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MALACHI CORLEY

## A Local Champion

A journey from WKU to the NFL



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**ISSUE 8 2024** 

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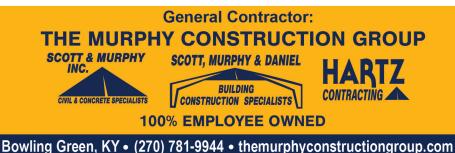
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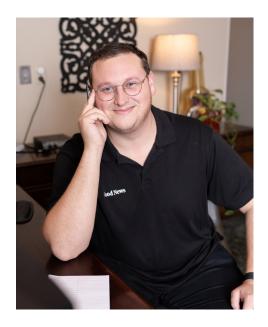
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T HE CROWD fills the stands, row after row, of people in our high school's colors. The family in front of you sits down with a fresh hot dog from the concession stand. It's still steaming with a drizzle of ketchup laced across the top from end to end. It smells so good you think you "just might have to go to the concession stand and get your own." On the way there, you run into your old favorite teacher. You run into your old high school crush, wave, and maybe catch up. In the background, the scoreboard keeps ticking up, and the crowd's roar gets louder. The moths and other critters dance around the floodlights tens of feet in the air.

We've all experienced what it feels like to be at a high school football game under the Friday night lights. We know what it feels like to get the jitters as the first play begins — the excitement when our team scores the first touchdown. For towns across the country, sports like high school football bring us together. It gives cheerleaders the experience of a lifetime, pushing them to perform impressive stunts, flips, and lifts. The band students learn to perform in front of hundreds of people and how to work together to

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

#### Where champions are made

Our hometown courts and fields introduce stars to the game.

make art. Hometown games are a perfect mixture of fun, family, nostalgia, and teamwork.

Healthy competition teaches things you can't learn alone at a desk. It shows the band, the players, and the cheerleaders how to have discipline. It shows them how to treat others. It pushes them to be humble and show sportsmanship. Because while we win today, next week may hand us a rough defeat. These qualities help make our town a better place. And the good news is — our town isn't the only place building up the next generation of young leaders. Schools across the nation, from California to Maine, are showing students what it means to be a team player.

As we grow older, we run out of time to do the things we love. We forget what it feels like to sit in the crowded stands with a warm hotdog in our hand and balance Dr. Pepper in our lap after sitting down. There's a hidden treasure in our county, and we shouldn't take it for granted. Hometown sports have shaped who we are, and they'll shape the next generation — and the one after that. Our hometown courts and fields introduce stars to the game.

This is where champions are made. GN

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# FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF STATEMEN

#### Veteran and finance officer Jim Manley helps the American Legion serve Bowling Green.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Amanda Guy

VETERAN IS someone who has given everything to their country — someone who has fought and protected and should be respected as such. They have done their service and deserve rest, but many never stop.

The veterans at American Legion Post 23 are like that, serving their community at home as they did abroad. Post 23 has fed people without homes, furnished veteran housing, donated to the school system and the Boys & Girls Club, and done so much more for the citizens of Bowling Green. Some of their work has been substantial, but equally important are the little things. Paying to fix a transmission or buying a washer are the things that seem small but really help the individual.

It is a community effort, as the American Legion makes great use of local donations, but the one at the head of it all is Post 23's finance officer, Jim Manley. Manley served the United States in the Marines and served with the American Legion for 54 consecutive years. For the past 32 years, he has been the finance officer, taking care of the books, paying the bills, and keeping the post up to date with its charitable gaming license and its gaming hall. While the job may feel secretarial at times, his work makes sure the money the American Legion raises goes back to Bowling Green. "Not only [do] we help veterans, but we do help the community as a whole," Manley said. "We have donated back to the community over \$2 million since I have been the finance officer here."

The Legion didn't start out being so involved in the community. Manley said the group realized what they could do for the community through their work with veterans.

"We saw what we were being able to do through the [Department of Veterans Affairs], then we saw the other needs in the community and thought, 'Hey, these people need more," Manley said. "We want to do everything that we can to help all of the people that are in need." "I wanted to help everybody that I could, and I wanted to stay doing that, and as long as I stay healthy and well, I am going to keep doing that."

