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exchange

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Stacy Johnson

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From Sirens to Service

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Running toward danger

Celebrating our local heroes

SHE FLASHES her lights and pushes the gas pedal a little harder. The walkie-talkie is too quiet, so she spins the dial and makes her bulletproof vest a little more comfortable. She worked hard to wear that badge. She joined the force to give people comfort and safety — a luxury her mother didn't have. A few people may think she joined law enforcement for pride, power, or influence, but the truth is that she just wants to help people.

He puts on a yellow helmet — the real one — not the play one he wore when he was younger. Decades ago, he watched his dad go to work every morning to go save the day. Sure, some of the days were not as exhilarating, like climbing a tree to get a cat home. But other days were scary. He

thought of his dad every time he ran into a burning house.

And she shops at Bath & Body Works for the new deals they're offering. Her favorite lotion scent is "Into The Night." She is sometimes self-conscious about her cracked, itching hands. When she worked long 16-hour days during the COVID-19 pandemic, she had to wash her hands triple what she used to... because she had to save triple the lives she used to. Only a hero like her could help give a family several more years with their loved ones.

Our first responders are heroes. And this issue of Good News shines a light on the life, happiness, and joy they help us keep. When we scream for help, they run toward danger. We thank you, now and forever. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Love, luck, and *lasting happiness*



A blind date and a military mishap shaped Bill Trimble's good life.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

Bill and Doris Trimble shared their story on July 16, 2024.



THE OFFICE'S furniture and decor matched his job description — drab and mundane. When Warren Bill Trimble hitchhiked from Sheffield, Alabama, to the Birmingham enlistment office in 1946, hours on end in a creaky, wooden desk chair was not what he imagined. The Smith Corona Sterling typewriter, also drab in its military khaki and green, clacked as he prepared outgoing letters, memos, and reports. The zip and ding of the carriage return outpaced the hour hand on the wall clock by a long shot. Could it get any worse?

It could.

His sergeant had a date that evening, but only if there was a date for her friend.

“I don't really go on blind dates,” replied Trimble to his invitation to join them.

“Well, tonight you do,” came the order.

The next morning, everything was brighter, even his desk job at Chamblee Naval Air Station in Atlanta. A bright, beautiful young woman whose “kiss could curl your hair” stole his heart.

“That girl could really kiss,” Bill said of his blind date, Doris.



Bill Trimble

More dates followed, and when Doris commented that she could go for a man who smoked a pipe and wore Men-men Skin Bracer, Bill couldn't get to the PX fast enough.

Stepping off the trolley for their date the following evening, an aroma of a cool menthol mixed with sweet, toasted tobacco met her before her date was in sight. True to her word, she could indeed go for a man like that. They married seven months later.

"I still have the pipe and some Skin Bracer," Bill shared, his voice conveying the wink of his eye.

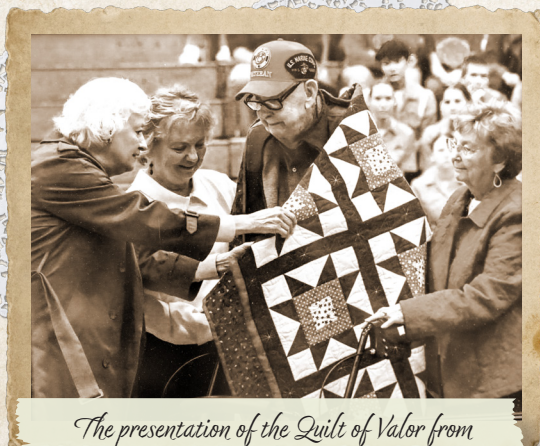
He hated his first assignment, but its impact on the trajectory of his life is undeniable.

"When I took a test in boot camp, I could type about 40 words a minute. That separated me from the other guys," he said. "So when boot camp was over, they needed a clerk typist in Atlanta, so one other guy [who could type] was pulled out and went to North Carolina, I went to Atlanta, and the rest of them went to Germany."

As soon as possible, Bill traded his typewriter for the tools of an aircraft mechanic.

