

TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO

West Virginia University

Role: Concept development and scriptwriting

Context

This video script was written for the announcement ceremony of a transformational **\$25 million gift to West Virginia University** from **Brad Smith and his wife, Alys**. One of the largest philanthropic gifts in WVU's history, the donation established the **Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative** to drive economic growth, expand outdoor education, and support innovative initiatives such as a remote worker program. The video premiered during the **Oct. 5 virtual announcement event** and was designed to ground the gift in personal narrative, place, and shared responsibility for West Virginia's future.

Strategic Rationale

Rather than leading with the scale of the gift or institutional messaging, this script centers on belonging, return, and shared responsibility. By grounding the announcement in Brad Smith's personal relationship to West Virginia, the story reframes philanthropy not as a transaction, but as a homecoming and a long-term commitment to people and place.

The narrative arc mirrors the university's broader mission: education as a force for opportunity, resilience, and collective progress. This approach was designed to resonate equally with donors, alumni, and community members—positioning the gift as an investment in West Virginia's future, not simply a moment of generosity.

Video Script

ON SCREEN

There's something about West Virginia.

BRAD (V.O.)

I was born in the heart of these mountains.

ON SCREEN

Something that calls people home.

BRAD (V.O.)

But long ago, I chose a different path.

ON SCREEN

Brad Smith built a future in business.
Met his wife, Alys.
And raised a family.

BRAD (V.O.)

I had spent a lifetime in pursuit of dreams—leaning into the wind, dreaming big dreams ...

ON SCREEN

Far from home.

BRAD (V.O.)

I convinced myself early on that those dreams had to exist on the other side of these mountains.

ON SCREEN

But his heart remained.
In West Virginia.

BRAD (V.O.)

After a lifetime of grand pursuits, I came to realize my heart never left—not for a moment. I may have spent the first 22 years of my life dreaming of a way out, but I can tell you with clear eyes and a full heart, I've spent every day since looking for a way back home.

ON SCREEN

Now, Brad and Alys Smith have a new dream.
To give back.

BRAD (V.O.)

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

ON SCREEN

Through education.
Opportunity.
Hope.

BRAD (V.O.)

I love this state. I'm proud of who we are. I'm proud of who we grow and produce. And I'm proud of how we stand tall in the face of adversity.

ON SCREEN

Together.
We will go forward.

BRAD (V.O.)

I can tell you—you're the only reason that I am.

ON SCREEN

And build a new future
for West Virginia.

BRAD (V.O.)

You are all of my reasons.

ON SCREEN

Thank you.

This video premiered during the Oct. 5 virtual announcement of the Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative.