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WKU spokesman Bob Skipper to retire in June

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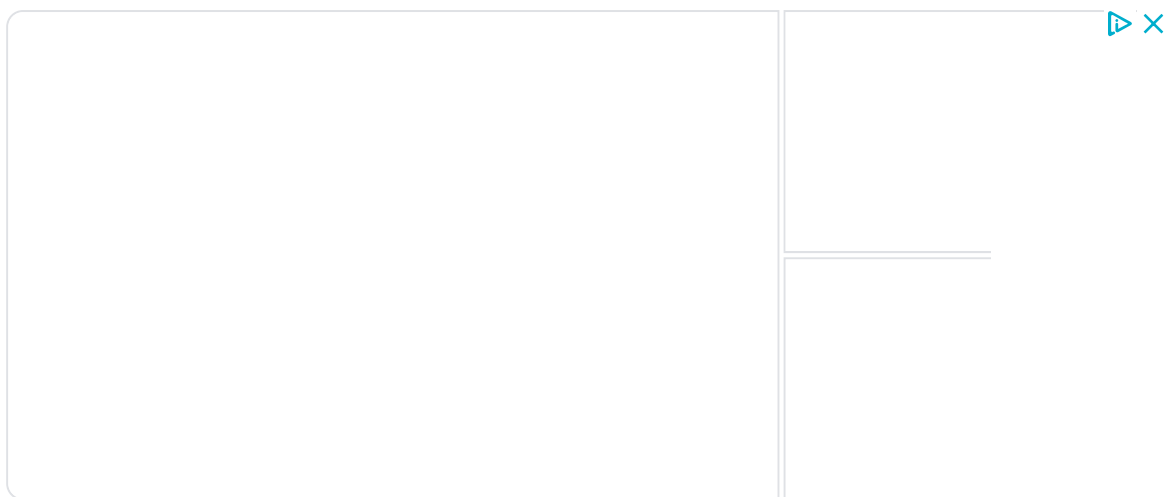
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Bob Skipper

He's the face of Western Kentucky University's media relations division and the university's official spokesman, but most students throughout the years know him by his email moniker: "Skipper, Bob."

Now, nearly 35 years into his career at WKU, Director of Media Relations Bob Skipper is preparing for his retirement, effective June 30.



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“There are a lot of highlights, most of which are just the people I’ve worked with,” Skipper said of his career at WKU, which began in 1986 when he left a stint at the Daily News as a reporter and photographer to become a university photographer for WKU.

A few years later, Skipper stepped up to become the university’s director of media relations.

“What I’m most proud of is the rapport I’ve been able to build across campus” with students, Skipper said.

Simple trick to clear earwax

Earwax can cause hearing loss, memory loss, simple fix to clear earwax.

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Each year, when winter weather haunts the forecast, it’s Skipper’s job to deliver the news about whether the university will delay or cancel classes

altogether, typically through a hotly-anticipated campuswide email that populates students' inboxes.

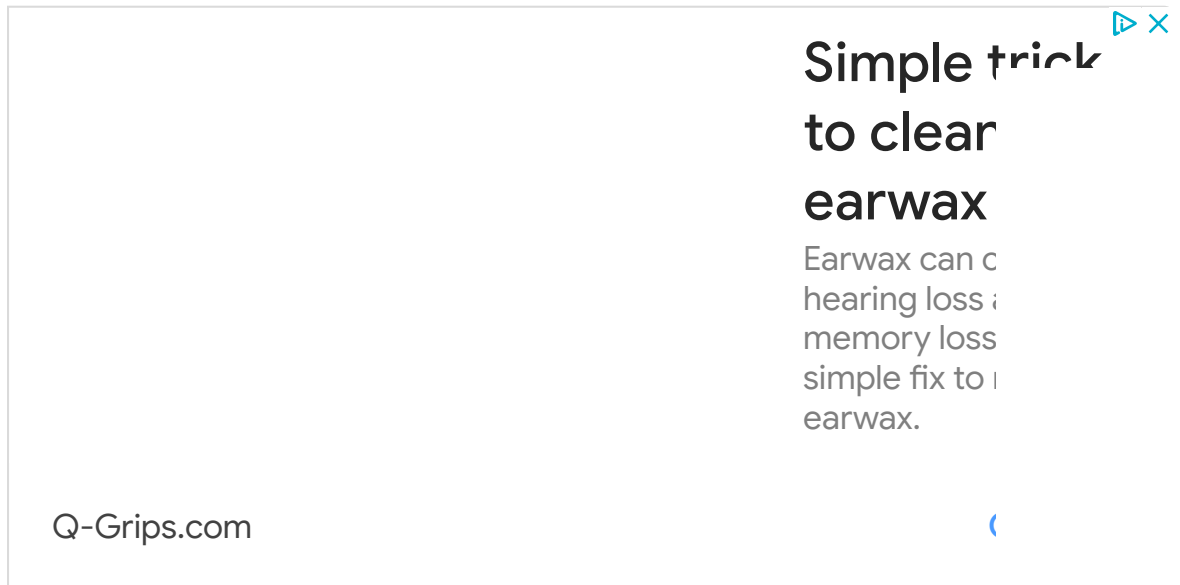
The result is that students take to social media to playfully lobby "Skipper, Bob" for a snow day, showering him with praise when their wish is granted and then turning on him when the magic inevitably dies.

The social media phenomenon was perhaps best captured by a 2014 "mean tweets" video when Skipper took to YouTube to read some of the tweets about him in his usual good-natured way.

"That was a lot of fun. It seemed to be a big hit" at the time, Skipper said.

Skipper said his relationships with people throughout the WKU community and on campus, especially the people in the university's marketing and communications division, made his decision to retire a difficult one.

"It's going to be hard not working with them on a daily basis," he said.



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Earwax can cause hearing loss and memory loss. A simple fix to remove earwax.

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Still, when the university offered to buy out senior employees' contracts in a bid to cut down on personnel costs amid a pandemic WKU is still trying to bounce back from, Skipper said the offer made financial sense for him and his family.

The opportunity came at a good time, too, just as more responsibilities are piling up at home, Skipper said. Post-retirement, Skipper said he plans to catch up on some work around the house and at the small farm he lives on, settle his parents' estate and spend more time with his grandchildren. He plans to continue as the Woodburn Volunteer Fire Department's chief for the time being, and he added he's "not old enough to retire to a rocking chair yet."

As for his career, Skipper said he feels blessed to have had the opportunity to advance through the university's ranks. After first coming to Bowling Green for college, he's never really wanted to live anywhere else, he said.

Throughout the years, Skipper said he's been blessed to have some good mentors to learn from, including Fred Hensley, Bob Edwards, Robbin Taylor and now President Timothy Caboni.



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"I appreciate all of their guidance and friendships," he said.

To anyone just starting in the communications field, Skipper said the biggest piece of advice he can offer is to “not overreact” and that a bit of humor can help keep one grounded. Things may look topsy-turvy in the moment, but “if you can keep your cool, you can ride those waves out and actually come out on top.”

– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter @NewsByAaron or visit bgdailynews.com.

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