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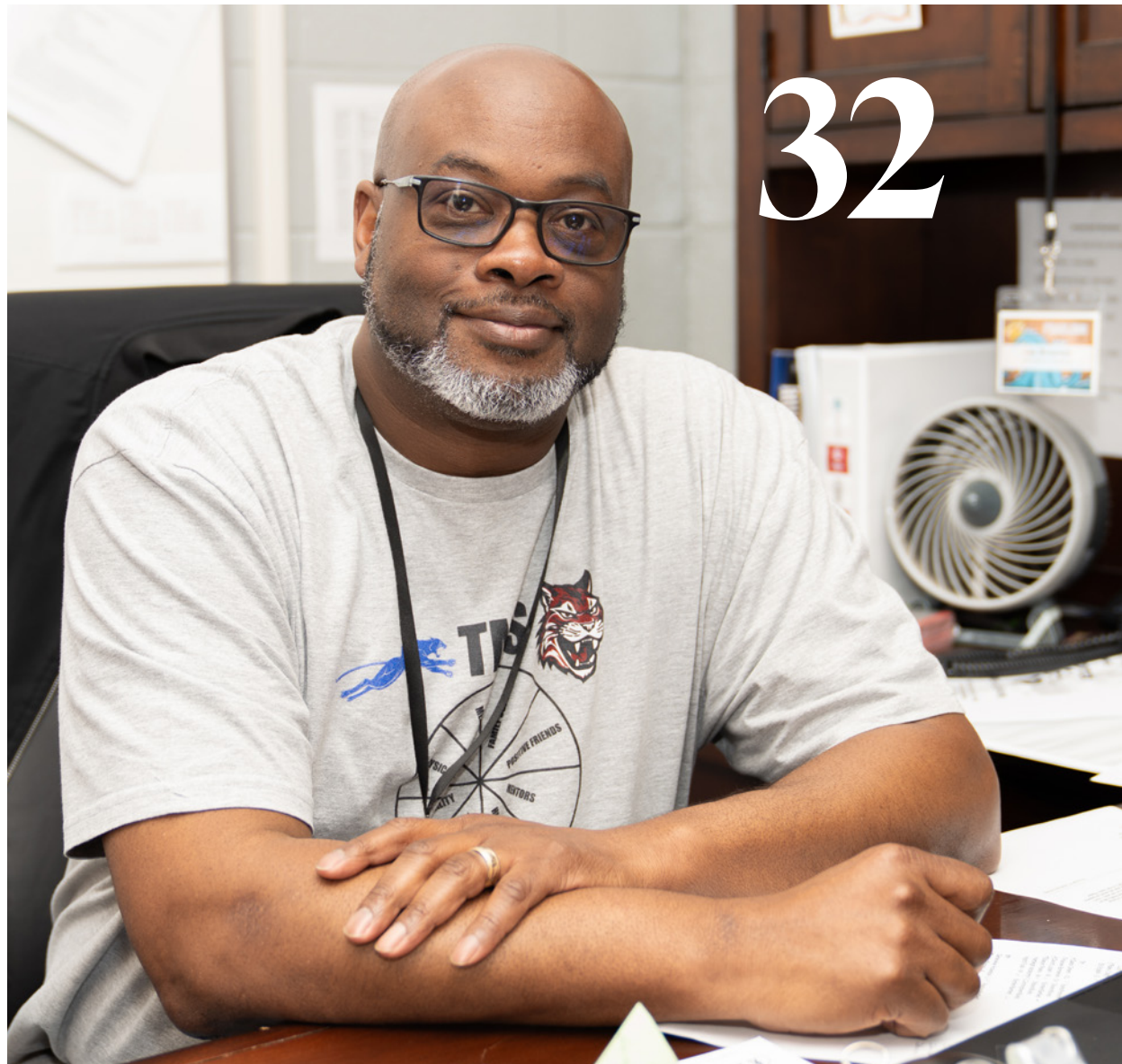
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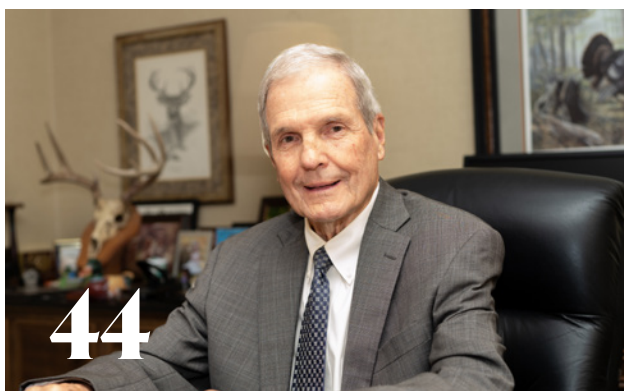
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## The bond of blood and honor

Our families survive the test of time.

