



THE IRON BLADE

SINCE 1955

Vol. 61, No. 1

61 Years of Ferrum College News

September, 2016

Ferrum College Welcomes New President

by Patrick Duggan

Dr. Joseph Carson Spooner grew up on a 600 acre farm in Sneads, Florida, population 1900. After graduating high-school, he became the first college student of his lineage and started his education at Florida State University before moving on to Yale. He picked up his first teaching job at his old school, starting him on a path that eventually led to back to Yale, this time as Dean of Jonathan Edwards College, Yale's oldest residential school. Now, he's become Ferrum College's eleventh president. As a farm boy from a poverty stricken small town, Spooner started out with the statistics stacked against him and found limitless success nonetheless. He cites his affection for his hometown as the defining factor that led him back to the country, referring to Sneads as "Ferrum without a college."

"Having grown up on a farm in rural communities, a place like Yale was a lot more foreign to me than a place like Ferrum." Spooner said. "Part of my educational and personal journey has been seeking out and having great opportunities like studying in Scotland and being a Dean at Yale, but it was always with an eye of coming back and working in rural communities, preferably in the south, just because it's a region of the country I'm familiar with."

Spooner was picked to replace former president Jennifer Braaten after months of consideration. The search committee that recruited him was led by Ferrum's Board of Trustees and reinforced with a handful of college representatives who spend most of their time working directly with students. Environmental science professor Delia Heck, Dean of Chapel and Religious Life Jan Nicholson, and political science professor Sandra Via were all closely involved in the process. Via says his authentic enthusiasm

and warm personality were what got him the job.

"He's very personable and he has a vision for Ferrum that aligns with our mission [statement]," Via said. "He's very much into helping students be the best they can be and he's very civic-minded."



Courtesy of Ferrum College

Dr. Joseph Carson Spooner and wife Nicole Gelfert are excited to have moved into the President's Residence.

Even as an administrator, that thirst for face-to-face connection and education draws Spooner not only to this profession, but specifically to Ferrum as well. His experiences growing up and working in his hometown left him with an innate desire to help those on the fringes succeed in the threads.

Before he decided to become a teacher, Spooner envisioned himself as a professional baseball player, a pursuit that came to an abrupt halt when he injured his knee during his senior year of high school. Prior to that life-altering setback, Spooner never predicted he would wind up in the career of education. He didn't have any plans outside of baseball. He attributes the success he found after his injury to his parents' constant support, a luxury that wasn't afforded to

all of his peers. His father saw sports as a vehicle for education, which was always first priority.

"I'll say this, my father grew up milking 150 dairy cows by hand each day, morning and night," Spooner said. "He's still one of the smartest people I've ever met, but when you look at his high school grades, he didn't perform well. One of the things that he was very committed to was limiting the amount of time my sister and I worked on the farm to make sure we had time to study, to play sports, to be engaged in communities, to do things that were good for our development. My sister and I were both very blessed because we had classmates who were in similar situations but whose families weren't necessarily making those sacrifices."

After losing baseball, Spooner found himself studying English and literature, something he never would have anticipated as a high school student. Studying the humanities taught him how to communicate and how to think critically about life. He cites Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man" as his favorite novel; having grown up in a small southern town still reeling from the effects of segregation (Sneads was literally divided by railroad tracks), reading Ellison forced him to interpret literature as a way of understanding the human experience.

"I think ["Invisible Man"] is the greatest piece of literature I've ever read, and I think it also showed me the utility of a humanities-based education," Spooner said. "I would say [Ralph] Ellison is someone who provides that kind of transformative experience."

After graduating with a degree in English in 1991, Spooner started his career in the midst of a national recession, walking into a job market that was unforgiving even for a Yale graduate. That's when he found himself back home at his own high school, where he taught 8th grade math,

Cont on Page 4

Born And Raised In Ferrum



by Anne Gardner Eubank

In a rural town of 2,043 people, it's not unusual for those who grow up in towns like Ferrum to wonder what else is out there in the world. Max Harper, a senior at Ferrum College, was born, raised, and attends school all in the small mountain town of Ferrum, and can't wait to see what the rest of the world has to offer. I sat down with Max to ask him a few questions on what it was like to spend his entire life here, and what he thinks Ferrum College means to the town.

Max has lived in Ferrum for two decades. "Twenty one years on Sunday!" Max told me. When I talked to him about growing up in Ferrum and what it meant to him, he did not think he would be here as long as he has.