"I didn't want to be a clerk typist. I hated that job, and I kept aggravating the sergeant to get me out on the line and let me work on planes rather than work on a typewriter. It took me a while to get that done, but they finally transferred me out on the line," Bill explained.

When Bill transferred to Naval Air Station Glenview, the general he served under commanded all squadrons from the East Coast to the Mississippi River. Those squadrons routinely traded locations with the ones from the West Coast for training purposes. During one of those West Coast maneuvers, things were far from mundane for Bill.



The presentation of the Quilt of Valor from the Lincoln County Piecemakers Quilt Guild

PHOTO CREDIT PAUL HENRY

En route to El Toro, California, their plane — heavily loaded with equipment, supplies, and fuel — steadily climbed to altitude. But something was noticeably wrong. The deep, pulsating rumble of the engines Bill always felt was absent, and the thunderous roar was swiftly decreasing. It was soon apparent that one engine died, and then the other engine failed.

"We're coming in with a dead stick," the pilot reported, according to Bill.

The situation warranted a forced landing.

While the pilot searched for a clear landing, mentally calculating the aircraft's glide ratio, Bill went to work in the aircraft's engine compartment, quickly assessing the situation while the pilot circled to land. Suddenly, the engines roared back to life, and the plane landed under full power. Bad fuel was the culprit; Bill was the coolhead.

The same calm, determined spirit followed the couple, their newborn son, Jeff, and Bill's mother as they left Chicago in a 1947 Chevrolet with 4 inches of snow on the ground after his discharge in 1950.

Bill reflected in amazement, "We left at 8:00 that evening and drove all night and never hit a dry piece of pavement from north of Chicago to Sheffield [Alabama]. We drove in snow, onto ice, and then into rain. I can't imagine how the good Lord got us through that."

But they were driving into the rest of their life. Nothing could delay that.

Their family grew again with the addition of their daughter, Lisa. Bill took a job with South Central Bell, and their family later moved to Fayetteville in 1965. They still live in the same home.

Today, the Trimbles banter is sweet and kind, sprinkled with patience and contentment. Bill is still in awe of his wife.

He said, "I don't understand how a woman with her abilities got hooked up with a dummy head like me. She was the top person in her class; she's a brilliant person."

"No, I'm not. I'm just me," Doris countered.

"Yeah, you are, baby," Bill reiterated. "She's still beautiful, just hanging in there."

She was fond of military life but is just as happy with life today.





Doris and Bill - August 2024

"I enjoy life, and I enjoy people," she shared. "Life is good. We enjoy our life."

Bill agreed. "We've had a good life — 77 years in October."

He'll soon be 97 years old and is likely the oldest living veteran in Lincoln County. Bill's mind is clear, and his words are thoughtful and endearing. Doris backs him up, and the two are obviously completing one another.

"We're just sitting here watching the cars go by," Bill said, but without any trace of bitterness or regret.

While it may seem mundane to some, it's another day in a good life for the Trimbles. **GN**

On Sept. 7, 2024, Bill's world was forever dimmed by the loss of his brightest light, Doris. For nearly 77 years, she brought color to the drab and mundane parts of his life, even making sitting and watching the cars go by a gentle, beautiful way to pass the time. The final chapter of the Trimbles' good life together closes, leaving only one watching the cars go by as Bill awaits the day he's reunited with Doris, his world's brightest light.

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Amy Fitch knows from experience the importance of location.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

"9 11, WHAT'S your emergency?" We expect to hear it when we dial those three numbers in a crisis. All that's on our minds is getting the quickest help possible. Television and movies are likely all that's informed our understanding of how the process works. We see dispatchers in headsets huddled over keyboards and hear the clicking and clacking as they enter information to send the help we need. We see them run locations and trace calls to pinpoint a caller's location.

But Amy Fitch, assistant director of the Fayetteville-Lincoln County Emergency Communications office, knows the reality.

With 22 years of experience in 911 services, she knows firsthand how the landscape of emergency response has evolved, particularly in the realm of technology. But, amid these advancements, one persistent misconception remains: the belief that dispatchers always know the caller's location.

