

Special thanks to **Woody Woodrum** for his research and assistance.

MARSHALL FOOTBALL HISTORY FOOTBALL HISTORY



▲ The 1903 Marshall College team featured the school's first full-time head football coach, George Ford, who is pictured in the back row.



▲ The 1904 team set a school record with four ties in George Ford's second season

1893

THE BEGINNING

Records from the "M Letterman Club," indicate eight individuals who lettered in football from 1892-1900. The Huntington Advertiser, and micro film of the period date back to only 1895. Marshall's athletic teams were referred to in the newspaper as "the blue and black of Marshall College," or as "Indians."

1895

THE CORNERSTONE GAME

On November 14, Ashland High School and Marshall College met in football following the laying of a cornerstone at the new Marshall College Building fronting 16th Street – today it is the fourth of five sections combined to form "Old Main," the Marshall University administration building. Ashland outweighed the Marshall team by an average of 163 pounds to 135 and the score quickly reflected that as Ashland led 24-0 at the half. Marshall played better in the second half, but gave up 12 more to lose 36-0. The Huntington Advertiser reported in an article on Nov. 16, "There is good material on the college team. All that it needs is regular and efficient training." On November 28, Marshall played Kingsbury High School of Ironton, Ohio, on the campus athletic field to a 0-0 Thanksgiving Day tie.

1897

INDIANS FALL TO TIGERS

On October 23, a crowd of more than 500 watched the Huntington "Tigers" and Marshall College "Indians" battle on the Marshall campus. The Huntington Advertiser reported Huntington had an early 4-0, but Marshall roared back up 10-8. A late kickoff fumble was recovered by Huntington and the Tigers defeated the Indians 14-10. On October 30, Marshall lost a second game of the season to Kingsbury High School of Ironton, falling 4-0 on the Marshall campus. A disputed score by Marshall's Indians early in the game costs the team a 4-4 tie and a chance for a 6-4 win. On November 13, Ironton's Kingsbury High School beat Marshall again, this time by a score of 14-6.

1898

MARSHALL BEGINS TO WIN

On October 22, Marshall got revenge on Kingsbury High School, who beat the "Indians" of Marshall twice in 1897, by shutting out the Ironton school 12-0 on the Marshall athletic field. On November 5, a rematch with Kingsbury was cancelled by KHS. The Huntington Advertiser reported the story with the headline "Ironton Boys Afraid". On November 9, Marshall played its second game of the year, an 11-5 loss to Catlettsburg in a game played at Clyffside Park in Catlettsburg. For many years the game was thought to be the first in school history. On November 18, Marshall got its rematch with Catlettsburg on the Marshall campus and pitched its second shutout of the season with a 17-0 win. On November 25, in the traditional Thanksgiving game on the Marshall campus, Marshall won a then school record third game of the season, with its third shutout of the season, blanking Ashland 6-0 to give earn a 3-1 record. Later that day at Clyffside Park, a team of Huntington and Catlettsburg players beat a team of Ashland and Ironton players 26-6 in a game played in front of more 500 Turkey-Day fans from the Tri-State area.

1899

WAR COOLS PLAY

On November 30, Marshall and Catlettsburg played to a 0-0 tie on Thanksgiving Day at Clyffside Park. It may have been a team of former and current Marshall players due to a shortage of men as a result of the Spanish-American war.

1903

FIRST HEAD COACH

George Ford became the first football coach in school history. Ford, a history professor, finished the season with a 2-2 record. In that season, the colors green and white were used for the first time. The Marshall Athletic Association was formed and Professor M.M. Scott was elected chairman. Roy Grass (1903-06) was selected as the first team captain.

1904

TIES

The Athletic Association expanded as George Ford was named chairman. Eligibility and lifestyle rules were established for athletics. The team went 3-2-4, which set a school record for ties that will stand forever with the advent of overtime.

1905

FIRST LETTERS

The Athletic Association awarded its first Varsity "M."

1906

FORWARD PASS DEBUTS

New coach Pearl Rardin leads Marshall for just one season, but they defeated Portsmouth, Ashland, Georgetown and Morris Harvey. Games were played in Clyffside Park located between Ashland and Catlettsburg in Kentucky. The Herd shut out its first four opponents of the season and allowed just five points (TDs were worth four points from 1883-1897 and five points from 1898-1911) in the season finale against Morris Harvey of Barboursville, W.Va. The Golden Eagles used a new weapon to move up the field and into the end zone – the forward pass, which was just legalized in 1906.