"Originally, I had planned to go to another school in North Carolina as an athlete," Harper said. "But I tore my ACL and decided to come to Ferrum and I stayed." While the town of Ferrum is small and may seem a bit isolated, Max had a bit of a different approach to the location of his hometown. "You're semi-close to a lot of different places. You're forty minutes away from the lake, an hour from Radford and Tech, and an hour or so from Greensboro; it's a good central place."

Max went on to say that having a positive outlook when it comes to living in such a remote area like Ferrum is not uncommon. Harper says the biggest difference between the town of Ferrum and Ferrum College is the attitude.

"From what I've seen, most people who live in Ferrum don't complain about

it, while some students do," Harper said.

Undeniably, Ferrum College is a key part to the town. "If the college weren't here, the town would be dead," Harper said. "It would just be a bump in the road. You would blink your eyes and miss it."

While Max may have lived here his entire life, he told me he does not plan on staying here.

"Once I graduate, I'm heading straight to the beach," Harper said. "Charleston, South Carolina, to be exact. I eventually would like to go to the College of Charleston and get my law degree."

In any town, school, or community, there are always positives and negatives. While Max talked about his appreciation for the location of his hometown, he definitely had some strong complaints. I asked him what the worst part of living in Ferrum was: "No Chipotle. 120,000%. The very worst part."

While Max has lived and learned his entire life in Ferrum, he is excited to see what the rest of the world has to offer, and hopefully he will find a place with several Chipotle locations.

AROUND CAMPUS

Ferrum College Annual Club Fair



Left, Tiyanna Washington, Ireland Sweeney, Jody Jefferies, and Lauren Weaver run the equestrian table at the club fair. "Club fair is a great opportunity to recognize students, organizations, recruit new members and to highlight the organization's activities and how active they are in the community," Weaver said.

Photos by Sofia Hernandez



Left, Callie O'Brien (left) signs up for Spanish Club with Professor Patricia Sagasti Suppes (right). "In spite of the heat, club fair was a good opportunity to connect with people on campus and learn about what various groups have planned for the year," Suppes said.



Above, Allison Martin, Elizabeth Aldrich, Blake Anderson, Hannah King, and Alexis Bradshaw representing ZXE at the club fair.

Students Face-Off in Zorb 360



Left, senior Max Harper tries his hand at Zorb 360. Above, the event leader helps Kieth Litchford start a roll. "I think the Zorb 360 was a great success," Harper said. "It was what we expected and more. Everyone that participated, after some encouragement, had fun and a good workout. It was harder than it looked."

Find the Artist Within

Chrysalis, Ferrum College's own literary arts magazine, is holding its annual fall contest. Whether you are a professional or an amateur, it doesn't matter! Do you want to see your words or artwork published? How about the chance to win money? Then submit your poetry, short stories, paintings, photos or digital art to Chrysalis@ferrum.edu. Win cash prizes - \$100 for first place and \$50 for second place in each category.

The deadline to submit is September 30. We want to see what you've got! See Wednesday's all-campus mail for rules and guidelines, and/or contact the advisor, Cara Modisett, cmodisett@ferrum.edu; editor Dina Prado, gprado@ferrum.edu or design editor Kaitlin Roeper, ktroeper@ferrum.edu.

"He stopped just before the light to pay it respect; He finally spoke, 'Hi, I'm someone meant to be extraordinary.'" -an excerpt from Tyreke Washington's "I Am Extraordinary" from Chrysalis, spring 2016.

Alumni Spotlight: Julianne Bove



by GraceAnn Gershner

Julianne Bove, recent Ferrum College graduate and New York Native, currently resides in Raleigh, North Carolina.

"Being eight and a half hours away from home for four years at Ferrum made this transition much easier for me," Bove said. "When I moved to Raleigh it was like I was going back to school again." Although Bove will always love the city, her years at Ferrum taught her to appreciate a quieter lifestyle.

"I will always love the city and the fast paced environment, but going to Ferrum pushed me to enjoy an environment that was way out of my comfort zone," Bove said. She also mentioned that she was disappointed because she doesn't know any other New York fans to cheer at hockey, baseball, or basketball games with her.

Bove's career is looking bright and vivid; She works at Enterprise Rent-A-Car and is now working her way up to a managerial position within the next five months. Enterprise is a sponsor of NCAA athletes geared towards hiring college players.

"It really is weird going to work every day now instead of going to school," Bove said. "But I really enjoy working there. Almost everyone I know played college sports so I always find that we get sidetracked sometimes and reminisce about our games and practices together."