A FAMILY LOADS up their navy blue Jeep in Tennessee and takes a cross-country road trip. It'll take several days to get to the Sequoia National Park in California. There may be hours when the Jeep feels smaller and smaller by the second. Taking turns picking the music leads to debates on how many songs Brother or Sister picked. The cooler in the floorboard has only a few snacks left. The time on their cellphones changes from Central time zone to Mountain, and then Pacific. After far too many tolls and gas-station stops, the GPS finally uses words that make the "crowd" go wild: "... two miles until your destination."

Grandma, Mom, Dad, Brother, and Sister hop out of the Jeep and stretch their legs. They look up at the leaves above. It's breathtakingly unbelievable. The size and strength of nature demand an undeniable respect. The General Sherman Tree stands almost 280 feet tall on the north end of the Giant Forest. It's believed to be 2,300 to 2,700 years old. It's hard to imagine how far the roots reach. The strength of the branches holds bird nests and gives homes to tiny insects just passing through. Each season

brings new life of connection from the soil to the crisp air, 280 feet above. The chirping bird family belongs together — until, of course, it's time to jump into flight. The ants crawl up and down the bark with a natural interconnectedness that can only be described with one word: family.

Sister misses a step on the way up, and Dad grabs her hand with firm support. "I've got ya," he says. Grandma smiles, not letting anyone know she holds back tears. She knows where her son got that phrase. She had heard it for 50 years before a funeral. Her son says it the same way his father used to. While Sister never got to meet him, his blood still flows through her veins with honor.

Our families weave us together with a generational strength that no wildfire or gust of wind can knock loose. Our memories of those who came before us fly beneath our wings when we jump from the nest. And when the icy cold bites at our fingers in winter, we have an enclave to snuggle into. Families are not just names on a birth certificate or put together with wedding bands. They're a generational structure that will always stand the test of 2,700 years. This issue of Good News honors just that: our families. GN

Wesley Bryant,  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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“It’s about helping the community,  
...we’re here for the community.”

*- Tommy Myers*





## *Tommy Myers:* **A False Retirement From Service**

A 69-year-old man reflects on a life of service in Cowan and Franklin County.

By Gabriel Grant Huff // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**F**IRST, THE fire alarm sounded, then the phone rang off the hook. That's when Tommy Myers went into action. Pulling on boots, headwear, and courage, he rode with other firefighters to save lives.

However, Myers' experience was different from most — because beside him, his wife and son bolted into the field.

For Myers, the service journey starts and ends in Cowan. He grew up in the small community and decided to remain in Franklin County after graduating high school.

To say the man worked a lot of jobs would be an understatement. A broad range of careers became available to him in bookkeeping, income taxes, plumbing, and

truck driving. He worked at a newspaper for around eight years and participated in a band for about 20 years.

In 1986, Myers found himself treating water with the Cowan Water Department and volunteering at the town's fire department.

The best year of his life came about seven years later.

In 1993, Myers met his future wife, Anna, and became the town's fire chief. Because Tommy had sustained experience in bookkeeping and boasted a ton of other skills, his predecessor knew the Cowan native would be the right man for the position.



## Never Too Young To Learn Fire Safety...



On Monday, Cowan Fire Department Chief Tommy Myers spoke about fire safety to Michelle Huffer's pre-school class at Cowan Elementary School. Because they were such quick learners, he made them all deputy firefighters. Pictured (l-r) are Michelle Huffer, Taylor Ellis, Chief Tommy Myers, Austin Madewell, Destyni Rood and Cameron King.  
—H-C Photo By Del Ray Zimmerman

▲ Tommy would visit schools in the area to teach young kids about fire safety.



▲ Tommy was the fire chief at this time. This was the installation of the dry hydrant for the fire department's use. Tommy was also the water superintendent for Cowan.

"It was good timing, and I went to work for Cowan, and I got more interested in helping the community and helping people."

Due to Tommy's influence, Anna volunteered at the fire department two years later to work alongside him. However, the influential pulling tugged in both directions as he dipped into her field of medical assistance, getting his Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification and following Anna, who also served as an EMT and previously worked for an ambulance service.

This new line of labor gave birth to the idea of Tommy creating Cowan's first responder medical program around 2008.

Every fire run and rescue held personal stakes — many of those needing help were his friends, neighbors, co-workers, or fellow grocery store shoppers. A tight-knit community became the price of living in a small town like Cowan.

Whether the danger involved wrecks, broken bones, CPR needs, suicide calls, or even death, Tommy gave his best effort to assist.

"When you've been doing it, everybody kind of knows you, and they really feel comfortable because

when they see me, they know who I am and they trust me, too."

He became fortunate enough to spend some of that time working alongside his son, Tommy Jr., who chose to follow in his father's footsteps by joining the fire department around 2000 and later accepted a job as an advanced EMT at Vanderbilt University.

Tommy relished those days of teaming up with his family, especially when all three of them worked the same call, running together to save lives.

"We're all doing the same thing, so we understand each other. We're helping the community, and it makes me feel good that they're doing that."

