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With lawsuits resolved, Smith says 'full speed ahead' for Russellville-based MS Industries II

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

A lawsuit filed against a Russellville-based company and multiple other entities has been settled and dismissed according to a media release sent to the Franklin Free Press on August 1, 2024. And with that settlement, the CEO says his company will resume plans to be operational at its Russellville facility in the final quarter of 2024. According to Steven Smith, CEO of MS Industries II, his company's load-

out facility, located on Walnut Gate Road in Russellville, is part of a multi-million dollar investment made by MS Industries II since it came to Russellville more than seven years ago. In 2020, an Arkansas businessman named Steven Booth filed a civil action in Lawrence County Circuit Court against MS Industries II, whose corporate headquarters are on Jackson Avenue North in downtown Russellville. Smith and MS Industries II both filed counterclaims against Booth.

See 'MS INDUSTRIES,' Page 4

Have an opinion?
 Story idea?



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RCS board approves Madden resignation, 70 additional personnel moves


John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

At a special called meeting held Thursday morning, the Russellville City Board of Education approved 71 personnel moves in advance of the new school year, including the resignation of Russellville High School Principal Jeremy Madden. Madden submitted his resignation Tuesday afternoon to RCS Superintendent Tim Guinn in advance of accepting the position of principal at Northside High School near Tuscaloosa. Madden's departure means two of the system's schools, RHS and

Russellville Middle School, will not have principals in place when the new school year begins August 8th. The 14-day posting for the RMS principal's job started on July 24, 2024. The 14-day posting for the RHS principal position began on July 30, 2024. Other personnel moves approved at the board's August 1st meeting included:
 —Leave of Absence: Tammy Thomas, bus driver, August 8-September 16, 2024.
 —Employment: Lindsey Potter, RHS/Child Nutrition Program worker, Emma Delaney, Mea Tucker, West Elementary School teachers, Jade

See 'RCS,' Page 5

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Kenneth Weeks, 83, of Phil Campbell, passed away on August 4, 2024. Akins Funeral Home assisted the family.

Felston Rondell "Dale" Moody, age 86, of Phil Campbell, AL, passed away on Sunday, August 04, 2024. The visitation will be 10:00 a.m. till 12:00 p.m. Thursday, August 08, 2024, at Spry Memorial Chapel. The funeral will be at 12:00 p.m. Thursday, August 08, 2024, at Spry Memorial Chapel.

Dewey Paul Guthrie, age 57, of Russellville, AL, passed away peacefully at his home, Friday, August 02, 2024. The visitation will be 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Friday, August 09, 2024, at Spry Memorial Chapel. The memorial service will follow at 3:00 p.m. in the funeral home chapel.

NWSCC well represented with 22 student athletes named to NJCAA All-Academic Team

Submitted

Northwest Shoals Community College officials recently announced the school's 22 student athletes who were named to the 2023-2024 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) All-Academic Team.

Student athletes are eligible to earn academic honors by achieving an overall Grade Point Average of 3.60 or higher for the 2023-2024 academic year. There are three levels of All-Academic Teams:

- NJCAA All-Academic First Team: 4.0 GPA.
- NJCAA All-Academic Second Team: 3.80-3.99 GPA.
- NJCAA All-Academic Third Team: 3.60-3.79 GPA.

NWSCC All-Academic First Team honorees, with their respective years and sports, are: Brayden Spurgeon, Baseball, Freshman. Jannaleigh Street, Softball, Freshman. Karlee Wallace, Softball, Freshman. Kennedi Clark, Softball, Freshman. Sarah Motquin, Softball, Freshman.

NWSCC All-Academic Second Team honorees, with their respective years, sports and GPAs, are: Benmichael Bennett, Baseball, Sophomore, 3.87. Eli Tidwell, Baseball, Freshman, 3.83. Emily Ahonen, Softball, Sophomore, 3.95. Rebekah Ratliff, Softball, Freshman, 3.94. Courtney McGraw, Softball, Sophomore, 3.87. Sarah Garner, Softball, Freshman, 3.87. Jade Roberson, Softball, Sophomore, 3.85. Natalie Baty, Softball, Freshman, 3.85. Bradyn Mitchell, Softball, Freshman, 3.82.

NWSCC All-Academic Third Team honorees, with their respective years, sports and GPAs, are: Logan White, Baseball, Sophomore 3.75. Tyler Wilson, Baseball, Freshman, 3.63. Caleb Davis, Baseball, Sophomore, 3.61. Madeleine Gutierrez, Cross Country, Freshman, 3.75. Bethany Monck, Softball, Freshman, 3.79. Madalynn Griffith, Softball, Freshman, 3.64. My Alma Mitchell, Softball, Sophomore, 3.62. Brooklyn Owens, Softball, Sophomore, 3.61. Additionally, the NWSCC softball team earned the NJCAA Academic Team Award for an overall team GPA of 3.56.



