

Freedom

July 4th

July 3, 2020

The Decatur Daily

Local fireworks show schedules
The history of July 4th

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restaurateurs
offer backyard
barbecue tips**

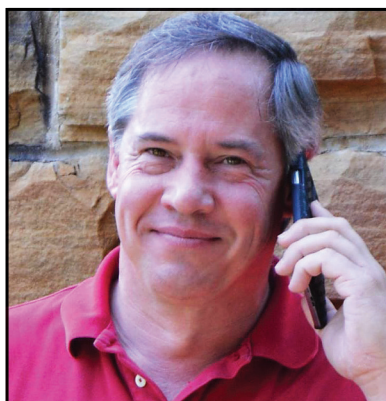
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Americans celebrated Independence Day while independence still in doubt

July Fourth remains time for revelry and reflection

By Franklin Harris
Assistant Metro Editor

Americans began celebrating the Fourth of July even before their new nation's independence was won.

After more than a year of civil unrest, including the Boston Tea Party of Dec. 16, 1773, King George III and the British Parliament in February 1775 declared Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion. Two months later, in April, the first armed skirmishes took place at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow would immortalize — with some creative license — Boston silversmith Paul Revere's ride to warn the local militias of the approaching British forces ahead of those first two battles:

*Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.*

The colonists responded by forming the Continental Army, under the command of George Washington, a veteran of the French and Indian War (1754–1763).

It wasn't until more than a year later that the 13 colonies would declare their independence from the British Empire. The Continental Congress declared independence on July 2, 1776. Two days later — July 4 — it adopted the Declaration of Independence, drafted primarily by Thomas Jefferson of Virginia.

The Declaration laid out the colonies' case for separation for all the world to see:

We hold these truths to be self-evident,



Paul Revere

that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it....

Thus the American War for Independence was underway by 1776 and in full swing a year later, when Americans who supported independence commemorated the occasion for the first time.

"Philadelphia held the first annual commemoration of independence on July 4, 1777, while Congress was still occupied with the ongoing war," according to History.com. "George Washington issued double rations of rum to all his soldiers to mark the anniversary of independence in 1778, and in 1781, several months before the key American victory at the Battle of Yorktown, Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday."

These early celebrations included music, bonfires and the firing of muskets and cannons — the precursors to today's elaborately choreographed fireworks displays.

John Adams, one of the Declaration's architects, wrote to his wife Abigail with a prediction for how Independence Day



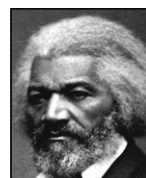
George Washington



Thomas Jefferson



John Adams



Frederick Douglass

would be remembered:

"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding

Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

Adams, however, thought Americans would mark the day the Continental Congress voted for independence, not the day it adopted the Declaration, so he was off by two days. Yet because of this, in a quirk of history, both he and Thomas Jefferson would forever be associated with the Fourth of July in two ways — for their roles in making independence happen, and for their deaths on July 4, 1826.

In 1852, Independence Day fell on a Sunday. The next day, Frederick Douglass, a social reformer and abolitionist who had escaped slavery in Maryland, gave a speech titled, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

His speech is an early example of dealing with the contentious legacy of America's founding. Douglass noted that despite America's independence as a nation, many of its inhabitants remained in bondage with nothing to celebrate. His message to his largely white audience that day was to expand the principles of the Declaration of Independence to all:



Fireworks decorate the sky above Point Mallard Park and are reflected in the waters of the Tennessee River on July 4, 2019. Americans have been celebrating Independence Day for more than two centuries. [DAN BUSEY/DECATUR DAILY]

"Pride and patriotism, not less than gratitude, prompt you to celebrate and to hold it in perpetual remembrance. I have said that the Declaration of Independence is the ring-bolt to the chain of your nation's destiny; so, indeed, I regard it. The principles contained in that instrument are saving principles. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost."

The Fourth of July would continue to be celebrated informally and as a state holiday for several decades, but it wasn't until after the Civil War — and the end of slavery — that it became an official national holiday.

