



## Contemporary News Accounts of the Marshall University Football Team Tragedy



See also:

- [The Marshall Plane Crash](#) A tribute to the 75 who lost their lives
- [November 14, 1970](#)

### Radio Network Newscasts

These are MP3 files averaging about 500 KB: [cbs\\_marshall1.mp3](#), [cbs\\_marshall2.mp3](#), [cbs\\_marshall3.mp3](#), [mutual\\_marshall.mp3](#),

### UPI State Broadcast Wire, Nov. 14, 1970

CWR21

URGENT

(HUNTINGTON)--A DC-8 PASSENGER PLANE IS DOWN NEAR HUNTINGTON'S TRI-STATE AIRPORT THIS EVENING. AUTHORITIES SAY THE WRECKAGE HAS BEEN LOCATED SOMEWHERE NEAR THE AREA OF WHERE THE INTERSTATE 64 BRIDGE CROSSES THE BIG SANDY RIVER OUTSIDE OF HUNTINGTON...ABOUT A MILE-AND-ONE-HALF FROM THE AIRPORT. THERE IS STILL NO WORD ON POSSIBLE INJURIES.

(MORE) FM844PES 11/14...

## UPI State Broadcast Wire, Nov. 15, 1970

CWR1

FIRST WEST VIRGINIA NEWS SUMMARY

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HERE IS NEWS OF WEST VIRGINIA FROM UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL:

(HUNTINGTON) -- A CHARTERED AIRLINER CARRYING 75 PERSONS... INCLUDING THE MARSHALL UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM, MEMBERS OF ITS COACHING STAFF AND SUPPORTERS, SOME OF THEM FEARED TO BE PROMINENT HUNTINGTON AREA PERSONS...CRASHED AND BURNED IN A LIGHT FOG AND RAIN LAST NIGHT NEAR HUNTINGTON'S TRI-STATE AIRPORT. POLICE, AIRPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS SAY THERE APPARENTLY WERE NO SURVIVORS. THE CRASH OCCURRED AT ABOUT 7-40 P-M JUST SHORT OF THE AIRPORT RUNWAY. THE PLANE WAS RETURNING THE TEAM FROM NORTH CAROLINA FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S GAME WITH EAST CAROLINA.

--NATIONAL GUARDSMEN, STATE POLICE AND VOLUNTEER FIREMEN HAVE BEGUN THE GRIM TASK OF REMOVING THOSE BODIES STREWN ABOUT THE WRECKAGE FROM THE SCENE. THE BODIES ARE BEING CARRIED IN PLASTIC BAGS AND ARE BEING PLACED IN NATIONAL GUARD TROOP CONVOY TRUCKS...WHERE THEY WILL BE TAKEN TO THE NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY WHERE A CRACK TEAM OF IDENTIFICATION EXPERTS WILL BEGIN THE TEDIOUS PROCESS OF ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY THE VICTIMS. PARTS OF THE PLANE IN THE SURROUNDING HEAVILY WOODED AREA STILL ARE BURNING FOUR HOURS AFTER THE CRASH OCCURRED. SPECTATORS HAVE LINED STATE ROUTE 75 AND ARE STANDING IN A LIGHT DRIZZLE LOOKING DOWN ON THE WOODED VALLEY AREA WHERE THE PLANE CRASHED. THE MAIN FUSELAGE CAN BE SEEN FROM THE HIGHWAY. A COCKPIT, HOWEVER, IS LOCATED BEHIND THE MAIN SECTION OF THE PLANE.

--A FEW MARSHALL STUDENTS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN PENETRATING POLICE BARRIERS TO GET TO THE SCENE. ONE STUDENT COMMENTED--QUOTE-- "ALL THE TROUBLE THIS SCHOOL HAS BEEN THROUGH, AND NOW THIS." GOVERNOR MOORE REMAINED AT THE SCENE FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES AND THEN LEFT FOR THE AIRPORT WHERE FAMILIES AND RELATIVES OF THOSE ON BOARD GATHERED. STATE POLICE HAVE BARRICADED THE CRASH SITE AND HAVE PREPARED IT FOR THE TEAM OF FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS TO BEGIN THEIR PROBE INTO THE CRASH.

