

1982-1992



Kenneth Perrin Presidency

Kenneth Perrin begins his presidency in 1982, stabilizing the school after a period of difficulty. He would also become known for his practicality, making campus changes to install night lighting, blue light buttons, and air conditioners in the dorms.



1983



Iconic WCU Sign Dedicated

The sign seen along the back wall is installed at the corner of High St. and Rosedale Ave., when the State College becomes a University. Along with the Rammy statue and Philips Memorial Hall, it is a prime site for graduation photos. It would be taken down in July 2021 to create a new fountain with interactive lighting as well as a tree-lined President's Walk for the university's Sesquicentennial.

1986



First Exchange Trip to China

The university's first foreign exchange program begins, when WCU and China's Henan University exchange delegates. Today, international students hail from nearly 50 countries, and faculty from 66 nations in 6 continents. Over 750 study abroad opportunities in 67 countries help mold WCU students into well-informed, global citizens. Students, faculty and staff log more than 7.5 million miles of international travel each year!



1992-2008



Madeline Wing Adler Presidency

Madeline Wing Adler becomes WCU's first woman president in 1992. She expands the university and its student organizations, and helps the university begin to come to terms with its past treatment of race, gender and sexuality. In recognition for her support of the arts at WCU, the new theater is named after her in 2006.



2000



Holocaust Studies is Approved

PASSHE approves a graduate Holocaust and Genocide Studies program at WCU led by history professor Irene Shur. WCU is the first university in the country to offer a degree in this field.

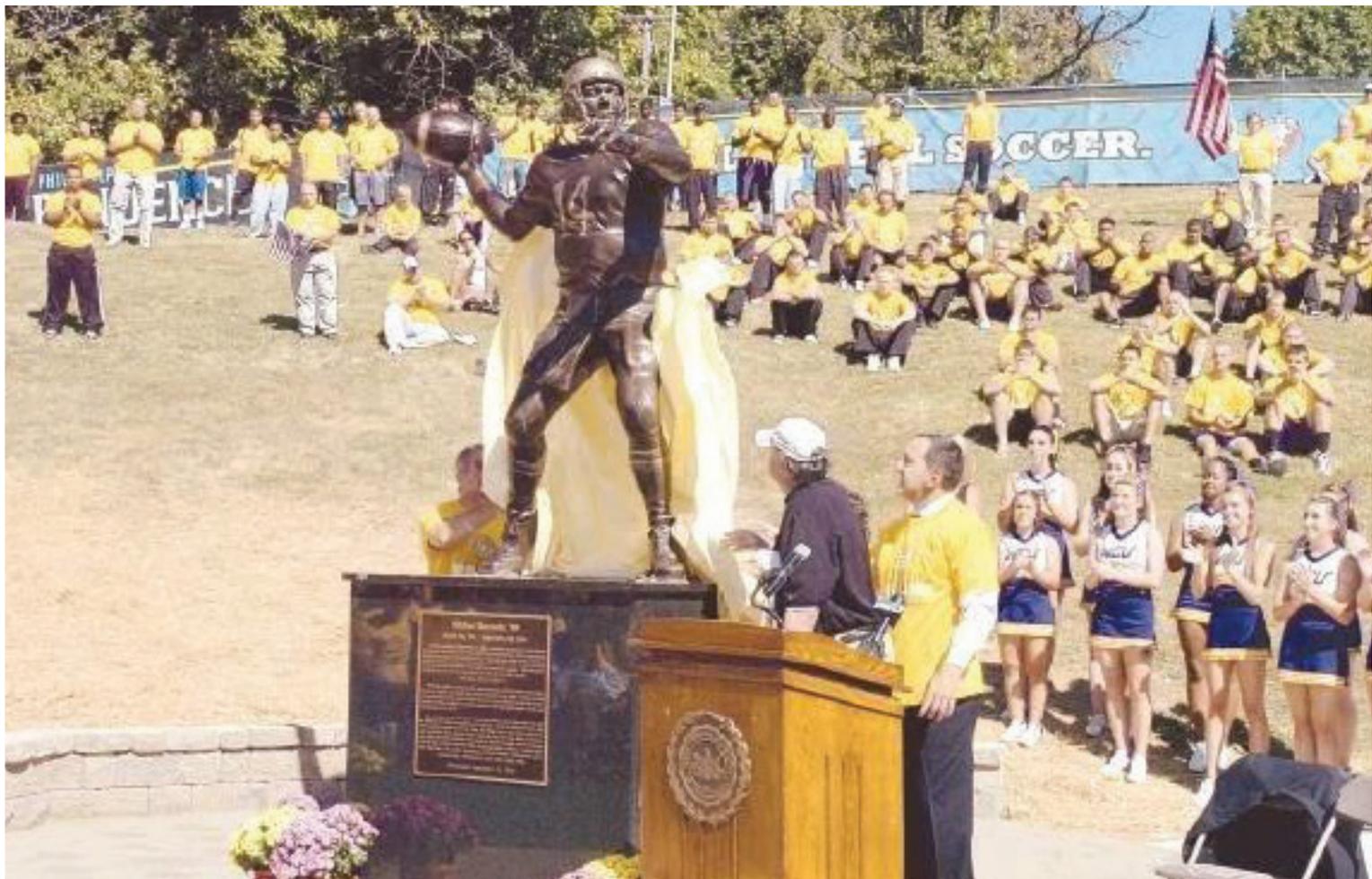
Torah scroll purchased by students on a tour of Auschwitz on loan from the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Program.