In 1870, as the nation approached its centennial and recovered from the wounds of its bloodiest conflict, Congress declared the Fourth of July a national holiday for the first time. In 1941, with Europe already immersed in World War II, Congress made the day a paid holiday for federal employees.

Born amid conflict and through times of war and peace, Independence Day has been marked by Americans since the nation's beginning and has served as a time of both celebration and reflection.

— franklin.harris@decaturdaily.com or 256-340-2394.

Go Fourth and Eat

By Catherine Godbey
Staff Writer

In 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence and announced freedom from British rule. Ever since, Americans celebrated the Fourth of July — even though the official vote occurred on July 2, 1776 — with fireworks and, of course, food.

“The food of the fourth is the food of summer — peaches, tomatoes, squash, beans, sweet onions, greens, cucumbers and peppers,” said Bill Harden, executive chef at Decatur Country Club. “Soon the okra, corn and melons will be rolling out as well — the building blocks of a great meal.”

For Brye Forbes, sous chef at Whisk’d Café, the staples of an Independence Day feast include prime rib, barbecue ribs, pork butt, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, grilled corn on the cob, coleslaw, potato salad, collard greens and corn bread.

Many at-home cooks will turn to the grills to create a Fourth of July meal. Forbes offered these tips.

- Make sure the propane tank has propane in it or that you have a backup.

- If using charcoal, use a charcoal chimney to help light the coals faster and more evenly.

- Before grilling, rub a cut onion on the grill to add flavor to the meat.

- Make sure to have hot and cool spots on the grill.

- Remove the meat from the heat 3 degrees early to prevent from overcooking as residual heat from the grill will continue to cook the meat

- Let the meat rest before cutting to retain the juices.

- Clean and oil the grill.

“For those of you who don’t use your grill year-round, it’s time to break that puppy out. Clean it real good and fire it up,” said Harden, who prefers grilling with all-natural lump charcoal with a topping of wet hickory and pecan wood chips.

Whether grilling at home, enjoying an afternoon picnic or going to a drive-in fireworks show, try these recipes.

Bacon-Wrapped Pork Tenderloin with a Pineapple Bourbon Glaze by Brye Forbes

Pork tenderloin
Bacon slices
1/4 cup pineapple juice
1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons creole grain mustard
1 to 2 ounces of your favorite bourbon
Splash of apple cider vinegar.

Clean the silver skin from the tenderloin. Wrap bacon slices around tenderloin, overlapping each piece to help prevent the bacon from coming off. Use butcher’s twine if necessary. Grill the tenderloin until the internal temperature reaches 120 and then glaze the meat. To make the glaze, mix together the pineapple juice, brown sugar, mustard, bourbon and apple cider vinegar. At 145 degrees, the tenderloin can be reglazed and removed from the grill to allow to rest. Cut and serve.

Grilled Corn with Cotija Cheese

From “Big Bob Gibson’s BBQ Book” by Chris Lilly



“For those of you who don’t use your grill year-round, it’s time to break that puppy out. Clean it real good and fire it up,” said Chef Bill Harden.

[DECATUR DAILY FILE]

3/4 cup plain yogurt
3/4 cup mayonnaise
5 tablespoons lime juice
1 cup Cotija cheese, grated fine
4 teaspoons chili powder
2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt
6 to 8 ears of corn

SEE EAT, G8

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Guide to North Alabama's fireworks

By Catherine Godbey
Staff Writer

In many cities and towns across America, the Fourth of July will look different this year after concerns over the coronavirus caused the cancellation of fireworks festivals.

While some long-standing festivals, such as Decatur's Spirit of America Festival, which started in 1967, and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center's Fireworks Extravaganza will remain dark, other community celebrations will take place in several north Alabama towns.

Bursts of pink, red, green, blue and white fireworks in the shapes of flowers, comets, rings and stars will fill the night skies above Athens, Madison and Huntsville as America celebrates its 244th Independence Day.

