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EDITOR'S PICK

Former Barren County educator selected for WKU Distinguished Alumni

STAFF REPORT 21 hrs ago

Nettie Bayless Courts Depp

Courtesy of Western Kentucky University



Described as a "pioneer in Kentucky education reform", former Barren County principal and superintendent Nettie Bayless Courts Depp will be inducted into the Western Kentucky University's Hall of Distinguished Alumni this fall.

Depp earned a Life Certificate in 1910 from the Southern Normal School, the forerunner for WKU, where she studied with WKU founder and first President Henry Hardin Cherry.

She was the superintendent of Barren County Schools from 1914-17, becoming the first female public official in the county after winning election in 1913. According to a WKU news release, Depp was also the first graduate of the university to be elected as a superintendent of a county school system.

"During her tenure as superintendent, she was instrumental in unifying local schools to create the county's first four-year high school at a time when high schools were not common in Kentucky," the news release said.

During her time as BCS superintendent, the system added 13 new and repaired 50 existing schoolhouses.

"Her term as superintendent was focused on working toward the future. Depp introduced and implemented a curriculum to all county schools and added music, art and business courses," the news release said. "Several schools added libraries, and others utilized a traveling library service. She also strived to enforce the compulsory school law. During her tenure, county school attendance tripled."

After serving as superintendent, Depp went on to become principal of Cave City School until 1923. She then finished her career as a teacher in Scottsville, working there from 1923-1931.

She died on Aug. 3, 1932.

Depp will join 1975 graduate Becky Ann Baker, an actress, and 1974 graduate Dr. Richard C. Rink, a surgeon and urologist, in induction to the Hall of Distinguished Alumni. The induction will take place during WKU's homecoming celebration with a luncheon recognizing the alumni slated for 11 a.m. on Oct. 26 at Sloan Convention Center.

For more information, visit the website <https://alumni.wku.edu>.

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