retton (kneeling), Dave Shaffer, Ed Branham, Don Prickett, Pat Sloan, Dave Gardner, Rich Blackstone, Wayne Denham, Dennis Burke, Charles Baylor, John Maphis, Bob Sheets, David Cooper



1968 Teammates with Letter Jacket: (from left to right) Dave Cooper, Wayne Denham, Pat Sloan, Don Prickett, John Jamerson

## FIRST EMERITUS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT SELECTED

Wesley Benson of Shinnston, West Virginia has been named the first recipient of the Emeritus Scholarship.

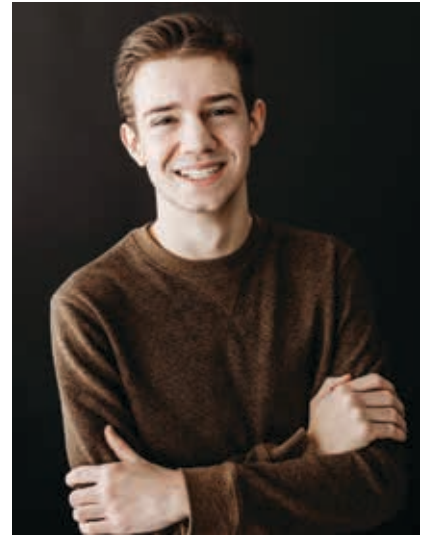
Wesley is a second-generation Falcon majoring in Communication Arts with a concentration in Multimedia Communication and a minor in Theatre. He aspires to pursue a career in broadcast journalism after graduation. Wesley's mother is a Fairmont State alumna.

In addition to his studies, Wesley is also involved on campus as a member of The Masquers, the Community Arts program, and is a Town & Gown Player. Most recently, he was involved in the Fairmont State Town and Gown Players' production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Fairmont State offered him the opportunity to focus on his studies while still being heavily involved in activities he is passionate about such as the performing arts.

When Wesley isn't in the classroom or rehearsals, he can be found spending time in the practice rooms in Wallman Hall or in the Falcon Center studying and spending time with friends. Off campus, he enjoys running, kayaking, and hiking.

Wesley knew he wanted to attend Fairmont State because it was important for him to stay close to home and he was looking for a tight-knit community. During his first year as a student, Wesley has made connections with so many others on campus and he enjoys the camaraderie that Fairmont State provides. Coming to Fairmont State, he found himself quickly feeling accepted and having a sense of belonging. It didn't take him long to know that he "picked the right place."

The Emeritus Scholarship was established by the generosity of those who have graduated fifty or more years ago from Fairmont State. Any gift made in response to an Emeritus Newsletter will be designated to the Emeritus Scholarship Fund to continue to help students like Wesley.



# FALCON DAY OF GIVING IS MOVING!

2.29.2024 • ONE DAY • ONE GOAL • ONE FAIRMONT STATE



# HARVEST YOUR LEGACY

*Our legacy is not what we hold in our hands, but what we harbor in our heart.*

Unlike any other season, fall is the time to come together. We gather friends. We gather family. We gather the produce of the field and celebrate the fruits of our labor. Fall, perhaps like no other season, is a time to remember, reminisce and recollect. It is time to take inventory and reap the rewards of all we have sown.

Your legacy is the sum of your hopes, aspirations and investments in your loved ones and the causes important to you. Make sure your legacy reflects your life appropriately.

This season is the perfect time to visit your attorney and make your memories part of your future. A plan does not need to be complicated. Consider the following and how simply they can be part of your plan.

<i>Tools for you</i>	<i>What it does</i>	<i>How we can help</i>
Will or estate plan	Lays out your wishes for family, friends and important causes	Our free estate planning guide makes it easy and could save attorneys' fees
Charitable gift annuity	Gives you tax benefits and fixed payments for life	We can show you your favorable fixed rate and tax deduction
Beneficiary designations for IRA, checking, investments	Takes only a few moments and can be easily changed	We can point you to the forms you need



*Here are some ideas to get you started:*

<i>If you have this now...</i>	<i>Consider this for your legacy...</i>
CD with your bank or credit union	A charitable gift annuity with favorable fixed rates
Financial accounts	A payable on death designation to direct where you want this account to go
Highly appreciated stock	A charitable remainder trust to liquidate the stock in tax-favored ways

*While it's true that a plan does benefit your family, friends, and cherished causes, the main beneficiary is you.*

When you have a plan, you live every day knowing your harvest will not go to waste. Everything you have worked for all your life and all you have invested in those around you will be cultivated and cared for, even when you are no longer here to do it.

Let us help you reap what you have sown. Visit our website, call, or email to learn about the free tools we have for you.



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