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Franklin Free Press

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The Franklin Free Press is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc. Our publication is mailed to our readers at no charge.

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The Franklin Free Press strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

Letters to the editor

The Franklin Free Press is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The Franklin Free Press reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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'MS INDUSTRIES,' From Page 1

Lawrence County Circuit Court Judge Callie Waldrep signed a pro tanto order on June 6, 2024, dismissing MS Industries II, Smith and his wife from the case, as well as dismissing Booth from the counterclaims.

Smith was also dismissed from the case in his role as trustee of the Steven D. Smith Trust. Other defendants dismissed by the court order include Eternal Guardian Management, LLC, Eternal Guardian Investments, LLLP, Eternal Minerals South, LLC, Stone's Landing, LLC and Celebrity Rides, LLC.



COURTESY PHOTO
MS Industries II's load-out facility on Walnut Gate Road.

Neither the media release nor the court order specifies the terms of the settlement among the parties, other than a statement in the media release that the court order "effectively ends the legal dispute and countersuit between Booth and MSI, along with the Smith defendants."

When contacted by the FFP late last week, Smith confirmed that Booth no longer had any affiliation with MS Industries II, as the company moves forward after the resolution of two of three lawsuits it faced.

Smith declined to discuss any specifics of the settlement citing its mutually agreed upon confidential nature.

When it comes to his company's plans post-lawsuit though, Smith had a lot to say.

In 2020, the Walnut Gate Road facility was nearing completion when Booth filed his lawsuit. That location has been dormant since 2020, but Smith says that's about to change.

"We're about to crank that facility up and start shipping product out of our Russellville location," Smith said.

MS Industries II's arrival came with a big splash, as Smith described his company's planned investment into the Russellville community as 'transformative.'

The company purchased a large downtown building to house its corporate headquarters in Russellville as work on the plant facility continued. The Walnut Gate Road location has dedicated rail access and a truck load-out facility to ship the company's products.

There was a healthy dose of local skepticism after the lawsuit was filed, when the company temporarily closed its Walnut Gate Road facility and laid off employees, as many wondered if that marked the end of MS Industries in Russellville.

"We endured an awful lot of criticism at that time. We've spent a lot of money in this area and we've stayed the course of our vision and plan," Smith said.

So what exactly does MS Industries II produce? In a word, silica.

MS Industries sells 22 different products, most of which are derived from silica, the major constituent of sand. These products are used in a variety of industries, from ceramics to tires to concrete to fiberglass to glass.

Smith said the Russellville plant will produce microproppants, silica flour and other products processed from silica, which will allow MS to become 'the largest producer of whole-grain microproppants in the United States.'

Smith said the company will soon start hiring employees for its load-out facility and he hopes it will be operational by the fourth quarter of this year.

Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. freepress.net!

'RCS,' From Page 1

Pounds, RHS teacher, Erika Abels, English Language Aide RHS.

—Transfers: Angela Franks from RMS/CNP Assistant Manager to RES CNP Manager, Kelly Butler, from RHS/CNP worker to RMS/CNP Assistant Manager, Bryan Ruiz and Reece Carson, from Park and Recreation Department to Part-Time Custodians.

—Temporary Employment in Position: Tiffany Terry, Lauren Taylor, Libby Scruggs, Misty Terry, Hannah Cummings, Mary Elizabeth Peters, Amanda Davis, Dana Massey and Anayeli Ruiz, Extended Care Pre-K Before and After Care. Angela Crittenden, Charlotte Dollar, Jamie Oliver, Heather Boyd, Joy McLaughin, Christina Baker, Carol Fretwell, Macey Vandiver, Monica Balding, Alyssa Landry, Jill Baker, Jill Hester, Lisa Thorn, Heather Godwin, Cortney Green, Gayla Mills, Debra Lawler, Donna Bolton, Jennifer Willis, Justin Chandler, Alissa Moore, Jessica Gipson, Kristyn Landry, Jessica Cummings, Tori Padron, Lindsey Wilson, Madison Hargett, Shonda Engelthaler, Challice Langston and Jessica Cantrell, RES 21st CCLC and WES Afterschool Program. Sydney Medley, Ponda Gordon, Alishia Putman, Anna Skidmore, Ashlyn James, Tiffany Standridge, Arely Monica, Mary Martindale, Sandi Lyon, Selena Pounders, Haley Hargett, Kasey O'Malley, Ashley Inmon, Amber Wright, Jesus Betancourt, Krista Sikes, Macey Vandiver and Emma Whitfield, RES 21st CCLC and WES Afterschool Program. Michell Lane, Lisa Thorn and Denise Wilson, employment as retired teachers part-time (Lane at WES and Thorn and Wilson at RES).

The board also approved Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) Preliminary One-Year contracts to Lindsey Warren, Shay Pounds and Jade Pounds.

—contracted with ALSDE for Angela Richardson to work as ARI Regional Staff from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

—approved a bread bid for the Child Nutrition Program for FY 2024-25.

