Western State College, Mountain Mecca

By: Kelsi Craig

Have you ever heard of the Colorado State Normal School? Questionably enough, this odd sounding school is the exact school in which every one of you are attending today. That’s right, before we were all here, Western State Colorado University was once called the Colorado Normal School. From the time it began until now, Western has seen many changes, not only in its name, but also in the structure and outlook that we see today.

One of our very own established professors here at Western has taken it upon himself to write a pictorial history book representing Western. Duane Vandenbusche has been at Western since 1962 teaching as a history professor; he still resides in that position. During his tenure, Vandenbusche also served as the track and cross-country coach, from 1971 until 2007.

Western’s newest book, *Western State College, Mountain Mecca*, written by Vandenbusche, published by the #1 regional publisher in the US, Arcadia Publishing, covers a wide span of 102 years of history, both in stories and through pictures. He stated that his goal with this book was “to show what a great and unique University Western State Colorado University is.” Vandenbusche added that, “Not only does our location make us capable of many things but it has many great experiences to offer as well.” Professor Vandenbusche pointed out that Western is surrounded by wilderness and outdoor things, provides world-class programs, like the research lab at Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Gothic, and a great education. All of these are a great combination and are something that you can only find here in the mountains. Within the book, Professor Vandenbusche takes you through a series of 10 chapters, each talking about the different eras and changes that have occurred at Western. Each chapter represents the college in different stages showing how it has changed from good to bad and the many things that helped to form the college.