When Fitch first joined the dispatch team, the technology was basic. Calls came primarily from landlines, and dispatchers relied on the information provided by callers to determine their location. The introduction of Enhanced 911 systems improved this process by automatically displaying a caller's phone number and general location, but it only eliminated some of the challenges. She emphasized that callers need to always know and report their location.

"We don't always know where you are," she explained. "Yes, technology has advanced, but there's still times we may not know."

Amy Fitch

As technology advances, so do the challenges associated with it. Fitch prioritizes ensuring the office has the best resources for the staff and the community.

The evolution of 911 services brings many lifesaving advancements, including the transition to Next Generation 911 systems, which allow for text messages, among other things. These tools enhance communication and provide dispatchers with more information, but they also require a shift in how people engage with emergency services.

"We get a lot of 911 hang-ups, text-to-911 [messages], and automated crash reports from various apps that we have to verify. We also get calls from people even in different states about social media for a welfare check or harassment — things like that," Fitch said.

Her daily responsibilities include managing staffing, overseeing training, and ensuring operational efficiency.

"If we're short-staffed that morning, I will work at a console to help when

needed. On other days, I'll do my everyday operational work, such as scheduling, employee time for payroll, ordering supplies, making sure training is up to date, and any other issues that we may have."

Today, dispatchers must be technologically savvy, often managing multiple screens and systems simultaneously. They're not just relaying calls; they are integral to the emergency response process, acting as the vital link between callers and first responders. This shift has made the job more demanding, requiring dispatchers to adapt quickly to new technologies and protocols.

Like most people employed in community service roles, it's a heart for helping people that connects Fitch to her work. It's also one part of a dispatcher's mindset. But the job isn't for everyone, even if helping others motivates them.

She said, "It takes a special kind of person to want to do this job and to be able to stick with it long-term as a career."

The emotional toll of the job is significant. As the first point of contact

in emergencies, some refer to dispatchers as "invisible first responders." This role can lead to stress and burnout, especially when dealing with traumatic situations. Some calls impact the team's overall mental health if not properly managed. Thankfully, the department prioritizes addressing and supporting this. The key, Fitch said, is communication and balance.

"We're a small department, so we all try to look after one another."

Fitch balances the demands of the job with family life. Her family anchors her life. Her husband, Patrick; children, Makinley (Garrett), Briley (Joe), and Kelby (Carlie); and her 7-month-old grandson, Chase, bring her great joy.

"Being 'Mimi' is the best title I hold," she shared.

Despite the evolution of 911 dispatch and persistent misconceptions, Fitch remains dedicated to connecting with those in need and providing the best possible service. Because emergencies strike at any moment, clerk communication and understanding are of the utmost importance. For Fitch, every call is an opportunity to make a difference.

The evolution of technology in 911 dispatch has brought about significant improvements, but the heart of the service remains the same: a commitment to helping others in their most desperate moments. Each call that comes through Fitch's center is a chance to make a real difference in someone's life. When you know your location when you call, you empower Fitch and her team to dispatch the help you need most efficiently. Remember, your awareness and cooperation can be the key to saving lives. So, next time you dial 911, be prepared to provide your location — it's a small detail that can make a world of difference. **GN**



▲ Amy Fitch, Candy Webb, and Lisa McGar

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IT WAS THERE ALL ALONG.



Navy Capt. Scott Whitworth sees his hometown with new eyes.

By Tina Neeley // Photos submitted by Scott Whitworth

IT'S A time of transition, celebration, and, for many, uncertainty. They hang their caps and gowns in the back of their closets, their tassels on their rearview mirror, and their hopes and dreams on their next forward steps. For many graduates, an unchaperoned week at the beach with friends creates memories and writes the last lines of a chapter in their lives in the sand. Reality waits at home with local jobs or college plans that may take them away from their small-town roots. Some will return, making Lincoln

County their home; others will return for holidays and special occasions.

Scott Whitworth understood the options.

"I was tired of going to school. Growing up, I heard a lot of stories about Adm. Frank Kelso, and you could just tell that the people of Fayetteville were so proud of him. I did a lot of research about the U.S. Navy and decided that I wanted to join as soon as I graduated [from] Lincoln County High School. One week after graduation in 1991, I left for boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois," Whitworth shared.