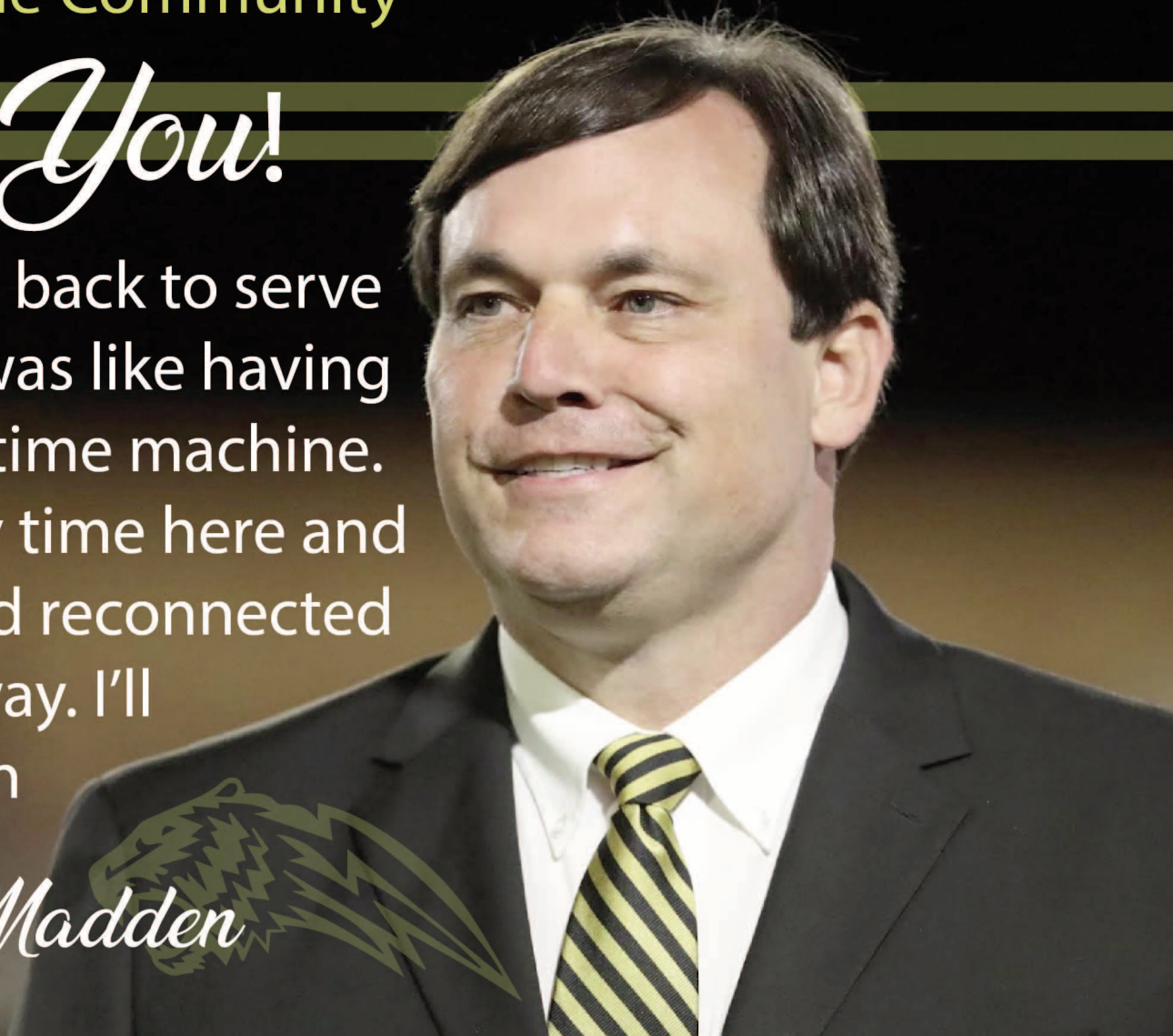
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Jeremy Madden



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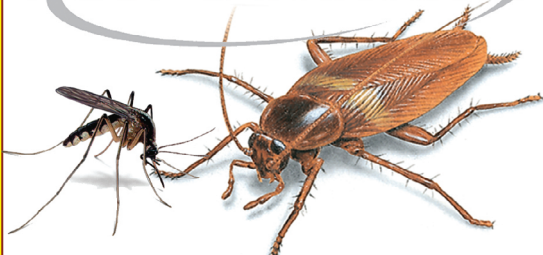
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 **A**shaKiran serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking across Alabama. Their vision is to be a 'ray of hope' by bridging the gap between service providers and culturally diverse communities. Their 24-hour crisis line number is 1-800-793-3010. Learn more about AshaKiran by visiting www.ashakiranonline.org. Consultations are free and confidential, and available in 45 different languages.