1907

EQUIPMENT BUDGET, \$65

The team's equipment budget of \$65.10 allowed for 12 pairs of green/white socks (\$8.40), six pairs of pants (\$13.20), 11 pairs of shoes (\$38.50) and one football (\$5). Due to a deficit in the Athletic Association budget, admission tickets were now needed to attend athletic events. The tickets were sold by The Athletic Association. The Association also proposed that all sports equipment be purchased through them. All equipment had to be returned to them at the conclusion of the season and inventory given to the school president before being locked up. Enrollment at Marshall topped 1,000 (1,021) for the first time in school history. There was no head coach, but the squad was run by the team captain, Robinson.

1909

BIG GREEN CATCHES ON

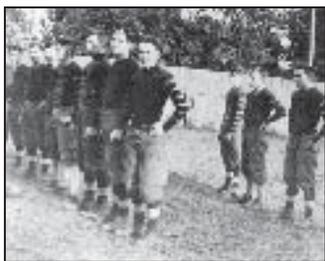
The Marshall yearbook continued to make references to "Indians" as the team nickname, but "Big Green" was beginning to catch on in area newspapers and on campus. Boyd Chambers became the coach of the football, basketball and baseball teams, as well as athletic director.

1911

FIRST COLLEGIATE SCHEDULE

First year that football schedule included only colleges of full academic rank. Cy Young, who is now a member of the College Football Hall of Fame, led the team to a 4-1-1 record as quarterback.

THE EARLY YEARS



▲ The 1914 Marshall College football team faced Scranton College in a preseason scrimmage.

1914

THE BIG ONE

Boyd Chambers' squad goes 5-4, but posts a record-setting 94-0 win over Wilmington.

1915

MARSHALL COLLEGE BREAKS OUT TOWER PASS

In a 92-6 loss to West Virginia, Marshall scored its only points on the famous "tower pass." Late in the game, Marshall had driven to the WVU 20-yard line. Bradley Workman, the Marshall tailback, faded back to pass while Dayton "Runt" Carter and Okey "Blondie" Taylor ran deep into the end zone. Once in the end zone, Taylor turned to face the passer and Carter quickly climbed up on Taylor's shoulders and caught a wobbly spiral from Workman for a touchdown. College football director Walter Camp later certified the score, but outlawed the play in 1916.

1916

UNIFORM NUMBER DEBUT

Numbers were used for the first time on Marshall football jerseys. Brad Workman scored five touchdowns in a 101-0 win over Kentucky Wesleyan. Workman had 15 touchdowns on the season. The win still stands as the biggest in school history.

1919

PERFECT SEASON

Marshall compiled an 8-0 season under Coach Archer Reilly, allowing just 13 points over the entire season. Games were played on a campus field called "Central Field" now used as Campus Commons. Doug Freutel averaged 17 points per game for the season, scoring 17 touchdowns while playing in just six of eight games. He scored a school record 38 points in a game against Greenbrier Military Academy.

1922

GRID-GRAD GAME

Homer Hatfield and Issac Pitsenberger of Marshall College played in the "Grid-Grad Game" for east all-stars in Columbus, Ohio, on December 2. The West won 13-0. It was the first appearance in a post-season all-star game by Marshall players.

1924

RULES SET

Marshall president Shawkey was elected president of the new West Virginia Athletic Conference – the forerunner of today's Division II WVIAC. Eligibility rules included:

1. Players must enroll in school to play
2. Must pass 12 hours per semester
3. Must be enrolled within two weeks of start of semester
4. Must have completed 15 units of secondary school.
5. Only four years per sport by any player.

Charter members were: Marshall, Broaddus College, Potomac State, Glenville Normal, Shepherd, New River State, Morris Harvey, Fairmont Normal, Concord State, West Virginia Wesleyan, and Salem.

1927

MARSHALL COLLEGE ON THE RADIO

A new playing surface was installed on campus as a "mammoth concrete stadium" to hold upwards of 25,000. The funding was secured by a state loan of \$42,000. The facility was to be built in the Fairfield Park area of Huntington. WSAZ, 930 AM, radio began broadcasting Marshall games – carrying all of Marshall's home athletic events, only month's after going on air. The first Marshall broadcast came against Concord on Oct. 8, 1927.



