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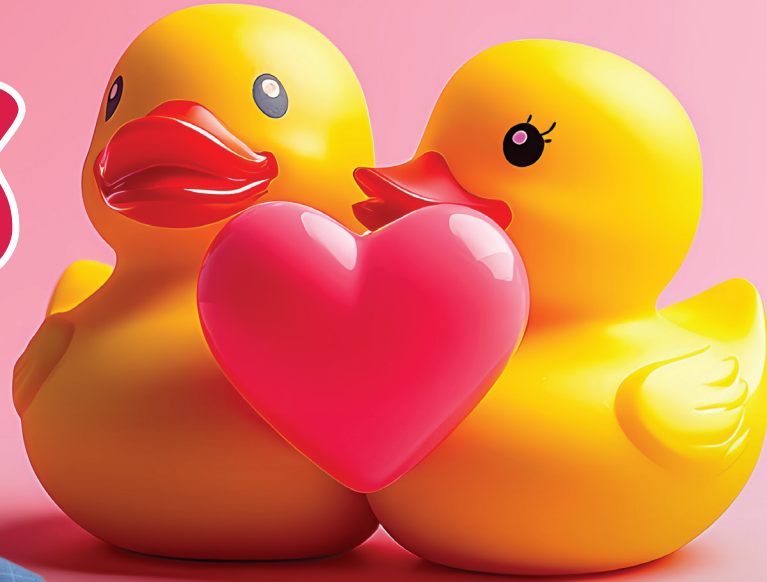
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Love is in the air

Good News celebrates the love that strengthens communities, brightens hearts, and makes life more beautiful.

**Y**OU KNOW that first breath of spring? The way the warmer air gives you goosebumps — the air is soft, full of promise, carrying hints of something new. After months of cold, we step outside, and for the first time, the sun lingers a little longer, warming our hands, our faces, our hearts. Maybe it's still daylight when we get home from work. Love is a lot like that. It's the warmth that lingers after the winter. The breath that fills our lungs when we didn't even realize we were holding them.

Love exists in big acts with large sums of money, sure. But more often, it's in the small acts — the moments we miss that swirl through the air like dandelion seeds, taking root in ways we may never fully see. It's checking in on a friend, even when they insist they're fine. It's the extra few seconds we hold the door open, the way

we buy the person behind us a coffee in the morning. It's letting go of old grudges, choosing forgiveness even when it would be easier to stay cold.

The beautiful thing about love is that it multiplies. The more we put out into the air, the more it spreads, catching in the wind, drifting far beyond where we first let it go. Love is not just an action or money, either — it's a kind of magic that moves everything it touches in the right direction.

This issue of Good News is dedicated to that love. Not just romantic love but the kind that makes communities stronger, hearts lighter, and life a little more beautiful. Love rooted in appreciation, in gratefulness, in the quiet choices we make every day to make the world a little warmer.

So breathe it in. And then send it back out into the air. **GN**

**Wesley Bryant,**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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# Strength

in the face of adversity



Jentry Prock



# A medical nightmare survived creates an inspiration.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**S**HE SPENT nearly five months in the hospital and some 45 days on a ventilator; she had more than a dozen surgeries and a kidney transplant — all before she turned 4. Yet Jentry Prock is a bright and happy child. As she continues to heal, her perseverance, along with her parents', serves as an inspiration to everyone in Fayetteville.

It started with a simple fever, one Tuesday in November when Jentry was about to turn 2. The pediatrician thought it was a little virus, but when she didn't get better, she was sent to the emergency room, where they gave Jentry some fluids and sent her home again. By Friday, the Procks knew something was seriously wrong — their daughter needed further care.

An overnight stay in the Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children was interrupted by a nurse coming in to prepare Jentry to go to Birmingham. The doctors thought she had hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a condition that can occur because of E. coli. They were shocked at the development, Samantha Prock said.

"They pretty much put her in an ambulance and tell us, 'Hey, we got to go to Birmingham. She's got to be at a bigger hospital,'" Samantha said.

Jentry's condition got worse, and that Friday night trip to the hospital turned into a five-month stay in Birmingham. She had HUS, parainfluenza, and the Norovirus, what Prock said was a perfect storm of illness. By that Sunday, Jentry was on dialysis. Her kidneys were not functioning, and soon after, she went on a ventilator as well. Still, things were not getting better — so the hospital performed exploratory surgery to find out what else was wrong. A large portion of her digestive tract had died, and her pancreas was injured as well.