## UPI National Broadcast Wire, Nov. 15, 1970

043 UPR

SECOND WORLD NEWS ROUNDUP

-0-

(SUMMARY)

TWO STORIES OF DEATH ...

MORE ON THOSE KHRUSHCHEV MEMOIRS ...

THE WEATHER HELPS FOREST FIREFIGHTERS IN CALIFORNIA ...

AND AN ATHEIST MAY BECOME AN EAGLE SCOUT.

THIS DAY'S NEWS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD ... GATHERED BY UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS AROUND THE GLOBE.

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(PLANE)

NORMAN BENJAMIN AND FOUR OF HIS FRIENDS WERE JUST GOING OUT FROM THEIR DORMITORY AT MARSHALL UNIVERSITY. THEN CAME THE RADIO BULLETIN ... A PLANE HAD CRASHED IN THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS OF WEST VIRGINIA.

SHOCK CAME OVER THE ROOM. THEY WERE ALL STUNNED. THEY KNEW THEIR CLASSMATES, FRIENDS -- THEIR FOOTBALL TEAM -- WAS ON BOARD THAT PLANE.

AND ALL 75 ARE DEAD.

"IT WAS LIKE A BAD DREAM," BENJAMIN RECALLS. "WE JUST HUNG

AROUND THE DORM TO SEE IF THEY NEEDED OUR HELP."  
BUT THERE WAS LITTLE TO DO OR SAY -- JUST MEMORIES.

THE CHARTERED SOUTHERN AIRWAYS JET CARRIED THE MARSHALL UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM AND COACHING STAFF ... PLUS A GROUP OF WEST VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATORS AND CIVIC LEADERS.

AND ALL 75 ARE DEAD.

THE PLANE STRUCK A HIGH HILL IN THE FOGGY MOUNTAINS AND SKIDDED DOWN INTO A VALLEY AND EXPLODED IN FLAMES. THE JET BURNED FOR MORE THAN FIVE HOURS DESPITE A HEAVY RAIN -- CHARRING THOSE BODIES INSIDE.

MRS. MINNIE RAMEY AND SOME OF HER FRIENDS HEARD AND SAW WHAT HAPPENED ... ONLY 200 FEET FROM THE CRASH SITE NEAR HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA.

MRS. HANEY HEARD THE PLANE AND RACED FOR THE WINDOW. SHE SAYS ... "IT SOUNDED LIKE SOMETHING WENT WRONG WITH THE PLANE. IT SORT OF WHISTLED, AND THEN IT TURNED THE SKY RED. THE WHOLE SKY WAS LIT UP. IT LOOKED LIKE THE PLANE WAS BREAKING APART BEFORE IT HIT."

AND ALL 75 PEOPLE ON BOARD ARE DEAD.

THE COMMENT OF WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR ARCH MORE JUST ABOUT SAYS IT ALL. MOORE'S WORDS ... "I AM TOTALLY CONSUMED. I CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY THESE THINGS HAPPEN"



## 75 on Football Team Plane Die in West Virginia Crash

*This is the UPI article which appeared in many U. S. newspapers on Nov. 15, 1970. The headline above is the one which appeared in the New York Times, which used this article.*

HUNTINGTON, W. Va. -- A chartered airliner, carrying the Marshall University football team and coaching staff and state civic leaders and legislators, crashed and burned in light fog and rain tonight near the Tri-State Airport in the Appalachian Mountains.

The authorities said all 75 persons aboard were killed.

The plane, a twin-jet DC-9 owned by Southern Airways in Atlanta, was in communication with the airport until just before the crash at about 7:40 P. M., after a 40-minute flight from North Carolina, where the Marshall team played an afternoon game.

Control tower officials said that "everything was perfectly normal and there was no indication of trouble."

The death toll was the highest this year in an airplane accident in the United States. All of the fatal airliner crashes this year were on charter or non-scheduled flights; none occurred in commercial scheduled flights.