Even after retiring, Tommy remains Cowan's fire chief, helping to oversee the operation and finding other ways to serve — still aiding the water department, assisting Huntland's sewer department, and even driving the garbage truck for Cowan.

In the 69-year-old's eyes, one never truly retires from service.

"It's about helping the community," he said, "... We're here for the community." **GN**





*Knowledge of the switches and buttons on the fire truck is crucial. A couple of decades working as the fire chief and currently serving keeps him sharp and informed.*





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*Tommy never knows what hes going to run into when he opens that fire truck door. Being in the small town of Cowan, many times, the person he is responding to has a personal connection with him.*

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# Donald Gregory: *Persevering in Faith*

A beloved local evangelist overcomes doubt, depression,  
and a tragic accident through a lifetime of faith.

By Becca Roberts // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**R**OWESVILLE BAPTIST Church is off the beaten path, tucked in the woods where a creek runs under the bridge that leads to the parking lot. The white walls of the building shine in the sunlight, and a kind-hearted gentleman smiles and waves.

Bro. Donald Gregory, 87, has a divine peace about him. His eyes sparkle as he talks of growing up there, across a few fields where his father's farm used to be, "as the crow flies," according to Gregory. This place was home, and he grew up in this church.

"My granddaddy came here from Beech Grove on a horse and buggy and built that church. It just had four corners at the time," Gregory said. Gregory added a wing and other areas to the church.

Gregory remembers that before electricity was invented, the church building used lamps for light.

"They had little shelves around the wall, and they put kerosene lamps on the shelves," Gregory

said. He said the paved road was just a dirt road back then.

Gregory never thought he would end up in full-time ministry. At just 17 years old, a moment alone huddled under a small bluff changed everything for him. He had gone there to pray to God for direction, and in that moment, Gregory knew the Lord was calling him to preach. He had resisted in the past, but now he ran headfirst up the ravine to the little church. At the end of the service, he stood and announced that God was calling him to preach.

After this revelation, he started preaching. He pastored several churches and became an evangelist, someone who goes from place to place preaching. He met his wife, Lorene, at a church he visited. They married when he was 21 and have been together for 67 years. He came back to pastor at Rowesville Baptist Church 10 years ago with his son, Phillip, as a deacon. Gregory faced a life-al-

◀ Donald and Lorene Gregory, taken around 2015





▲ Lorene, Pamela, Phillip, and Donald Gregory taken in the mid 70's. Phillip has served as deacon at Roweville Baptist Church.

tering challenge when a bulldozer turned over on him, and he lost one of his legs.

"I built about 200 houses in my life and two churches," Gregory said. He did additions to buildings and other projects. Even after his accident, he continued to work in construction.

"Losing my leg didn't slow me down much," Gregory said. "But when it happened, the nurses told me, 'Mr. Gregory, you are in bad shape.'" He was in and out of consciousness when they carried him to the emergency room. He nearly died during surgery, losing 13 pints of blood, and he lost his leg. It took a couple of days for the reality

to sink in, and when it did, he fell into depression. Gregory began praying and listening to old cassette tapes of the Gaithers singing hymns, and he felt the spirit of God fill the room. After that, his depression was gone.

Gregory has spoken at many revivals and has dedicated his life to ministry. For 38 years, he preached at revival events, some lasting as long as 119 days, and he spoke every single night. His messages, such as "What Must I Do to be Saved?" encouraged many to give their lives to God. "Being saved is a true experience with God," Gregory said. **GN**





Donald and Lorene Gregory



*Donald inside Rowesville  
Baptist church, where he  
grew up. He remembers  
when the room was lit  
only with lamps.*







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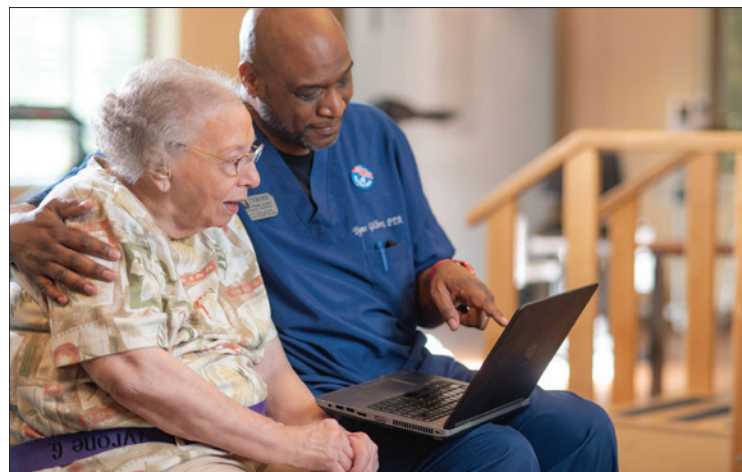
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## PAM PECK: The Heart of Realty

A Franklin County realtor partners with her son to build a family business anchored in faith and community.