Even the doctors didn't know if she would live or die, Samantha said. Jentry wasn't breathing well, even on a ventilator, and HUS kept the dialysis from getting all the fluid out of her body. Samantha said they even discussed putting her on life support, taking decisions hour by hour. During that time, the Fayetteville community came to their aid. People across the town sent notes,

letters, and Sunday school drawings to the family. Friends and neighbors fed their cows and dogs, and their mail lady made a point to play with them when she could. The community even held a benefit at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds.

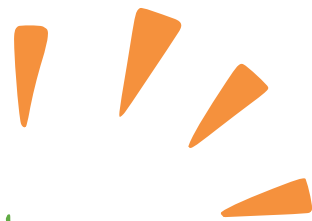
"Our town and our community wrapped their arms around us," Prock said. "They all came out, and they raised money for us to live on and pay medical bills while we were out with our baby. It was in a time that was so bad, we didn't know if she was gonna make it or everything like that; we felt so blessed."

Luckily, Jentry pulled through.



▲ Jentry holds her kidney-shaped stuffy





“She’s my hero; she’s been so brave through all this. She’s an inspiration, I feel like — to me, to everybody — just how, through it all, she just kept going.”

—Samantha Prock



“That didn’t have to happen. She pulled out of it,” Samantha said. “During that time, she had surgery every other day for them to stitch up and close up her stomach, so we’re probably looking at about 10 or 15 surgeries during that time.”

In March, the Procks came home from the hospital. Jentry was stable, but her kidneys still weren’t functioning — she was going to need a transplant. Besides that, she had to relearn quite a few things after her time in the hospital, and the Procks had to find out if there was any developmental damage as well. Once again, Samantha said they were blessed.

“We learned to walk, drink, and eat — she had to learn how to use her stomach again,” Samantha said. “She went back to being normal even though the doctors were totally concerned about that.”

While going through the preparatory surgeries and waiting for a kidney match, Jentry had a very strict life. She couldn’t drink more than 11 ounces of water a day; she couldn’t eat chocolate, cheese, or potatoes; and she couldn’t play outside in the heat for long or go swimming. Even five M&Ms could throw off her labs.

“Something as silly as vacation Bible school, I would love for her to go or go over to a little friend’s house or us go over to eat at another person’s house. I couldn’t let her go because she

had such a strict diet,” Samantha said. “Her body had no way of filtering out all the stuff.”

Rain or shine or even through a snowstorm, the family had to drive two hours to the hospital for dialysis three times a week — until one day, they got the phone call that changed their lives. The hospital had found a match. Most children get adult kidneys, and that’s what happened to Jentry.

“It was a 22-year-old kidney,” Samantha said. “That’s all we know about it. We don’t know where it came from.”

Months later, Jentry only had to visit the hospital once every month, and that time was steadily decreasing. Samantha said she has bounced back well, and while it is evident she hasn’t had the most normal childhood so far, she is smart and has handled all the changes well.

“She’s my hero; she’s been so brave through all this,” Samantha said. “She’s an inspiration, I feel like — to me, to everybody — just how, through it all, she just kept going.”

Samantha has found a purpose through all of this, telling others their story and encouraging them to become organ donors.

“A 22-year-old ... changed my life and changed my daughter’s life forever, giving her back her childhood,” Samantha said. “Something as simple as eating chocolate or drinking some water — they gave that back to her.”

The story of Jentry, Samantha, and Jimmy Prock is one of perseverance and faith, and it is one that everyone can learn from. After all, strength can be found even in the darkest of places, and eventually, things will become bright once again. **GN**







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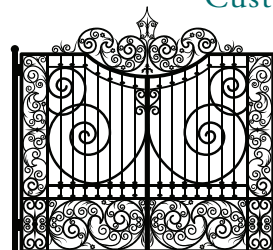
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▲ According to the proper protocol, Boy Scout Troop 489 will be responsible for retiring the cotton flags deposited in the drop box in a flag ceremony.

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# THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE OF RESPECT

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A new flag drop box provides a way  
for the community to retire American flags.

By Sara Hook // Photos submitted by Laurie Caruso of the Elk Valley Times

**W**HAT DOES a flag represent? Is it the values of the group it flies over, the efforts of those who carry it, or the history written under its banner? The United States Stars and Stripes embodies all these things and more. Yet, as the nation endures, individual flags grow tired and frayed. Retiring them with the dignity they deserve can be challenging for many, leaving some unsure of how to show proper respect. Thankfully, Fayetteville now has a solution: a striking red, white, and blue box stands proudly on the courthouse lawn, ready to respectfully retire the community's old and worn United States flags.

Linda Williams of the Lincoln County Warrior Exhibit recognized the need, but it was a community effort that made the drop box possible. The Warrior Exhibit's goal is to honor local veterans, which they do by framing and displaying veteran pictures in their building on Main Avenue North. When Williams saw a flag drop box on Facebook, she realized there was another way to honor veterans' sacrifices.

"I saw a picture on Facebook, and I said, 'Wow, we need to do this,'" Williams said. "I first called Bill Newman and asked him if we could put it on the courthouse lawn, and he said yes. Then, I went to T&W [Machine] to see if they would build it for us," Williams said.



◀ *Mike Davis places a flag inside the box to be properly retired.*

T&W recommended that she go to Franke for a donation of materials, and Franke offered to build and donate a finished box. However, the collaboration did not stop there. Lincoln County Sheriff's Department Maintenance Supervisor Mike Davis and the trustee work crew installed the box and the concrete pad it sits on. Elks Lodge 1792 and its members helped the Warrior Exhibit board pay for the patriotic wrapping done by NDesigns.

Each flag dropped off is handled according to the United States flag code. Boy Scout Troop 489 collects the cotton flags periodically and retires them with the proper ceremony.

"They can burn the cotton flags, but they cannot burn the synthetic flags," Williams said. "The way to do away with a flag in the appropriate way if it's a synthetic flag and can't be burned is you cut it in four pieces, and then technically it is not a flag anymore."

The drop box sits on the east side of the courthouse square, right next to the handicap ramp.

"You can't miss it," Williams said. "It's red, white, and blue."

It began with one person's inspiration, but the whole project wouldn't have been possible without dozens of people chipping in, donating their time, money, and ideas to make something happen. While Williams started the project, she was not the one who would finish it.

"It has taken the whole community and our board to do it. It's not a Linda Williams thing," Williams said. "Without the community, we wouldn't have been able to have done it."

The flag drop box is indeed an indication of the American spirit in Fayetteville and Lincoln County. The community loves its veterans and country and is prepared to show it. GN



▲ Representatives from the Warrior Exhibit Board, Franke, Elks Lodge, Boy Scout Troop 489, Lincoln County Sheriff's Department deputies, Mayor Bill Newman, Mike Davis, Lincoln County Sheriff's Department work crew supervisor, and Chancellor J.B. Cox

*"It has taken the whole community and our board to do it. It's not a Linda Williams thing. Without the community, we wouldn't have been able to have done it."*

-Linda Williams



▲ Deputy Jesse Mills places a flag inside the newly placed flag box.

# THEIR LOVE IS MOUNTAIN HIGH.

Mike and Mary Burton's 29-year journey of devotion and resilience

By Haley Potter  
Photography by Brooke Snyder

**M**IKE AND Mary Burton have shared a love story spanning 29 years — one that has defied doubts, embraced challenges, and thrived through life's highs and lows. As we celebrate Valentine's Day, their journey offers a heartfelt reminder of what it means to truly cherish one another.

It all began in 1994 when Mary was working locally as a waitress. Mike walked into the restaurant, and something clicked. Some would call it love at first sight. After finishing his meal, he left his number behind, a bold move that would mark the start of a beautiful relationship. By 1996, the couple was married and welcomed their first child that same year. In 2004, their family grew with the addition of twin boys. Now, their love has expanded to include a grandchild whom they adore.

