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Annual StoryCorps Project features retired Rear Admiral William “Bill” Stubblefield for program launch

A campuswide week of sharing personal stories was kicked off by the October 16, 2023, launch featuring retired Rear Admiral William “Bill” Stubblefield, who shared his event-filled life, rising from a callow Tennessee kid to naval admiral and director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). With his wife Bonnie, he experienced a rich and fulfilling life of service working in the United States Navy. The Stubblefields went on to establish the Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications, and both Bill and Bonnie have done much to instill civility in the political landscape. To hear the full program and to enjoy the storied life of retired Rear Admiral William “Bill” Stubblefield, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yfvj_N-JXfl.

Students participate in the Shepherd Speaks StoryCorps Project

In October 2023, graduate student Samantha Householder spearheaded the StoryCorps project week, coordinating with Appalachian studies students Carter Warhurst, Brandon Decker, and Taylor Beam as well as Ally for Appalachia Randy Underwood, who helped conduct interviews and post stories on the national StoryCorps website. The storytelling prompt for each of the storytellers this year was to talk about a person or event that changed their life for good or ill. Videos of this project are available at www.shepherd.edu/appalachian/shepherd-speaks-storycorps-project.



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Ann Pancake serves as 2023 One Book One West Virginia author and Shepherd University's 25th Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence

After working with the Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence (AHWIR) committee over the summer—reviewing the West Virginia Fiction Competition finalist stories, helping with the Ann Pancake website, and planning programs and events for the fall AHWIR series, master fiction writer and prose stylist Ann Pancake joined us in the Eastern Panhandle and virtually across the state for a hugely successful Appalachian Heritage program series in September. To learn more about Ann Pancake and her work in these programs, visit www.shepherd.edu/ahwirweb/pancake/. ■

Pictured below: (left) Dynamic Appalachian poet Torli Bush reads from his poetry collection during one of the featured AHWIR programs. A significant rising star in Appalachian literature, Bush's poetry has been championed by Ann Pancake.; (middle, top) Seated (l. to r.) are Pam Miller, Ann Pancake, and Pam Splaine, standing are Ann Henriksson, Esther Murphy, and Betty Snyder.; (middle, bottom) Ann Pancake speaks to Friends of the Shepherdstown Library at the Bavarian Inn.; (right) Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence Ann Pancake receives the Humanities Council Writer's Award and a \$5,000 check from Appalachian Center Director Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt.





The Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities receives grant to offer a July 2023 West Virginia storytelling institute for West Virginia teachers

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation awarded Shepherd University a \$136,250 grant to re-vision public school civic and social studies education in West Virginia. The project, called “People Powered: Civic Action, Community Engagement, and American Representative Democracy,” involved a unique partnership between the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education and the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities.

Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt was tapped as project director for the grant to capture West Virginia social studies and civics teachers’ enthusiasm for incorporating experiential learning into their teaching and for utilizing the extraordinary resources of the Robert C. Byrd archives. Working closely with Benedum Grants Director Melanie Claxton, Shurbutt focused on ways to get foundation funding directly into the hands of educators so that they might enhance their classroom civics resources and obtain pedagogical tools for

more vibrant civics experiences and participation for students.

30 social studies teachers were enlisted in the yearlong project that would first involve a workshop series focusing on civility and democratic participation, experiential pedagogy, and the utilization of archival resources in the classroom. To facilitate each of these important facets of the workshop, Shurbutt received help from Ashley Horst from the Bonnie and Bill Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications, Dr. Jason Allen from the Shepherd University School of Education, and archivist Jody Brumage, who created archival resources for the teachers to use

in their classrooms. Each teacher determined specific ways to implement the People Powered principles into their classroom lessons.

The final step in the project will occur on April 20, 2024, when the teachers present their projects that use the experiential practices learned or inspired by the workshop, with the most ambitious and successful participants receiving Benedum awards for their social studies and civics programs (a \$5,000 first prize and four \$2,500 prizes).