By Becca Roberts



**S**TEPPING INTO the new offices of Peck Realty Group LLC, potential buyers and sellers instantly know this is a business they can trust. Pam Peck has been an established realtor in Franklin County for over 30 years. Her family's journey in real estate is a testament to their faith and deep roots in the community.

Pam Peck and her husband, John Clifton Peck, have two children: a daughter, Leanne Lankford, and a son, John Michael Peck, who is also her business partner. She helped raise two other children, Dale Nunley and Christy Brooks, and claims seven grandchildren. Family is everything to the Pecks.

*"This community made me. I didn't make this community."*

- PAM PECK,  
co-owner of Peck Realty Group LLC.

Pam's son, John Michael, has worked with her for years but recently partnered with his mom to co-own Peck Realty Group LLC.

"I'm so proud and blessed to have John Michael as my partner and grateful for the wonderful agents who have taken this journey with us," Pam said.

Her husband got her started in this industry 48 years ago, and it has grown into a family business.

"My husband supported me in becoming a realtor and starting my own business. He said I had the personality for real estate, and I love it," Pam said.

She said she started out in an old gas station building with a "blind secretary," Brenda Tate (her loving aunt). Her grandmother believed strongly in her dream, so she put the money needed to start the business in a bank that would loan it to Pam until she could pay it back. Pam was so successful, she paid her grandma back in full that first year. She gained a stellar reputation because she and the whole team care about people first. She is proud to have excellent agents representing the company, and she always tells them to focus on the client above all else.

"We don't count our commission first. We worry about that client first, because if you take care of your customer, the money will take care of itself," Pam said.

Pam offers a guarantee that if customers are not happy with her work, they can let her go, but no one has ever taken her up on that.

"This community made me. I didn't make this community," Pam said.

She praises Franklin County for supporting her family, and they support local businesses in return.

Pam's community connections became even dearer when she was diagnosed with cancer right after selling her Century 21 business. Her community rallied around her through treatments, and though her scans came back cancer-free, three months later, it had unfortunately returned. Through her treatments, she is still working and writing up contracts. She says she believes her faith in God, family, work, and supportive community keep her going.

"They believed in me and cared for me. I still receive 'get well' cards or people texting me saying, 'I'm praying for you.' It makes me feel so good that there are such good people still out there in this world," Pam said.

She maintains that God has a plan, despite her health challenges, and she is grateful for each day that her family's business can serve the people of Franklin County. **GN**





# Meet Our Winning Team



**Pam Peck**

(931) 580-8321

[pampeckc21@gmail.com](mailto:pampeckc21@gmail.com)

**CEO | Broker | Real Estate Veteran  
Community Leader**

With more than 45 years of experience, Pam Peck is a highly respected figure in the Middle Tennessee real estate market. Based in Franklin County, Pam specializes in Tims Ford Lake properties and serves the communities of Winchester, Decherd, Estill Springs, Huntland, Sewanee, Tullahoma, Manchester, and surrounding areas—including Coffee, Grundy, and Moore Counties.

Her expertise spans residential, commercial, new construction, and rental properties. Prior to founding her own company, Pam spent 11 years as a top-producing leader in a neighboring state and went on to serve as the Broker of Century 21 Prestige (formerly Century 21 Mid-State Realty LLC) for over 30 years.

A trailblazer in the industry, Pam co-developed Franklin County's first successful condominium project and has collaborated with numerous builders to help families design and build their dream homes.



**John M. Peck**

(931) 636-7020

[jmpeckc21@gmail.com](mailto:jmpeckc21@gmail.com)

**Owner | Principle Broker | Real Estate Expert  
Market Strategist | Client-Focused Professional**

With over 15 years of licensure and a lifetime immersed in the real estate industry, John Michael Peck brings a fresh, strategic approach backed by proven results. Specializing in Tims Ford Lake and surrounding areas, he leverages in-depth market insight to deliver outstanding service to buyers, sellers, and investors. John Michael recently started Peck Realty Group LLC alongside his Momma and partner, Pam Peck.

He holds a Bachelor's Degree from Grand Canyon University and advanced training in Custom Market Analysis, Commercial Real Estate, and Strategic Marketing. John Michael is known for his personalized, hands-on approach, ensuring every detail is handled with care and precision.

In addition to his real estate success, John Michael also serves in local ministry, reflecting his strong values and dedication to his community.



**Landon Keller**

(931) 308-7384

[landonkeller@gmail.com](mailto:landonkeller@gmail.com)

Landon's 10 year career in real estate began simply because he enjoyed the process as a first-time home buyer. With a deep passion for connecting people with their dream homes and investment opportunities, he has dedicated his career to the dynamic and rewarding field of real estate. His journey into this industry stems from a belief that every individual deserves a space that reflects their aspirations, enhances their lifestyle, and stands as a cornerstone for their future. As a professional, he brings not only expertise but also a genuine commitment to understanding the unique needs of his clients.



