Decades of Spirit – Former Homecoming Queens

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“Decades of Spirit” is this year’s Homecoming theme at WKU, a chance to celebrate traditions from the university’s 113 year history.

Tonight Amy Bingham sits down with some former Homecoming Queens to reminisce in this week’s View from the Hill.

There is no shortage of nostalgia on the hill this week as WKU’s homecoming theme digs deep into the archives to celebrate decades of spirit. Some former homecoming queens were more than happy to take a stroll down memory lane.

“I see it every morning when I wake up.”

WKU’s most recent homecoming queen Makayle Botts keeps her crown by her bedside.

She says the whole thing still feels like a dream.

“I can just remember how truly blessed I felt. I remember in my interview they asked me why do you deserve to be Homecoming queen and I said I feel like I’ve already won.”

“I remember the entire week being so much fun.”

2004 Queen Destiny O’Rourke was so excited to reminisce about her win, that she wore her crown to work this week at Bowling Green High.

“The moment they said my name you know I just was beside myself. I remember thinking well ok if I win I’m definitely not gonna do the pose where people scream and they squat and that’s exactly what happened!”

“I think really that year in 1979 it was kind of the first year they put up posters in support of their candidates.”

It’s been 40 years since Betty McGuire took home the crown in 1979. For that game, she traded her twirler outfit for homecoming attire.

“It really was a shock and I couldn’t stop laughing and talking and giggling and Dr. Zacharias told me to be still so he could put the crown on my head.”

Alice Gatewood Waddell made history in 1972 when she became the first African American to be crowned Homecoming queen.

“The black students at that time sat in one section of the stadium and they were really I mean just cheering and really happy. The other part of the stadium was kind of calm, you know wasn’t as celebratory.”

Waddell says she didn’t take it personally when a recount was held to verify the results. And says she was very proud of being crowned on the field once known as Jonesville, owned by her great grandparents.

“It was sort of like bringing something back to a community that once belonged to black people and my ancestors and family.”

“Decades of Spirit” will come to life at the homecoming parade beginning at five o’clock tomorrow afternoon. It’s a brand new route this year starting at the planetarium, going downtown and ending at Cherry Hall. Kickoff for the game is Saturday at 3 pm when WKU takes on Charlotte.

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

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