To learn more about this summer institute, visit www.shepherd.edu/apst-teacher-institute. ■

Supported by a \$20,000 West Virginia Humanities Council grant, the 2023 “Voices from the Misty Mountains” Teacher Institute hosted 20 West Virginia middle and high school teachers representing all disciplines and grade levels. Appalachian poet Frank X Walker served as the artist-in-residence, while an array of

experts and scholars talked about colonial Appalachia, Appalachia and the Civil War, and Appalachian ethnomusicology and storytelling. The Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities thanks the West Virginia Humanities Council for making these teacher institutes available for West Virginia teachers. ■



Fall newsmakers from the **Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities**

Rhonda and Sparky Rucker performed in the Frank Arts Center for the 2023 Appalachian Heritage Festival Concert, organized and presented by Rachael Meads for the Performing Arts Series at Shepherd. The festival also provided a daylong workshop series to the community that covered “Unaccompanied Singing” with Georgia Lilly, “Songs of Struggle and Civil Rights” with the Ruckers, and a “Songwriting Conversation with John Lilly.” The annual festival is one of the highlights of the fall semester. To read about the festival’s events, visit www.shepherd.edu/news/appalachian-heritage-festival-scheduled-on-september-23/.

The **Appalachian Chamber Music Festival** performed in August throughout the Eastern Panhandle, partnering with the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities for a special concert at the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education on August 23, 2023. The festival likewise had a winter residency featuring some of the finest musicians in the world. See details about the 2024 season at www.appalachianchamber.org/2023events.



Fiddle master **Andrew Finn Magill** regaled Shepherd audiences with a September 6, 2023, performance of traditional Irish, old-time bluegrass, and swing music. Brought back by popular demand, Magill performed for a second time to a packed audience in the Scarborough Library Reading Room. Magill is a Fulbright fellow, North Carolina Arts Council fellow, and All-Ireland fiddle finalist. He infuses his music with Brazilian choro, jazz, and traditional fiddle music, keeping these Irish traditions alive for Appalachian audiences. Read about Andrew Finn Magill at www.shepherd.edu/news/center-for-appalachian-studies-to-host-september-6-fiddle-concert/.



Ann Pancake presented the West Virginia Fiction Competition awards on September 28, 2023, at the Appalachian Heritage Scarborough Keynote event. The three winners were first place **Joelle McDonald** of Bridgeport, West Virginia, for her story “A Mourner”; second place **Riley Kilmore** from Toboyne Township, Pennsylvania, for “Mother, May I”; and third place **Audrey Chapman** from Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, for “Belly’s Angel.” The Judges’ Choice Prize, selected by the Fiction Competition Committee, went to **Ms. Robin Chancey’s** fifth-grade class at Kenna Elementary School in Jackson County, West Virginia. The fiction competition committee included David O. Hoffman, educator and Shepherd alum; Julie Becraft-Shehan, fiction writer; and Dr. James Pate, Shepherd associate professor of English. These extraordinarily gifted writers received cash prizes, fiction critiques from Ann Pancake, and the promise of publication in the spring 2024 volume of the *Anthology of Appalachian Writers*. Hoffman and Master of Appalachian Studies students Becraft-Shehan and Ben Trogdon will serve as literary editors for the 2024 anthology.

The Shepherd University Foundation announced on September 8, 2023, that 15 Shepherd University faculty members received 2022-23 endowment funding, three of whom are Appalachian studies board members. They include **Dr. Ben Martz**, recognized and funded by the Edward L. Snyder Endowed Chair for Business; **Dr. Benjamin Bankhurst**, recognized and funded by the Ray & Madeline Johnston American History Chair Endowment; and **Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt**, recognized and funded by the George Washington Chair of Ethics. These endowment funds support the scholarship, research, and professional development of faculty. To read about the work of these faculty, visit www.shepherd.edu/news/foundation-announces-faculty-excellence-recipients-for-2022-2023-academic-year/.

Dr. Heidi Hanrahan nominated **Taylor Beam** for the Sue Stewart and Hansel Bailey Scholarship in Appalachian Studies. The competitive award is based on service, scholarship, and activism evinced by the nominee. The prize money may be used for tuition, books, residence hall expenses, or any university-related expenses. Dr. Hanrahan’s nomination detailed the exemplary work and academic excellence of Beam, an accomplished scholar and writer. Beam is a native West Virginian, proud of her heritage and her service to the region, having participated in the Alternative Spring Break service project for West Virginia families. She is a double major in English and global studies, with a minor in Appalachian studies. Congratulations to both Taylor and Dr. Hanrahan on the award.