Where to watch fireworks this weekend:

Red, White and Boom Drive-In

When: Saturday, 8:30 p.m.
Where: Athens Stadium
Cost: Free

Fireworks will light up the sky above Athens this Fourth of July during the annual Red, White and Boom show. The drive-in fireworks display will be synchronized to music aired on 105.1 FM. Organizers recommended spectators find a parking spot by 8 p.m. and, due to concerns over the coronavirus, remain in their cars during the show. People who need to get out of their vehicles should wear masks and practice social distancing.

"Initially, we decided to postpone until later in the year, but with the community pleas to have the show on the Fourth of July and the relaxed guidelines for organizations hosting events, we reconsidered having the event," said Teresa Todd, president of Athens-Limestone Tourism.

To watch the fireworks, park in the parking lots adjacent to U.S. 31 and U.S. 251.

Elk River Boat Party

When: Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Anderson Creek in Limestone County
Cost: Free

The Fourth of July celebration on the Tennessee River will kick off early with the 14th annual Elk River Boat Party. The by-boat-only event will feature music by blues and rock group Kozmic Mama and a patriotic-themed boat decorating contest.

Organizers Mike and Bridget Jackson expect the party, which started with 60 boats the first year, to attract a record number of festivalgoers.

"Ever since the coronavirus happened, the river has been packed. Every weekend this spring and summer has looked like a holiday weekend. If the weather cooperates and there is zero chance of rain, I expect this to be a record-breaking year. I expect this to be one of the biggest boat parties east of the Mississippi River," Mike Jackson said.

Some boats will start arriving for the 3 p.m. party at 10 a.m., with most anchoring at Anderson Creek off of the Elk River around 1 p.m. Following the boat party, which will end around 7:15 p.m., fireworks will shoot off from Bay Village on Wheeler Lake. The fireworks will be visible from

the mouth of the Elk River.

Bay Village Fireworks Show

When: Saturday, 8 p.m.
Where: Bay Village in Athens on Wheeler Lake
Cost: Free

Five years ago, a group of residents at Bay Village in Athens, led by Jay Reynolds, collaborated to create a neighborhood fireworks show as a gift to the community. Now, the Fourth of July festivity lighting the sky above Wheeler Lake is a must-see event. The 20-minute fireworks show will start around 8:30 p.m., weather permitting. The show will be viewable from Lucy's Branch Marina or by boat from the Tennessee River

Patriotic Extravaganza

When: Saturday, 4 p.m.
Where: Trash Pandas' Toyota Field in Madison
Cost: \$10 per person, kids 2 and younger enter free. \$6 for parking

SEE FIREWORKS, G8



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Expressions of American ideals

The following are quotations from text and speech that illustrate American ideals.

"We stand for freedom in the world. We see the gulags and the prisons, those places where man is not free to do work of his choosing and profit from his labor, places where the freedom to worship God has been extinguished and where souls have withered. But we're blessed by God with the right to say of our country: This is where freedom is. This is the land of limitless possibilities." — Remarks made July 4, 1984, at the Spirit of America Festival in Decatur, President Ronald Reagan (1911-2004).

"... We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." — From the Gettysburg Address in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary." — President James Madison (1751-1836).

"It's not tyranny we desire; it's a just,

limited, federal government." — Alexander Hamilton (1755/57-1804)

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." — Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)

"The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government." — From Farewell Address in 1796 by President George Washington (1732-1799)

"Where liberty dwells, there is my country." — Attributed to Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790).

"We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation

that is afraid of its people." — President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963).