The first team all-conference and first team all-state honoree finished her senior season with 66 goals and 17 assists, racking up a total of 83. Bove continues to embrace her lacrosse skills during her post-grad career; outside of her job, she spends her free time on the weekends coaching a local youth league in her community.

"It is really nice to be able to continue working with the sport that I love," Bove said. "A lot of the time most college athletes are finished with their sport after graduation, but I definitely got lucky."

And as far as keeping up at home, Bove jokes, "My mom still calls me every single day to check up on me. I never miss out on anything from home. She even puts the dogs on Facetime. She still fills me in on everything that is happening in my younger brother Tom's life, even though I talk to him constantly. I get a call at least once a week from her yelling "Did you hear what Thomas did?". Bove said, "I definitely miss home, but I think I've found my place in Raleigh".

SPORTS

Freshmen Stars Stand Out In Comeback Win

by Joey Pride

In college sports, it is becoming increasingly difficult to lead a team as a freshman. Brian Mann and Billy Higgins defied the odds in their first collegiate game by earning USA South Athletic Conference honors over the weekend for their performances in Ferrum's 39-38 win over Emory & Henry in the first annual Crooked Road Classic. Mann, a running back, earned the Offensive Rookie of the Week award and Higgins, a linebacker, won Defensive Rookie of the Week. Brian Mann rushed for 167 yards on 28 carries, scored two touchdowns, managed 103 yards on three kickoff returns, and scored on a 2-point attempt. Higgins led Ferrum in tackles with nine, six of which were unassisted, and also broke up one pass.

Q: How special was it to win individual honors in such an important game for the team?

(Mann) Winning my first college game was something I'll never forget, without a doubt, and the individual award was nice, but at the end of the day, as long as the team gets the W, that's all that matter.

(Higgins) It was great, and one of the most fun games I've ever played in. I really appreciate the award, but I need to keep working

so that I can achieve more.

Q: What kind of confidence does this weekend give you going into the rest of the season?

(Mann) It is definitely a confidence boost. It makes me want to work harder, for sure, but all credit goes to the offensive line. If it wasn't for the holes they were giving me up front, then none of this could have happened.

(Higgins) It made me really happy but it makes me hungrier, because one is not enough for me. It makes me want to work towards winner Rookie of the Year, and I hope we can get us a ring, too.

Q: What are some of your goals for the season?

(Mann) The way the offensive side looks at it, we just look toward executing the next play. Ultimately, the main goal is for everyone to execute their job to the best of their abilities. Of course, we want to win as many games as we can, and that's the ultimate goal.

(Higgins) We want to run every play at full speed, show 100% energy on every play, be more physical than the opposition, and play with emotion and have fun, no matter what.

Q: How do you feel going into the Shenandoah game this Saturday?



Courtesy of Nia Pettiford

Junior KwaJay Witcher (13) makes a play on defense to halt the offense of the Emory and Henry Wasps.

(Mann) I'm definitely confident in our team, but Shenandoah is a good football team, and we just need to come out here and practice as hard as we can.

(Higgins) I feel that if we play as one unit, we can definitely come out with a win after this game. We just have to take it seriously and take it one play at a time.

Q: What are your expectations come the end of the season?

I just want us to be the best team we can, that's basically the ultimate goal. We would love to win every game, but at the end of the day, we

want our hard work to culminate in us being the best team possible.

(Higgins) I feel like we did pretty good on Saturday, but there is always room for improvement. At the end of the season, I want us to be fighting for a conference championship and even a national championship.

Both teammates seem ready to get the rest of their season moving in the right direction, and they are both looking forward to their next game at Shenandoah University on September 10th at 7 PM in Winchester, Virginia.

Ferrum Panthers Win Crooked Road Classic

by Joey Pride

The first annual Crooked Road Classic was one for the history books, seeing Ferrum beat Emory & Henry by a score of 39-38 in front of over 4,100 fans. The Panthers home opener on the new turf field showed how determined the Panthers are to live up to the hype that has surrounded this season. Ferrum managed to come-back from a 21-0 deficit in the second quarter and a 28-7 Wasp lead late in the third quarter.

The momentum seemed to be turning after a fumble recovery for the Panthers. The black hats never looked back. A pair of missed field goals by freshman kicker Chase Deaton forced Coach Grande to attempt 3 two point conversions, Ferrum converted all of them. The Panthers scored three touchdowns in the fourth quarter to take a one point lead with seven seconds left. With seventy-seven seconds left, Ferrum tied it up at thirty-one after Brian Mann's rushing touchdown and two-point conversion.