– Jim Manley



It's a goal that is reflected in Manley as well and was the reason he joined the American Legion. He grew up in a family that didn't have much — at one time no electricity or running water — but they always helped each other. That mindset translated to his military service, and then beyond to his work and his membership with the Legion.

"I wanted to help everybody that I could, and I wanted to stay doing that, and as long as I stay healthy and well, I am going to keep doing that," Manley said.

With so much experience with the Legion and his role as finance officer, Manley has been in a unique position to make all of Post 23's efforts worthwhile. He doesn't work alone, however.

Post 23 partners with other organizations throughout Bowling Green, like Good Deeds KY. It is through these organizations that the Legion furnishes veterans' apartments, getting furniture, clothing, and other items for those who need it. The veterans work with Room in the Inn and the Salvation Army in the winter, setting up cots and feeding the unhoused at night. It is the school resource coordinators who call the Legion when there are kids who need beds or who can't afford a field trip.

Another big outreach Post 23 does is with local nursing homes. Legion volunteers are assigned to each nursing home in the area, and those volunteers visit with veterans in the homes and make sure they have everything they need.

"We go into the nursing homes at least once a month, and we visit the veterans," Manley said.

They help provide for the other residents as well. Manley himself goes to Greenwood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and when he brings things for the veterans, Toys for Tots will often send puzzle books, socks, and other items the residents might need.

There are many other organizations

that the American Legion works with, from Room in the Inn and the Salvation Army to the Marine Corps League and more. It's one of the greatest things about Bowling Green — that everyone works together.

"We really, really enjoy working with the community," Manley said. "It's a great feeling that you're helping somebody, and ... we're here helping someone, not expecting anything in return."

Hundreds of people have felt the effect of the veterans' work, and hundreds more will continue to have their lives changed in the future.

"As long as we're doing the right thing and we are working for the people and for the Lord, I feel that things are going to keep working out," Manley said. "As long as we're able [to] do these things, we're going to do them."

With a servant like Jim Manley at the helm, there is no doubt they will. **GN** 





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# Spreading Kindness:

## Small acts making a big difference

Nonprofit Good Deeds KY shows that showing kindness is for everyone.

By Kali Bradford // Photography by Amanda Guy

HE LONG-TIME and much-beloved children's television host, Fred Rogers, often spoke about the importance of helping others on his public television show, "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." In his own life, Rogers was encouraged by his mother to "look for those helping" when things seemed troublesome in the world around him.

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping," Rogers once said.

Sixteen-year-old Emorie Osborne is one such helper who has learned the importance of helping, thanks to her mother, Mary Osborne, and their nonprofit, Good Deeds KY. Good Deeds KY is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) based in Bowling Green with a mission of "doing good deeds for others, expecting nothing in return."





While only a nonprofit since 2020, Good Deeds KY has been doing good things for Bowling Green residents for the past eight years. As a very determined kindergartner, Emorie decided it was time for her and her classmates to come together and get involved. The rest, as they say, is history — along with a whole lot of helping.

#### Small Beginnings, Big Heart

The story of Good Deeds KY has a unique beginning that started in 2016.

"Emorie was in kindergarten, and she had sisters in the fourth and sixth grades," explained Emorie's mother, Mary. "At Alvaton Elementary School, they didn't have any clubs for kindergarten through third grade. Emorie didn't like hearing her sisters talking about what clubs they were going to be in, especially when she couldn't join. I suggested to her that we do something about it. At first, she didn't know what she wanted to do — she just wanted to do something."

After a few weeks of debating, Emorie and Mary decided that a club that helped others was an excellent place to start.

"It started in kindergarten, and she only allowed kindergarten to third grade students — because, you know, that was the whole reason why she wanted it," she said. "And to this day, Alvaton [Elementary] only has kindergarten to third graders that can be a part of the club."

Mary said around 100 students became involved with the club for various age-appropriate acts of kindness.

"In the beginning, we would do cards for veterans on Veterans Day, socks and letters for those in the nursing home — also letters of encouragement for the homeless that would be left in area shelters," she added.

Mary said that while the younger students have continued to do those smaller acts of kindness, over the years, the organization has grown and created the opportunity for all ages to lend a helping hand.

# "

In the beginning, we would do cards for veterans on Veterans Day, socks and letters for those in the nursing home — also letters of encouragement for the homeless that would be left in area shelters.