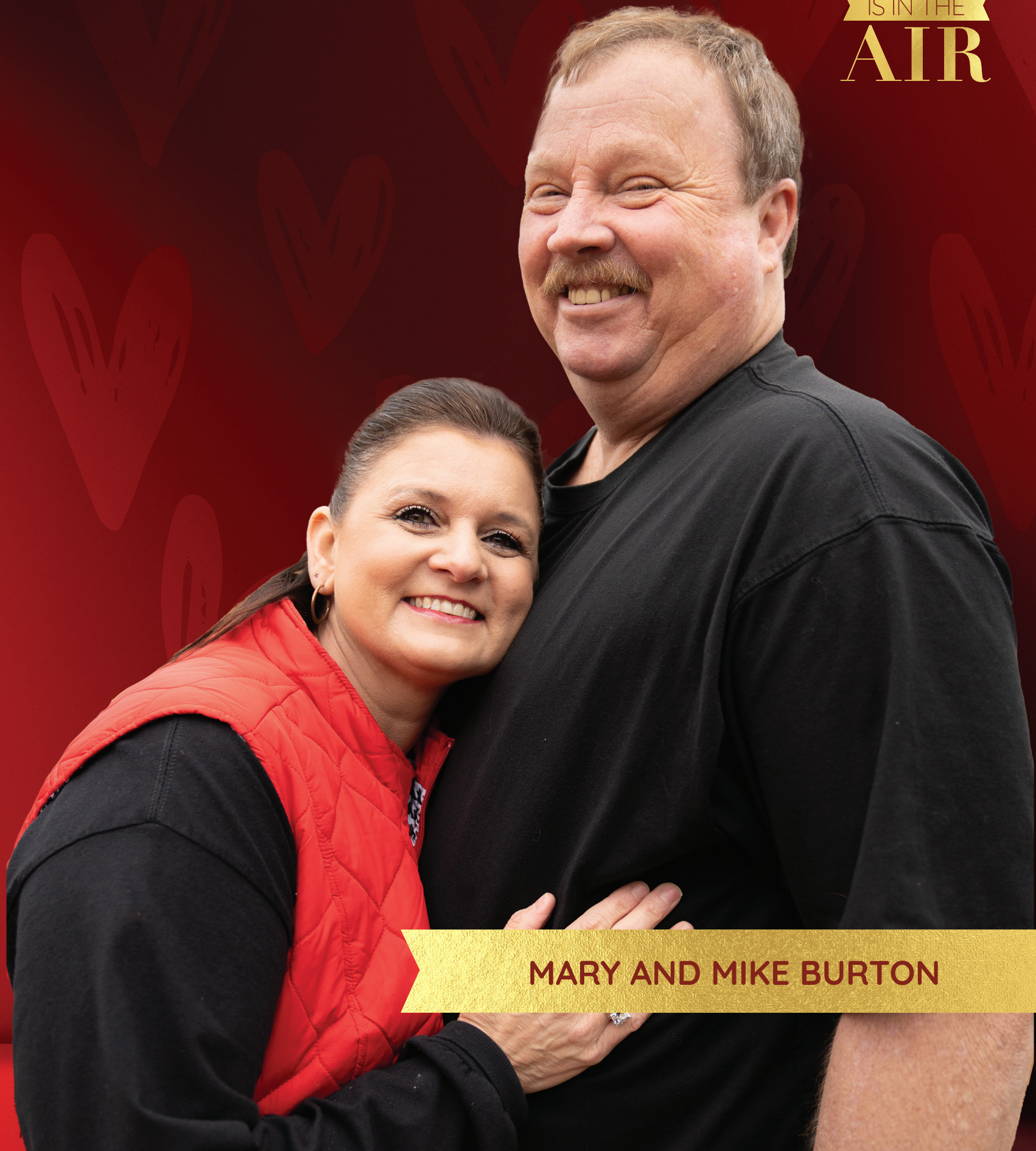
"Mike is 10 years older than me," Mary said. "At first, everyone said it would never work. Our families and friends were skeptical, but here we are, 29 years later, proving them wrong."

The age difference turned out to be a strength rather than a challenge. "I'd dealt with immature guys before," Mary said, "but Mike was older and more grounded. He's been my rock through everything."

Their secret? Small, consistent acts of love. For years, Mike would text Mary at 10 a.m. during his usual break time at work every day, no matter where he was or what he was doing. "Even if we were in the same house, he'd text me, 'I love you,'" Mary shared with a smile. "Now that I have a job where I can answer the phone, he calls instead. It's those little gestures that mean the most."

When it comes to their favorite things to do together, the Smoky Mountains hold a special

LOVE  
IS IN THE  
AIR



MARY AND MIKE BURTON



▲ Cody Burton, Mike Burton, Mary Burton, Luke Croft, Katyleen Croft, Ada Kate Croft, and Caleb Burton

“

**Life throws curveballs. But we've made it work. Through the good times and the bad, we've always been there for each other.**

**- Mary Burton**

place in their hearts. “Our first trip there was our honeymoon,” Mary said. “It’s become our getaway spot. Every year, we return to those mountains. It’s like our place.”

As busy parents and grandparents, Mike and Mary still prioritize their time together. Their children and grandchild live locally, allowing the family to remain close-knit. Despite their roles as grandparents, Mike and Mary ensure they carve out moments for each other, whether it’s a trip to the mountains or a quiet evening at home.

Reflecting on their journey, Mary acknowledges that life hasn’t always been easy. “Life throws curveballs,” she said. “But we’ve made it work. Through the good times and the bad, we’ve always been there for each other.”

For Mike, the key to their enduring love is simple: “It’s about making her feel loved every day,” he said. Whether it’s a text, a call, or a quiet moment together, Mike’s actions speak volumes about his devotion to Mary.

“We’re blessed to have this life together,” Mary said. “And we’re grateful for every moment we’ve shared.”

As they look ahead, Mike and Mary’s love continues to grow, and their yearly trip to the Smoky Mountains won’t end anytime soon. Their journey reminds us that true love isn’t about grand gestures or perfection; it’s about showing up every day with a full heart and an open mind. Here’s to Mike and Mary Burton — proof that love is always in the air. **GN**





# A RESTORATION OF HISTORY

Keith Syler and Becky Priest work to repair a piece of Fayetteville's past.



By Sara Hook  
Photography by Brooke Snyder

**T**HE HOUSE was set way back from the road, old, run-down, and covered in weeds and poison ivy. Its roof had holes, the floor had deteriorated, and the basement was full of trash — but Keith Syler and Becky Priest saw something beautiful. For the past 2 1/2 years, they have been restoring that house piece by piece, and through it, they discovered an incredible piece of Fayetteville history.

It all started with a home listed on Zillow. Neither Syler nor Priest knew anything about Fayetteville, but they found a home they liked on the real estate website and came to check it out. It turned out to be a bust — the house needed a lot of work, and it seemed too much for the price. Then, Priest looked across the street and fell in love.

“Set back off the road off of Mulberry is this poor little dilapidated old house,” Priest said. “I said, ‘Keith, you got to come over here and look at this house. It’s amazing.’ I said, ‘It needs help, bless its heart, but if anybody could fix it, you can.’”

The couple had long loved old homes — in fact, it was an old home that first brought them together. Priest grew up in a Queen Anne Victorian home, and this isn’t the first home Keith has restored. He said it is a very different process from modern homes because the wood, joints, and even walls are built differently. As he learned, he got the qualifications to go alongside his work: certifications for working on geothermal construction and high-efficiency heating, among others.

“I kind of gravitate toward the Victorian era because it’s so decorative,” Syler said. “[There’s] so much

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BECKY PRIEST AND KEITH SYLER

“

I kind of gravitate toward the Victorian era because it's so decorative. [There's] so much craftsmanship involved in all the trim work and putting it all together.

- Becky Priest

craftsmanship involved in all the trim work and putting it all together.”

As they worked on the house, Syler and Priest began to discover more and more about the history of the construction. At first, they thought the house was built in 1880 — but a little research showed that it had been sold to William S. (W.S.) Hurt in 1874. Other hints led them to believe the house was even older. The main house is constructed with square nails, which went out of fashion in the 1820s. They found the remains of an 1820s-style cast iron stove in the backyard and a museum wardrobe labeled ‘1830s James Bright Family Wardrobe’ with the name Hurt scrawled inside.

“That gave us a real tie from W.S. Hurt because we knew James Bright had multiple houses,” Syler said. “He bought and sold land, just massive amounts of land, and he became very wealthy doing that.”

Other documents and accounts indicated that the house on Mulberry was possibly James Bright's first brick house. It could even be the house that Andrew Jackson used as his headquarters and that the Union attempted to burn in the 1860s. Syler and Priest aren't 100% sure because many historical documents are missing, but they said the circumstantial evidence has led to their theory.

“I've found an 1830s Federal Navy Officer's coat button, I've found



▲ Keith and Becky on their front porch — the porch was one of the first things Keith repaired.