**Buddy & Tene' Jewell**

(615) 618-2999

[buddyjewellteam@gmail.com](mailto:buddyjewellteam@gmail.com)

Meet The Buddy Jewell Team, a dynamic husband-and-wife duo bringing a unique blend of talent and dedication to the Tennessee real estate market.

Tené Jewell is a seasoned realtor, a past honoree of the Crye-Leike Realty Multimillion Dollar Club, and has been recognized multiple times as one of Crye-Leike Tennessee's Top 20 Realtors.

Many know Buddy as the inaugural winner of USA Network's "Nashville Star," a distinction that launched a successful country music career.

Tené and Buddy are members of the National Association of Realtors and the Middle Tennessee Association of Realtors. The Christian couple are true "people-persons," who invest time in understanding their clients' goals and aspirations. They are excited to help clients navigate their real estate journeys.



**Steve Newman**

(931) 308-3488

[stevnewmanc21@gmail.com](mailto:stevnewmanc21@gmail.com)

In his 28TH year as a licensed Affiliate Real Estate Broker and as a former teacher, Steve truly values his dedication to ongoing Adult Education.

Early in his career, he gained the designation as a Graduate, REALTOR Institute, a Seniors Real Estate Specialist and eventually found his passion as an Accredited Buyer's Representative.

"It gives me so much professional and personal satisfaction to help clients find their dream home. Many first time Buyers have no idea that they even have the ability to become homeowners.

I would love to talk with you today to find out if my dedication to my career could help you fulfill your dream of becoming a homeowner," says Steve.



**Steve Kirby**

(615) 417-3257

[skirby1953@hotmail.com](mailto:skirby1953@hotmail.com)

Steve has more than 30 years of sales experience, 13 of which he served as General Manager of Russell Barnett Chevrolet GMC. Steve is currently the Executive Director of United Way of Franklin County, Chairman of the Emergency Food and Shelter Board and committee member of the One Day Outreach for Franklin County. Steve has been a voting member of the Country Music Association for nearly 40 years. Steve and his wife Colleen, who has worked as an RN at the hospital here in Winchester for more than 47 years, are members of the First Baptist Church of Winchester. If you need assistance with selling your home or purchasing your next home, Steve is here to guide you through the process.



**Mack Meeks**

(931) 808-8661

[mackmeeksc21@gmail.com](mailto:mackmeeksc21@gmail.com)

With over 27 years of experience in Tennessee real estate, Mack Meeks is a trusted Realtor® and Broker who brings professionalism, integrity, and personal care to every client interaction. As a proud grandfather and long-time resident of the area, Mack understands the value of home and the importance of family—insights that shape the way he serves buyers and sellers alike. Mack specializes in homes, land, and investment properties throughout Franklin, Grundy, Marion, Coffee, and Moore counties. From the scenic bluff views of the Cumberland Plateau to the lakes and trails surrounding Tims Ford, Mack knows the region inside and out and is passionate about helping others find their place in it.



**Elizabeth Padgett**

(931) 808-4656

[elizabethpadgett21@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethpadgett21@gmail.com)

Shalom! Grace and Peace to you, as you consider your transaction of buying or selling your home. Let me introduce myself.

My name is Elizabeth Padgett. I have 14 years of experience in helping my clients accomplish their goals and make their dreams a reality as they buy and sell their homes, land, and commercial buildings. I am committed to providing top-quality service to my past, present, and future clients. I am happy to discuss your real estate needs or questions.

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EVER CATCH the aroma of a memory? You know the one — your mama's Sunday pot roast, fried onions and potatoes, chocolate chip cookies, or cinnamon rolls? We do our best to recreate them for our families, but something is always missing. The same food anywhere else is never exactly like Mama's, and perhaps it's because the foods of our favorite holidays and traditions are seasoned with special memories and love. **GN**

## Mama's Pot Roast

Submitted by Cathy Gulley

3-4 lb. chuck roast  
3 T. vegetable oil  
6 med. potatoes, diced  
2 lg. onions, diced  
1 lb. carrots, sliced  
6 c. water  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ c. soy sauce  
2 pkgs. beef stew seasoning mix  
1 t. chicken bouillon granules  
½ t. ground black pepper  
1½ t. Accent®, optional  
1 bay leaf



Preheat oven to 375°. In a large skillet over medium high heat, sear both sides of the roast in vegetable oil. Remove from heat; place in the center of a large roasting pan, along with the juices from the skillet. Place vegetables around meat and add water, garlic, and soy sauce. Sprinkle dry ingredients on top; stir lightly to dissolve seasonings. Add bay leaf. Cover, and bake at 375° for 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 275° and continue baking for 1½ - 2 hours or until meat and vegetables are tender.





# A HERITAGE WITH HEART

A local pastor and guidance counselor continues a family tradition of breaking barriers and caring for others.

BY BECCA ROBERTS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BROOKE SNYDER

**S**TUDENTS AT East Middle School in Tullahoma grin when they see Pastor Lee Brannon III in the halls. Brannon is East Middle School's beloved school counselor. He is the pastor of Burning Bush Original Church of God in Belvidere, where he has served for 24 years with his wife, Tonya Brannon, and two daughters, Hannah and Mikah.