 **T**he Senior Center of Phil Campbell is under new management. Everyone age 60 and over are invited to come join us and be part of the group. This is for men and women. We meet at the Phil Campbell Community Center Monday thru Friday from 8-noon. A delicious lunch is served at 11 a.m. Meals are \$1 donation. Some come and play Rook. We also do Bingo when we have enough people. There are several games to play or just sit and socialize with other seniors.

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 **T**he 2024 Franklin County Watermelon Festival Car Show will take place on Saturday, August 17, from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Prizes will be awarded throughout the day. 50/50 raffle. Winner drawn at 1 p.m. Must be present to win. Entry fee \$25 for first car and additional cars \$15. Call 256-443-5919 for more information. The event is sponsored by the Russellville High School Marching Hundred Band Parents.

 **H**omecoming at Jonesboro Baptist Church will be held on Sunday, August 11th. Preaching service at 11 a.m. Lunch to follow at 12 p.m. There will be a special singing service at 1:30 p.m., with Assurance. Church is located at 5061 Waterloo Road. Pastor Kent Walker and congregation invite everyone to attend.

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Phil Campbell woman charged with criminally negligent homicide in 2023 death of her eight-year-old son

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A Phil Campbell woman was arrested Friday and charged with Criminally Negligent Homicide in the March 4, 2023 death of her eight-year-old son.

Kimberly Boykin, 37, was indicted by a Franklin County Grand Jury under Code of Alabama 13A-6-4, Criminally Negligent Homicide (Non-Vehicle).

The significance of the charge being unrelated to use of a vehicle is that it's a Class A misdemeanor rather than a Class C felony in cases where a motor vehicle is involved.

If convicted, Boykin would face up to one year in the Franklin County Jail.

Boykin was booked into the Franklin County Jail Friday morning around 10 a.m. Boykin remained in jail as of Friday afternoon. Franklin County Circuit Judge Brian Hamilton set Boykin's bond amount at \$1,500 but she had not posted the bond as of late Friday.

On March 4, 2023, a call was made to Franklin County 911 alerting authorities to a shooting at a residence in the Gravel Hill community.

The shooting victim was Boykin's son, Jacob Christopher Williams, an eight-year-old second grader at Phil Campbell Elementary School.

Boykin is accused of negligently leaving a loaded firearm where a child could access it in a home with several children present.

The investigation revealed that a four-year-old child saw the gun, picked it up and fired it, striking Jacob in the abdomen. An older sibling in the house made the 911 call, investigators said.

According to Franklin County Sheriff's Office investigators, Boykin was not present in the residence at the time the shooting occurred. Deputies and EMS arrived at the scene, and Jacob was transported to a local hospital, but later died as a result of injuries from the gunshot.

In order to convict Boykin, the State of Alabama must prove she caused the death of her eight-year-old child as a result of criminal negligence. To prove criminal negligence, the state must prove Boykin failed to perceive a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the result (the child's death) will occur.

The next step in the case will be an arraignment, where Boykin will enter a formal plea. Then it will be placed on a future Franklin County Circuit Court trial docket.



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Franklin County fifth among 67 Alabama counties for getting most value for property tax dollars

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Alabama is often found near the bottom of state rankings in many categories where you don't want your state to bring up the rear. But when it comes to property tax rates, Alabama is second from last, ahead of only Hawaii, and that's a good thing. Considered one of the country's most affordable states, Alabama sees its homeowners pay an average of \$674 per year in property taxes, compared to the national average of \$2,795, according to www.smartasset.com. Alabama property taxes are represented in mills, units equal to one tenth of a percent, so 1% equals 10 mills. Rates can vary based on location, and variances in rates charged by counties, school districts and municipalities. Effective property tax rates are the median amount of property taxes paid each year as a percentage of the median home value in that county. The www.smartasset.com website shows Franklin County to have a median home value, as of 2020, of \$103,000. The median property tax payment, again for 2020, was \$355, for an average effective property tax rate of 0.34% for Franklin County. Jefferson County's effective property tax rate of 0.71% is the state's highest. Clay County's effective property tax rate of 0.24% is the lowest in Alabama. Smartasset.com ranked Alabama's 67 counties to show which county's residents are getting the most value for their property tax dollars. Franklin County ranks 5th in that list. Criteria used include the county's property tax rate, school rating, home value growth and home value growth index.

Schools are measured by the math and reading/language arts proficiencies for every school district in the county.

Counties where property values rose by the greatest amount are indicative of counties where people are motivated to purchase homes and to see a positive return on their investment.

A property tax index, based on the above criteria, ranks counties where homeowners' property tax dollars are going the furthest.

Franklin County trails only Limestone, Madison, Baldwin and Cleburne on the list.