It was the nation's third airliner accident -- the second this year -- involving a college football team. Thirty-one

persons, including 14 Wichita State University players, were killed last Oct. 2 when their plane crashed in the Colorado Rockies. In 1960, a plane crash in Toledo, Ohio, killed 22 persons, including 16 members of the California State Polytechnic College team.

The DC-9, which has twin jets on either side of the tail assembly, can carry 95 passengers.

The civic leaders and legislators aboard the plane were members of a boosters' club composed of prominent citizens who helped the football team financially. A spokesman for the university said members of the club who were on the plane included six prominent physicians.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the plane carried 70 passengers, a crew of four and a baggage handler.

The pilot was making an approach to the airport Runway 11 when the crash occurred about 7:40 P. M., after a 40-minute flight from Kinston, N. C. The Marshall team had played East Carolina College at Greenville, N. C., and lost, 17-14.

There was a 300-foot ceiling and visibility was five miles, the aviation agency said.

The plane came down about a mile and a half from the airport, near a point where Interstate 64 crosses the Big Sandy River into Kentucky. The Appalachians rise to a height of about 1,000 feet in the area.

Mrs. Don Bailey, a resident of the area, said: "I heard the plane overhead. Then it made a funny sound. I went to the back porch and saw a streak of fire and then an explosion. My house shook. Then it seemed like there was nothing but fire in the sky."

Mrs. Bailey's husband added, "I don't see how anybody could have gotten out of that plane."

Steve Stanley, an air traffic control specialist at the airport, said he was on the field "taking a breather" when the crash occurred.

"I saw a large ball of fire, an explosion, about two miles from Runway 11," Mr. Stanley said.

Other eyewitnesses reported that the plane struck the top of a hill, skidded down into a valley and exploded.

State Trooper W. F. Donohoe, one of nine state policemen at the crash scene, said the wreckage still burned two hours after the crash.

A spokesman for Marshall University, which has an enrollment of 9,100, said the plane carried 37 football players, members of the coaching staff, a West Virginia State Assemblyman, a Huntington television station sportscaster and member of the Big Green Boosters Club. The Marshall team's nicknames are Thundering Herd and Big Green.

John Ontague, East Carolina's athletic director, said that Marshall's athletic director, Charles Kautz, and the university's head football coach, Rick Tolley, were aboard the plane, which left Kinston at 6:38 P. M.

The Marshall team, depleted because of a recent recruiting scandal and Mid-American Conference suspension, opened the season with a 40-man squad. Only about a half-dozen players were from West Virginia. Others were from Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, Ohio and New Jersey.

Marshall was placed on probation by the National Collegiate Athletic Association because of recruiting methods and alleged payments to players. The players mentioned in the alleged irregularities dropped out of school or transferred to other schools. The team had three victories and six losses this year.

Marshall University, which is located in Huntington in the tri-state region where West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky meet, is more familiar to sports fans for its basketball teams than its football teams.

The school was founded in 1837, two years after the death of Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States.

## Crash Wipes Out MU Grid Team

*This is part of the AP article which appeared in many U. S. newspapers on Nov. 15, 1970. The headline above is the one which appeared in the Raleigh Register-Beckley Post Herald, which used this article.*

KENOVA -- A twin-jet Southern Airways DC9 carrying Marshall University's football team, rooters and crew crashed and exploded in flames near here Saturday night, with no apparent survivors, according to State Police and Federal Agency spokesmen.

A spokesman for Southern Airways in Atlanta, Ga., said the \$3.5 million craft was carrying 70 passengers and a crew of five. They said it was the only plane Marshall had chartered.

Witnesses at the scene near this southwestern state community said the plane slammed into the side of a small hill at about 7:40 p.m. and exploded into "a giant ball of fire."

State Police said at least 13 bodies were counted outside the burning craft, but flames were too intense to probe the interior of the plane.

This was the second plane in less than two months which crashed carrying a football team. On Oct. 2, one of two chartered planes carrying the Wichita State University football team, coaches, boosters and others, crashed in the mountains of Colorado, killing 31 persons -- including 14 football players.