▲ Whitworth in full dress uniform as a commander. He was a guest speaker at a retirement ceremony in Jacksonville, FL. "It has been my absolute honor to serve with the best sons and daughters this nation has provided in defending this nation and serving in the world's most powerful and respected Navy for 33 years."



Whitworth began as an aviation mechanic, enjoyed three years as a member of the Naval Flight Demonstration Team “Blue Angels,” and was an aircraft maintenance instructor before returning to the classroom. He obtained degrees from Troy State University, the Military College of South Carolina (“The Citadel”), and the Naval Postgraduate School. Throughout his 32-year career, Whitworth advanced from his earliest position to his recent commission as captain.

His service includes time aboard some of the Navy’s most remarkable vessels, which include Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigates, and Cyclone-class patrol ships, including:

- USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN69)
- USS George Washington (CVN73)
- USS Robert G. Bradley
- USS KLAKRING (FFG42)
- USS Squall (PC)
- USS Hurricane (PC)
- USS Whirlwind (PC)
- USS Typhoon (PC)
- USS Chinook (PC)
- USS Sioux City (LCS11)



▲ Maj. Gen. Winston P. Brooks (also from Fayetteville) and Whitworth when he toured USS Sioux City (LCS 11) in Plymouth, England. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to host a general in the United States Army that is from Fayetteville onboard a United States warship commanded by a naval officer from Fayetteville. This occurred in September 2022.

He and the crews maintained the Iraq “no-fly zone,” countered illicit drug trafficking, conducted hurricane relief assistance, combatted pirate threats against container ships in the Red Sea, and kept Iranian ships at bay if they tried to attack or disrupt shipping in the Middle East. Whitworth also served during the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan.

His service includes nearly two years as director of integration, verification, and testing of integrated air and missile defense in Stuttgart, Germany, the U.S. European Command headquarters.

“Although we only got 22 months in Germany, the family and I were able to travel to 17 different countries and enjoy everything Europe has to offer. There are some beautiful countries out there, and I encourage you to see and visit as many as you can, but in my opinion, the best country in the world remains the United States of America. We may have our faults, and we may have our issues, but I truly believe anyone can make themselves whatever they want to be in this great country; it is the land of opportunity.”

Not long after, Whitworth deployed aboard the USS Sioux City and commanded the first trans-Atlantic passage for this type of ship.

Recently promoted to captain, he expects to command a larger ship or a squadron of ships in his next assignment.

“I am humbled that the U.S. Navy has offered me these opportunities. I love this country, and the United States Navy has done more for me than I could ever do for it.”

Growing up in Fayetteville provided a solid start in life and an understanding of the value of family.

“I feel pretty lucky to have been raised in Fayetteville. Growing up, and even when I return to visit, I’m always impressed that people always ask about my family and share with me what they mean to them. You just don’t see that in this day and age. As I’ve gotten older and more of my older family members have started to pass away, it makes me realize how much I value my remaining family members.”

Whitworth’s idea of a hero is no longer that of the outstanding athletes he admired as a child and young adult.



“To me, a hero is someone willing to sacrifice their life to protect those who cannot defend themselves, such as military personnel, police officers, or firefighters. A hero also embodies the hardworking parent who tirelessly provides for their children, doing whatever it takes to ensure their well-being. Ultimately, a hero is someone who believes in the value of our nation as a beacon of hope and is ready to fight for and defend it at all costs.”

The military, he said, is an excellent option for young people uncertain about their future choices.

“If they feel lost, stuck in a small town, or keep getting distracted and can’t reach their goals, they should consider joining the military. The military creates stability and teaches discipline. Although it may not pay that much, it can provide a secure life, and if you do it right, you can secure a life for your family as well.”

Sometimes, you have to leave home to see what was there all along with new eyes.