- Mary Osborne

#### Growing and Giving

The club has now grown to include additional schools, such as Cumberland Trace Elementary and Western Kentucky University, with 150 members in its Good Deeds KY club on campus. Mary stated that they've also recruited additional volunteers and community partnerships, such as with the American Legion, enabling the group to reach even more people in need.

"It has manifested into so much more," Mary explained. "We can provide beds for homeless veterans that have obtained housing. We have partnered with school systems to help provide students' families with basic needs that they may not have or have access to. We work with caseworkers, social workers, and both women and men in recovery. We're not an upgrade system. We're a system that if you don't have anything, we'll help get what you need." The club's rapid growth led to its becoming an official nonprofit in 2020.

"We became a nonprofit because we were growing and gaining more support, and we couldn't accept the support without being a nonprofit," Mary said. "It's a fantastic problem to have. There is something about doing for someone else and expecting nothing in return. You are just doing it to be a positive light and to give someone a helping hand."

#### What's Next?

Mary said the next five years for the organization look to be years of growth.

"In the next five years, we expect to be bigger. We would love for there to be more of these clubs in schools. I think it's important to teach kids what it means to give and that giving can mean more than just donating money. 'Giving' is sometimes your time and effort. We would also love to see Good Deeds grow in our community and be able to service more counties around us. We currently service the counties around us, but it's limited because of our resources.

"I didn't know that it would turn into this, but I'm not surprised because there's a need for it, and once you see it and you feel it, it's hard not to want to help and do some good. It's amazing work. We're blessed to get to do it. We have a fantastic community that supports us."

She also added that, just as in the beginning, Emorie will continue to lead the charge to help as many as she can with a good deed.

"She has a serving heart," Mary said. "It just is a way of life for her, and I'm proud that she's continued this and continues it. It's just her mindset." GN

For more information on Good Deeds KY, visit gooddeedsky.org.





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# Continuing a FAMILY FAMILY HERIAGE

Westbrook Farms thrives for generation after generation.

By Sara Hook Photography by Amanda Guy

**AMELS**, ALPACAS, and kangaroos live side by side with cows, horses, and other farm animals on rolling hills that stretch across the Bowling Green countryside. Some live their best lives out in the fields, while some find excitement in traveling to meet children across the state, and others show off their natural charm at local weddings and event venues. One family runs all of it -a family that has worked on that same land since the early 1900s. Westbrook Farms sits just outside Bowling Green in Alvaton, spanning some 2,500 acres of farmland and cattle. Four generations of Westbrooks have worked on the farm, taking it from its humble beginning of a few milk cows to the multifaceted business it is today.

Adam Westbrook is of that fourth generation, and his family, his parents, and two of his brothers











and their families currently run the farm day-to-day. Like his father and grandfather before him, Westbrook and his brothers stayed with the farm after graduating high school. It was his great-grandfather who started Westbrook Farms in the milk industry before milking machines — when every cow was milked by hand.

"They did it by hand up until probably [the] '60s, and then that's when milking machines [came] out," Westbrook said. "Now we're row cropping about 1,700 acres, and then we have beef cows and hay." Every member of the family is important to the farm's smooth running. While the family has left the milk business, the farm is still alive and thriving more than ever. Westbrook's sister-in-law built Westbrook Farms' event and venue business and is regularly involved in the community.

"We had an old tobacco barn on the farm, and she turned that into a venue barn," Westbrook said. "She stays booked all the time — weddings, events, birthday parties — she has a traveling petting zoo, she can



"We had an old tobacco barn on the farm, and she turned that into a venue barn. She stays booked all the time — weddings, events, birthday parties — she has a traveling petting zoo..."

- Adam Westbrook

load everything up and bring it to you. She does really good with that, and she does hayrides. I mean, she has a little cart that goes behind a horse — she can do cart rides. I mean, she does a lot."

Everyone that comes to the events enjoys themselves, Westbrook said. The success there, alongside the farm as a whole, is the result of many years of hard, dedicated work by the whole family. Farming may not be easy or glamorous work, but there is always a visible outcome at the end of a season's work.

"It is rewarding to watch a crop grow and harvest it by the end of the year and see your hard work pay off,"Westbrook said. Each year is different, and the success of a farm can depend on events entirely out of a farmer's control — weather especially. A drought or excessive rain can mean a net loss that year. There is no guaranteed paycheck. Still, Westbrook said, it's a good way of life.