Witnesses said they were "rocked" out of their chairs from the concussion of the explosion.

John Young, who lives about a half mile from the crash site, said he "heard this loud noise. . .I ran out to see what it was and all I saw was a big ball of fire."

"Nobody could have survived that," Young said.

Albert Rich, whose house also is about a half mile from the scene, said he first thought the loud noise was lightning. He went out to see.

"I heard this one bang and a minute later there was this terrific bang which shook the whole house. I ran outside to see if there was a storm, and I saw this flash over the hill," Rich said.

He said the plane skimmed the top of an abandoned house just before it crashed.

A light rain hampered rescue efforts, where the site was accessible only by a narrow, dirt road which had turned mostly into mud. [...]

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## U. S. Studies Crash Fatal to 75 in Jet

### Investigators Report Plane Carrying Marshall Team Was Operated Normally

*This article appeared in the New York Times on Nov. 16, 1970. One paragraph was inadvertently not copied, indicated by [...].*

By JON NORDHEIMER

HUNTINGTON, W. Va., Nov. 15 -- A Federal safety official said tonight that the Government's preliminary investigation into the crash last night of a chartered jetliner carrying the Marshall University football team had

uncovered no irregularities in the operation and performance of the aircraft. All 75 persons aboard died in the crash.

John H. Reed, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said at a news conference: "All handling appeared to be routine, all equipment appeared to be functioning normally."

According to the Federal authorities, the Southern Airways DC-9 jet apparently hit the top of trees above a ridge and exploded in a thickly wooded hollow while attempting to land at the Tri-State Airport in Kenova, W. Va., in rain and fog.

Forty-three of those killed were members and coaches of the Marshall squad, returning from a game with East Carolina University in Greenville, N. C. It was the only trip by air that the team was to have made this season.

The other victims of the crash were supporters of the team, mostly from Huntington, and five crew members.

Marshall University officials said that six members of the football team, who had injuries from previous games, had not made the trip, in addition to a few active players who were not on the traveling squad.

The bodies of the 75 victims were moved today to two temporary morgues, one at a National Guard armory and the other in an airport hangar.

And tonight on the Marshall University campus in Huntington, about 7,000 students held a memorial service for the dead. The state school has an enrollment of about 10,000.

The mood was somber as friends and relatives of the dead players arrived in town, confused and incredulous.

Many coaches wept and some required treatment for shock. A light snow, the first of the season, dusted the tall trees and brick buildings of the state institution, which occupies a four-square-block area near the center of this manufacturing city of 73,000 population.

"No one can believe it," said William Dawson as he stood outside the administration building. "No one can believe that all these great boys were wiped out."

Mr. Dawson, a 27-year-old former professional football player with the Boston Patriots, was one of two surviving coaches of the team. After yesterday's game, which Marshall lost to East Carolina by a score of 17 to 14, he and the other coach had driven by car to make a recruiting stop in another North Carolina town while the rest of the team flew back to Huntington on the chartered plane. [...]

The rash six weeks ago of a leased plane in the Rockies, killing 14 Wichita State University football players, led to an informal review of the Marshall traveling arrangements, but no changes had been considered necessary, according to university officials.

At his news conference, Mr. Reed of the National Transportation Safety Board called the crash of the Marshall plane "the worst involving an athletic team in the history of American aviation."

Mr. Reed said that last night's accident could not be compared to the Wichita State crash, which occurred Oct. 2, killing 31 persons including the 14 football players. He noted that the Marshall team was aboard a DC-9 jet operated by an established charter airline, while the Wichita players had been aboard a much smaller craft that was chartered by an aircraft leasing concern.

The Marshall team usually traveled by bus for games in the three-state region of West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio. However, one charter flight was made last year, to Michigan, before this weekend's trip.

Officials of the Federal Aviation Administration said today that the last radio contact with the Marshall plane, 90 seconds before the crash, was routine and gave no hint of any irregularity. The plane's flight recorder was recovered in the wreckage and the information on altitude and other details were being examined by investigators.

