



GLENVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

# Pioneer Update

Glenville State University Newsletter for Alumni & Friends | January 2026

**Happy New Year to Our Pioneer Family**

*Wishing you joy and prosperity in 2026!*

**Alumni  
SPOTLIGHT**





President Manchin greets Trey Stanley (Social Studies Education 5-adult) on stage during the Winter Commencement ceremony held on Saturday, December 13.

## December Graduates Celebrated at Winter Commencement

Glenville State University's Winter Commencement Ceremony took place on Saturday, December 13 in GSU's Waco Center.

Shawn Arthur '20 is currently working as the Assistant Track & Field Coach at the University of Charleston.

He came to Glenville State from Poca, West Virginia where he majored in Athletic Conditioning & Coaching and was a member of the Track & Field team. In fact, Shawn was named All-MEC for Track & Field nineteen times, was a three-time MEC Conference Champion (High Jump in 2019 and 2021, 400h in 2021), is an MEC record holder in 400h, is a GSU school record holder in the 400h and Long Jump, and has 92.5 career points scored at the Outdoor MEC Championships.

After graduating from Glenville State, he went on to earn a master's degree in Allied Health: Exercise Science. Before landing at the University of Charleston, he was a Physical Therapy Assistant and Personal Trainer at Teays Physical Therapy from 2021 to 2023 and, during that same time, also served as the Head Track & Field Coach at Poca High School. Shawn was also a Graduate Assistant Track & Field Coach at Otterbein University during their 2023-2024 season.

During his time coaching at Poca, their girls team scored the most points in school history at the state meet. At Otterbein, Shawn had a national qualifier in women's high jump, as well as many conference qualifiers and champions. At UC, their teams

The prospective graduates walked across the commencement stage and were recognized for their academic achievements. The group earned associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees in a variety of programs including business, education, land resources, criminal justice, science, music, and more. The students come to Glenville State from various counties throughout West Virginia, several other states including Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and abroad from Chile, Columbia, Nepal, and Paraguay.

West Virginia House of Delegates member Lori Dittman, delivered the keynote address. First elected in 2022, Dittman represents West Virginia's 63rd district, which includes all of Braxton County and part of Gilmer County. In her remarks, Dittman shared advice and words of encouragement to the students who were on hand to take part in the ceremony.

"No matter where life takes you – from here, across the nation, or around the world – you will always have a place to come home to in these West Virginia hills. Once you've been a part of Glenville, the mountains claim you forever," Dittman said.

Dr. Marjorie Stewart, who recently retired from the Department of Language and Literature, was bestowed with the title of Professor Emerita during the ceremony. Stewart came to Glenville State in 2012 and served in various capacities within the Department of Language and Literature including professor, campus newspaper sponsor, and facilitator of a task force on developmental education.

[Click here](#) to view photos from the ceremony.

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won both Men's and Women's indoor and outdoor MEC championships during the 2025 season – something Shawn says they are looking to do again this year. He adds that one of his athletes even qualified for the national championships and was selected to represent his home country of Belgium for his national team's 4x100 relay.

In his downtime, Shawn enjoys being outdoors, mountain biking, snowboarding, and he still trains and competes in the 400h from time to time. Shawn is one of the youth leaders at Bancroft Mission Church and he also joins the students and staff at UC when they take part in community service projects, including the Labor of Love on Labor Day.

He and his wife Angie were married in August 2025. They reside in Charleston, West Virginia.

When asked what Glenville State means to him, Shawn said, "Glenville gave me the space to grow into adulthood and to develop lifelong skills. Along the way, I met people who made a lasting, positive impact on my life. From professors like Dr. [Jong-Hoon] Yu to coaches like Coach [Nick] Spino and Coach [Jesse] Skiles '87, and teammates such as Divaughn Dixon and Sam Pollard '20. Each of them played a role in shaping the person I am today, and for that, I'm truly grateful to Glenville. It's a unique place that feels like home, fostering a close-knit community unlike any other. If I had the choice, I would do it all over again."

We are pleased to feature Shawn in this month's Alumni Spotlight and are proud to call him an alumnus.



Steve Westfall stands in the building warehouse in Ripley, West Virginia, for Jackson County's chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace. (Photo by Amelia Ferrell Knisely | West Virginia Watch)

## Former WV Lawmaker Now Builds Beds for Children Who Need a Place to Sleep

By Amelia Ferrell Knisely, *West Virginia Watch*

In Jackson County, some children don't have a bed to sleep in. They'll sleep on couches, on the floor or doubled up with siblings.