“Fayetteville truly is a special place — a place where people hold doors for one another, where saying goodbye may take longer than the actual visit, where you cannot walk 10 feet in town without bumping into someone you know, where people pull over on the side of the road when a funeral is taking place to show respect for the memory of someone, and where a handshake and your word are often good enough. I didn’t realize it then, but [that’s] not how the rest of the world operates. It’s sad, and why I feel lucky to be from a place like Fayetteville.” GN



▲ Whitworth with his late mother, Rebecca “Becky” Towry, attending his graduation from Navy Boot Camp in Great Lakes, IL in July 1991.



Ultimately, a hero is someone who believes in the value of our nation as a beacon of hope and is ready to fight for and defend it at all costs.

- Scott Whitworth



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Emergency Response Meets Education

VETERAN PARAMEDIC AND REGISTERED NURSE STACY JOHNSON BRINGS REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE TO THE CLASSROOM.

AS STACY Johnson stands before students in his classes, he sees the earliest sparks of a desire to find their place among those who help us when we're not able to help ourselves. As future emergency medical technicians (EMTs), first responders, and health care workers, they will come when someone frantically dials 911, be at our hospital bedsides when we need care, or assist in our doctor's offices. They will attend to us onboard emergency helicopter transportation, draw our labs, and oversee imaging orders. Some will become our physicians, physicians' assistants, and nurse practitioners.

Looking at his students, Johnson doesn't just see our future; he sees his past.

In 1985, Johnson and his classmates walked into their unknown futures from the Lincoln County High School (LCHS) halls in their caps



and gowns. His next chapter included Middle Tennessee State University classes and another graduation ceremony. This time, he earned his bachelor's degree in animal science/ag education with minors in secondary education and general science. He circled back home to LCHS in 1989,

▲ Johnson preparing for a new day of medical classes



taking his seat at the front of the class teaching ag science. Disappointingly, a decrease in the student load left him facing the reality of the financial stability of a part-time teaching position. Staying wasn't an option. It was time to leave home again.

"You're blessed with a skill. Use that skill to bless someone else, and then you are a hero."

- Stacy Johnson

OUR HEROES



“Fortunately, my interest in pre-hospital emergency medicine had been sparked during my interim at LCHS, and I chose to take night classes and obtain my EMT licensure. I began working on ground ambulances in my time off from school. As fate would have it, the ambulance service I was working for was putting on an extra shift and needed full-time employees, so that’s just being at the right time at the right place,” Johnson shared.

He took the job on the extra shift and soon enrolled in paramedic school, graduating in 1993. While working in the ground emergency medical ser-

vices (EMS), he returned to teaching, this time as an adjunct instructor in the EMS program at Motlow State Community College, where he later became the paramedic program director.

From teaching and ground EMS service, Johnson’s career took an upward turn in 1999 when he accepted a position as a flight paramedic for Huntsville MedFlight. He flew with the company for 20 years.

Johnson’s work attending patients on ground and air ambulance services prepared him for more than he could see.

Even more experience followed when Johnson decided to go to nurs-

ing school. He graduated as a registered nurse (RN) in 2015 and continued to fly with Huntsville MedFlight, this time as an RN/paramedic. He added time as an RN/paramedic in Huntsville Hospital and Lincoln Medical Center’s emergency rooms.

Johnson holds degrees from the University of Alabama Huntsville School of Primary Medical Care (paramedic) and Calhoun Community College (Associate of Applied Science in nursing and emergency medical services).

Each new career experience brought him one step closer to full circle.

“In 2023, the job opened at LCHS to work in the health sciences part of the CTE (career and technical education) department. I was fortunate enough to be hired back at LCHS to teach EMT, first responder, and medical therapeutics. I’m also going to be a part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes here at LCHS. You might say, I’m right back where it all began — with my Falcon family.”

While the first responder and EMT courses are new to the LCHS CTE program, Johnson’s familiarity with the material is not. As an experienced instructor and EMS professional, he brings a firsthand perspective to emergency response.

He said, “I’m able to place reality into the scenarios and practice of medicine. It’s one thing to read a book, watch a video, and memorize check-offs, but education moves to another level when the instructor has real-life experiences to weave into the instruction. The same can be said of all the CTE instructors here at LCHS.”