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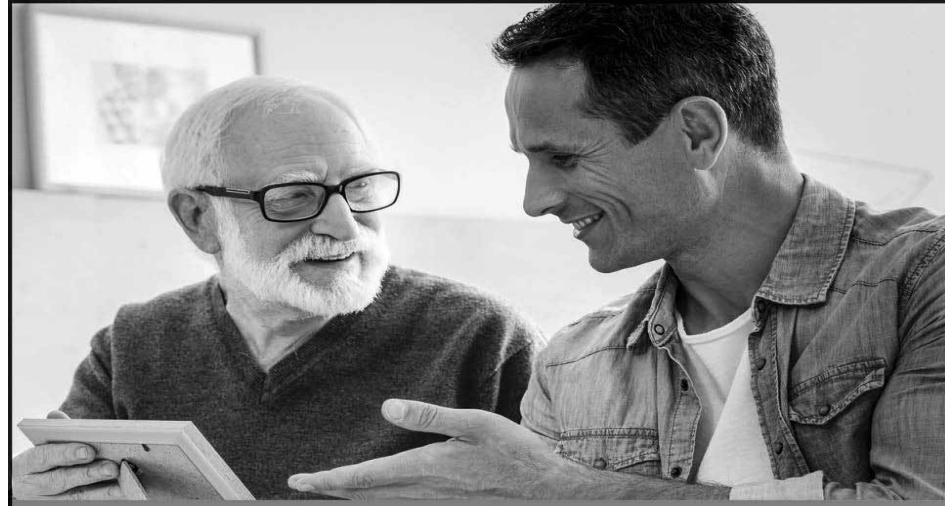
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High school sports 'more than just a game' but not for the reasons you might think

Kadin Pounders
 Franklin Free Press

How many times have you heard the phrase "it's just a game" when discussing the outcome of a high school sporting event? If you're around sporting events as much as I am... Well, I'll just say I wish I had a nickel for every time I heard it. And sometimes I waffle back and forth on whether I believe that or not, but I think I've come to a final conclusion: High school sports are more than just games. But maybe not for the reason you're thinking.

Sports can and should be one of the fundamental educational experiences to be had in high school, helping students learn teamwork, discipline, and perseverance, just to name a few qualities. Sports offer students a public way to show off their talents and skills, make friends, and learn life lessons. Unfortunately, there are also ways in which these lessons can be undercut. These benefits of high school sports can either be aided or undermined by the behavior of parents or adults in the stands. It's important for the grown ups to exhibit, at the very least, decent human conduct at these events, not just for the sake of the children but also for those around us and the community we represent as a whole.

Adults, especially parents, serve as role models. I don't think I'm saying anything groundbreaking there. Students are impressionable and are often looking to adults—parents, teachers, coaches, etc.—for cues and clues on how to act. When adults display good sportsmanship, it sets

See, 'GAME,' Page 12

Scholarship to honor memory of Garrard, Cantrell and their passion for tennis

Kadin Pounders
 Franklin Free Press

When it came to Kay Cantrell and Ann Garrard, two things were never in doubt: Their love for the game of tennis and the impact they made on others' lives. When the first ever Kay Cantrell and Ann Garrard Memorial Tennis Tournament takes place next month, on Saturday, September 21st, it will be an appropriate continuance of the duo's legacy, serving as both a fun day out on the court and fundraiser for an already established scholarship.

"When Katie (Hester) came to me with this idea, I couldn't think of any better way to honor them, not only with the scholarship but also adding in the tournament," said Paige McCluskey, who, alongside Katie Hester, established the scholarship and the memorial tournament. "They loved competition, they loved tennis, so I couldn't think of a better way to honor those ladies than this."

Cantrell and Garrard passed away within a few weeks of each other in April 2023, both 77, but in their lifetimes the two were long-time friends and tennis partners.

"Ann and Kay had always played tennis together and were on multiple teams throughout the years in over a decade of playing," Hester said.

It was Hester, a 2010 Russellville High School graduate and now a special education teacher and tennis coach at Wilson High School, who first came up with the idea of a scholarship honoring her grandmother, Ann Garrard.

"It was (Garrard) playing tennis that got me into playing tennis," Hester said.

"With me coaching a high school team, I knew I wanted to do something to honor her memory of playing tennis and her especially playing with my high school team," Hester added.

"My family initially started a scholarship at Wilson to be given to one of my high school tennis players.



COURTESY PHOTO

Ann Garrard, left, and Kay Cantrell.

See, 'TENNIS,' page 14

Fleming hopes experience will propel Tharptown volleyball team to postseason run

Kadin Pounders
 Franklin Free Press

The Tharptown High School varsity volleyball team will be on the prowl and hopeful for postseason play this year as the Lady Wildcats enter the 2024 campaign with a seasoned roster. Tharptown head coach Kamri Fleming, entering her fifth season in charge of the program, said the Lady Wildcats have struggled in past seasons, but she's optimistic that this team's experience can be a decisive factor.

"The year before last we were a bunch of eighth- and ninth-graders, and last year we were a bunch of ninth- and 10th-graders," Fleming said. "But now this year we're 10th- and 11-graders and we're older and more mature. I think that's going to be a big difference for us."