Former House of Delegates member Steve Westfall '78 decided to do something about it.

He launched a local chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a national nonprofit organization that uses volunteers to build and deliver handmade beds along with mattresses, bedding and pillows to children in need. The nonprofit's slogan says, "No kid sleeps on the floor in our town."

Since Labor Day last year, Westfall said they'd delivered nine beds to local kids.

"An 11-year-old told us this was the first bed she has ever had," said Westfall, who served as a Republican in the House from 2012 to 2024.

"We know there's a need. We got two more applications today," he said Sept. 16.

Westfall said he learned about Sleep in Heavenly Peace from a fellow lawmaker, Sen. Ben Queen, R-Harrison, who had built beds in his home county.

West Virginia has a rising child poverty rate and a foster care crisis — issues Westfall heard about in the Legislature — that have contributed to children needing beds. Sometimes grandparents suddenly take in multiple grandchildren, and they don't have enough beds or blankets for the children or the means to pay for it.

In Ripley, not far from Westfall's insurance agency, there's now a building full of lumber, table saws, sanders and more. Westfall said that grants and local donations helped it come together.

Westfall traveled to Salt Lake City to learn how to make the beds from Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

[Click here](#) to read the full story.



## Kim Caldwell Believes in Her Unconventional Basketball Style—And So Does Tennessee

By Emma Baccellieri, *Sports Illustrated*

Kim Stephens Caldwell '11 has been running her system for a decade now, which is long enough to have internalized every relevant question, complaint and frustration. There are plenty of them, and she can understand many, but there is one that has always bothered her. She hates when people call it a gimmick. If her teams look unorthodox—pressing aggressively, shooting on sight, making group substitutions like a hockey team makes line changes—that's only in service of strategy. The coach hates the idea that she runs this for attention or novelty or style points. Caldwell runs it to win.

The system is a useful key here. It's a reflection of the basketball philosophy that Caldwell has

installed as the women's head coach at No. 15 Tennessee. And it's an answer to many of the questions that swirled when she was hired last year.

Such as: *Is a 35-year-old with one season of Division I head coaching experience, someone who has never been on staff at a Power 4, truly ready for Tennessee, of all places?* Or: *Who can actually sell modern top recruits on a model of constant subbing and less playing time?* Or: *In a program so entwined with its architect, even all these decades later, where every NCAA coach has been either Pat Summitt or someone who played for Pat Summitt, how do you hire someone who has never stepped foot on campus?* Or: *Who?*

The answers come not so much from the system itself as from what it says about the person who runs it. Volunteers athletic director Danny White and the hiring committee liked what they saw in Caldwell's record at D-II Glenville State and in her lone D-I season at Marshall. And they especially liked what they saw in a coach bold enough to try an unusual style, creative enough to make it her own, and self-assured enough to remain committed to it.

"I was hired to do this," says Caldwell, now 36, perched on a couch in her office shortly before the start of the season. "If this is what you want me to come here and do, then I'm going to come here and do it. If you want me to come here and do something else, I'm not the person for the job."

Tennessee decided that it needed something new, even if that something might be rather polarizing, and that no better coach for that existed than Caldwell.

Her first season was one of transition. Operating with much of the same roster that was already in place—just one player transferred out—Caldwell installed her full-court press with hockey substitutions and high shot volume. They scored more than any Tennessee roster in 20 years. They beat archrival UConn. But they did not end with an especially deep postseason run. Caldwell brought Tennessee back to the Sweet 16, further than it had gone in the final season under her predecessor, Kellie Harper, but no further than it had gone in the few seasons prior. And that came amid massive personal change for Caldwell. She learned before the start of the season that she was pregnant with her first child, and she gave birth in the middle of conference play, navigating early motherhood while preparing for March Madness. She ultimately missed just one game.

[Click here](#) to read the full story.

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## Ribbon-cutting held for Beane Wrestling Center

By Shirley (James) Shuman '56, *Braxton Citizens News*

Attendees at the December 17 ribbon-cutting for the new home for BCHS wrestlers celebrated the fact that these athletes have a new place to practice. The athletes and their coaches are joining in the celebration through their practices which began last week. Superintendent Dr. Donna Burge-Tetrick said of the structure, "The new Coach Sterling Beane Sr. '70 Wrestling Center stands as both a tribute to an outstanding coach and a testament to the collaboration and vision of Braxton County Schools."