1928

FAIRFIELD DEDICATED

Marshall dedicated Fairfield Stadium with a 27-0 win over Fairmont and went on to post an 8-1-1 record and second WVAC crown, under Charles "Trusty" Tallman in the last of his four seasons as coach. Tallman played at Marshall in 1917, 19-20, and then played at WVU from 1921-24. Tom Stark scored 10 touchdowns as the Herd's main rushing threat. Parthenon sports editor Bob Jamison suggests school nickname be changed to "Judges." Marshall played its first game under the lights, a 0-0 tie at Williams & Mary.

1931

THE SHEIK DOMINATES

Freshman John "The Sheik of Seth" Zontini set a Marshall record that still stands, averaging 9.5 yards per carry, rushing for 865 yards on 91 carries, including 200 yards in a 60-0 win over Fairmont. The two-time high school All-American was recruited by West Virginia, Notre Dame, Tennessee and many others, but he came to Marshall when Hawley brought him to Huntington from a coal mine and got him a good job, despite the depression. Zontini led the Herd to a third WVAC title. A live buffalo mascot was purchased from "101 Ranch" in Mariand, Oklahoma, and was named Marco, a combination of Marshall and College.



▲ John "The Sheik of Seth" Zontini set a Marshall record that still stands today by averaging 9.5 yards per carry in 1931.

MARSHALL FOOTBALL HISTORY FOOTBALL HISTORY



1935

HENDERSON TAKES OVER

The legendary Cam Henderson coached his first Marshall football game on Sept. 28, a 31-0 win over Concord. Marshall's "Alma Mater" was adopted for the first time, with the words by James Hayworth and music by his father, Clarence E. Hayworth, a Marshall professor from 1907-1929.

1938

SNOW STORM CANCELS GAME

Coach Cam Henderson used a camera for the first time at Marshall to film a scrimmage in September. Later Marshall filmed its first game, versus Miami, Ohio. Bill Smith and Herb Royer played for the college all-stars in a game against the Philadelphia Eagles in August. Royer was added to the team during game week and, to increase game ticket sales, went as "The Masked Marvel," wearing a hood to practices.



1939

ELKINS SETS MARK

Marshall was judged to be the best football team in the state. The Herd compiled a 9-2 record with wins over Virginia Tech (20-0), Toledo (14-12) and Miami of Ohio (21-0). One of the losses was a 14-13 setback to "Peahead" Walker's Wake Forest team in Huntington. Boot Elkins set a Marshall record with a 97-yard touchdown run against the Hokies.



1940

HUNT SCORES & SCORES

Running back Jackie Hunt, a consensus All-American, scored 27 touchdowns – 162 points – and set a new collegiate record as the Thundering Herd ran off an 8-2 record. Hunt's 27 touchdowns in a single season stood as a Marshall record for 56 years. Grantland Rice named Hunt as one of the top 10 backs in the nation in Collier's Magazine. Hunt, Andy D'Antoni and Jim Roberts were named MVPs and attended the Rose Bowl, which included a tour of MGM Studios where they met Judy Garland and Lana Turner.



1941

HERD DOWNS WAKE FOREST

Marshall knocked off favored Wake Forest 16-6 before an estimated crowd of 15,000 at Fairfield Stadium. Following the season Jackie Hunt played in the Blue-Gray All-Star Classic in Montgomery, Alabama. He played in two NFL vs. college stars game the following summer before joining the military for World War II.

1942

WAR BREAKS OUT

Marshall fielded a team in 1942, but most of the team's players had already gone off to battle Nazi Germany. The result was a 1-7-1 record for the year. Football was suspended for the rest of the war years, with no games played from 1943-45.

1946

HERD FOOTBALL IS BACK

Cam Henderson restarted the Marshall football program, even though some of the players were yet to return from war service. The result was a 2-7-1 record. Henderson's basketball team, however, was fully loaded and posted a school record 32-5 record and won the NAIB National Championship for the small school division during the 1946-47 season.

1947

FIRST BOWL GAME

The Herd finished with a 9-2 record including a 60-6 win over Steubenville. Marshall played in the Tangerine Bowl, its first bowl game in school history, but fell to Catawba, 7-0.

1949

WSAZ TELEVISES HERD

First television broadcast of Marshall football in a game versus Xavier on WSAZ-TV, just six weeks after the station went on the air for the first time. Jack Bradley did play-by-play for both TV-3 and WSAZ radio 930 AM. Cam Henderson was fired as the Herd's football coach after 12 seasons, one Buckeye Conference title, one bowl game and a record of 68-46-5.

