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## Veterans honored at WKU

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Nov 11, 2024



Western Kentucky University President Timothy Caboni speaks at the wreath-laying ceremony at the Guthrie Tower on Monday.

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Western Kentucky University held its annual wreath-laying ceremony for Veterans Day and hosted the induction of two alumni, Col. Taylor Chasteen and the late Capt. Ralph Shrewsbury Jr., into the ROTC Hall of Fame.

“This day provides us with an important opportunity to reflect on the costs and the blessings of liberty – to remember that in the face of difficulty, in the face of danger, in the face of the unknown, our servicemen and women stand firm to protect our freedom,” WKU President Timothy Caboni said to a crowd of more than 50 at the Guthrie Bell Tower.

At Diddle Arena’s Stansbury Concourse around noon, several spoke on the service and lives of Chasteen and Shrewsbury Jr.

Chasteen served a distinguished military service following his 1981 graduation from WKU.

Chasteen became part of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) “Screaming Eagles” Division, eventually becoming commander of C/426th S&T Battalion in 1989, according to a WKU release. He was deployed to Saudi Arabia to participate in Desert Shield in 1990, and in Desert Storm’s initial land assault, his battalion participated in history’s largest Air Assault Operation, according to the release.

He went on to serve for more than three decades.



At one point Monday, he addressed the WKU ROTC corps of cadets and younger people as a messenger from the past and someone with an idea of what awaits them.

“You will each journey a different path, whether you're going to take a commission or whether you're working in civilian life; your family's association and this institution have given you a foundation and some tools,” he said. “Your time and place and the rapid pace of change will present many challenges. You will be assigned positions of great responsibility involving lives and material. You will make decisions every day. At times, confusion will be abundant, but when volatility, uncertainty, chaos and ambiguity take over, you must provide intelligent and steady leadership.”

Shrewsbury Jr., a 1942 WKU graduate, led a platoon in Normandy in 1944 when a counterattack caught him and his men, and tanks cut them off, according to WKU. Lacking anti-tank weapons or grenades, he reluctantly surrendered surviving soldiers but later escaped with other wounded survivors in a moving prisoner of war train headed to Germany; he evaded Germans for 16 days, returned to friendly lines and the next year, commanded Company G in a pivotal battle for the defense of Hatten, France, according to WKU.

After service, he continued his education and then served as a decadeslong optometrist in Ohio County. He died in 1998.

“Everything granddad did was for his family, whether it be kids, grandkids, his own brothers – which there were a lot of ...” his grandson Kyle Shrewsbury said. “He always wanted to put them first and him last.”

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**David Horowitz**