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." — Preamble to the U.S. Constitution (written in 1787, ratified in 1788)

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." — First Amendment to U.S. Constitution, part of the first 10 amendments known as the Bill of Rights (ratified 1791)

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." — Second Amendment to U.S. Constitution, part



President Ronald Reagan appears at the 1984 Spirit of America celebration in Decatur. Ed Rogers, the executive director of the Reagan-Bush '84 campaign in Alabama, said in an interview that summer, "It is a good event for him to attend. It is patriotic. It is his kind of event and his kind of people." [JOHN GODBEY/DECATUR DAILY/FILE]

of the first 10 amendments known as the Bill of Rights (ratified 1791)

"Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong." Full text of toast made in 1816 by Commodore Stephen Decatur (1779-1820)



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EAT

From Page G5

In a small bowl, combine yogurt, mayonnaise and lime juice. In another bowl, combine cheese, chili powder, cayenne pepper, cumin and salt. Build a charcoal fire for direct grilling. While the grill is heating, remove the corn from the husks. Grill the corn directly over the hot coals, approximately 450 degrees, for 6 to 7 minutes, turning every two minutes until the kernels start to soften. Remove the corn from the grill and apply a light coat

of the yogurt mixture to each cob. Sprinkle with the cheese mixture.

Garlic Pickle Chips by Bill Harden

1 gallon cider vinegar
1 gallon water
4 cups sugar
50 garlic cloves
20 whole dried chilies
1/2 cup black peppercorns
3 tablespoons mustard seeds
3 tablespoons whole coriander
5 bay leaves
2 broken cinnamon sticks
10 pounds cucumbers

Bring cider vinegar and water to a boil. Add all the seasonings and simmer for 5 minutes. Cut the cucumbers in 1/4-inch slices. Pour hot liquid over the cucumbers.

Fourth of July Fruit Salsa by Brye Forbes

1/2 cup blueberries
16 ounces strawberries, hulled and diced
2 green apples, peeled and diced
2 kiwis, peeled and diced
1 mango or peach, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Lemon zest, orange zest or lime zest
Mix fruit, sugar, juice and zest, optional, together. Let sit for 30 minutes in the refrigerator. Serve with cinnamon pita chips.

Cinnamon Pita Chips

Pita bread
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cinnamon
Bake pita chips until lightly browned and crisp. Toss in butter, cinnamon, sugar mixture.

— cgodbey@decaturdaily.com or 256-340-2441. Twitter @DecaturLiving.

FIREWORKS

From Page G6

The Rocket City Trash Pandas will host a Fourth of July Patriotic Extravaganza, which will culminate with a fireworks show. Gates open at 4 p.m. Activities include a bungee jump trampoline, swing rides and live entertainment. Fireworks will begin at 9 p.m. The facility will operate at half capacity. To order tickets, visit milb.com/rocket-city.

Independence Day Celebration

When: Saturday, 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Where: MidCity District in Huntsville

Cost: Free

A watermelon-carving contest, live music, outdoor movie and fireworks await visitors to the Independence Day Celebration at Huntsville's MidCity District, 5901 University Drive. Judging for the precarved watermelons will start the fun at 3 p.m. A band will take the stage at 7 p.m., followed by a showing of "Jurassic Park" at 8:15 p.m. The fireworks will begin at 10:30 p.m.

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Veterans honored in 'patriot parades' by Honored Legacies for Veterans

By Cassie Kuhn
Staff Writer

Before World War II veteran John Kuhn of Decatur died last year at the age of 95, he asked Chris Batte, then a coordinator for the Alabama chapter of veterans' organization Forever Young, to ensure that his story was told.

The realization that many veterans shared Kuhn's desire to maintain their legacy led Batte and Elaine Oaks to leave Forever Young and create their own non-profit, Honored Legacies for Veterans, in January. "Our mission is to honor senior veterans and their communities," Batte said.

Honored Legacies is based in Madison and serves between 85 and 90 veterans in Morgan, Madison, Blount and Lawrence counties.

Batte said the organization uses its funds to take veterans to honorary dinners, meetings and on trips. However, when the coronavirus pandemic put a halt to in-person events, Batte and Oaks began brainstorming ways to celebrate senior veterans without putting them at risk for exposure to COVID-19.

"We were hearing from them that they're lonely, and they missed us, and we felt like we wanted to reach out to them in whatever way we possibly could," Batte said. "We decided that we would start doing the patriot parades."