"It teaches you good values, to respect ... the land and animals and taking care of everything,"Westbrook said. "It draws you closer to each other, knowing that [income]'s not guaranteed."

The Westbrook family aims to keep their farm alive for as long as possible while continuing to serve the Bowling Green and Warren County communities. Part of that involves respecting and caring for the many acres of land they own.

"You want to stay profitable. You want to keep the land in the best condition — the way you found it — keep it the way you keep it, don't let it erode, and we do all the no-till practices and stuff like that," Westbrook said. "We want to keep it profitable and keep it in the family."

As a local business, Westbrook Farms has kept the community fed for generations, and the Westbrook family plans to continue to do so for generations to come. Who knows? Your next meal may be from these very pastures. **GN** 



# **OR LIFE**

By Gabriel Grant Huff Photography by Amanda Guy

**LISABETH KUBLER-ROSS** once said, "As far WWII in the infantry, fighting throughout Europe. as service goes, it can take the form of a million things. To do service, you don't have to

be a doctor working in the slums for free or become a social worker. Your position in life and what you do doesn't matter as much as how you do what vou do."

Joe M. Harlan has lived out the words of this famous Swiss-American psychiatrist very well. Born in August 1949 in Beebe, Arkansas, Harlan spent most of his childhood in Burns, Tennessee, and Oakville, Kentucky, graduating high school in 1967.

From then on, most of the now Bowling Green resident's life has been characterized by service. Not many people would say anything different, and perhaps the person most responsible for setting Harlan on such a path was his dad, a U.S. Army veteran who battled in

"He was a good, sound country boy ... overseas and so forth," Harlan said. "I felt like I needed to do the same thing."

A LIFE OF SERVICE EARNS JOE HARLAN THE **RESIDENT LIFETIME** ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

With two years of college behind him, Harlan joined the Army in 1969. He served as a Green Beret in the Army Special Forces from 1969 to 1972 during the Vietnam era. About 20 years later, in 1991, the Army sent Harlan overseas to the Middle East for four months to support troops in Operation Desert Storm. This mission to free Kuwait began five months after Iraq's invasion

of the country. By late February 1991, the U.S. and its allies had succeeded. For 32 years, he served the United States Army at about five military installations in the South, including Fort Campbell, located along the Kentucky-Tennessee border.

While some can find Army service challenging, Harlan enjoyed his time.

"To me, it didn't seem difficult," Harlan said. "I enjoyed it. You learned a lot. You do the right things. Everybody took care of each other. I could travel, and I liked to meet people and learn new skills. It was just a really nice experience."

Amidst his military career, Harlan also volunteered for the Russellville Rural Fire Department, an organization of community volunteers. He continued his life of service by saving and helping those in need. For about 30 years, he rescued people from fires, car wrecks, and more, becoming captain about 15 years into the job.

"In the summertime, and the fall especially, we might have two or three runs a week, and it was at our expense," Harlan recalled. "We never got paid for it." Years after he retired, the fire department created an annual excellence award, the Joe M. Harlan Award, testifying to the man's great heart of service and given to those who displayed a similar commitment. The department gave the award for the first time in December 2023.

Turning 75 years old in 2024, Harlan still strives to serve others today. He moved to Charter Senior Living of Bowling Green with his wife in 2024. Although he no longer supports the United States Army or saves people from fires, in the words of Kubler-Ross, his position in life and what he does doesn't matter as much as how he does what he does. Even if it's just pushing other residents' wheelchairs or cheering them up, Harlan performs his actions with faithfulness, believing that encouragement and setting a good example are goals everyone should adopt. "TO ME, IT DIDN'T SEEM DIFFICULT. I ENJOYED IT. YOU LEARNED A LOT. YOU DO THE RIGHT THINGS. EVERYBODY TOOK CARE OF EACH OTHER. I COULD TRAVEL, AND I LIKED TO MEET PEOPLE AND LEARN NEW SKILLS."

- Joe Harlan

While Harlan's servanthood played out in public, it also, most importantly, took place with his spouse of over 50 years. He met Linda at church in 1969 and dated her in college, marrying a year later in 1970. Together, they have three children and several grandchildren.