Aside from pastoring, Lee Brannon worked as a case manager at the Highland Rim Mental Health Center. After a tragic school shooting in 1998, Brannon was called to be available at Lincoln County High School to counsel students. This experience led Brannon to serve as the high school counselor in Lincoln County and later in

Franklin County. He was the first Black school counselor in the Franklin County school system. His calling to serve his church and the schools became intertwined.

"If we can change our school, we can change our neighborhood. If we can change our neighborhood, we can change our city. If we can change our city, we can change the world," Brannon said. "The kids know that I am available to listen without judgment, and I think when they leave my office, if they don't know anything else, they know that somebody cares for them."

This dedication to the community's safety, education, and well-being was passed down to Brannon from his whole family.







▲ School Sources of Strength members: Lucy Tucker, Tinsley Poston, Ingrid Fults, Lee Brannon, David Lopez, Kacee Bordenet, Ellasyn Parks, and Eli English

Brannon's father, Lee Roy Brannon Jr., made history as the county's first Black National Guardsman, and his mother, Barbara Brown, broke barriers as the first Black Department of Human Services worker. Lee shares his mother's advice to students even now.

"She would say, 'Son, if you stop to think, you will think to stop,'" Lee recalled. "She meant before you make any decisions, think about the consequences."

Another mentor for Lee was his grandfather, Fred Blackwell Sr. He took over the first Black funeral home in the county (Johnson-Blackwell Funeral Home) and had the only Black-owned laundromat. He was in the first graduating class of Townsend High School. Blackwell and his wife, Julia, were able to send all seven of their children to college by working multiple jobs.



If we can change our school, we can change our neighborhood. If we can change our neighborhood, we can change our city. If we can change our city, we can change the world.

PASTOR LEE BRANNON







School Sources of Strength members Lucy Tucker, Tinsley Poston, Ingrid Fults, Lee Brannon, David Lopez, Kacee Bordenet, Ellasyn Parks, and Eli English sit around the table discussing plans that will take place in the following weeks.



▲ Standing from left to right: Mike Blackwell Sr., Floyd Blackwell Sr., Fred Blackwell Jr., Julia Blackwell, Carolyn Nelson, Barbara Brannon, Alfreda Morris, and Gloria Maddox Kirkpatrick. Sitting in the front is Fred Blackwell Sr.

Lee's family values compassion and education. His grandmother insisted that all her children earn a teaching certification, regardless of their major. She knew that educators are world changers. Lee agrees.

"One of the greatest needs for us is re-evaluating the way that we teach kids. Education doesn't change much, but the way we do things doesn't always work for certain kids; that doesn't mean they aren't as smart or as capable, it's just that the 'four walls' system isn't working for them," Lee said.

Lee impacts lives through many channels. He is the student council advisor and adult advisor for Sources of Strength, a peer-led program in which students become the eyes and ears in the hallways to keep a pulse on their classmates' emotional well-being. This year, he initiated "Random Acts of Kindness Week" and is planning a sneaker drive.

Wherever you find Lee, he is creating and inspiring positive changes in the world, honoring his family's generational values. GN



▲ Lee Brannon serves East Middle School in Tullahoma.



Lee serves East Middle  
School in Tullahoma







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# HONORING ANCESTRAL FOOTSTEPS

A local historian preserves  
the heritage of Native  
Americans forced to  
endure a treacherous trek.

BY BECCA ROBERTS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BROOKE SNYDER

**W**ALKERS OF all ages stand in the chilled breeze of an October morning in Franklin County as raindrops drizzle from the gray clouds above. The crowd waits in reverence at the Old Cowan Road Park pavilion as a guest speaker stands to recite a Cherokee blessing. Some dress in authentic clothing from the 1800s, and some ride horses and wagons, while others walk in modern clothes — all are welcome. Guest speakers present the history of the people they have gathered to honor — the Cherokee people who were forcefully removed from their homes and made to walk on what would be named “the Trail of Tears,” due to inhumane conditions, treacherous trails, and numerous fatalities.

Kathy Pack, a member of the Franklin County Historical Society and the Tennessee Trail of Tears Association,



▲ Kathy Pack spending time reading and researching about Cherokee families.







▲ Pack opens up the Cherokee Immigration Records from 1829-35. Pack's great-great-grandmother was Cherokee.

has worked for the Franklin County Library as the IT Specialist and its history liaison for nearly nine years. She has been involved with the Trail of Tears walk since 2019, when the library first partnered with the walk's founder, Floyd Ayers. Ayers hosted it on his own for the first walk in 2018, and he was instrumental in getting Trail of Tears markers placed along the route in Franklin County, along with David Moore. Pack said Ayers did a wonderful job leading this event until he died last September, and the library continues his noble work.