Ferrum seemed to have all the

momentum. However, a kickoff return for a touchdown by Emory's Kendrick Kube gave Ferrum an-



Courtesy of Nia Pettiford

The Ferrum Panthers emerged victorious against Emory and Henry for the first time in a decade in the first annual Crooked Road Classic

other seven point deficit. Now with only a minute left, Ferrum made the 68 yard drive down the field count, because Harvey Taylor and the rest of the Panthers showed no quit, and Taylor's eighteen yard pass to Johnny White sent the fans roaring in excitement, only to have to wait nervously for the two-point conversion. With only one yard separating Ferrum from their first win over Emory & Henry in over ten years, it was the quarterback

Harvey Taylor virtually end the game with a fake handoff to freshman Brian Mann, which left him with plenty of space to find the endzone.

Taylor was 16-28 with 227 passing yards and three TDs, while Mann managed 167 yards on 28 carries and two touchdowns. Sophomore Johnny White recorded 10 catches for 105 yards and a touchdown. Chris Guy had 5 receptions for 101 yards and a touchdown, while Nick Pearce had one catch for a 21 yard TD. Freshman Billy Higgins led the Panthers defense with 9 tackles.

For the Wasps, Kevin Paxton was 24-42 for 235 yards and two passing touchdowns. Justin Banks also led the Wasps with eleven tackles.

The Panthers will travel to Shenandoah University on Saturday, September 10th. Kick-off for the game is scheduled to take place at 7 PM.

Familiar Face, New Role

by Chris Rodgers

The fall of 2016 means the start of a new school year and another year of athletics. For former wrestler Paul Biggs (2012), it means having his first season as head coach. Biggs is looking to bring success to the cross country team. Also, in the winter, he looks to continue the wrestling team's success, but this time as an assistant coach.

Coach Biggs is "very excited to push some of my former teammates. I wrestled here all four years and finished as a NCAA Tournament qualifier." As for cross country is concerned, Biggs is really excited to "bring in more competitive athletes to join the current team and continue pushing his runners in conference play."



CAMPUS EVENTS

Word To the Freshmen

by Aleysia Goodley

Transitioning from top dog in high school back to a measly freshman in college can be hard for anyone. Adjusting to new people, a new place, and being hours away are all challenging and sometimes scary changes, especially for the ones who have trouble making friends. We are now fully responsible for ourselves, fully and entirely.

But where could we possibly begin? Luckily, students here at Ferrum who have already conformed to college life are willing to help us first semester freshmen out. Junior Carlos Leyva informs

us that to have a prosperous year, you will obviously have to do the work your professors assign you.

“Doing your assignments shows you care about your work, when you care, they care,” Leyva said. “Sit in front of the class, and be mindful of the amount of extra activities you involve yourself in.” Leyva also encourages you to be responsible and interactive with your peers.

Second semester freshmen and transfer student Diamond Hudson has tips about making friends. “You can make friends if you join clubs or just speak up in class to the person beside you and

make simple conversation. Friends will help you ease into this hectic lifestyle so make them if you can!”

Homesickness can be the toughest thing to deal with when first leaving home. “Talking and texting to your family on a regular basis will help with homesickness,” Hudson said.

Junior Declan Galvin and Senior Andrew Newman agree that getting your assignments in quickly leads to the best scenario for your grades. As for homesickness, Galvin says that he keeps a healthy balance between his own life and communicating with his family. He advises to just go out and enjoy the things Ferrum has to offer.

“About once a week I call my dad, just enough to keep me in contact but still enjoy my time here,” Galvin said.

Newman and Galvin encourage us to be ourselves, do things that will make you happy, and be proud of who you are.

“Get out of your room,” Galvin said “Don’t be afraid to make a fool of yourself, people have probably done something more stupid and embarrassing than you anyway.”

Now that you’ve gotten some insight on College life 101, be the best you can be, and savor the freedom!

Real Deal Crazy Game Show

by Kayla McMillan

The Real Deal Crazy Game Show, hosted by New Yorker, Ralph Tetta, represents exactly what the title says. This game included cash prizes for students and mystery box objects, which involved t-shirts, and mystery envelopes that included funny, interactive activities to entertain the audience, such as “do the river dance for \$5.00,” and runway walk in a silly outfit for seven. This was a very interactive game show that gave many audience members a chance to win a prize.