During their retirement, Linda was diagnosed with brain cancer. Her condition worsened around the time they moved to Bowling Green, which came as a shock to him. With joy and great love, he faithfully served the love of his life 24/7.

"[I try] to keep her in good spirits, and she's getting better," said Joe, laughingly saying she still loves to sing.

Joe's dedication to service did not go unrecognized, as the Kentucky Senior Living Association delivered the Resident Lifetime Achievement Award to him on March 14, 2024.

"I feel like the people are recognizing the fact that we are trying to do the right thing for the right reasons," Joe said.

"I think it caught me by surprise — that was very nice of them." As his daughter, Jennifer, would say — Joe continues to have a servant's heart, living as a servant leader and man of God. GN





### **TWENTY YEARS OF TASTY TRADITION**

Mister B's Pizza & Wings is a favorite with sports fans and families.

A PACKED PARKING lot is the sign of a good restaurant, and between the ample indoor and outdoor seating, Mister B's usually hosts a full house. With delicious menu options like pizza, pasta, wings, salads, and sandwiches, this Bowling Green staple has something for everyone.

Stepping into Mister B's, you immediately smell the warm, inviting aroma of freshly baked pizza.

We started with the nacho basket, which consisted of tortilla chips and cheese sauce in plastic cups. Even though it wasn't the most elegant presentation, it thrilled the 6-year-old child dining with us. We also indulged in deep-fried pickles accompanied by a quintessential American condiment — good ol' ranch dressing.

Pizza is available in both thin crust and pan, and when reviewing pizza, I think it's always good to start with a classic, so we got half pepperoni and half pepperoni, sausage, and mushroom. The moment the pepperoni pizza arrived at our table, it was love at first sight. With its perfect balance of crunch and chew, the golden-brown crust set the stage for what's to come. Baked to perfection, the crust had a light, airy texture with a satisfying crispness at the edges, providing the ideal foundation for the toppings. The sauce was rich and tangy with a hint of garlic, which perfectly complements the other flavors without overpowering them. There was also enough sauce, a welcome change from many other pizza offerings in Bowling Green — there's nothing worse than a dry pizza. The food here is fantastic, the atmosphere is casual and family-friendly, and the service is prompt and cheerful. What more could you want?

Whether you're a die-hard pizza enthusiast or just someone looking for a comforting, delicious meal, the pizza at Mister B's is a must-try. It's a reminder of why this beloved dish has stood the test of time and continues to bring joy to pizza lovers everywhere. **GN** 

#### GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Bowling Green. This month Eve Vawter visited Mister B's Pizza and Wings.

Eve Vawter FoodCriticBowling Green@gmail.com

#### Mister B's Pizza & Wings

1945 Scottsville Rd. Bowling Green (270) 904-4200



# Tailgate like a CHAMPION

Kick off the season with these game day recipes.

HEN THE stadium lights blaze and the roar of the crowd echoes, true fans know the game-day experience begins in the parking lot. Celebrate your team's spirit with these tailgating recipes, which will fuel your revelry from kickoff to the final whistle.

From handheld classics to shareable spreads, these dishes pack bold flavors and endless energy — the perfect sustenance for cheering your champions to victory. Fire up the grill and get ready to tailgate in championship style! **GN** 

#### Hot 'N' Tangy Wings

Submitted by Dennis Gardner 3 1/2 lbs. chicken wings 1 c. barbecue sauce 1/2 c. hot sauce 1/2 c. honey 1 t. brown sugar 1 t. dry mustard



Clean and dry chicken wings. Cut and discard wing tips. Cut the wings at their joints to make two separate pieces. Place chicken pieces in broiler for 8-10 minutes until chicken is browned, flipping pieces once. Place chicken in a slow cooker. In a small mixing bowl, combine barbecue sauce, hot sauce, honey, brown sugar, and mustard. Pour over wings. Cover and cook on low for 4 1/2-5 hours or on high for 2-2 1/2 hours.

Submit your recipes to be included in Good News Magazine and the Exchange Cookbook: www.southernaprons.com

#### **Potato Salad**

Submitted by Debbie Henderson

1 bag potatoes, 5 lb., cooked, peeled, and diced
6 dill pickles, chopped
6 hard boiled eggs, chopped
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
5 ribs of celery, chopped
1/2 onion, chopped
1 can sliced black olives, drained
mayonnaise, to coat mixture
mustard, to color

Mix cooked potatoes, pickles, eggs, salt, pepper, celery, onion, and olives in large bowl. Add enough mayonnaise to coat mixture. Add just enough mustard to color salad. Chill salad for at least 2 hours.