He continued, “Having worked in a ground ambulance, on a flying ambulance, in a critical access ER, and in a Level 1 ER has given me the opportunity to see patient care from all the aspects that an emergency services provider will experience. If one of those components had not been experienced, then my education would have been lacking. Each job is just a part of the big picture, and working in them helps the provider understand what it takes to help see our patients have the best chance at survival.”

The new program and Johnson’s instruction follow state standards from the Department of Education and the Department of EMS. This program benefits students and the local medical field.

“The new first responder and EMT courses are a vision come true for the Lincoln County Department of Education and LCHS. Our goal is to produce a job-ready member of society, and successful completion of either of the courses will do just that for the student learner,” Johnson explained. “We are working closely with Motlow State and Lincoln Medical Center to produce a licensed medical professional upon graduation. The medical field has been hit hard the last few years, and we hope to do our part to help provide entry-level medical professionals into the community.”

Johnson sees the program’s future as extremely bright, with expectations of steady growth. While growth is a challenge, Johnson is confident that everyone involved will rise to meet it, ensuring its positive impact on the students and community it serves for many years to come.

“To me, a hero is not who you are; it’s what you are.”
- Stacy Johnson

His view on the program’s future is as bright as the spark in his students’ eyes. As the spark of desire grows to a flame of reality, he sees the power of believing you can do anything you want. He sees our future heroes.

“To me, a hero is not who you are; it’s what you are. You’re blessed with a skill. Use that skill to bless someone else, and then you are a hero.”

Johnson may not see it, but he’s our hero, too. GN





RICHARD WRIGHT

From Sirens To Service

RICHARD WRIGHT'S LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO COMPASSION AND CARE DEFINES HIS EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES CAREER.

IN THE two-room schoolhouse in Howell, many things distracted students on an average day. Thoughts of recess, the sights of changing seasons, note-passing, and sports rivalries interrupted lessons and note-taking. But the wailing siren of the ambulances operated by the local funeral home prompted one student to rush to the window repeatedly. Seeing it was not a passing interest, his teacher made it easier on them both by moving him near the window. Now, his heart might rush at the sound of the siren, but his feet would not.

Rushing to aid those needing emergency services fascinated Richard Wright from a young age. It's a fascination that ignited a career marked by challenges, growth, and a commitment to the community.

Wright said, "It's just something that I've always been interested in, and when I was old enough, I joined the civil defense rescue squad. We did search and rescue, and when the ambulance service was established in

'72, we used to go out and assist them in different kinds of automobile accidents. I had a group of guys that took me in, and I was just in awe. And after that, I just knew it was the path I was going to take.”

So, upon completing high school, he went to emergency medical technician (EMT) school, but when he graduated, there were no openings in Lincoln County’s emergency medical services (EMS). He worked for three months as an orderly at Lincoln County Hospital until a position opened up in EMS in 1976. Wright, who advanced next to shift captain, became an advanced EMT, continuing his employment there for the next 30 years before assuming his current position as director of the hospital-based EMS.

“I’ve been here for 49 years — I’ll have 50 when I retire, which is less than a year away. I’ve always wanted to try to provide the highest level of care for all the citizens of Lincoln County and treat everybody with respect, kindness, sympathy, and empathy — just like the old saying, ‘No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care,’” stated Wright.

Wright continuously prioritizes care and compassion despite the challenges of staffing shortages, increased call volumes, and the emotional toll the job takes on those in the profession. In addition, service employees who work 24-hour shifts sacrifice time with their families, missing countless holidays and special events. Wright said the shift crews now work 24 hours on and 72 hours off, which provides improved work-life balance.

“Our people love it,” Wright said.

Staffing shortages are a nationwide problem, but Wright and his staff work closely with local schools and colleges that offer emergency services courses. The aim is to encour-

age those interested in the profession and improve hire rates.

“There [are] not as many people going into the medical field in general, but the public schools have done a good job teaching the program, and it’s moving people toward EMS again. Currently, we’re fully staffed. We’ve got a lot of young people now in our program,” informed Wright. “It takes a load off my mind when I go home at night knowing I’ve got a fully staffed

crew. And we work with the other counties around us like Giles, Marshall, Moore, and Bedford because we depend on each other for mutual aid.”