Coach Beane provided background on the journey from the earliest wrestling practices to the latest facility. He began by saying, "After 53 years of practicing in different places at the high school, the wrestling team now has a permanent place to call home." He continued to explain that when wrestling was begun as a sport at BCHS, they "practiced up behind the bleachers in the gymnasium on burlap mats that [they] had to move each day," and added, "At that point the athletic director, Roy J. Brosius, said he would buy us uniforms if we could raise money for a mat. Our very first mat cost \$1,500. We still had a problem, nowhere to practice."

"In the late 70s," Coach Beane explained, "AD Chuck Smyth began construction on our football facility, and he allowed a dressing room large enough to accommodate a wrestling mat, which has been our home for several years although we had to share it with the football team." He went on to say that last year Superintendent Burge-Tetrick and Principal Lori Stover '04, "approached [him] about turning the old building construction building into a wrestling facility," and added, "I knew it would take a lot of work but would make our program top notch."

Agreeing with Coach Beane's perspective on the level the program could reach, Dr. Burge-Tetrick named those who were responsible for the work. Calling the renovation "a true team effort," she said that it had been "led by maintenance supervisor Mark Rose, HVAC technician Terry Green, electrical instructor Keith Greene, and electrical students who wired the building." The superintendent also noted that middle school CTE students "helped clean up construction debris and [supported] the project throughout its development."



The renovated building contains male and female locker rooms, a laundry room which also houses an ice machine, and a mop room. The mat room has two wrestling mats—one full size along with climbing ropes, pullup bars, protective padding, and a scoreboard. It also has heating and air conditioning.

Dr. Burge-Tetrick emphasized that the renovated building “represents hard work and community spirit.” She added, “It honors Coach Beane’s lifelong impact on Braxton County athletics and ensures that generations of wrestlers will have a facility worthy of their effort, tradition, and pride.”

Coach Beane agreed with Dr. Burge-Tetrick but expressed it in a slightly different way. “Our facility is second to none in West Virginia where it can accommodate high school, middle school, and youth practices,” he said. “It just makes you proud when you step in the door of the new facility and [realize] the leadership of the administration that got this accomplished.”



(l-r) Kathy Eddy, CPA, CGMA, Whitney Nettles, Adrianna Blanco, MacKenzie Petry, Danielle "DJ" White, Mendy Aluise, Jacob Meadows, and Adam Bright.

## Accounting Students Attend WVSCPA Student and Member Night

Late last year, several Glenville State University accounting students attended the West Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants (WVSCPA) Student and Member Night alongside Lecturer of Accounting, MacKenzie (Ammerman) Petry '21. The event was hosted by the Parkersburg Chapter of the WVSCPA.

The event, which was held at the Parkersburg Country Club, brought together accounting firms from the Parkersburg, Marietta, and Ohio Valley areas. Students had the chance to talk with CPAs, partners, and recruiters about internships, career paths, and what it looks like to work in the profession.

“Attending the Student and Member Night event was great for our students, it really shows them what they can gain from the Accounting program at GSU. They also represented GSU very well and made some strong connections,” Petry said.

During the event, current statewide WVSCPA President, Mendy Aluise, spoke about her own path to becoming a CPA and her experience serving as the Society’s chair.

"Hearing a bit of Mendy's story was a great message for our students who are thinking about next steps after graduation," Petry added.

Student members of the WVSCPA gain access to several benefits, including the ability to participate in the Annual Recruiting Fair, networking opportunities at Society and Chapter events, eligibility for Outstanding Accounting Student Awards and the ability to compete for the Accounting Education Foundation's scholarships, access to the WVSCPA quarterly newsletter, and more.



## Casteel Named Head Football Coach at GSU

Glenville State University's Director of Athletics, Jesse Skiles '87, has announced the hiring of Jake Casteel as the next Head Football Coach at Glenville State. Casteel becomes the 26th head coach of the nine-time conference champion and two-time national runner-up football program.

"We are excited to welcome Coach Casteel into our Pioneer Family," Skiles said. "He is a talented young coach who has worked on some strong coaching staffs and has also proven to be an aggressive recruiter."

Casteel comes to Glenville State after serving as a defensive assistant coach with West Virginia University, working primarily with the linebackers under his father, bandits coach Jeff Casteel. Jake was hired by former GSU head coach and current WVU head coach Rich Rodriguez in January 2025 to join the Mountaineers staff.

"It's an honor to be named the head coach at Glenville State. I am excited to build on the tradition of this program and make the university, community, and alumni proud to be Pioneers," said Casteel.

