

Wilkes Community College's



MerleFest®

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ON THE CAMPUS OF WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WILKESBORO, NC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MerleFest Welcomes Steve Johnson as Artist Relations Manager

WILKESBORO, N.C. (October 3, 2012) — **MerleFest**, presented by Lowe's and slated for **April 25-28, 2013**, will welcome Steve Johnson as the festival's artist relations manager at Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, N.C., effective October 22. The artist relations manager is responsible for leading efforts in selecting, scheduling, and caring for artists at MerleFest and the Walker Center each year.

Steve Johnson has been involved in the music industry since the 1970s, most recently in promotion/management with Mountain Music Entertainment, a company he started in 2010. Additionally, he has served on the Indianapolis Visitor and Convention Bureau Music Crossroads Steering Committee, the Indianapolis Opera Board, and The Bean Blossom Jamboree Foundation Board of Directors, and this past year he served as artist relations' on-site contact for the Graves Mountain Festival of Music. Johnson is currently a member of the International Bluegrass Music Association, International Folk Alliance, and the Americana Music Association. He is a musician and songwriter, performing weekly with a band from the Asheville area.

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Steve is a native of Asheville, North Carolina. He has a bachelor's degree from Winston-Salem State University and a Master's Degree from Duke University in Health Sciences.

“Growing up in North Carolina, not too far from Wilkesboro, I developed a great appreciation for MerleFest and what it means to the music culture of the area,” said Johnson. “I am incredibly honored to join Wilkes Community College and MerleFest in my new role and look forward to becoming part of a great music family and community.”

“Steve's passion for music and his appreciation and knowledge of MerleFest caught our attention during the interview process,” said Ted Hagaman, festival director for MerleFest. “Music has been a major part of his entire life. He has experience as an artist/agent representative and in an event management role, which gives him unique credentials to serve effectively as our artist relations manager. We look forward to Steve joining the MerleFest team as we continue to honor the life and accomplishments of Doc and Merle Watson.”

MerleFest, considered one of the premier music festivals in the country, is an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans held at Wilkes Community College. MerleFest was founded in 1988 in memory of the late Eddy Merle Watson, son of American music legend Doc Watson who passed away May 29, 2012. MerleFest is a celebration of “traditional plus” music, a unique mix of music based on the traditional, roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, and expanded to include Americana, country, blues, rock and many other styles. The festival hosts over 90 artists, performing on 14 stages during the course of the four-day event. The annual event has become the primary fundraiser for the WCC Endowment Corporation, funding scholarships, capital projects and other educational needs.

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