Local attorney and Appalachian studies graduate student **Susan Thompson** presented her research and efforts to bring back the American chestnut tree to Appalachia during a November 9, 2023, program at the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education. Thompson is working under Dr. Brooke Comer, assistant professor of environmental science, on the project and her master's thesis. Her research has involved planting groves of American chestnuts, particularly the new blight resistant strain, at the Agricultural Innovation Center at Tabler Farm. Thompson's work will be published in the Appalachian studies archive for public viewing at www.shepherd.edu/appalachian/center-newsletters.

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities received a \$16,000 grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council to hold a July 22-26, 2024, teacher institute titled "The Art of Storytelling: Teaching and Telling in the Classroom Across the Curriculum." Master storyteller **Adam Booth** will host the institute, while **Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt** will serve as administrative director. Storyteller **Noah Baum** will join Booth for the project. West Virginia teachers will receive a stipend of \$500 for attending the weeklong event, gaged to hone their storytelling craft and enrich their teaching. Those interested can visit www.shepherd.edu/apst-teacher-institute for more details.

Anthology editors nominated six works from the Barbara Kingsolver volume of the *Anthology of Appalachian Writers* for the Pushcart Prize. In the fiction category, **Lisa Taka Younis'** "Lambs," **Noche Gauthier's** "Hymnals," and **Julie Becraft-Shehan's** "Reverie"; and in the poetry category, **E. J. Wade's** "Framed in Chestnut and Gold Leaf," West Virginia Poet Laureate **Marc Harshman's** "Flight Behavior," and Ohio Poet Laureate **Kari Gunter-Seymour's** "Nighthawk." "The Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses" is awarded annually and includes hundreds of presses and thousands of writers in its annual collection.

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities is partnering with Jefferson County's **Jamila Jones** and her Arise Project to create an Affrilachian Trail, marking the historically rich places in the region associated with the African American Road to Freedom. Jones has worked with an array of groups and individuals to help her secure funding and bring the project to fruition. The Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities has pledged to help her accomplish this important project in the coming year.





Master of Appalachian Studies degree candidate **Bryan Staggers** presented his one-man theater production titled “American Man” at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August 2023. The production was a result of Staggers’ studio work during his studies at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), completing his dual master’s degree in Appalachian studies at Shepherd and creative media studies at UWS. The study abroad experience is part of a cooperative dual master’s degree that many graduate students in the Appalachian studies program have opted for. The program in Scotland is in Ayr and Paisley near Glasgow, one of the UK’s media and theater powerhouses, with a single semester of study abroad work needed to complete the master’s degree in creative media studies. A comparable study abroad experience is now part of the new B.A./B.S. Appalachian studies undergraduate degree. To watch Staggers’ production, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKlp_7tXvVY.



Appalachian literature students trekked across the region in the annual study tour “Appalachian Road Trip.” Students explored the West Virginia Culture Center and State Museum in Charleston, Hawk’s Nest Tunnel Disaster site in Summersville, New River Gorge Bridge, Thurmond Depot, Tamarack Marketplace, and Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and Youth Museum.

Pictured left (bottom, l. to r.) are Samantha Householder, Taylor Beam, Grace Summerbell, Riley Kilmore, Jill Black, Marti Gray, Brandon Decker, Dr. Shurbutt, top, Susan Harris, Lisa Osborn, Kristen Williams, Ravyn Weirch, and Brooklyn Gholston.

Appalachian studies and political science double major **Brooklyn Gholston** presented at the National Black Storytellers Conference November 8-12, 2023, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities helped fund the trip, and Gholston’s storytelling was a huge success at the conference. Gholston, who was introduced to the art of storytelling in Adam Booth’s storytelling class, plans to be an attorney. At the conference, she gained a wealth of experience and many friends while working with some of the most important Black storytellers in the country. Listen to Gholston talk about her experience at www.shepherd.edu/appalachian/voices-from-appalachia-radio-show-recordings/.