▲ Keith holds a piece of door trim from the living room of their home. This trim is original to the home and was held with square nails.

a Confederate Army cuff button, I've found a Union Army Officer's coat button, we've found [a] Civil War stirrup, and we've found a spur," Syler said. "We've found some of the early — really early — rim fire cartridges underneath the front porch."

In addition, simple tasks like moving flowers and laying paths have unearthed two cisterns. There is something new to be found every day.

"It's like an archeological dig around here," Priest said. "You never know what you're going to dig up."

There has been so much history uncovered during the restoration process, and Syler said once they have the section they're living in done, the pair will begin making and publishing videos of their work and research. Hopefully, he said, that will help fund what they are doing.

"Most of the time, when you have somebody doing one



▲ Square nails that were used to build Keith and Becky's home — square nails were used until around 1830, which tells us how old the home is.

of these projects they have lots of financial resources to do the project," Syler said. "We're musicians... it's the extra cash that we can squeeze out of our pocket to do it."

Syler and Priest have many other plans for the house, which will be realized during construction and afterward. A staircase will be turned into a staircase of history, each step engraved with a family that lived in the home. Portraits of James Bright and his wife, Nancy Morgan Bright, will hang in the foyer, and Priest hopes to play their 1870s pump organ for Host of Christmas Past once the house is done.

Dozens of people across Fayetteville have a connection with the little house on Mulberry Avenue, and it has impacted hundreds more in its long and storied history. Thanks to Keith Syler and Becky Priest, history is becoming a little cleaner and a little clearer every day. **GN**

# FROM YARD SALES TO A HEARTFELT MISSION



Kaylee's Korner blesses  
the community.

**By Amanda E. West**  
**Photography by Brooke Snyder**  
**and submitted by Tonita Thompson**

**O**PEN THE door at 1622 Huntsville Highway and step over the threshold into Kaylee's Korner. Vintage olive green stemware, opaque carnival glass, depression glass, teapots, coffee mugs, and snow-white hobnailed milk glass line the shelves. Hardbound books in muted grays and browns, thousands of collectibles from past decades, solid wood desks, ornate bed frames, ruby red hurricane lamps, and artwork framed with oak awaken memories of yesteryear and fill every visitor with nostalgia. Quaint rooms overflowing with well-loved toys, doodads, kitchen gadgets, and knickknacks are centered around a larger space separated into individual booths where each vendor has added their personal touch. At Kaylee's Korner, every nook, cranny, and "korner" hold treasures waiting to be uncovered.

For Tonita Thompson, Kaylee's Korner is more than a thrift or an antique store. It's more than a building to resell furniture. It's an outlet for her to bless a community that has so richly blessed her. Thirteen years ago, Tonita and her husband, Roger, gained custody of their granddaughter, Kaylee, and shortly after, Kaylee received a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

"I wanted to put her in a school for autism, and I found one close to the Huntsville airport," recalled Thompson. "But we couldn't afford it. I prayed and felt led by God to have a yard sale to pay her tuition. Everybody connected to us cleaned out their closets, and because of this, every month, our need was met. After I brought her back to public school, friends were still giving us items to sell. We continued holding yard sales,

**LOVE**  
IS IN THE  
**AIR**



**TONITA THOMPSON**



◀ *Tonita and her part-time helper, DeAnna Smith, pose inside the store.*

“

I've become more aware of just how many people are hurting. I welcome them to come into Kaylee's Korner and forget their outside problems.

- Tonita Thompson

and we were able to take her on a trip to Disney World. The donations began to accumulate, and I prayed for a building. God provided this business that used to be The Blue Door Antique Store, and Kaylee's Korner was born.”

Thompson, a native of Lincoln County and a self-proclaimed introvert, said, “I don't have the personality for this, but God has put the right people at the right time in place. When my mother passed away, I received so many hugs from people I didn't even know a year before, and that has truly helped me to heal.”

Though the Thompsons' finances have been tight over the years, they have always stepped in to help others whenever possible.

“We never had money, but we would do what we could. When we are told about needs in the community like a house fire, all three of us who work at the store begin collect-

ing items that we think the family could use. I also purchase items from people who are struggling to pay their bills. When I realized that some of my customers didn't like holding on to change, I put a jug by the cash register, and now we use it to pay someone's electric bill before it gets cut off. In the spring and summer, I let people have yard sales in our parking lot, and if they want to pay for their spot, I ask them to make a donation to that jug.”