Volunteers and veterans alike participate in the patriot parades, where a procession of cars and motorcycles adorned with American flags passes by veterans' homes. Batte said that those who have already been honored in patriot parades will sometimes join the procession for other veterans.

Batte said the parades started about six weeks ago, and will continue for another few weeks until the procession reaches each veteran of the 85 to 90 who are a part of Honored Legacies. "We've had as many as 35 to 40 vehicles at one time," she said.

Holly McDonald's grandfather Major Wooten is a 103-year-old World War II veteran and a part of Honored Legacies. McDonald attributes Wooten's centenarian status in part to Honored Legacies and organizations like it. She



Parades organized by Honored Legacies for Veterans pay tribute to veterans in Morgan, Lawrence, Madison and Blount counties. [COURTESY PHOTO]

said Honored Legacies has added "love, camaraderie and companionship" to her grandfather's life.

"We almost lost him during the COVID thing because of loneliness and loss of connection. He was put in the hospital for almost a week and they eventually put him in ICU and his system started shutting down, but we rallied the group together and the community in the parking lot," McDonald said. "We got him out of hospice the next day to pass at home and just getting out and loved on by our members. He made a quick turn and he is a living and breathing miracle today."

McDonald said Wooten served in Paris, France during World War II. Wooten was drafted because of his trade as a U.S. Steel employee, and he restored railroad cars that had been damaged during the war.

Batte said veterans are appreciative of the efforts made to honor them through patriot parades. "We've got emails and voicemail messages of how much it meant to them, and we've had wives call and say, 'My husband's been so down and this just really lifted him up,' and I think lives are really being changed,"

she said. "It just shows them how much they're loved and appreciated."

One veteran said, "Absolutely honored by the drive-by. Pass along my thanks to the participants! I would do it again because of people like you and those who are with you," in a text exchange posted to the organization's Facebook page. Another wrote, "Thank you very much for you organizing this drive-through! I had goosebumps! It makes a veteran feel that someone cares. Again I appreciate

it. Thank you."

In addition to patriot parades, Honored Legacies is planning an event for its members on July 25.

"They're lonely, they're very very lonely and we hear from all of them that they cannot wait to get back together," Batte said, adding that the event will be held in a more than 20,000-square-foot building in Athens so the veterans and volunteers can maintain social distance.

Batte said a key goal of Honored Legacies is to create a website focused on telling the stories of veterans. She said the website will include lesson plans for teachers. "As a teacher, I know that I teach from the book," she said, adding that it can be time-consuming for teachers to put cohesive lesson plans together when the content isn't coming straight from a textbook. Batte said the website will be simple to use and will bring "living primary resources" to teachers and students.

Erin Coggins, a volunteer at Honored Legacies, is writing the lesson plans that will accompany the website.

"It brings history to life, and for the veterans, what better honor to know that from here on out, school-children are going to learn what you did mattered," Coggins said.

For more information about Honored Legacies for Veterans, visit facebook.com/honoredlegacies.

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Americans we admire

Past holds lessons for local residents

By Matthew Speakman
Staff Writer

From the first man to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong, to the first female African-American secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, local residents look up to a wide variety of famous Americans.

We asked people in the community to tell us about somebody from United States history they admire as the nation prepares to celebrate Independence Day.

Amanda Whitmire

"An American historical figure who I truly respect and admire is Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt became president in a time of adversity during the Great Depression. He developed out-of-the-box policies which put Americans to work, modernized the country, and brought



Whitmire

people together. He also was a positive and strong leader during World War II. He had a rhetoric style which united our country for a bigger purpose. His leadership motivated men and women to volunteer to defend our country, like my grandfathers who fought in the war in both Europe and the Pacific.

"While Roosevelt was not a perfect man, he always put the needs of the United States ahead of his own. He had health impairments but did not let that stop him. We still feel the effects of Roosevelt today, through agencies like TVA, which powers north Alabama. He was an American hero."