Pack is passionate about educating the community about history, especially the Trail of Tears. The library offers history-based programming in addition to quarterly historical society programs. Her mission is to honor the families affected by this tragic event and inform the public so that it does not repeat the devastating behaviors of the past.



We do have to acknowledge our past so that we don't repeat things like this, and so that we can try to reconcile the best we can.

KATHY PACK





*Kathy Pack spending time reading and researching about Cherokee families.*





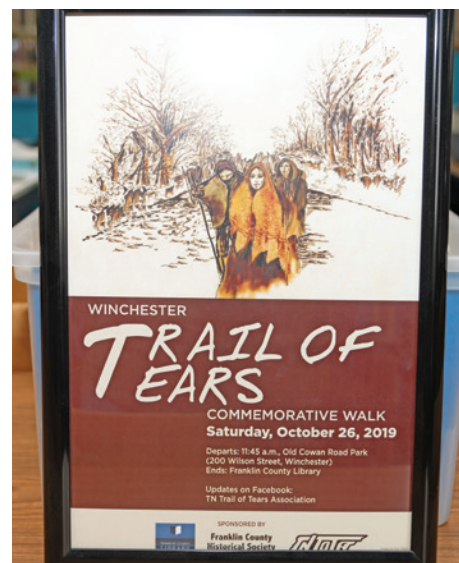


"We do have to acknowledge our past so that we don't repeat things like this, and so that we can try to reconcile the best we can. We walk in the footsteps of those who walked through Winchester in October of 1838 to honor them and their resilience and dedication to survive and thrive despite the cruelty and hardships endured on the Trail of Tears," Pack said.

In fact, Pack's own great-great-grandmother was Cherokee, and this personal connection strengthens her compassion for those affected by the Trail of Tears. Pack said one of the most impactful quotes from this tragedy was from a Confederate soldier who accompanied the Cherokee on the trail, who said, "I had been through the Civil War and

saw men shot to pieces and slaughtered by the thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruelest work I ever saw."

This is why walkers solemnly traverse this local stretch of the Trail of Tears each year. Historical documentation confirms that the Cherokee people passed through Winchester on Oct. 29, 1838, so the event is always held in October. The walk ends at the library, where walkers find food offerings, including Indian tacos, displays from local state parks with artifacts and Atlatl (spear weapon) throwing demonstrations. It is an incredible opportunity to learn about and honor extraordinary people, an event that Pack hopes will continue to grow each year. **GN**

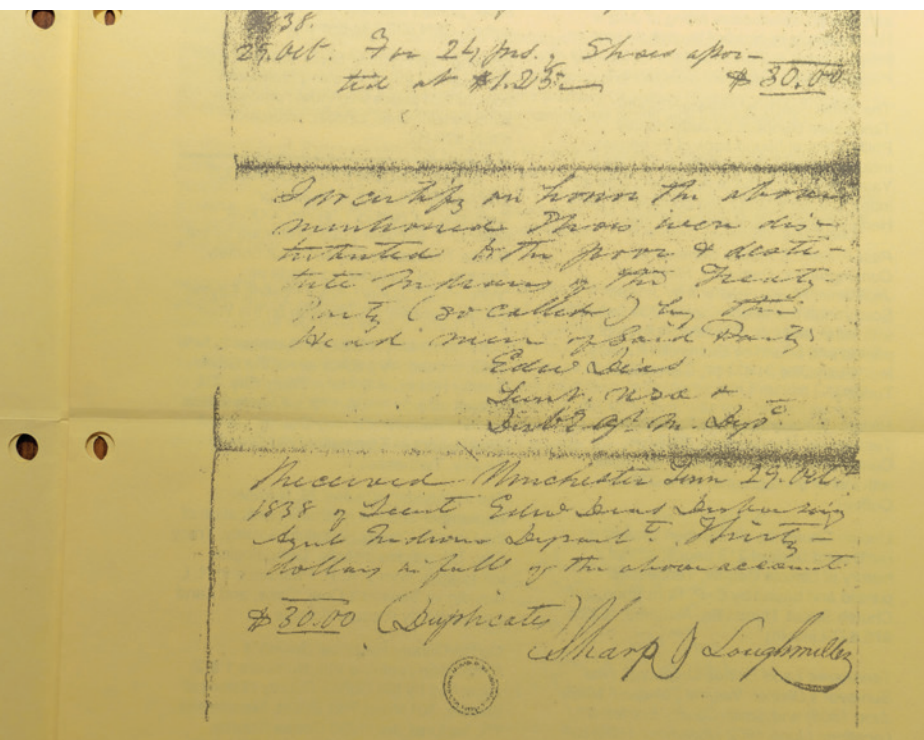


▲ Many gather at the Old Cowan Road Park to walk the path of those who suffered.



walkers are welcomed.

ity of Cherokee traveled overland on foot on the horses and in wagons.



