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WKU Journalism & Broadcasting

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This special edition of The Hilltopper Journalist documents the move of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting into Mass Media and Technology Hall. The photographs were taken by students in Tim Broekema's Photojournalism Practicum class. Articles about the move and about the School's new director, Pam Johnson, and the departing director, Jo-Ann Albers, are on pages 3 and 4.

A message from the director

Dear Friends of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting:

First things first. I am very pleased to be the new director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting. I accepted the position because when I came for the interview, four things won me over:

• Hard working and eager students.
• A dedicated and talented faculty and staff.
• A supportive and caring administration.
• A solid and innovative curriculum.

My initial priority goals will be to maintain and enhance the current program and culture of the school, promote the school nationally and internationally, and obtain four endowed professorships and the naming of the school.

I look forward to having a productive and fun time at Western.

Pam McAllister Johnson, Ph.D.
Epleys Movers was in charge of moving the School of Journalism and Broadcasting from the top of the hill to its new home at the bottom in Mass Media and Technology Hall.

Chad Stevens, center, and Jeanie Aframe-Smith, right, both photodjournalels-in-residence at Western, and photo student Mat Thorne, discuss the new photography studio.

James Kenny, coordinator of the photojournalism program, gets a greeting at his window from photojournalism students after class. "I can't wait until those shades come in," Kenny said.

Mark Simpson, assistant professor, right, shows off one of the facility's new desktop computers to associate professor Cory Lash.

Wilma King-Jones, coordinator of the public relations program settles into her new office in Mass Media and Technology Hall.
Five disciplines
one building—at last

By HJ Staff

By Pam McAllister Johnson

The College Heights Herald is the only student-run daily newspaper in Kentucky University. After leaving Gannett, a Midwesterner who's lived in the Northwest, Pam McAllister Johnson was hired as the New director has soft spot for students

By HJ Staff

New director has soft spot for students

By HJ Staff

After years of being split among three buildings, the students, staff and faculty of Western Kentucky University's School of Journalism and Broadcasting are finally under one roof.

Classes began meeting in the $18.5 million Mass Media and Technology Hall when school started on Aug. 14, and by the end of September instructors and administrators were setting into their new offices.

With the exception of the darned Kitchen, the move was complete by the end of October.

When the building opened, Jo-Anne Albers, the former director of the School, described it as an open and friendly place.

"It's a wonderful place," she said. "It's as much as we'd hoped for, but more than we had hoped.

Albers said some aspects of the original design, such as faculty offices, were scaled back because of budget constraints.

After being built for journalism department in 1967, it included a request for a new journalism building in the formal budget that fall and every budget it followed. It was a new way of looking at a journalism building.

"It's a great place," Johnson said.

The classes began scheduling for completion of full courses in the fall and the initial students were well satisfied with their new home.

The groundbreaking was finally held on April 5, 2001 in the Hall.

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"It's a great place," Johnson said. "We'd love to be there, but we need room for more students and faculty.

"I don't think they'd have done it if they hadn't been driven by the market," she said.

Some critics say that newspapers have diminished quality and public-owned newspapers, but Johnson says that's not necessarily true.

"We've just been working on improving the product and we're doing it," she said.

Corporate newspapers have taken the lead in learning about these trends and public-owned newspapers have faced different challenges.

"This has caused newspapers to become better," she said. "They have to know their market better," she said.

"So in that sense there's good news and bad news," she said. However, she says newspaper organizations should consider accepting a 20 percent to 30 percent profit margin.

"They have been consistently high and it's profit margins than any other industry," Johnson said. "The margin is made to be in the state of the community.

"But I was surprised two years ago when I heard about a newspaper that made 50 percent profit margins within the past three years.

"To me, that's over the top."
By Jo-Ann Albers

Deciding to come to Western Kentucky University to head the journalism program in the fall of 1987 was one of the best decisions I've made. There have been no regrets and only a couple of surprises. I was asked to step down from the directorship of the School of Journalism & Broadcasting was not made easily, but it was the right report.

I researched the job pretty well. I knew a lot about the program because I chaired the 1986 accreditation team and was the co-author of last year's study report that identified strengths and weaknesses. I spent four days on campus visiting with faculty and students and meeting with administrators.

My decision to come to Western grew out of my representation of Women in Communication on the Accrediting Commission on Education in Journalism for six years. The time commitment was small, only about 27 years in daily newspapering and a year before that in broadcasting. I was ready for a change.

The attraction of academia included wanting to make a positive impact in journalism and mass communication education. I wanted to be in a place that didn't conclude you weren't working if you weren't in your office. I didn't think a lack of necessity of thinking time (though the School of Journalism & Broadcasting still has two years of master's programs) was too great an obstacle for me. I also wanted to interact with students and faculty and see what I might do to ensure their success.

Western Kentucky University services were in place for me. I was born about 100 miles east of here and my maternal grandparents' house on Highway 60 next door to Bradley's Pleasant Baptist Church. It set this coming home and was an opportunity to renew involvement with the Kentucky Press Association. I was the first head of the KPA news division established a few months before I left The Clarion Leader in May 1981 to become editor of Stangs Journal in Michigan.

Jo-Ann Albers was the director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting for 16 years. She is an optional retirement, but still teaches one class and is helping with the transition.

J. B. Whitaker, a former reporter and editor, has been an assistant since 1988 and 10th in 1992. The Herald is still in Garrettsville. The last year he left that position and was the editor of the Board was 1987. On Oct. 31, Whitaker, a member of the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame, was inducted into Western's Hall of Distinguished Alumni. In 1997 the journalism department and the Herald moved up from the Hill to DISC and the Academic Complex to the new building.

A tradition of excellence

Throughout the years, Western journalism students have made their marks. Some examples:

Yvon Stroey, a 1981 graduate and Herald editor in 1980-87, refined in 1992 as a professional editor at the University of Missouri after a distinguished career in broadcasting and journalism education. He has many honors, including a distinguished service award from Radio-Television News Directors Association.

Neal Boiler, a 1976 graduate and Herald editor in 1979-80, was named in 1996. That year, he left that position and formed the Stags Post Group to work with publishers and businesses in developing their online and offline media.

The Stags Post Group began in 1999 and is owned by the Stags Post Group.
Movers spent several weeks getting the School of Journalism and Broadcasting from the top of the Hill to the bottom.

Empty boxes line the walls of Mass Media and Technology Hall.

Jo-Ann Albers, former director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, prepares for the move. "I'll never find this," Albers said.

Associate professor Harry Allen stayed in his office until 6 a.m. one Wednesday, getting ready for a noon pick-up by the movers. They came on Friday.

Tim Broekema, a photojournalist-in-residence, tries to keep up with the organized chaos of the move.

Workers load boxes from the photojournalism program in Garrett Conference Center.
Tracey Self cleans the floor of the Mass Media and Technology Hall while WKU students Sarah McDonald and Heather Cowhord study.

Richard Pennington puts finishing touches on Mass Media and Technology Hall. Pennington has been working on the building for almost a year.

Mike Morse teaches the first basic photography class in Mass Media and Technology Hall on Sept. 20, 2003.

WKU Spirit Masters Natalie Creney of Hopkinsville and Natasha DeJarnett of Georgetown visit the new gallery in Mass Media and Technology Hall.

The sun sets behind Guthrie Bell Tower, which can be seen from the northwest face of Mass Media and Technology Hall.