It could not immediately be confirmed, but it seemed likely that the Southern Airways crew aboard the DC-9 had never landed before at the Tri-State Airport, which like many airports in the Appalachians, is constructed on the top of a large hill. The crew that landed here on Friday to pick up the team was not the crew that flew them back from Greenville, Southern Airways said.

The Tri-State Airport is not equipped with a part of the Instrument Landing System that assists pilots in landing during adverse weather conditions. It gives a pilot his altitude and helps establish his landing path. Airport personnel were operating last night with the "localizer" part of the system, which supplies information on direction and helps aim the plane toward the landing strip, according to Charles Dodrill, president of the Tri-State Airport Authority.

The crash occurred at 7:37 P. M. The Federal Aviation Administration had reported weather conditions this way:

"Estimated ceiling 500 feet broken; visibility five miles; 1000 feet overcast; light rain, fog and smoke." Scattered clouds were reported at 300 feet.

Minimum F. A. A. conditions for landing at Tri-State are a 392-foot ceiling with visibility of three-fourths of a mile, it was reported. Airlines frequently establish higher minimums.

The DC-9, piloted by Capt. Frank Abbot of Memphis, who was described by Southern Airways as a senior pilot with more than 20,000 hours of flying time, apparently struck the top of trees above a ridge a mile and a half from the landing strip, according to the F. A. A. The plane nosedived into a small valley and exploded on impact.

Today, as investigators studied the charred wreckage, only the two rear-mounted engines of the plane were intact. The rest was rubble strewn in a long, black scar on the earth.

One of those killed was Roger Childers, who had been a defensive player on the team last year. He underwent brain surgery last January on what was thought to be a football-connected injury, but which turned out to be a non-malignant tumor. The operation was regarded as a success and he returned to Marshall this semester and worked as the field manager for the football team. Last week, with members of the team attending, he was married.

Mr. Childers's wife was once of many relatives who had waited last night in a Huntington hospital for ambulances to bring in survivors of the crash. None came.

Some in the aviation industry, mostly pilots, have complained for many years that all airports regulated by the F. A. A. should be required to employ full Instrument Landing System equipment. Officials at the Tri-State Airport said that the installation of "Glide Float" equipment -- the part of the system not used here -- had been considered but never carried out because of problems of financing and the availability of large tracts of unoccupied level land required for the installation.

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## **A Quarter-Century After a Terrible Tragedy, Marshall University Has the Winningest Football Team of the 1990s**

*The following article appeared in Time magazine on November 24, 1997, and is reproduced here with permission.*

By STEVE WULF

Even without knowing its significance, a visitor would be mesmerized by the fountain on the campus of Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. Water flows from the top of 75 strands of steel shaped and forged to look like a gigantic flower. On this particular autumn Saturday morning, the steady trickle is the only sound on a campus that will soon shake with cheers.

They love the Thundering Herd in Huntington. Stand anywhere in this Rust Belt, Bible Belt city of 60,000, twirl

around, and you will see at least one green-and-white GO HERD sign. Young and old are wearing shirts and hats with the Heisman Trophy symbol and MARSHALL 88 on them--acknowledging the presence among them of wide receiver and Heisman Trophy candidate Randy Moss. Last year the Herd went 15-0 to win the national championship of 1-AA. This year, in its 100th season of college football, Marshall is playing in Division 1 for the first time in a long, long time, and it has a chance to go 11-2 and win the championship of the Mid-American Conference (MAC), the conference that once expelled it. These are great days to be one with the Herd.

There is a day, however, that Marshall would like to forget. Last week the water in the fountain was turned off until next spring, the football players gathered for a solemn ceremony, three wreaths were placed at the foot of the fountain, and taps was played one more time. Under a cloudy sky, people close to Marshall recalled Nov. 14, 1970. But then they remember that date on an almost continual basis. As Marshall football coach and former Herd running back Bob Pruett says, "I think I speak for a lot of people when I tell you that on that day, the bottom of my heart fell out."