Wesley Woodard

"In my opinion, Jackie Robinson is one of the most influential figures in history and helped jump-start change in not only the world of sports, but America as a whole. Having the courage to play professional baseball in the late 1940s and '50s



Woodard

when the players on the Major League team rosters were only white is inspiring to me. He endured the horrible racism and did so without retaliating and that takes an extreme amount of self-control.

Jackie's fearlessness allowed for not only Major League Baseball to start integrating but encouraged other sports to do so as well."

Sean Ambrose



Ambrose

"Major Richard Winters embodies everything a patriot strives to be. When his country called on him, he volunteered for the parachute infantry despite it being a new and unproven concept.

Throughout all of World War II, Winters showed bravery, valor and a level head in the midst of battle. He never thought of allowing his men to enter harm's way when he himself could take that risk instead. Major Winters and his legacy played a part in my decision to be on the path to become an Army officer."

Kori Walker



Kori Walker

"My favorite historical figure is Harriet Tubman because she led African-Americans from slavery to freedom. After she helped save over 300 slaves through the Underground Railroad, Harriet went on to serve during the Civil War as a nurse and a secret agent. Harriet Tubman's perseverance, courage, and selflessness make her one of the most (admirable) figures in our country's history. As an African-American woman, Harriet was tenacious by helping others, being brave, and putting her own life and freedom at risk to lead other African-Americans to freedom."

Chandler Brown



Brown

"Sgt. Maj. Gilbert 'Hashmark' Johnson was one of the first African-Americans to enlist in the United States Marine Corps and served as one of the first African American drill instructors at Montford Point. He transferred from the



A bronze statue of abolitionist Harriet Tubman was unveiled earlier this year at the Maryland State House in Annapolis. Her network for secretly bringing former slaves to freedom was known as the Underground Railroad. [JULIE CORTEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Navy to the Marine Corps on Nov. 14, 1942, after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 to end discrimination within the government. He described himself as stern but fair. In August of 1972, during his final speaking at a Montford Point Marine Associate luncheon he stated, 'the objective was to qualify you with loyalty. With a devotion to duty and with determination equal to all: transcended by none, I had a job to do — I brainwashed you. You measured up.'

Jerry Burton



Burton

"Andrew Carnegie immigrated from America to Scotland at 13 years old and had a true rags-to-riches story. While being an immigrant, his success promoted the American Dream of working for everything you have in life and eventually you will make it in America's society. After becoming one the wealthiest men in America, he did not do what other elite businessmen did. Carnegie believed in the Gospel of Wealth, meaning that the wealthy were morally obligated to give back. He did this by creating institutions in America as well as Scotland.

"He helped fund scientific research and gave teachers at these institutions a \$10 million retirement fund while also donating money to cities around America to construct free public libraries. ... Carnegie also believed in world peace and equality of man, so he founded the Carnegie endowment for international peace and funded the Hague Palace of Peace, which now houses the world court in Netherlands."

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FIGURES

From Page G10

Major Deacon



Deacon

"Mine is Neil Armstrong. He risked his life for the achievement of mankind. He was part of a 10-year team that all worked for 10 years to do something that had never been done before. His team brought the entire world together for a moment to recognize human achievement. Everyone was important on his team, from him flying the (spacecraft) to the person who made the gloves. He is just an example of how working together achieves more. Together we succeed."

Kim Walker



Kim Walker

"One of my favorite people in history is James Naismith, because he invented the game I love. Naismith's game of basketball has been a part of my life since I was very young, and it has provided me with enough wonderful memories to last a lifetime, a college education, and a great career in teaching and coaching."

Dan Lucas



Lucas

"One of my favorite historical figures is the tennis legend Arthur Ashe. As a young Black man, Ashe overcame Jim Crow and discrimination to enter a predominantly white man's game to become the No. 1 tennis player in the world. As a player he was very talented, but what impressed me the most was his calm demeanor and brilliant use of strategy. He was respected and liked by his fellow pros and was named captain of the U.S. Davis Cup team following his retirement from competitive tennis. Off the court, Ashe was a civil rights activist that fought hard to overcome apartheid in South Africa. Ashe didn't want to be remembered as a tennis player. He was most proud of his work to overcome discrimination throughout the world."