Among her players Fleming pointed out two in particular who the Lady Wildcats will be relying on to help them have a successful season. One is Carly Cason who, standing at 6-foot-1, is Tharptown's tallest player.

"(Cason) played last year and she's played every year, but last year was her first year on varsity, so that was a learning year for her," Fleming said. "This year, since she does have that year of experience, she looks more mature and more comfortable and she's done really well for us this summer. I'm looking for her to help us out a lot this season."

Fleming said Cason's superior height is an asset, but it also means the Lady Wildcats will be looking to her to make plays at the net.

"At 6-foot-1 our tallest player is Carly, and the next tallest player we have after her is like 5-foot-6. That really makes a big difference defensively on the outside," she said. "My outside blocker that plays on the right side is, I think, 5-foot-3, so you're giving up a block there. That means we're going to rely a lot on Carly to block in all three positions."

See, 'FLEMING,' Page 13

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'GAME,' From Page 11

a good example for the student-athletes. It teaches them to respect their opponents, the officials, and the game itself, which is what we all find ourselves preaching but not necessarily doing. When parents act like that missed field goal or missed foul call or coaching decision is the end of the world —by yelling at referees, criticizing coaches, or (c'mon, man) other players—it sends the message that, well, maybe it is. Look, I'm not saying fans can't or shouldn't support their teams with some playful verbal sparring or constructively criticize anyone involved. Sports should be fun and we all want to win. But when it gets to the point where grown adults are raging at 14- to 18-year-old kids, it's gotten out of control. This leads to the type of toxic environment where the disrespect and negativity outweigh the positive aspects of the game being played. In other words, don't be the person going viral for berating officials or coaches or, God forbid, players during the game.

The focus of high school sports should be the student-athletes and their progress and development, not the adults' or parents' desires or frustrations. One of my favorite movies of all time is *The Breakfast Club* and one of the most heartbreaking scenes is when the *Breakfast Club* students are in the confession circle. Andrew Clark, the jock, played by Emilio Estevez, in one of the many powerful confessions, tells the group he's in detention because he bullied a kid. Psychologically he realizes he did it for his dad. "Andrew, you've got to be number one! I won't tolerate any losers in this family!" Andrew then adds that he sometimes wished he'd blow his knee out so he wouldn't have to worry about his wrestling career anymore. It's dramatic, yes, but it's a perfect example of my point. When parents become overbearing or overly critical, it puts unnecessary pressure on student-athletes, who, whether they show it or not, are probably a little stressed already. Like I said, we all want to win and any student-athlete looking to better themselves should be open to constructive criticism, but it shouldn't go so far as to cause anxiety, burnout, or a loss of love for the game. High school athletes should feel supported, they should feel encouraged. Very few people perform well under a mountain of scrutiny and stress. A positive, supportive environment helps them thrive and, hopefully, develop a lifelong love for sports.

Remember, too, that fans' behavior at sporting events also helps create the atmosphere in the stadium or gym. High school sporting events

are billed as family-friendly events, and it's up to all of us to ensure it stays that way. When you show up, you sit next to your dad or your next door neighbor or your co-worker; you bring your kids along and you invite your pals from out of town; and in a lot of cases you may be mixing with fans of the opposing team. When fans and adults go negative or engage in toxic behavior, it can disrupt any sense of community and school spirit that games should engender. Fair or not, one fan's unruly conduct can also be seen as representative of the community as a whole to those from outside it. This can deter other parents and students from attending games, which diminishes that sense of community pride and school spirit that we all love. On the flip side, when fans act positively—or at least not like a jerk—it makes the experience better for everyone involved.

Finally, fans and parents need to recognize the important role of coaches and officials in high school sports. Just like parents are role models, coaches are, too. The men and women on the sidelines dedicate a lot of their time and energy to teaching and working with the student-athletes, often with few resources and sometimes at significant personal cost. A lot of them are teachers, who after spending all morning and afternoon with their students turn around and spend half the evening with them, too. Officials have an important job, as well, making sure games are fair and safe. Both coaches and officials deserve your respect and your appreciation. Most of them have thick skin—it comes with the territory—but next time ask yourself if you'd like to do your job with hundreds of people watching and criticizing everything you did, even if you know you did it right. Awful parental and fan behavior at sporting events is one of the major reasons why retention of officials and referees is so difficult. When parents overly criticize coaches and officials, it can certainly be demoralizing, but it can also call into question the integrity of the game.

Simply put, the behavior of spectators at high school sporting events is important. Adult fans and parents need to recognize their role as role models to the kids on the field and on the court. You may not like their decisions, but at the very least show some respect to the coaches and officials. Most importantly, make the well-being and the physical and mental development of the student-athletes the priority. For right now, at least, the kids aren't out there getting paid to be there. Most of them play because they want to, and it would be a real shame if a kid's desire or love of a sport was forever ruined by an obnoxious or overbearing adult. Sports, especially football, are very important in the South. Culturally important. There are rivalries to win, traditions to uphold, winning streaks to continue. But at what cost to the kids that are doing all that? You think, like I do, that it's more than just a game? Please, with the fall sport season just around the corner, act like it.

GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE

STREET DEPARTMENT/HEAVY EQUIPMENT DRIVER/OPERATOR, SOLID WASTE

HEAVY EQUIPMENT DRIVER/OPERATOR

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

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Heavy Equipment Operation: Drives and operates equipment to accomplish a full range of assignments and tasks, including the most complex projects.

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QUALIFICATIONS:

Possess a High School Diploma or GED. Two years of work experience collecting and disposing of solid waste. Work within a city environment is preferred. Four years of work experience as a Heavy Equipment Operator. Possess a current and valid CDL-Class B license is required; maintain insurability for the duration of employment. Possess and maintain a safe driving record. Work experience in general road and sidewalk repair and maintenance is preferred. Experience interacting with general public is preferred. Ability to respond to emergencies 24/7. Ability to pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol test and random drug screening.

THE CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, disability, or any other non-merit factor.

Applications may be picked up at Russellville City Hall in the Office of the Mayor, 304 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, Alabama. Applications must be returned no later than August 23, 2024 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board

P. O. Box 308

Russellville, AL 35653

The average pay for this position is \$44,865.60 – 69,160.00

The successful candidate will be required to successfully complete a complete physical examination including drug screening prior to employment.

'FLEMING,' From Page 11

A lack of height on the team, an uncontrollable factor for any high school program, is one area Fleming said the Lady Wildcats will have to play around this season.

"We're pretty good defensively, but we struggle offensively hitting the ball. It's not that we can't do it, but it's just that we're kind of small," she said. "We're going to have to learn to use what we've got to be better offensively."

The other key player Fleming picked out was Karrah Nichols, one of Tharptown's veterans on the court.

"I think Karrah Nichols will have a good year for us," Fleming said. "She's played on varsity for me every year since she was in the seventh grade, so I think this year she'll be able to make a bigger difference. She'll be more experienced and I believe she'll be able to carry us more offensively and defensively."

Typically, with more experience comes more expectations. Fleming believes this is the year the Lady Wildcats, if they put in the effort, can make it to the playoffs.

"I think that we can make a run to the postseason, but it's going to depend on the girls and how hard they're willing to work," said Fleming, whose program plays in Class 2A Area 14. "I feel like in terms of the county we can be pretty competitive with everyone, and as far as area goes I feel like we can be competitive with every team there, as well. We played Covenant (Christian) this summer, and we played really well against them."

For Tharptown in 2024, Fleming said a lot will come down to confidence.

"To me, confidence is the one thing that we really struggle with," she said. "We know we can do it, but being confident and doing it repetitively has been our biggest issue. As far as talent goes, we know we have talent, but being confident and producing it and getting it to show through what we're doing is where we struggle. If we can be confident then I think we can compete with everyone."

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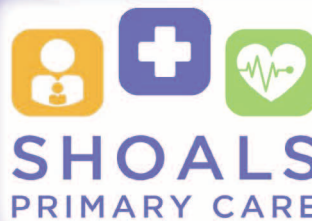
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'TENNIS,' From Page 11

We gave out two last year for 500 dollars each.”
 Thanks to donations from friends and family, Hester said they were able to raise the money for the two scholarships in about a month’s time, but she also knew she wanted to expand. That’s when she reached out to her friend McCluskey, the granddaughter of Kay Cantrell, with the idea of a scholarship dedicated to both their grandmothers and awarded to a Russellville High School tennis player.
 “Last summer I messaged Paige and said I wanted to do this on a bigger scale and I want to give back to Russellville because that’s where they’re from, that’s where they played,” Hester said. “I asked her her opinion on starting initially just the scholarship, and she and her family were all for it. So, we came together and created the Kay Cantrell and Ann Garrard Memorial Scholarship.
 “We got donations from family members, so this May we gave out

one at Wilson for 500 dollars, and then we added Russellville and we gave that one to a senior and it was a thousand dollars,” Hester added.

Not stopping there, Hester and McCluskey then set their sights on raising even more money for the scholarships through a fundraiser. That’s where the idea of a tournament came in.

“We knew we wanted to grow it so we wanted to start a fundraiser, which would be a tennis tournament, to try to not only fund the scholarships we already have but also branch out to other schools, too,” Hester said.

Hester and McCluskey didn’t put a specific number on the amount of money they hoped to raise through the tournament, but McCluskey said the goal is to make enough that another local tennis student-athlete can have the opportunity to win the scholarship.

“I would say our goal is to get enough to be able to expand to other schools,” McCluskey said. “We’ve talked about expanding to some county schools or even Muscle Shoals or just anywhere we can. We would love to see it grow and be able to give out more scholarships.”

Hester and McCluskey both said they needed financial assistance to attend college and they understand the benefit a scholarship can provide. The two said the requirements for a tennis-playing senior applying for the scholarship aren’t that stringent—just a short essay—and in the past it’s been awarded to those with need for it, but Hester and McCluskey said they’ve been touched by some of the submissions they’ve received.