1953

MAC MEMBERSHIP BEGINS

After five seasons in the Ohio Valley Conference, Marshall joined the Mid-American Conference. It was the first of six seasons under Herb Royer, a former Marshall All-American. The season's highlight came in an upset victory over MAC champion Ohio when Bob "Gunnar" Miller kicked a field goal for the 9-6 victory, the first for Marshall in MAC play. Paul Long led the Herd in punting as a 27-year-old senior.

1956

COLOR BARRIER BROKEN

Howard Barrett, a 6-foot, 190-pound, quarterback from Stratton High School in Beckley, W.Va., and Roy L. Goines, a 6-foot, 171-pound halfback from Douglas High School in Huntington became the first African-American varsity football players for Marshall. They were recruited by MU head coach Herb Royer after Herd basketball coach and legend Cam Henderson signed Hal Greer out of Douglas High School in 1954 to play basketball. Greer was the first "Black" student or athlete to attend any "White" college or university in the state of West Virginia. Goines lettered in both 1956 and 1957, joining Greer as Huntington-Douglass Alums and MU's first African-American lettermen. In 1960, Wilson Latham was named captain, becoming the first African-American to hold that honor in Marshall football history.

1960-61

MAY LEADS HERD

Marshall played Eastern Kentucky in Ashland in a benefit game called the Shrine Bowl. Marshall College won 13-0 in 1960 and Marshall University won 20-0 in 1961 with quarterback Ralph May at the helm for both games. Marshall was granted university status by the West Virginia legislature on March 2. The first victory as Marshall University came on October 14, a 14-8 decision over Kent State.

1962

ONE THOUSAND YARDS

Marshall recorded a 4-6 record, however senior QB Bob Hamlin managed to become the first person to throw for more than 1,000 yards in a season with 1,104 yards.

1963

BACK TO WINNING

Marshall posted its first winning season (5-4-1) since 1957.

1965

IT'S OFFICIAL: "THE HERD"

Thundering Herd became the official nickname of Marshall's sports teams. Both Herd and Big Green had been used by media and fans alike. In a faculty-student vote on January 5th, Thundering Herd defeated Big Green and Rams. Big Green became the name of the fund raising program. Marshall posted a 7-3 record on the field, which turned out to be the last winning season for the Herd for 20 years. The team featured a player named Bobby Pruett, who played both offensive and defensive end. Pruett scored both touchdowns and went for a Marshall record 195 yards in a 14-12 victory over Buffalo.

GROWTH, TRAGEDY & REBUILDING

1970

TRAGEDY STRIKES

The team opened the season against Morehead State on brand new astroturf at Fairfield Stadium, which was renovated with a new capacity of 15,000. The Herd posted a 17-7 win and followed up with victories over Xavier and Kent and close losses to Louisville and Bowling Green. Following another particularly heart-breaking loss, 17-14 at East Carolina on November 14, the Herd boarded a Southern Airways jet for Huntington. All 75 people on board, including 37 players, five coaches, administrators, students, boosters and crew members, were killed.



1971

YOUNG HERD

Jack Lengyel, former Wooster College Coach, was named head coach and assigned the task of rebuilding a devastated program. Marshall petitioned the NCAA to allow freshmen to play in order to field a team, and the 1971 team became forever known as the "The Young Thundering Herd". Marshall stunned Xavier in the first home game since the fatal crash, 15-13. The team finished with a 2-8 record after defeating heavily-favored Bowling Green 12-10.



SEPTEMBER 25, 1971

MARSHALL 15, XAVIER 13

"Marshall pulled off the upset when QB Reggie Oliver hit Terry Gardner with the winning touchdown pass on the last play of the game. The circumstances and emotions, put this amazing game on our list. This was the first Marshall home game after a devastating plane crash in November of the previous season that claimed the lives of seventy-five people including, with the obvious exception of those who didn't make the trip, the whole Marshall football team. When you think of where the Marshall program has come, remember, they had to start from absolute scratch." - from Collegefootballnews.com

1973

FIRST SELL OUT

First capacity crowd (16,000) at Fairfield Stadium saw Marshall top Morehead in season opener, 24-17. Marshall applied for re-admission to the MAC, but was turned down.

1976

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

With Marshall granted admission into Southern Conference, Frank Ellwood's Herd notched five victories, including the first win in 37 years over Miami of Ohio, 21-16. Fairfield Stadium's capacity was increased to 18,000. During the season, Marshall upset Akron, 9-0.



