Claire Donahue/Olympic Gold Medal

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Olympic gold medalist Claire Donahue has been making the rounds in Bowling Green this week, less than a month after making history for WKU.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham talks with the swimmer about her amazing journey to London.

The excitement continues for WKU graduate Claire Donahue who, last month, became the first WKU athlete to ever claim a gold medal in the summer Olympics.

Who better than Olympic Gold medalist Claire Donahue to talk about the Spirit of WKU?

That’s why we put her through the paces of some intense photo shoots this week as part of our marketing campaign.

 “It brings me a lot of pride to have so many people from Western Kentucky and Bowling Green supporting me and being so excited for me and what I was able to do.”

The swimmer, who always has her red towel, has truly put WKU on the map.

 “Teammates would ask what’s the red towel because I would keep it with me at trials and at the Olympics and took pictures with it. (I had to explain it to them)

Now she has another memento she keeps with her, one that generates a lot of excitement.

 “Just holding it and people talking about it and wanting to see it, it’s just been a huge experience to be able to go to the Olympics and on top of that get a gold medal.”

She says the London games had several overwhelming moments.

 “Just thinking oh my gosh I’m with the best athletes in the world, how often does that happen, I guess every four years but for me, for an individual person, it doesn’t happen that often.”

Now Claire is spreading her message of hard work and perseverance, including to WKU’s class of 2016.

She credits her family with shaping who she is and who she still wants to be.

 “I was ten or eleven when I told them I wanted to go to the Olympics and they never said Claire you can’t do that, that’s impossible.”

And for Claire the journey doesn’t end here…she’s already looking toward the future.

 “Definitely Rio 2016, I thought a lot about it and I think it’s a definite possibility, there’s a lot I want to do in between, a lot of meets I want to go to.”

Claire will do her training here in Bowling Green with the WKU swim team. She will be competing in meets every six months leading up to the Rio Olympics. She also has plenty of speaking engagements and other commitments lined up.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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