“We had to have scholarships to go to college, so I think the students that we’ve given the scholarship to have had a need for it,” Hester said. “But Bralynn Vincent got it this past year, and he wrote about his grandfather playing tennis, so that really struck with us. He grew up similar to us and they had that family connection to tennis.”

The Kay Cantrell and Ann Garrard Memorial Tennis Tournament, which will be held at the Russellville Tennis Complex, has a 30 dollar entry fee and will consist of men’s and women’s doubles competition and singles play for boys and girls in under 18, 15, 12, and under 10 age groups. The 10u group was a later addition to the event suggested by others in the community. Tennis is a growing sport among youth in the local area, something both Cantrell and Garrard would love to see.

“(Cantrell) got me started playing tennis early, and I played in middle school and high school,” McCluskey, a 2010 Russellville High School graduate, said. “As we’ve opened up the tournament and started sharing it on Facebook I’m seeing all the stuff about the 10u and the young kids that are wanting to get involved, and I think that’s great. They would love that.”

According to the two organizers, the tournament has seen an outpouring of support from the community so far, and that support has cut down on operating costs, giving the event an opportunity to generate even more funds.

See, ‘TENNIS’ Page 15

GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE

PATROL OFFICER – POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEFINITION OF JOB: Patrols a designated sector of the city of Russellville and responds to complaints. Serves warrants and subpoenas and testifies in court. Provides traffic control assistance. Performs dispatching duties. Performs other police related duties as required.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Knowledge of: the city buildings and street system of Russellville; city, state and federal laws; court procedures; department rules, regulations and procedures; maintenance and use of weapons; radio codes, surveillance equipment and legal procedures involved with illegal drug cases.

Ability to: operate a motor vehicle; read; safely fire a weapon; communicate on telephone and radio; generate written documents such as reports and tickets; bend, crouch; stretch; stretch; walk; run; respond to emergency situations on short notice when off-duty; and do the essential functions of the job as directed in this description.

Willingness to: work overtime, irregular hours, weekends and holidays; travel and attend seminars and workshops.

QUALIFICATIONS and SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a high school diploma or GED
 Minimum of 21 years of age

Must meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by the State of Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission

Possession of a valid Alabama Drivers License

Possess the ability to obtain an Alabama Police Academy diploma or its equivalent

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Pay Range is from \$44,865.60 – 69,160.00.

Applications and copies of the Job Descriptions may be obtained at the Russellville City Hall, Office of the Mayor, 304 North Jackson Avenue.

Applications submitted to the Russellville Civil Service Board less than one year ago remain active. Those individuals need not reapply in order to receive consideration for this appointment. Applications must be returned no later than August 9, 2024 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board

P. O. Box 308

Russellville, AL 35653

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**GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT
CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE
STREET DEPARTMENT**

EQUIPMENT OPERATOR II

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: Drives and operates equipment to accomplish a full range of assignments and tasks. Operates heavy equipment on job sites, such as, but not limited to: back hoe, bobcat, loader and knuckle booms.

QUALIFICATIONS: The completion of High School Diploma or GED. Two years of work experience maintaining or constructing roads. Two years of work experience as an Equipment Operator I. The possession of a current and valid class B CDL. Work experience in the operation of knuckle boom truck.

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Applications must be returned no later than August 23, 2024 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board
P. O. Box 308
Russellville, AL 35653

The average pay for this position is \$40,060.80 – 61,734.00

The successful candidate will be required to successfully complete a complete physical examination including drug screening prior to employment.

'TENNIS,' From Page 14

"Clayton Homes is donating tennis balls and cases of water for us to use," McCluskey said.

"That's overhead that we would've had to buy if we didn't have enough or couldn't get someone to do that," Hester added. "We've had tons of people offer to help and to give, so I don't think we'll have a lot of overhead and everything should go towards the scholarship."

The level of support garnered for the memorial tournament honoring Cantrell and Garrard is a lovely sign of the effect the women had on others, Hester and McCluskey said.

"I think it's amazed me how much of an impact they had. You think they're your world, but then when you step outside you see that they were a lot of people's world," Hester said. "They had a lot of connections and friendships from business or from tennis or from school or church. It just goes back to Russellville being such a tight-knit town and that everybody supports each other."

"I think it just shows how much they were loved by all these people in the community," McCluskey added. "It's not just the tennis community but people locally are donating or showing up wanting to play. All the help we've gotten from everybody in the community, I think it just shows how much everybody loved them."

Anyone interested in entering the Kay Cantrell and Ann Garrard Memorial Tennis Tournament or in learning more about it can find all the information on the event's Facebook page. Those interested can also contact Katie Hester at 256-460-0519 or Paige McCluskey at 256-668-3434 or email kcagtennis@gmail.com.

Please send your guest columns and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



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