#### **Calico Cheese Dip**

Submitted by Nancy Johnston

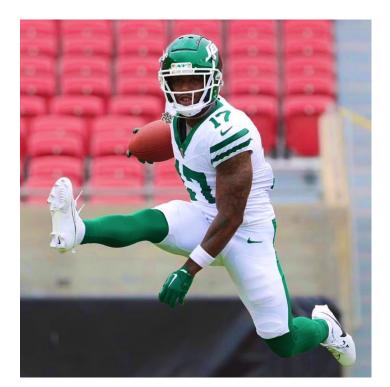
4 c. Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
4 oz. can green chilies, chopped
2 ¼ oz. can sliced, ripe olives, drained
½ c. minced, fresh parsley
4 green onions, sliced
3 med. tomatoes, diced and seeded
1 pkg. Italian salad dressing mix
tortilla chips

In a mixing bowl, combine the cheese, chilies, olives, onions, tomatoes, and parsley. Prepare salad dressing mix according to package directions. Pour over cheese mixture and mix well. Serve with tortilla chips.









## Malachi Corley's Journey From WKU to the NFL

By Haley Potter // Photos submitted by Malachi Corley

**T WAS** a crisp evening in April with high emotions and anticipation when Malachi Corley's phone rang, forever altering the trajectory of his entire life. Day two of the NFL draft had been filled with excitement and nerves, and the call he received from the New York Jets was the peak of years of sweat, dedication, and faith.

"Words can't describe the way I have been feeling since I got that call on day two of the draft. It's been exciting, and I feel truly blessed. I have to give a shoutout to my Lord and Savior for blessing me with the talents and the desire to perfect my craft and be in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in my life," Corley exclaimed, his tone filled with emotion.

For Corley, this moment was not merely an entry into professional football — it

showcased the relentless pursuit of his dreams. From a young boy in Louisville to a star receiver at Western Kentucky University (WKU), Corley's journey has been marked by significant milestones and relationships that have shaped him both on and off the field.

Football was more than just a game for Corley in his younger years. It was a sanctuary where he could channel his energy and focus his ambitions. His years at WKU were critical and ones he will never forget, not just for his athletic development but for the bonds he formed.

"Some of my most memorable moments at WKU stem from obviously the on-the-field team success and personal success, but I really enjoyed the bonds and relationships I built with those in the locker room and facility. And also the relationships and bonds I made throughout the city of Bowling Green itself," Corley reminisced.

One of Corley's standout memories is from the Conference USA Championship game against the University of Texas at San Antonio.

"The atmosphere was electric, and the stakes didn't get much bigger," he recalled with a smile.

But it wasn't just the big games that defined his time at WKU. The daily grind, the camaraderie with teammates, and the guidance from coaches played an equally crucial role.

"All of my coaches played an intricate part in my development and success during my time on the hill. Coach V, my strength coach, served as both a coach and





WKU prepared me for the ups and downs of life. It prepared me for ways to overcome adversity, and it also taught me to always strive for excellence in everything I do.



a mentor. My position coaches throughout the years, including Coach Mizell, played a huge role in not only my skill development but grooming me as a man."

The preparation at WKU went beyond the physical. Corley learned valuable life lessons, understanding the importance of perseverance and resilience.

"WKU prepared me for the ups and downs of life. It prepared me for ways to overcome adversity, and it also taught me to always strive for excellence in everything I do."

This mindset was critical as he transitioned from college football to the professional league, which had steeper challenges and much fiercer competition. Draft day was a whirlwind of emotions, but Corley woke up with a sense of calm, made evident by his faith.

"Day two of [the] draft, I woke up excited for what I felt lay ahead. I didn't wake up nervous or anxious. I believe God has a plan for our lives, and I trust in that plan."

Surrounded by family and friends, Corley soaked in the positive vibes, enjoying music and the company of



loved ones. When the call finally came, it was a dream realized.

"Getting the call later that evening, I couldn't have been more ecstatic and happy with the outcome, and I was also thrilled with where I ended up."

The transition from draft day to rookie mini-camp was quick. Corley barely had time to savor the moment before diving into professional training.