High above James F. Edwards Field, Keith Morehouse, the play-by-play man for the Thundering Herd Network, and color commentator Ulmo ("Sonny") Randle are calling third-quarter action for viewers of Marshall's game with visiting Eastern Michigan University. Actually, the broadcasters are gently chiding Marshall fans for being too quiet.

"Seems like a fog of lethargy has fallen on the crowd, Sonny."

"They might be spoiled by all this success, Keith. Or else they're worried about turning their clocks back tonight."

"First down, Marshall...and there's some polite golf applause ... It wasn't that long ago that these fans would cheer louder for a long incomplete pass."

Indeed, Marshall has the winningest football program in America in the '90s. But in the '70s, Marshall's was the losingest team in the nation--22 wins in 10 years. The Herd had one 12-game losing streak and two 10-game losing streaks. A petition was even circulated around campus to drop football. Had Marshall done that, though, the tragedy would have deepened. "Seventy-five people would have died in vain," says Morehouse.

On Nov. 14, 1970, Marshall lost a 17-14 heartbreaker at East Carolina--its sixth defeat in nine games. Still, as the players, coaches and boosters boarded the Southern Airways DC-9 in Greenville, N.C., there was the feeling of promise, as well as of escape from the winless seasons of '67 and '68 and a subsequent recruiting scandal that had got Marshall thrown out of the MAC.

It was a rainy, windy night, and none of the crew members had ever landed at Tri-State Airport, which is located on a tabletop plateau close to the Kentucky-West Virginia-Ohio border. At 7:42 p.m., as it was about to land, the plane clipped the tops of the trees west of Runway 11 and crashed into an Appalachian hillside with a full load of fuel. Onboard the plane were 37 players, 25 supporters, eight coaches and five crew members. None of them survived the fiery crash, the worst ever involving an American sports team. One of the victims was sportscaster Gene Morehouse, who was also the school's sports-information director and the father of six children.

"I was nine years old at the time," says Keith. "All I knew was that I had lost my father. I didn't think about all the doctors and civic leaders and coaches and players, all the other children who lost parents in the crash, all the parents who lost children."

The force of the blow to the city of 60,000 and the college of 9,000 was immeasurable. Among those lost in the crash were head coach Rick Tolley and athletic director Charles Kautz, four physicians, a city councilman, a state legislator, a car dealer and several prominent businessmen. And the pain wasn't confined to Huntington alone. Four of the players--including Ted Shoebridge, the starting quarterback, and Arthur Harris Jr., the team's leading rusher and pass receiver--were from northern New Jersey. As fate would have it, Arthur Harris Sr. was also on the plane because he had been offered a seat by assistant coach Deke Brackett. And as fate would have it, assistant coach William ("Red") Dawson was not on the plane. It had been decided that he, along with graduate assistant Gale



Parker, would drive back from North Carolina in the car that Dawson had been using for a recruiting trip.

Parker and Dawson heard about the crash on the car radio. Keith Morehouse was home watching The Newlywed Game with his mother and his twin sister when the bulletin flashed across the screen. "My mother shrieked and started making frantic phone calls," Keith recalls. "People started coming over, and it was a blur after that." Longtime Huntington residents can tell you without hesitation where they were when they first heard the news--at the drive-in movie theater, in a restaurant, at a dance. Jack Hardin, a police reporter for the Huntington Herald-Dispatch, rushed to the airport not knowing what plane had gone down. When a Baptist minister, who had got to the crash site before him, showed him a wallet and asked him if he knew the name Lionel Theodore Shoebridge Jr., Hardin thought, "Oh, my God."

The task of identifying the bodies was both excruciating and excruciatingly slow. A wake was held in Lyndhurst, N.J., for Teddy Shoebridge even before his body was positively identified. Six victims were never identified; today, those six bodies are buried in adjacent graves next to a monument in Spring Hill Cemetery, which overlooks the Marshall campus.