Prior to West Virginia, Casteel spent one season at Jacksonville State where he was a defensive analyst and SAM's coach. In 2024, Jacksonville State linebackers racked up more than 240 tackles, which helped the Gamecocks to a No. 11 nationally ranked redzone defense and No. 16 ranked in turnovers gained with 24.

Casteel's first full-time position came at Cal Poly in 2022 as the linebackers coach and co-special teams coordinator. He spent two seasons on the Mustangs staff after spending one season each as a graduate assistant at West Virginia (2021) and Boise State (2020) on the defensive side of the ball.

Casteel was a standout linebacker at Northern Arizona from 2014-18, totaling 250 tackles in 44 games played over four seasons with the Lumberjacks. He led NAU in 2018 with 90 stops and had 54 tackles

in 2017 when Northern Arizona earned their first bid to the FCS Playoffs since 2013. Casteel was a four-time Big Sky All-Academic Team selection as well during his playing career before staying at NAU in 2019 as a graduate assistant.

"I want to thank Director of Athletics Jesse Skiles, President Dr. Manchin, and Ike Morris for believing in me," Casteel added.

Joining Casteel from the previous football coaching staff will be Brian Hill '93, Javon Butler '23, Seth Arnold '23, and Dave McEntire.



(l-r) Hadden Mick, Braiden Haught, Jeremy Taylor, Zach Sumpter, and eSports Coach Austin Pantaleo.

## GSU eSports Rocket League Team Captures National Championship

Glenville State University's eSports Rocket League team has made program history, capturing its first-ever National Championship after an undefeated 11-0 season and a decisive 4-2 series victory over the nationally respected Coffeyville Community College in the championship finals held in December 2025.

Throughout the season, the Pioneers delivered a dominant performance, outscoring opponents 142-39 and recording 15 clean sheets across 35 total games played in all series.

The championship-winning roster, which included Zach Sumpter, Braiden Haught, Hadden Mick, and Jeremy Taylor, demonstrated exceptional dedication throughout the season. Their commitment, work ethic, and willingness to improve helped make them the first team in Glenville State University eSports history to secure a national title.

Director of eSports Austin Pantaleo praised the team's journey and development.



## GSU's Mental Health Counselor Named WVHEPC Counselor of the Year

Kendra Pullen '20 was recently recognized as the 2025 Counselor of the Year by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Pullen is a Mental Health Counselor at Glenville State University, where she works with students to support their growth, resilience, and overall well-being.

In her role, she offers individual counseling, facilitates groups, and provides support during times of stress or transition. She also collaborates with the

"I couldn't be prouder of these four players. When I came in, they wanted this from day one and put in the time and effort right away. The team you saw in the finals is a product of their commitment over the past semester. As their coach, I'm not only proud, but astonished by their development. Two of the players on this roster had never played competitive Rocket League before this season, and every player had areas they needed to improve. They didn't make excuses or complain, they simply put in the work and wanted it more. I'm extremely proud of this team, and it's an amazing group to win the first-ever national championship for this program," Pantaleo said.

campus community through workshops, trainings, and outreach programs that encourage wellness, reduce stigma, and strengthen a sense of belonging.

Congratulations, Kendra!

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## PIONEER ATHLETICS

*Check out these game schedules and come out to support the Pioneers!*



**Men's  
Basketball**



**Women's  
Basketball**



**Wrestling**



**Acrobatics &  
Tumbling**



**Track & Field**



**Boxing**

## Interested in Joining the Pioneer Athletic Club?

As a member, you directly support Pioneer student-athletes through scholarship. Annual Pioneer Athletic Club membership gives you exclusive access to premium areas at Morris Stadium and the Waco Center, where you will have a bird's eye view of the football field and McPherson Court.

[Click here](#) to learn more about membership benefits and how to enroll.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Monday, January 26 - Reception for GSU Alumni, Friends, & Legislators**  
5:00 PM - Woman's Club of Charleston, Charleston, WV

**Tuesday, January 27 - GSU Day at the WV Legislature**  
WV State Capitol - Charleston, WV

**Wednesday, February 11 - Little Kanawha Reading Series: Bob Tinnell**  
4:00 PM - Robert F. Kidd Library

**Thursday, February 19 - Founders Day of Giving**  
*Save the Date!*

**Friday, February 20 - Casino Night**  
Mollohan Campus Community Center Ballroom  
*Save the Date!*

**Saturday, February 28 - Winter Homecoming**  
Waco Center  
*Save the Date!*

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