"It was a quick turnaround from draft day to rookie mini-camp. So, that was close to a week later, and then I had about a week off, where I spent that time back in Louisville just perfecting my craft with the best trainer in the world, Chris Vaughn, at Aspirations Fitness."

The schedule was grueling, but Corley embraced it with the same passion and dedication that had brought him this far. Corley's life has been full of activity, from mini-camps to rookie premieres in Los Angeles. "My experience from the draft to now has been super exciting, and my schedule has been super full. From the rookie minicamp to going out to LA for rookie premier, it's been a whirlwind, but I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunities and the rooms I have found myself in over the last few weeks!"

Amidst the chaos, Corley remains grounded, fueled by the support of those who believe in him. A conversation with Aaron Rodgers was an unexpected but thrilling development in Corley's journey.

"That came about via texting and being on the phone with Aaron. He offered, and who wouldn't want to be roommates with or live close to Aaron Rodgers," Corley shared, a hint of excitement in his tone. "I've been having a business manager and a few others do some house hunting of my own, though, so we will see how it all shakes out!"

The prospect of living close to an NFL legend added another layer of excitement to his developing career. Malachi Corley's future is bright. While his immediate focus is on making an impact in the NFL, his heart remains tied to WKU and the community that shaped him.

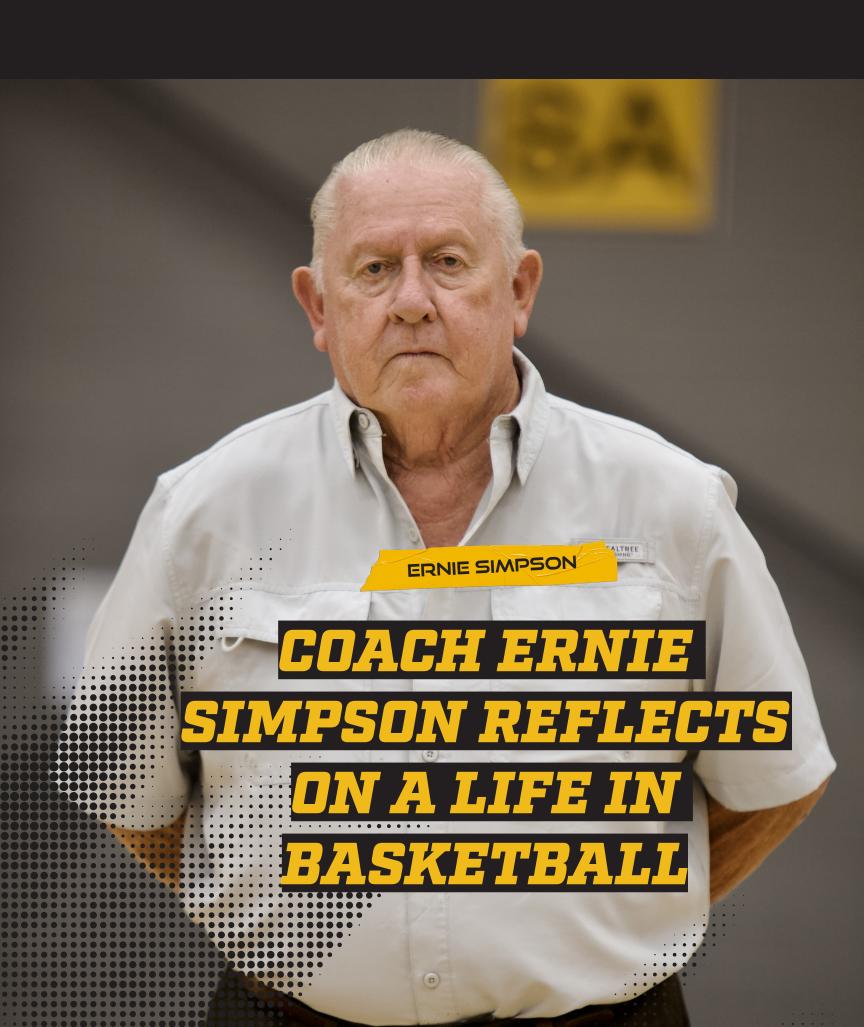
"Western is always a place that will be something like home for me. Schedule permitting, I'd love to come back and be involved as much as I can. I love Western and the city of Bowling Green, and my mother and friends still live in Kentucky, so I'll definitely be back around and involved!"