The Real Deal Crazy Game show was a trivia based game that included questions relating to his-

tory, politics and the up and coming election. Students were chosen at random.

If a student were to get the answer incorrect, they were asked to do a silly stunt for chance to win a different amount of money than the amount spun on the wheel.

The objective of the game was for a student to get the highest amount on the wheel. The big winner would get a chance to spin at the end of the game for a chance to win \$50 or \$100. The winner of this event was Ferrum College senior, Tori Akers. She walked away with \$22 in cash and a new charger adapter

worth \$25. “I was going to go for the mystery box, but my gut told me to keep the \$22 and the charger,” Akers said. After she had made her decision, Tetta revealed what was in the final mystery box and it was the \$100 dollar grand prize. When asked if she regretted not choosing the box, Akers said, “no because I could really use the charger for my trip to Africa.”

Director of Career and Leadership and Panther Productions Justin Muse, says that he wants to bring more engagement from the students on campus and turn events like this to an every weekend occurrence for

the students. “We don’t want it to feel like a suitcase college,” stated Muse. Panther Productions wants to give students an opportunity to have fun, safe weekends. The ultimate goal for Panther Productions is to build more involvement on campus. Muse stated that this is the “first step” to student involvement and activities on campus. Muse encourages students to give ideas for weekend events to Panther Productions and to become more involved.

The next event has not yet been stated, but be on the lookout for future weekend activities throughout the year from Panther Productions.

Cont. New President

9th grade English, and coached JV football and basketball. Spooner had returned to his hometown in a time of crisis; in the spring prior, the high school was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

“It was a tough year, but it was a great year to watch a community come together and try to figure out how to deal in a moment of great difficulty,” Spooner said. “I think in some ways it was just a symbol of my faith in small communities, to know that in tough times people stick together to make it through in the same way they celebrate together when things are good.”

After cutting his teeth as a high school teacher, Spooner went back to Florida State to get his master’s in American Studies, where he continued to studies his craft working as a teacher’s assistant. Next, he spent a couple years working for a non-profit summer educational program based out of Wellesley College in Massachusetts, where he eventually became dean of students for their elementary school program.

“I knew I loved teaching and I loved working with young people,” Spooner said. “I was just trying to search and figure out what that looks like in the long term. I think there’s sometimes an urgency to know all the answers immediately. I had a deep belief that I was headed in a general direction that was authentic to where my interests were, but I didn’t know how that was going to come to fruition.”

At 27, Spooner once again headed back to Sneads to work in the local community college, where he spent seven and a half years teaching English and American literature and coordinating the honors program. Spooner says that until now, this was the best professional experience he ever had; his time there shaped who is today and cemented his goals as an educator.

“In the five county area that our community college served, the poverty rate was near 30 percent, and you either ended up working on a farm, working in corrections because there were so many correctional facilities in the area, or you

ended up incarcerated,” Spooner said. “I think that experience was where I really started to understand the breadth of an educational experience and what was important, watching young people who maybe didn’t have many opportunities grow into these fabulous people.”

Spooner’s time there solidified his ideals; those years helped him realize why communities like Ferrum College are so important to him. He later went on to earn a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Edinburgh before returning to Yale University as dean of Jonathan Edwards. He says didn’t take those steps with the end goal of becoming a college president, but rather to master his abilities so he could make a difference in a rural community similar to his hometown.

Spooner isn’t aggressive in his vision for Ferrum; he’s spent his first six weeks as president acquainting himself with the populous and assimilating himself into campus life; he spends time in the campus YMCA and the cafeteria meeting students and introducing himself to

the community. More than anything, Spooner wants to enhance and focus the unique advantages of Ferrum that he hasn’t encountered at Yale or FSU.

“I’ve always been taught to have humility about what you bring to a place when there are so many people who have been there much longer,” Spooner said. “That’s not to say that I have no vision, but that I am patient right now because I’m still learning. I look around here and see things that facilitate good teaching, good learning, good personal development intellectually, spiritually, and socially. There are so many more opportunities here than other places I’ve been recently. The first moment my wife and I drove onto campus, we pulled up, looked around and thought, this is what is missing in so many people’s lives. There was never a moment where we didn’t feel welcome. People use the phrase ‘Ferrum Family’ here, and a lot of people in higher education today like to refer to themselves as offering a family like atmosphere. In some cases, that’s just marketing ploy. Here, it’s real.”