Due to the increased call volume, being fully staffed is more necessary than ever. Presently, six trucks cover the Lincoln County area: three advanced life support ambulances in service 24/7, a basic life support ambulance operating 12 hours a day, and two reserve trucks. Additionally, two



▲ Wright standing in front of Howell Community Center, where he went to grade school

“I’ve always wanted to try to provide the highest level of care for all the citizens of Lincoln County and treat everybody with respect, kindness, sympathy, and empathy.”

- Richard Wright

OUR HEROES



Wright was moved to the windows behind him by his teachers because he always loved to see where the sirens were coming from first. His spark of interest in EMS started here.



quick response vehicles enable administrative staff to respond and offer assistance when needed.

While ensuring adequate staffing is crucial for operational efficiency, it's equally important to address the emotional challenges that come with the territory.

There's no denying the emotional toll of the work. Dealing with the raw emotions of family members during emergency calls and the impact of responding to traumatic incidents is one of the hardest parts of the job.

"Anytime we have a bad call, we have professional counseling available. These are all trained EMS providers who have probably been through what they've been through, and they'll sit down and talk to them. And we also include our 911 dispatchers in our debriefing."

It all comes back to treating patients with the best of care and a kindness of heart.

"You need to always have that care aspect in there, too. It takes a special person to be able to do it. I work with some phenomenal individuals. They get it, and they don't miss anything on either side. The kindness comes through."

Wright heads up a team of people willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of others, fulfilling his definition of heroes. They dedicate their lives to serving and saving ours. We believe they'll come when we call, and they do.

"I wouldn't mind for any of these people to come to my house or take care of me or my family. And that's the goal I set out when I took over this directorship, to have a crew of men and women that I wouldn't mind picking up any of my family anytime, and we are there," expressed Wright.

And to the future heroes distracted from their schoolwork when the sirens wail, we know you'll come when we call. GN



Caring For Those You Care About

MANDY CURRIER JUST WANTS TO HELP PEOPLE.

SHE SLIPPED into her car, her shoulders and her spirits slumping from the weight of the shift that just ended. In no hurry, she turned the ignition, not to back out but to roll down her window, creating an escape route for her thoughts. She reviewed the most stressful cases one by one, turning them over as if on paper, inspecting every line for hints. What went right? What went wrong? How could it be different next time? As

she finally left the parking lot, she sifted through what she found, tossing out what she couldn't change, making a mental note of what she could. She would write it down later and review it with the team the next time they were together.

It's a glimpse into the life of Mandy Currier, a dedicated registered nurse at Lincoln Medical Center's emergency room (ER). However, her journey to this moment began long before she ever set foot in the ER.

While in nursing school, Currier cared for patients as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at Lincoln Care Center and Donalson Care Center. She then went on to work as a floor nurse at Donalson upon obtaining her license as a registered nurse. Currier knew that if she worked as a CNA first, she'd take that experience into her future nursing career.

"I feel like to be a good nurse, a leader, and a role model for new nurses, you need to start from the bottom and build your way up. CNAs are very hardworking members of your team," Currier shared.

As a nurse, she worked at both Lincoln and Donalson care centers. Currier taught education-

OUR HEROES



al and CNA classes at Donalson, worked in the ER at the old hospital, and then returned to skilled care. But when the new hospital opened, she started in the ER, finding that her previous experience at the old hospital and in skilled care and home health prepared her for the ever-changing cases in the ER.

Currier said, "It's something different every day. You don't know if it's going to be a stumped toe or a major medical emergency, so you've always

got to be quick with your thinking and critical skills. It's just very fast-paced."

In a small-town community, the odds are great that you might know the patient or their family. That familiarity makes dealing with critical care situations even more difficult.

"You have to separate yourself from that at the time and then go back and go over things and decompress after the fact," she explained. "A lot of times, we decompress as a group after the fact and just review things."

"Nurses are real. We have emotions and feelings. We have bad days, too. Sometimes we need a hug, too."