1977

GEIGER CRACKS 1,000 YARDS

Marshall was eligible for the Southern Conference football title for first time. C.W. Geiger became Marshall's first official 1,000-yard rusher. Most historians agree that Jackie Hunt likely accomplished the feat in 1940 and 1941.

1981

FIRST SOUTHERN CONFERENCE VICTORY

The Thundering Herd won its first game of the season before the second largest crowd ever in Fairfield Stadium (18,212), defeating Morehead State, 20-17. However, the season highlight came on Nov. 7, in Boone, N.C., when Marshall won its first ever Southern Conference game. The Herd upset Appalachian State, 17-10, snapping an 0-26-1 streak against Southern Conference teams. A Huntington police escort picked up the Herd buses at the Hurricane rest area on I-64 and escorted the team all the way back to 18th street, where a crowd of more than 3,000 fans cheered the 2-8 Herd for their victory.

1984

WINNING AGAIN

Marshall won its final two games of the season on the road against Illinois State, 10-3, and East Tennessee State, 31-28, to post its first winning season in 20 years, finishing 6-5 overall. Carl Foder virtually rewrote the record book with his passing statistics, which included 22 touchdown passes. The win over ETSU was the first indoor win in school history.

1985

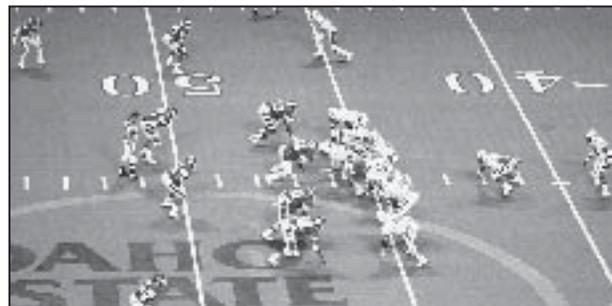
MOMENTUM BUILDS

The Thundering Herd won seven games, the most since 1964, and went undefeated at home. Early in the season, Marshall was ranked third in the NCAA Division I-AA poll. A new single season attendance record was set at 103,905. Stan Parrish resigned to become head coach at Kansas State. On Dec. 20, George Chaump was named as the new mentor for the Herd.

1986

CHAUMP GUIDES HERD

Marshall's title hopes and NCAA I-AA playoff hopes were dashed when they lost their final two games after recording their third consecutive winning season. The Herd scored 37 touchdowns, setting a then team scoring record, as well as establishing a new total offense record of 3,983 yards.



1987

SO CLOSE IN IDAHO

Marshall finished as the National I-AA runner-up, losing to Northeast Louisiana, 43-42, in the championship game played in Pocatello, Idaho. On the way to the title match, the Herd rolled over James Madison, 41-12, Weber State, 51-23, and Southern Conference Champion Appalachian State, 24-10. Marshall quarterback Tony Petersen was named Southern Conference Athlete of the Year and the league's Offensive Player of the Year. The highlight of the season was a last second victory over Louisville.

1988

CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD

The Thundering Herd won its first Southern Conference football championship as Marshall and Furman tied for the top spot in the league with 6-1 records. Mike Barber was honored as the recipient of the first-ever NCAA Division I-AA Player of the Year, as voted by the American Football Coaches Association. The team set a then-school record for wins with 11. With an eight-game win streak to start the year, the Herd was ranked No. 1 in Division I-AA for the first time.

1989

HOME WIN STREAK HITS 16

Marshall finished at 6-5 for a sixth-consecutive winning season, matching a school record.

MARSHALL FOOTBALL HISTORY FOOTBALL HISTORY

1990

DONNAN TAKES HELM

Marshall posted its seventh-consecutive winning season, setting a school record. First-year Head Coach Jim Donnan went 6-5 including a 10-7 win against Southern Conference power Furman.

1991

HERD REACHES NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

The Herd flourished under second-year head coach Jim Donnan, as they posted an 11-4 record and went undefeated in the new Marshall University Stadium, including the 24-23 inaugural game win over New Hampshire in front of a record crowd of 33,116. Scout team player J.D. Coffman died during the season of a viral disease and the team remembered him with the phrase "Feed the Fire." They took his helmet with them to every game, all the way to the national championship game. In post-season play, Marshall defeated Western Illinois, Northern Iowa and Eastern Kentucky before losing, 25-17, to Youngstown State in the I-AA Championship game in Statesboro, Georgia. Several players received high individual honors: offensive guard Phil Ratliff named to the Kodak All-America team, quarterback Michael Payton named Southern Conference Offensive Player of the Year and defensive back Roger Johnson named Southern Conference Freshman of the Year.