As Corley embarks on this new chapter, his story inspires many. It's a tale of hard work, faith, and the power of dreams. While his journey is far from over, the legacy he's already building is a testament to his character and dedication.

"Thank you guys so much, and shout out to you guys for allowing me to speak on some of the most exciting times of my life and giving me a platform. Best of luck!"

With these words, Malachi Corley steps confidently into his future, ready to take on the challenges and triumphs. **GN** 





## Legendary coach's induction into Kentucky High School Basketball Hall of Fame honors his remarkable career

By Richard J. Klin // Photography by Amanda Guy

#### **OACH ERNIE SIMPSON** is

one of the 2024 inductees into the Kentucky High School Basketball Hall of Fame. Simpson was raised in Shelby County and — unsurprisingly played high school basketball. He then went on to contribute his playing skills at Kentucky Wesleyan College.

"After being involved with basketball all my life, my next step was coaching. That's where I went," Simpson related matter-of-factly.

He began his coaching career as an assistant boys basketball coach at Henry County High School. He became the head coach at the now-defunct Lincoln School, a school for gifted, underprivileged children, and then helmed Morganfield's Union County High School's team for seven years.

In 1977, Simpson worked as an assistant coach at the University of Evansville in Indiana. Sent by the head coach on a recruiting mission, he missed the team's next game and their airplane flight on Dec. 13 — a flight that made tragic history when it crashed, killing 14 team members, friends of the team, the coach, and the plane crew, for a horrifying total of 29 fatalities.

He then began a long tenure as the boys basketball head coach for the Bowling Green High School Purples, which ended with his retirement in 2001.

His induction into the hall of fame requires no explanation. The stats tell the story: Ernie Simpson had 562 career wins, with victories in over 70% of his teams' games. He shepherded three teams to the high school state tournament — Union County, Ashland, and Bowling Green (twice). Simpson was the Courier-Journal Coach of the Year for the 1998–99 season, in which the Bowling Green Purples ended the season with a record of 27-0. At the time of his retire-



I was just myself. I was raised on a family farm with [my] three brothers. We all believed in doing our part. My parents were great disciplinarians who had us [attend] school, do well, and treat everybody fairly.

ment, he was Kentucky's winningest active high school basketball coach. Today, he ranks as the 17th all-time winningest high school coach.

ERNIE SIMPSON

His legacy of 29 years of head coaching was far-reaching and active — the ripple effect of players under his wing going out to all corners of the basketball world. Simpson coached Dwane Casey, the former Detroit Pistons head coach, who will be inducted into the hall of fame this year. In 2001, the Kentucky Mr. Basketball designation — an honor bestowed upon the state's best high school player - went to Josh Carrier of the Simpson-led Purples. Simpson also coached Kevin Willard, the head coach of men's basketball at the University of Maryland. Four of his players played at the University of Kentucky, and he coached over 25 players who were

recipients of athletic scholarships. His former players have coached for a wide array of teams. And it is also a family legacy as well. All three of his sons shared a passion for the sport, and all three played college basketball — Cannon played at Georgetown College, Matthew played at Transylvania University in Lexington, and his youngest son, Casey, is now a coach at Campbellsville University.

The demands of coaching are extensive and far-ranging — the essence of multitasking. Simpson is modest and concise when it comes time to codify any sort of guiding principle or rubric.

"I was just myself. I was raised on a family farm with [my] three brothers. We all believed in doing our part. My parents were great disciplinarians who had us [attend] school, do well, and treat everybody fairly. So that's where I got most of it from."

He could have continued as a coach, but after over 30 years of coaching and teaching, he asserted, "Sometimes you just know when it's time. I could have coached a little bit longer, but this really worked out for the best."

He still follows the basketball world closely, and his life as a retiree is the essence of rural. Simpson lives on a 40-acre family farm.

"[I've] got a few cows — I talk to them every now and again! It's relaxing! After coaching all those years ... those cows they don't talk back!"

It seems a very fitting and well-deserved retirement as Ernie Simpson formally enters the annals of the hall of fame, joining a very select group of individuals who have, over time, made immense contributions. **GN** 



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(270) 781-4046 www.legionpost23.com

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