The task of rebuilding the football team fell briefly to Dawson, then to new coach Jack Lengyel. Thankfully, a few of the players from the 1970 squad had not made the East Carolina trip because of injuries, and the NCAA gave Marshall special permission to play freshmen. President Richard Nixon sent Lengyel a letter of encouragement, writing, "Friends across the land will be rooting for you, but whatever the season brings, you have already won your greatest victory by putting the 1971 varsity squad on the field."

The "Young Thundering Herd," as Lengyel labeled it, did win two games that season, the first a miraculous 15-13 win over Xavier in the second game of the year. But Marshall settled into a perfectly understandable futility after that '71 season. Sonny Randle, the great NFL receiver, arrived in 1979 to breathe fire into the program, and while he did lay the foundation for the future, he left Marshall after winning 12 games and losing 42 in five seasons. In 1984 the team had its first winning season in 20 years, and the Herd hasn't had a losing season since. In 1992 host Marshall defeated Youngstown State, 31-28, to win the Division I-AA championship.

Covering that game for WOWK-TV in Huntington was Keith Morehouse. "I don't think I was consciously trying to follow in my father's footsteps," he says, "but that's the way it turned out." He enrolled at Marshall in the fall of '79 as a broadcast-journalism major and covered the football team for the school newspaper. By then, he had already met his future bride. The summer after his senior year in high school, Keith was in Myrtle Beach, S.C., when he ran into Debbie Hagley, a girl from a different Huntington high school. "I knew immediately who she was because the names of the victims are emblazoned in the minds of all the survivors," says Keith. Her father and mother, Dr. Ray Hagley and Shirley Hagley, were on that plane, and left behind six children. "I didn't have it easy," says Keith, "but she had it much tougher than I did."

Bonded by the tragedy, Keith and Debbie Morehouse were married in 1985. They have a 6-year-old son, Lake, who is already an avid Thundering Herd fan. "He's got a football autographed by coach Pruett," says Keith, "and one of those big foam No. 1 hands. Debbie also decorated his room in green-and-white wallpaper."

Over lunch at a steak house outside Huntington, some men are talking about Randy Moss, the wonderfully gifted wide receiver whom Marshall inherited after 1) Notre Dame turned him away because of a battery charge, and 2) Florida State kicked him out when he admitted to having smoked marijuana. In the eyes of Marshall boosters, however, Moss's biggest crime is insensitivity. It seems he was quoted earlier this fall as having said the plane crash was "nothing big" to him.

"Give him a break," says the tall, impressive-looking man in work clothes. "I'm sure he didn't know what he was saying. People around here don't like the way he wears his hair in braids or the rap music he plays. Heck, I used to get kidded for wearing a crewcut and listening to Hank Williams. 'Course, I wasn't as good a receiver as he was."

Red Dawson--the speaker--was pretty good though. And like Moss, he was a blessing to Marshall from Florida State. Dawson arrived in Huntington in 1968 after a brief stint as a tight end for the Boston Patriots. He was an

All-America at Florida State, the "other end" down the line from legend Fred Biletnikoff. "Freddy used to say one of the hardest times he was ever hit was when I ran the wrong route and collided with him," says Dawson. "I'm here to tell you, it was Freddy who ran the wrong route."

Dawson is president of the successful Red Dawson Construction Co. in Huntington. He loves his work, he loves his family, he loves his golf, he loves West Virginia. "The Old Master's blessed me real good," he says.

Some people might disagree. Dawson was handed an almost unbearable burden the night of Nov. 14, 1970. The assistant coach, all of 27 years old, had been with those 75 people that day. But when they boarded the plane, he got into his car. He might have been with them. He might have been spared the pain, the guilt.

Red doesn't like to talk about that night. Who would? But he remembers. Here is a man, after all, who casually mentions that the play he called from the press box to beat Xavier in the second game of the '71 season was a "2-13 bootleg screen" from quarterback Reggie Oliver, clear across the field to Terry Gardner.

Dawson left the Marshall football program after that season, partly because he could sense that he was reminding others of the tragedy, partly because he wanted to get away from football. "I love this area, so I never thought about moving," he says. "I just got a job with a friend's construction company as a trainee. Basically, it was hard labor, and it was the best thing for me. Took my mind off things."