1992

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Marshall won its first ever football national championship with a thrilling victory over Youngstown State, 31-28, before a title game record crowd of 31,304 at MU Stadium. Herd hero Willy Merrick kicked the first, and only, field goal of his career from 22 yards out with 10 seconds left for the win. Marshall's 12 wins were the most in school history. Individual honors for the NCAA champions and national scoring leaders included Chevrolet National Coach of the Year for Jim Donnan; Walter Payton I-AA Player of the Year for Michael Payton; Jacobs Blocking Trophy Award for Phil Ratliff; and All-America honors for Payton, Ratliff, Troy Brown and Mike Bartrum. Brown and Bartrum began their NFL careers with the New England Patriots and Kansas City Chiefs, respectively. Payton won his second-consecutive Southern Conference Athlete of the Year award.

1993

YOUNGSTOWN GETS REVENGE

For the third-consecutive year, Marshall and Youngstown State met for the national title. The Herd came up short, 17-5, but nevertheless had a successful year with its 11 wins. Chris Deaton won the prestigious Jacobs Blocking Trophy, Chris Parker was named Southern Conference Offensive Player of the Year and William King was honored as Southern Conference Defensive Player of the Year. Roger Johnson was named an All-American, as were Deaton, Parker, King, Rodney Garrett and David Merrick. The Marshall defense allowed a national best of only 11.2 points per game.

1994

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE SUCCESS

The school's first ever outright Southern Conference football championship came about as a result of the Herd's 7-1 league slate and for the fourth-consecutive season MU gained a playoff berth. The Herd also boasted its fourth-consecutive winner of the Southern Conference Offensive Player of the Year in quarterback Todd Donnan. Safety Roger Johnson, offensive tackle William Pannell and punter Travis Colquitt were first team All-Americans. Chris Parker rushed for a school record 1,728 yards. The Herd went 9-0 at home.

1995

ANOTHER CLOSE CALL

Marshall became the first team in I-AA history to make five consecutive trips to the semi-final round of the playoffs. The Herd made its fifth national championship game but fell short to Montana, 22-20. Running back Chris Parker ended his brilliant career with a school and Southern Conference record 5,931 yards and was named Southern Conference Offensive Player of the Year. Parker, defensive end B.J. Cohen, defensive tackle Billy Lyon, defensive back Melvin Cunningham, and offensive tackle William Pannell were named All-Americans. Pannell also won the Southern Conference's Jacobs Blocking Trophy. QB Chad Pennington captured the league's Freshman of the Year honors.

1996

UNDEFEATED HERD CAPTURES SECOND NATIONAL TITLE

Marshall sets its claim as the best Division I-AA team in history as it plowed through the season to claim its second national championship in five years. The Herd finished 15-0 and never had a game finish closer than two touchdowns. Freshman Randy Moss set NCAA records for most touchdown receptions and receiving yardage by a freshman. He also bettered Jerry Rice's mark by catching a touchdown pass in 11-consecutive regular season games. Eric Kresser tied a school record for touchdown passes with 35. Aaron Ferguson became the fourth Marshall player in five years to win the Southern Conference's Jacobs Blocking Trophy. Ten players were named All-American. Seventeen players were voted All-Southern Conference, nearly the entire starting line-up. Bob Pruett, in his first season as the head coach at Marshall, was named National Coach of the Year by Chevrolet and the All-American Football Foundation. Pruett also became the first coach in college football history to post a perfect 15-0 record and national championship in his first year.

1997

MARSHALL DOMINATES IN DIVISION I-A

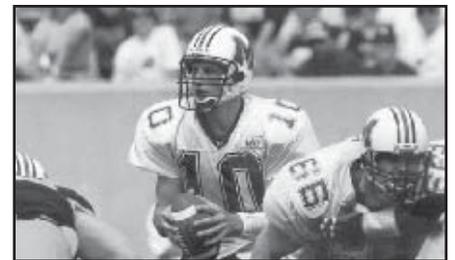
In the school's first season in the Mid-American Conference and Division I-A football in nearly 30 years, Marshall wasted no time in showing that it belonged. The Herd's 10 wins were the most ever by any first year Division I-A team. The Herd won the first MAC championship game over Toledo, 34-14 and advanced to the Ford Motor City Bowl, the school's first bowl game in 50 years, to play Mississippi. Sophomore wide receiver Randy Moss ended his record-breaking career at Marshall as the school's first ever Heisman Trophy finalist and Biletnikoff Award winner before being drafted by the Minnesota Vikings as the 21st overall pick in the draft. Moss also broke the NCAA record for touchdown receptions in a season with 25. Moss finished his career with 55 touchdowns in only 28 games. Chad Pennington led the nation in touchdown passes with 39, which also set the NCAA record for touchdown passes thrown by a sophomore. The Herd's center John Wade participated in the Senior Bowl All-Star game and was drafted by the Jacksonville Jaguars.