2001



Michael Horrocks Dies in 9/11 Attack

On September 11, nineteen terrorists hijack four commercial flights and crash them into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Among those killed is Michael Horrocks, a former Marine and WCU quarterback in the 1980s who is co-pilot aboard United flight 175. He would be memorialized with a statue at Farrell Stadium in 2010.



2005



Iris Spencer Poetry Award Endowed

Thanks to a \$250,000 grant from Kean Spencer in memory of his mother, Iris, three awards are given out annually to emerging and established poets by our nationally recognized Poetry Center.

2007



Taylor Swift Concert

Pop singer Taylor Swift holds a concert on campus to promote her self-titled country album. It is part of a long tradition of highly publicized events by iconic orators, activists, bands, comedians, and TV and movie stars, engaging our campus community.

Autographed poster on loan from the Office of Student Programs.

2008



Barack Obama Visits Campus

Presidential candidate Barack Obama visits the University on his “Hardball College Tour”, performing a live interview with MSNBC’s Chris Matthews. He would become the first African American president of the United States.

View a portion of this interview on the touchscreen in the back corner.

2010



WCU Commits to Sustainability

President Greg Weisenstein signs the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). The Climate Action Plan was written with the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2025.

For more information on these initiatives, see our exhibition currently on display in the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, or visit www.wcupa.edu/EarthDayVirtualExhibition.

2012



Tree Campus Award

WCU wins its first of eight consecutive Tree Campus USA Awards. This award recognizes not only the extraordinary trees on our campus—including the rare Bartram Oak in the Quad and a Black Oak at Tanglewood—but also our commitment to preserving trees through our tree advisory committee, Sustainability Council, and student service-learning projects.

2013



Frederick Douglass Statue Inaugurated

Thanks to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission along with gifts from several donors, a statue of Douglass is erected in the Quad. Its sculptor, Richard Blake, is a retired professor from the Department of Art + Design.

Scale model by Richard Blake on loan from John Baker.

2014



WCU Expands into Philadelphia

To better meet the needs of its students, The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education establishes a campus in Center City, Philadelphia with programs from multiple universities. It begins with offerings from Cheyney, East Stroudsburg, Millersville, and West Chester, though now only West Chester and Bloomsburg are involved.