Dawson is not a morose man or one given to introspection. But in an unguarded moment, Red does reveal a little of his anguish. "The worst part," he says, "was trying to tell the parents of players I recruited, people who had welcomed me into their living rooms, how sorry I was that their sons were on that plane." When he says that, his eyes seem to want to cry, but can't. It's as if they're tapped out.

From his distant vantage point, Dawson has watched over the 1970 Marshall football family. When the son of one of the crash victims got himself into some trouble a few years back, Dawson became his unofficial guardian. When the parents of Ted Shoebridge came down from Lyndhurst for the induction of their son into the Marshall Hall of Fame in 1990, Dawson was there to meet them at the airport.

The last two Marshall coaches, Jim Donnan and Bob Pruett, have made it a point to make Dawson feel welcome. Red was on the sidelines when the Herd won its national championship in '92, and this year Pruett invited him to be the honorary assistant coach for the season opener against West Virginia--the first time the two schools had met since 1923.

"We lost 42-31, even though we had the lead after three quarters," says Dawson. "Coach Pruett later said that he let me coach the fourth quarter. But I had a great old time on the sidelines. I was yelling so loud that I thought the referees might penalize me. Never thought I'd be yelling on the sidelines of a Marshall game ever again."

At a kitchen table in Lyndhurst, Yolanda Shoebridge presents a pile of newspaper clippings, programs and magazines to a visitor. They all sing the praises of quarterback Ted Shoebridge Jr. "He is a bright, intelligent young man and an excellent playmaker," the 1970 Marshall football program said of the junior quarterback. Indeed, Shoebridge set 18 passing records at Marshall, and his stats compared favorably with other star college quarterbacks at the time--Terry Bradshaw, Joe Theisman, Jim Plunkett, Dan Pastorini. His path seemed headed for the NFL.

"He was a great kid," she says. "We'd drive down to Huntington for his games, and he would always be looking for us to arrive. And when we did, he'd run over to us, pick each of us up in his arms and twirl us around. I once said, 'Teddy, aren't you afraid of showing affection in front of your teammates?' and he said, 'Nah, I'm the starting quarterback.'"

The Shoebridges didn't travel down to Greenville for the East Carolina game. They watched their second son Thomas play for Lyndhurst High that day, then came home to scan the TV for the Marshall result. "We couldn't figure out why there was no score," Yolanda remembers. "Then came the knock at our door. It was our parish priest." Somebody at Marshall, knowing the Shoebridges were devout Catholics, had asked the priest to deliver the

news.

Yolanda and Ted Sr., an auto mechanic, had their two other sons to raise: Tom, who became a teacher and track and football coach at Lyndhurst High, and Terry, a former Milwaukee Brewer minor leaguer who is now an accountant. But the loss of Teddy took so much out of them. "People say it gets better over time," says Yolanda, "but it only gets worse. My husband stopped going to church, and for years he refused to go with me to Teddy's gravesite. He bought all of Teddy's game films for \$1,200 but then couldn't bear to watch them. The films are still in the basement, unopened." When Marshall decided to induct Ted Jr. into its Hall of Fame in 1990, Yolanda and Ted Sr. flew to Huntington--but only at the urging of their sons. "It was a good thing to do," she says. "Seeing Red Dawson again, talking to people who knew Teddy eased the pain a little."

Ted Sr. died last year, and now Yolanda lives with Tom. Their living room is filled with pictures of the whole family, but the most prominent keepsakes are Teddy's old Marshall helmet and an oil painting of a handsome young man in a green No. 14 jersey.

During Saturday home games at Lyndhurst High, Yolanda sits under the scoreboard dedicated to her son and watches a quarterback who could have been his son. She goes home and looks for the Marshall score on TV; these days she usually smiles at the result. At bedtime she performs her nightly ritual of reading a Mother's Day card that Ted Jr. once sent her.

Hers is a fountain that flows every day, keeping the memory alive.

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