Kimberly Hunter and DeAnna Smith help Thompson run the store, and both women are also caregivers. When they aren't working at Kaylee's Korner, Hunter cares for her mother, who was recently diagnosed with dementia, and Smith cares for her mother-in-law, who is 93.

“DeAnna's mission is to pray for people,” said Thompson. “Our customers often share their problems with us, so sometimes, she prays openly, and at other times, she prays quietly. We are constantly trying to think of things we can do to help our community. Our latest is that we are currently in the process of building a blessing box. During the holidays throughout the year, we enjoy putting up backdrops and hosting events so people can bring their kiddos in for pictures.”

Kaylee recently turned 18, and later this year, she will graduate from high school. She loves pizza and original Doritos, and her favorite “job” at Kaylee's Korner is sorting and organizing the jewelry. Though the store was birthed out of a need to provide for Kaylee's education, it is now a place where treasures are discovered — rediscovered — and strangers leave as friends.



This spring, Kaylee's Korner will host a special visitor who will hop down the bunny trail just in time to celebrate Easter. Tonita, Kimberly, DeAnna, and Kaylee invite you to drop in and say hello. They'd also love for you to follow them on Facebook as they regularly update their page with pictures of new items, share details of upcoming sales, and post about other special "visitors" who will make an appearance.

"In the three years that we've been open, I've become more aware of just how many people are hurting. I welcome them to come into Kaylee's Korner and forget their outside problems. Whether they take time to just look around — or maybe they need someone to talk to — we are here for them." GN

*For more information, go to [www.kayleeskornertn.com](http://www.kayleeskornertn.com)*



▲ Kaylee Mann



▲ Tonita stands beside an antique buffet that was made in the 1800s.