2015



WCU Named an Arboretum

WCU's entire campus is named a Level II University Arboretum by Arbnet for its 2000 trees from 54 native species on north campus, and the Gordon Natural Area in south campus. Of particular interest is the rare Bartram Oak near Philip's Memorial Hall, which is the tallest of its kind and the oldest tree on campus. Since 2012 the university has participated in Tree Campus USA program. The first logo the university ever commissioned (used from 1986-1999) even features a stylized tree!



West Chester University

2016



First Doctoral Candidates Graduate

On December 17, West Chester University graduates its first doctoral candidates when 7 students in the new Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) program receive their diplomas. There are now four doctorate programs.

DNP doctoral robes donated by the WCU Foundation.

2016



Resource Pantry Opens

Furthering its commitment to meeting the needs of all students, including those who are homeless and food insecure, WCU establishes a place in Commonwealth Hall for students struggling financially to acquire food, clothes, job interview materials, and many other supplies.



2016



Incomparable Rams Play Macy's Parade

The Incomparable Golden Rams Marching Band performs at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, first having done so in 1986. This drumhead is used during this appearance for the 75-second performance of "Winter Wonderland."

The band has earned the title "incomparable" for its numerous high-profile performances at Eagles, Steelers, Jets and Giants football games; the Phillies' World Series appearances; West Chester parades; and the Philadelphia Thanksgiving Parade.

Drumhead on loan from the Wells School of Music.

2016



Christopher Fiorentino is Named President

In April, Christopher Fiorentino is named interim President after Greg Weisenstein's retirement. A longtime faculty member and Dean of the Business School, he is formally inaugurated on January 5th, 2017, by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's Board of Governors.

Trump Rally Divides Community

On April 25th, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump holds a rally at Hollinger Field House. Police separate the peaceful protesters and supporters on opposite sides of Church Street.

APSCUF Faculty Strike

Faculty at West Chester University, along with the other 13 PASSHE universities, go on strike at 5 am on October 19 over a contract dispute. WCU students overwhelmingly support the faculty, with clubs and fraternities delivering food, bands holding spontaneous concerts, and individuals marching alongside their teachers. The strike would end two days later after an agreement between the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties and PASSHE is reached. It is the only time APSCUF faculty would go on strike.

Strike signs used in the protest provided by Special Collections.

2017



Research Station Created in East Africa

The Shinehouse Gishwati Research Station is established on the outskirts of Gishwati-Mukura National Park in the Western Province of Rwanda, thanks to a generous donation by WCU alumnus Jim Shinehouse. An international, interdisciplinary research center, in its first year it would host 52 students and 21 faculty from 12 different institutions representing anthropology, biology, linguistics, primatology, and psychology.

LEED Certification

On May 8th, the Business and Public Management Building earns a LEED Gold Certification, the premiere designation for sustainable architecture. The building uses water management, efficient lighting and temperature controls, geoexchange heating and cooling, and recycled materials in its construction.

Vandana Shiva Speaks

On March 21st, the famous Indian food justice activist gives a rousing speech on campus concerning environmental racism. She also discusses the issues of urban food deserts and lack of access to green spaces.

Poster advertising the event on loan from the Department of Women and Gender Studies.

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2018



Wells School of Music Named

On September 27th, a \$3 million donation from the Wells brothers marks the largest cash gift in the University's history. The two notable alumni had started the marching band as well as the jazz program.

2020



Black Lives Matter Protest

On June 6th, at the height of pandemic lockdowns, and in response to the highly publicized murders of black people at the hands of police officers, a Black Lives Matter protest is held in the lawn across from the campus security building. Although few students are on campus, WCU students come from across the region to participate.

WCU BLM mask donated by Aaron Stoyack.

2020



Science and Engineering is Celebrated

In July, the final steel beam is put in place for the Science and Engineering Center and The Commons after a ceremony including President Fiorentino and the building's benefactors. Another example of sustainable architecture, the new building houses most of the health, science and engineering programs, as well as a dining hall and other amenities.

2021



WCU Covid-19 Vaccine Site

The Sturzebecker Health Sciences Center is designated by the Chester County Health Department as a location to distribute the Covid-19 vaccine.