1998

FIRST BOWL VICTORY

Marshall's first-ever bowl victory capped off a 12-1 season for the Herd. En route to the school's eighth-straight season with 10 or more wins, Marshall knocked off the South Carolina Gamecocks, 24-21, on a Billy Malashevich field goal as time expired, giving



the Herd its first win over a Southeastern Conference team. A Halloween day loss at Bowling Green proved to be the only speed bump in the season for Marshall, which won its second Mid-American Conference championship in as many seasons of Division I-A competition when Marshall won a MAC title game rematch with Toledo, 23-17. Marshall again played in the Motor City Bowl, where the Herd beat the University of Louisville, which went into the game boasting the nation's top rated offense, 48-29. Marshall quarterback Chad Pennington was named the game's outstanding player as he passed for 411 yards and four touchdowns, while linebacker John Grace was the outstanding lineman as he recorded eight tackles, four of them behind the line of scrimmage.

THE 90s AND THE DECADE OF DOMINANCE

1999

THE MAGICAL SEASON

Marshall entered the final season of the 1990s with an opportunity to stake its claim as the most successful Division I-A/I-AA team of the decade. After opening the season with a dramatic 13-10 victory over Clemson in Death Valley, the Herd rolled through the regular season behind the stellar play of senior quarterback Chad Pennington and an extremely stingy defensive unit. After allowing a rushing touchdown in the fourth quarter of the Clemson game, Marshall did not allow another until the 10th game of the season. As the season progressed, Pennington continued to climb the NCAA charts in several passing categories, finishing in the top five in NCAA history in passing yards, completions and touchdown passes. None, however, was as dramatic as the one-yard TD pass to Eric Pinkerton in the closing seconds of the MAC Championship game against Western Michigan. Trailing 23-0 early in the third quarter, Pennington rallied his team to a 30-27 deficit with seven seconds to play and no time outs. Instead of going for the field goal to tie, the Herd went for the win and Pennington hooked up with Pinkerton for the game-winning points. Marshall went on to crush Brigham Young, 21-3, in the Motor City Bowl to cap an undefeated season and a top 10 national ranking. Pennington was a finalist for the Davey O'Brien and Johnny Unitas Awards, as well as becoming the second Marshall player in three years to be a Heisman Trophy finalist. After the season Pennington, along with teammates Rogers Beckett, Doug Chapman and James Williams, were selected in the NFL Draft. Marshall completed the 1990s with 114 victories, more than any other team in Division I-A or I-AA in a single decade in the history of college football.

2000

MAC CHAMPS, AGAIN

Marshall laid claim to an unprecedented fourth consecutive Mid-American Conference Championship with a 19-14 victory over Western Michigan. The Herd extended its national-best win streak to 17 games with a 63-7 victory over Southeast Missouri State in the season opener. After three losses, Marshall rallied though to win seven of its last eight games, including a 25-14 win over Cincinnati in the Motor City Bowl. It marked the third-straight bowl win. Sophomore quarterback Byron Leftwich finished the season throwing for 3,358 yards and 21 touchdowns, with just nine interceptions. Seven players were honored as all-conference selections: Jimmy Cabellos (OL), Nate Poole (WR), Max Yates (LB), Paul Toviessi (DL), Jimmy Parker (DL), Danny Derricott (DB) and Maurice Hines (DB). Paul Toviessi was selected by the Denver Broncos in the second round, as the 51st overall pick in the 2001 NFL Draft. All four-year seniors from the 2000 team earned a conference championship ring from each season they played.



2001

DID YOU SEE THAT GAME?