Jevon Jackson

"There are many different people to choose from that are intelligent people that helped us in many different ways, but my historical idol is Cassius Clay also known as Muhammad Ali. Ali brought his



Jackson

own flavor to the game of boxing, and he simply changed the game. He was a fluent at what he did whether it was trash talking or even better, just winning. Ali also stood up for what he believed in. He stood up to the wrongdoing to his kind at the time and made it known that it was wrong. He used his platform for greatness and for the good. He even changed his name because he believed that Cassius was a name of bondage and slavery."

Justin Moore



Moore

"Martin Luther King, Jr. He is a great example of a leader and one that I try to imitate. He was strong-willed with his intentions and purpose, but he achieved his vision with patience, perseverance and understanding."

Vicki Morese



Morese

"Condoleezza Rice is someone I've always admired because she is smart, plays concert piano and has a handicap on the golf course that is much better than most people I know, including me. Her handicap was a 14. She was one of the first women to be admitted to Augusta National Golf Club. She was born in Alabama and overcame much racial prejudice to go on to be the secretary of state for George W. Bush. She promoted peace throughout the world."

Mikel Riggs



Riggs

"Vince Lombardi is my favorite historical figure, because he is arguably the greatest football coach of all time. He was a master motivator who got his teams to believe they could win no matter the opponent. He was known for having a simple playbook which allowed his teams to practice them to perfection."

Drew Robinson



Robinson

"One of my favorite figures from American history is Benjamin Franklin, because of his interest in science and contributions to establishing America as we know it."

Carter Sample



Sample

"My favorite U.S. historical figure is Teddy Roosevelt. He was a tough, resilient president who continually made himself better. He also revitalized the game of football, allowing the sport to flourish. Roosevelt was a strong leader but was humble about it."

Faron Key



Key

of basketball."

Ashley McCullough

"A historical figure I admire and respect is Helen Keller for the grit she showed throughout her life."



McCullough

Clay Smith



Smith

"One of my favorite figures in United State history is George Washington for the great example of leadership that he set. Being the first president, he had a very important job of setting a precedent for all future presidents. Washington turned down the offer to be king of the United States showing how he cared more for the people than he did for his own power. There is so much we can learn from his story about leadership and putting others ahead of yourself."

Turner Stepp



Stepp

"Pat Tillman walked away from a multi-million-dollar NFL contract to enlist and serve our country after 9/11, and that speaks absolute volumes. He had everything in life going for him, but his patriotism for this country drew him to serve. He was later (killed in action). He was an absolute animal on the football field but decided to serve and lead soldiers because he knew that was the right thing to do. I look up to him, and he was a big reason why I chose to go down the military path and commit to the Naval Academy."



Helen Keller, left, who became an author and lecturer despite being deaf and blind, was born less than 50 miles from Decatur in Tuscumbia. At right is Keller's teacher, Anne Sullivan.

[COURTESY PHOTO]

Indyia Swoopes

"I chose Harriet Tubman because she gave her life to make a difference in others' lives. She was brave and courageous and never gave up."



Swoopes

Parker Vandine



Vandine

"My favorite figure from U.S. history is Andrew Carnegie. He started as a poor factory worker in his youth and worked his way up to become one of the wealthiest men in the world at the time. One of my favorite things about Andrew Carnegie is his devotion to philanthropy and helping the less fortunate to better themselves."

Jamaal Burks



Burks

"One of my favorite historical figures is Muhammad Ali. For someone to go from champion of the world to working together to make change while putting his career on hold for almost 10 years is something that truly shows a person's character and their true motives. He stayed on the top of his game while also helping his community with fellow African-Americans. He paved the way for athletes to not only worry about their career but their community, and it is something I have always respected and is a main reason why he is someone I look up to."

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