# Crossroads Pregnancy Center Dedication Ceremony - Jan. 14

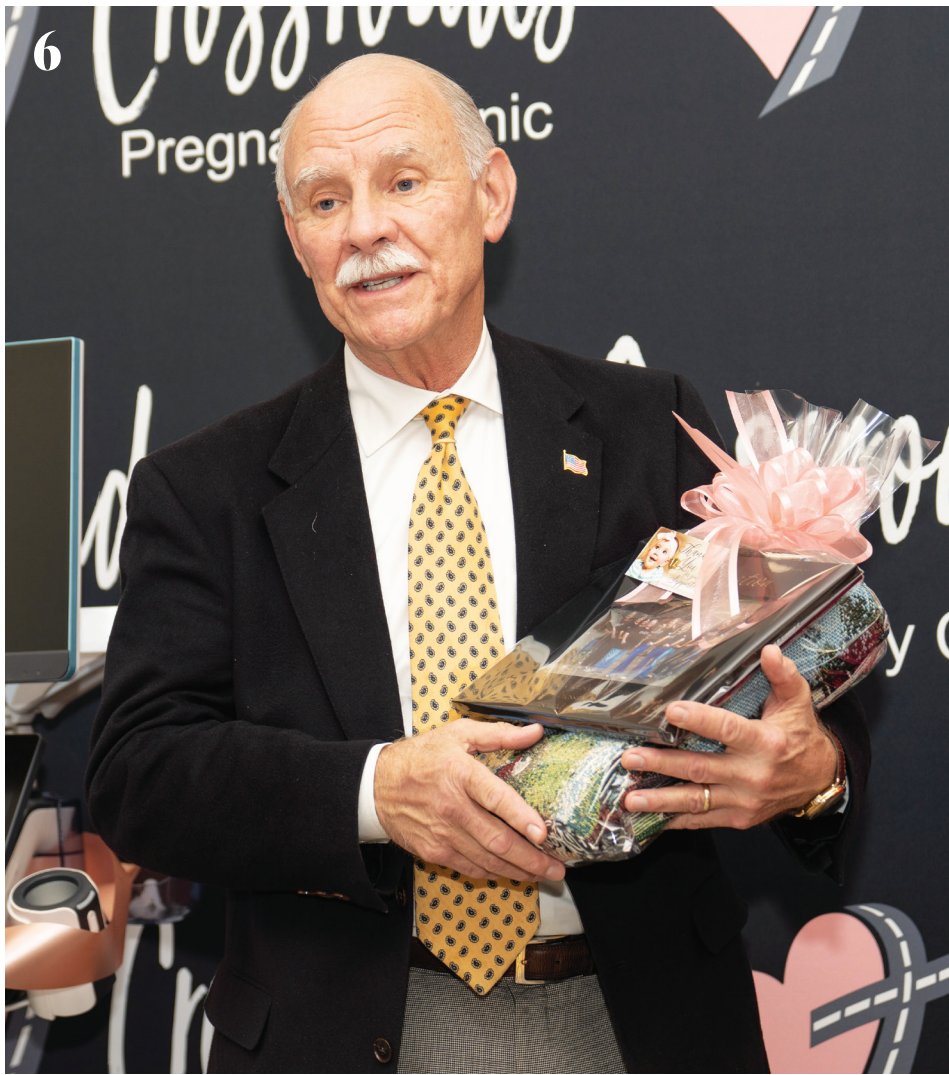


Photography by Brooke Snyder

Crossroads Pregnancy Clinic has received a new 3D/4D ultrasound machine through the Tennessee Baptist Missions Board — an unexpected and much-needed gift. This incredible addition will enhance the care provided to expectant mothers and families in our community. A very special dedication ceremony was held on Jan. 14.



1. Michelle Holman 2. Everyone who came to support Crossroads 3. Jade Butcher, Dr. Watts, Dr. Morrison, and Michelle Holman  
4. New 3/D/4D ultrasound machine 5. Jade Butcher, Amy Leimer, Don Bukar, Dr. David Watts, Dr. Theresa Morrison, Michelle Holman, Amanda Curtis, Gail Gardner, Laura Mayer, and Alex Hoagland



**6.** Dr. David Watts **7.** Dr. Randy Davis, executive director of TN Baptist Mission Board **8.** Amanda Curtis  
**9.** Beth Moore, representing the TN Baptist Mission Board, Michelle Holman, and Amanda Curtis  
**10.** All that attended laying hands on the new machine to pray over those who would benefit from it.

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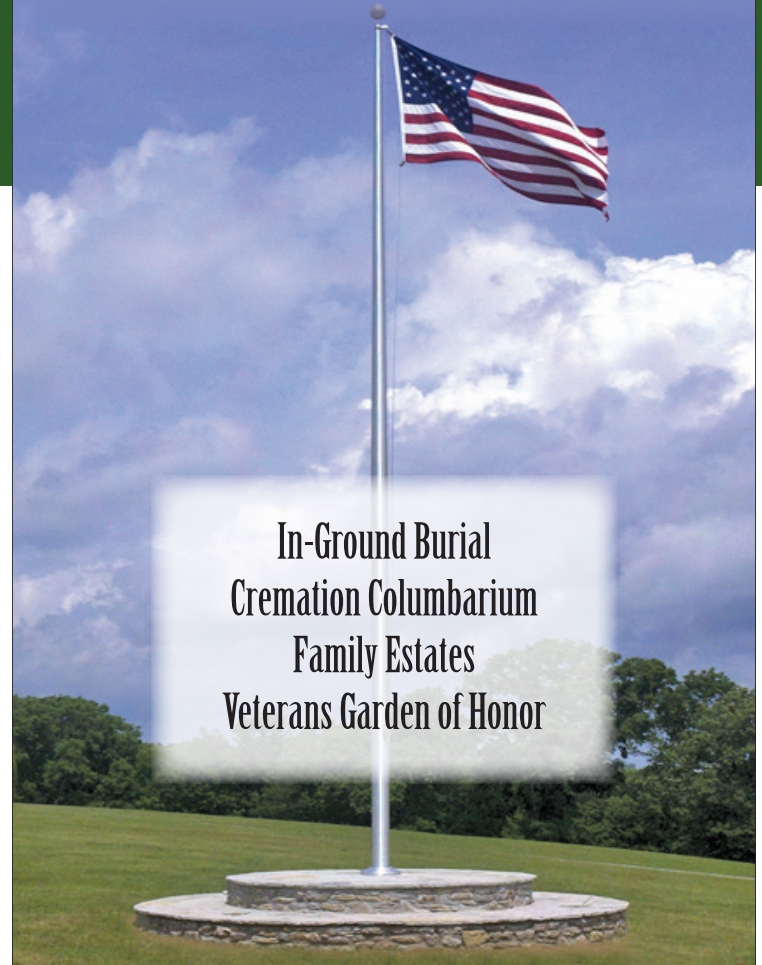
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