The Thundering Herd blew a substantial lead against Toledo, costing Marshall its first MAC Championship, and trailed East Carolina 38-8 at halftime of the GMAC Bowl. It seemed as if a season that had included a 10-game win streak, a fifth straight MAC East Division title and numerous national accolades was about to come to an end. Then things started to turn. First Ralph Street, and then Terence Tarpley, returned interceptions for touchdowns, helping to cut the deficit to 41-29 by the end of the third quarter. Then junior quarterback Byron Leftwich hoisted the Herd onto his broad shoulders and literally carried the team to one of the most stunning victories in school history. When his 70th, and final, pass connected with Josh Davis, completing the largest comeback in bowl history, shock waves echoed around the nation. In the days and weeks following the GMAC Bowl, the fervor surrounding Leftwich and Marshall football continued to grow.

2002

BACK ON TOP IN THE MAC

Byron Leftwich entered his final collegiate season as the top ranked player in college football and a second week game at Virginia Tech was expected to be the high-water mark for the year. Despite Leftwich's best efforts, he finished 31-for-49 for 406 yards, the Thundering Herd fell to the Hokies. Marshall moved quickly to shake off the disappointment and rolled to five-straight wins heading into November. Following victories over Ohio and Ball State, Marshall turned its attention on regaining the MAC crown. After jumping out early, just as they had done the previous year, the Herd watched Toledo battle back and turn the game into a shootout down the stretch. During the game Leftwich became the MAC's all-time passing leader, but it was his game-winning 40-yard touchdown strike to Watts in the game's final minute that will go down in history. Marshall didn't need the dramatics of 2001 in the GMAC Bowl. The Herd took control of the game against Louisville early and never looked back, taking a 38-15 victory.

2003

MADE IN MANHATTAN

The team earned an 8-4 record for a school-record 20th consecutive winning season. The Herd faithful, who set an attendance record during the season, also saw the end of Darius Watts' tremendous collegiate career and Marshall Stadium get a new name. The Thundering Herd's 27-20 win over then sixth-ranked, and eventual Big 12 Conference Champion, Kansas State marked the first time ever that a MAC school had beaten a team ranked as high as sixth in the national rankings and it marked the first time that Marshall had beaten a team ranked in the AP Top 25. The Herd's win ended several impressive Wildcat streaks that day, including the nation's fourth longest active winning streak and 39-game home winning streak. Marshall was then selected as the "National Team of the Week" by the Football Writers Association of America.



2004

GODDARD ARRIVES

Marshall experienced several ups and downs en route to a 6-6 overall record in its final year in the Mid-American Conference, however, the highlight of the season had to be the tremendous play of senior defensive end Johnathan Goddard. Goddard exploded on to the scene and recorded 16 quarterback sacks and 28.5 tackles for loss. Both of those numbers led the nation and etched Goddard's name into the Marshall, MAC and NCAA record books. He went on to be named Marshall's first-ever Bronko Nagurski Trophy finalist and earned multiple All-America accolades.

2005

A NEW COACH, A NEW CONFERENCE, A NEW ERA

Former Marshall All-American defensive back Mark Snyder was introduced as the 28th head coach in program history on April 14, 2005. The 2005 season also saw the Thundering Herd entering a new league - the newly revamped Conference USA. In its first season of competition, the Herd finished 4-7 with a 3-5 mark in C-USA. Marshall set a new single-game attendance record with a crowd of 36,914 for a game with Kansas State on Sept. 10. The Thundering Herd also appeared on national television a record eight times.

2006

BRADSHAW, MCCLELLAN & SLATE

Marshall rallied from a 1-5 start to a strong 4-2 finish, playing for bowl eligibility until the season's final game. The year was highlighted by the play of junior running back Ahmad Bradshaw and sophomore defensive end Albert McClellan. Bradshaw rushed for a Conference USA-best 1,523 yards and 19 touchdowns and finished second nationally in scoring with 120 points. McClellan was named C-USA Defensive Player of the Year after leading the league with 19 tackles for loss and 11.5 sacks. Cody Slate led the team in receiving en route to freshman All-America honors.

2007

RECORD ATTENDANCE

Marshall averages 30,020 fans at its home game to set a new school record, eclipsing the previous record attendance average of 29,673 per game in 1999. Marshall also hosts West Virginia University for the first time ever and a Joan C. Edwards Stadium record crowd of 40,383. MU also sets a school-record in season ticket sales with more than 22,000 season ticket packages sold. Marshall battled a strong schedule that featured games against Miami (Fla.), WVU and Cincinnati en route to a 3-9 overall record. Junior RB Ahmad Bradshaw was drafted in the 7th round of the NFL Draft by the New York Giants.