- Mandy Currier



MANDY
CURRIER

OUR HEROES



▲ Abbie Grace Mashburn, Mandy Currier, and Maggie Paladin

However, on an average day, Currier's work as an ER nurse involves cases that aren't necessarily deemed critical by the strictest medical standards.

"When people talk about emergency nursing, they first and foremost think about saving lives. Yes, we do, but nursing includes so much more," Currier stated. "It includes being a caregiver, a support person, a shoulder to cry on, a hug if needed, education to the community, and a listening ear when all the emotions are running high."

And the ER nurses need some of the same.

"Nurses are real. We have emotions and feelings. We have bad days,

too. Sometimes we need a hug, too," she said.

Currier's greatest desire as a nurse is to help people, and there was never a more challenging time to do that than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She reflected, "COVID was really bad. I wasn't in the ER during COVID; I worked in ICU (intensive care unit). Already, that was a really bad time for nursing because there was not much you could do to help people. I told my family that when I signed up — when I wanted to be a nurse — it was because I wanted to help people. And then, just being in that situation, there was not much we could do. It was out of our hands. We were doing all the medical stuff

we could do for those patients, but you just couldn't help them. That was probably the most stressful part of my nursing career."

Currier is known to advocate for her patients and educate them about their medications and diagnosis. Even helping them understand what the doctor tells them is important to her. Still, the patient and the patient's family are dealing with pain, confusion, and a suitcase full of emotions. It's often the nurses that bear the brunt of their anxiety.

"Being a nurse is hard. We're human. We make mistakes, but just know that I will do everything in my power to help you in a time of need. Every time I go to work, I am so thankful that I'm

able to help and give back to our community. I just hope I can lighten someone's load or brighten their day."

Behind most emergency response workers is a family sacrificing the presence of their loved ones on holidays and special occasions.

Currier said, "My family is very important to me. I'm grateful for my husband, Shawn, who listens to and supports me. I'm proud of my girls, Sara and Camryn. They understand that, as a nurse, the ER doesn't close, so we have to be there. I do miss out on things from time to time."

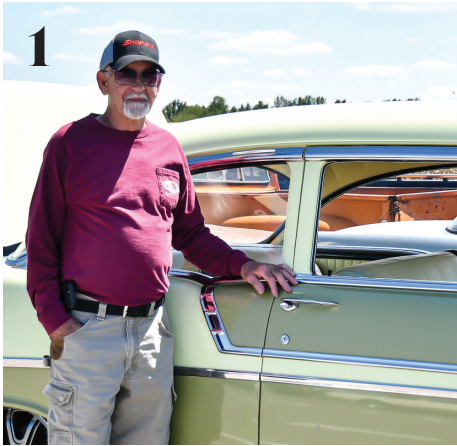
As one shift gives way to the next, Currier knows that the weight of the daily challenges is balanced by the difference she makes and the lives she touches. She knows that each day will bring new challenges, new patients, and new opportunities to make a difference. She knows she just wants to help people. GN

"Being a nurse is hard. We're human. We make mistakes, but just know that I will do everything in my power to help you in a time of need."

- Mandy Currier



Pleasant Hill Baptist Church Annual Car Show - Sept. 7



Photos submitted by Velva Walker

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Flintville hosted its annual car show on Sept. 7. People lined the parking lot to see the cars and share a meal together.



1. Randy Norman and a 1956 Chevy Bel Air 2. Classic cars and trucks on display 3. Tim Mitchell and a 1966 Plymouth Satellite 4. Classic trucks 5. Jeff Walker and a 1972 Chevy Nova 6. Tractors on display

Hayden's Hope Craft Fair - Sept. 8



Photos submitted by Velva Walker

Hayden's Hope Craft Fair was Sept. 8. This annual event is held at The Farmhouse at Two Trees and provides both outreach as well as scholarship opportunities to local and regional youth.



1. Maycee Hammons, Carlie Shelton, Baylee Taylor, and Jax Taylor 2. Lily Bernard
3. Avah Bernard 4. Grayson Wilson and Alex Perrin

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Facebook: Fayetteville Lincoln County Senior Center

Kings Mountain Messenger Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

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kingsmountainmessenger@tndar.org
www.tndar.org/~kingsmountain

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