

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Nov. 2, 2017

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

We have few better traditions at Northwest Missouri State University than our Homecoming week and this year's Homecoming celebration was a historic one.

The traditions include the crowning of our Homecoming king and queen at the annual Variety Show. We hosted our traditional ringing of the Bell of '48 to signal Walkout Day – although the day really started with the Bearcat Marching Band and Bearcat Fight Song as a 4 a.m. wake-up call. We hosted the 20th annual International Flag-Raising Ceremony, and the M-Club Hall of Fame induction, Homecoming parade, football game and volleyball games rounded out the weekend.

We also honored alumnus Mike Faust, whose name is now attached to our alumni center. A dedication and ribbon-cutting for what is now the Michael L. Faust Center for Alumni and Friends commemorated our expansion of the alumni house, which was made possible through a \$1 million gift by the Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation of Omaha in Mike's honor.

This was an amazing gift because we didn't solicit it. The Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation reached out to us and asked how they could honor Mike. He dedicated a 36-year career to Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc., where Walter Scott was chairman and chief executive officer, retiring in 2015 as the assistant to the chairman. Mike has been as valuable to us as we know he was to Kiewit and Walter for those 36 years with Kiewit.

Mike was the sole funder of a new computer lab in Wells Hall, known as the Faust Media Lab. We didn't ask for the money. He stepped forward and offered to help get the lab out of the basement. He provided the critical final dollars needed for the Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center. We didn't ask for the money. He volunteered to help because of his fond memories of Dr. Foster in the 1970s.

After he completed his time as visiting dean of Northwest's Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth College of Business and Professional Studies, he donated 100 percent of his compensation to the new Booth School of Business. Again, we didn't ask. It was his idea.

During his time with the Northwest Foundation, he has been an advocate for a much larger scholarship endowment, and has led the way through exceptionally generous gifts and an estate commitment. We believe he is the longest-serving director in the history of the Northwest Foundation, and by the time he completes his final term in 2020 he will have served for more than one-third of the Foundation's history.

Because of the length – and quality – of his service to Northwest, we can think of no more appropriate name for the historic, and now new, structure than the Michael L. Faust Center for Alumni and Friends!

We also announced the conference room inside the Faust Center is named the Lawhead Conference Room in honor of 1942 Northwest graduate Florence Abarr Lawhead, who

served on the Northwest Foundation Board of Directors and was active with the Arizona Alumni and Friends Chapter of the Northwest Alumni Association.

Florence and her late husband, Dr. Charles Lawhead, provided a gift in 2005 to help establish the former University Advancement Center, a property located east of the Faust Center that the Northwest Foundation later sold and now serves as the Lutheran Campus Center.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention Emma Lee Morgan, who, at 99 years young, served as our Homecoming parade grand marshal. What a distinct honor and pleasure it was to meet Emma, who now resides in Houston, is a 1939 alumna and a fervent Bearcat supporter. She was one of only four graduates in 1939 to major in mathematics and commerce.

With so many local schools, businesses and partners participating – and so many alumni, families and friends returning to Maryville – Homecoming at Northwest is all about celebrating our community and our history. In recent week's we've also hosted FFA students and school visits from a number of regional school districts. We hosted the Northwest Missouri School Counselors Association Fall Conference, and we have a range of outreach activities planned in the coming months. Everyone is a recruiter and everyone is an ambassador for Northwest!

Dr. John Jasinski is the 10th president of Northwest Missouri State University. For news and events at Northwest visit www.nwmissouri.edu.