▲ A voucher dated Oct. 29, 1838, for 24 pairs of shoes purchased for \$30 from Sharp and Loughmiller.









en- Jochono, 174  
John, 346, 352  
(Shawnee), 74  
Bighead, 84, 338  
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GN





# PASSING THE GAVEL

Four generations of  
Lynch lawyers serve  
Franklin County, with a  
fifth on the way.

BY BECCA ROBERTS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BROOKE SNYDER

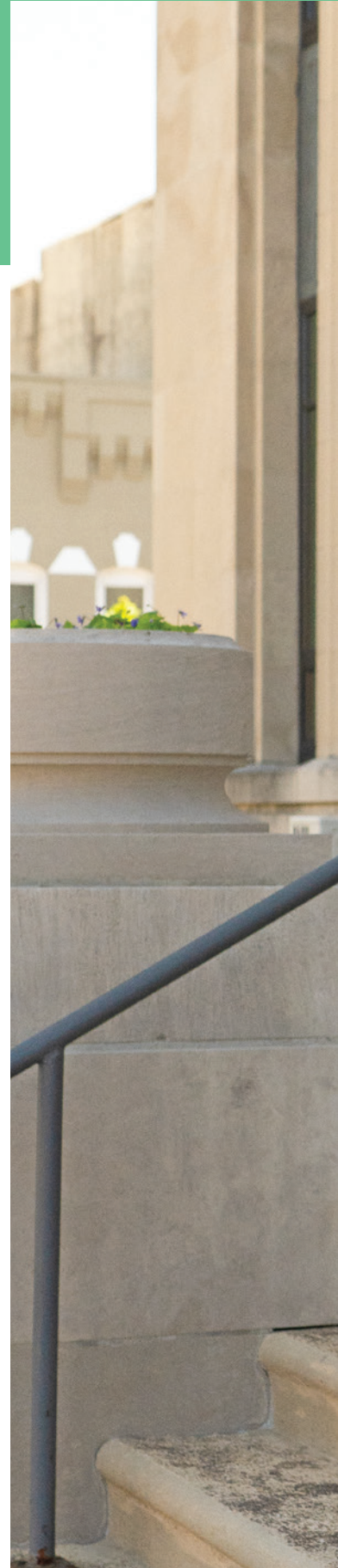
**B**EN LYNCH'S office is inundated with portraits of his relatives — all notable lawyers. The Lynch family has owned their law firm, Lynch, Lynch, and Lynch Attorneys at Law, for generations. Their story began with J.K.P. Pearson, a “shade tree lawyer” during the Civil War era who practiced law outdoors during hot Tennessee summers. This grew into five generations of lawyers who continue to serve Franklin County.

Ben Lynch studied at Lipscomb University and Vanderbilt Law School, while most of his family pursued law at Cumberland Law School. He joined the family practice in 1963, working alongside his father, Pat B. Lynch, and his grandfather — both

of whom were also leaders at Winchester Church of Christ. The men were known for winning cases, typically on the side of right. However, Ben shared one humorous story about his grandfather, who once got a local ruffian acquitted of several crimes. Eventually, the man lost his life, and when people gathered to view the body, one attendee quipped, “Don’t let Frank Lynch in here. He might get him out of this one, too!”

Growing up in a family full of lawyers, Ben knew he wanted to follow in his family’s footsteps. He enjoyed presenting cases before a jury, but said most cases are settled in mediation now.

Ben has won many cases; one difficult case went all the way to the 6th Circuit Court of Ap-







Maggie Lynch,  
B Patrick Lynch,  
and Ben Lynch





*Maggie Lynch, Ben Lynch, and Benjamin Patrick Lynch represent three active generations of Lynch family attorneys, pictured together beneath portraits of their esteemed predecessors.*







**I have both my dad and granddad looking out for me and helping me. They teach me a lot and give me advice about what I'm going to deal with in the future.**

## MAGGIE LYNCH

peals, which is one level away from the Supreme Court. Even against teams of New York lawyers, he won that major case. The Lynch family has a reputation for excellence, as evidenced by Ben's recollection about his father.

"I heard others say, 'I've got the smartest, best lawyer on my side — I've got Pat. I can't lose the lawsuit,'" Ben said.

His father served in the state legislature, and his brothers also became lawyers. Pat B. Lynch left big shoes to fill — and they have filled them well.

Ben continues to be an example and advisor for his son, Benjamin Patrick Lynch, and most recently, his granddaughter, Maggie Lynch, named after Ben's wife, Margaret Lynch. Maggie works as a court clerk in the General Sessions Criminal Court in Franklin County, and she also helps out at her family's firm. In the fall, she will head to the Nashville School of Law and is considering real estate law, like her father. But she plans to follow her grandfather's advice and not rush the decision.

"Granddaddy always tells me, 'Don't rule anything out.' Go in with an open mind and you might like things you didn't expect," Maggie said. She is even considering a judgeship someday.

She is grateful for her close-knit family, especially the relationship she shares with her grandfather.

"I call him about anything and everything. I have both my dad and granddad looking out for me and helping me. They teach me a lot and give me advice about what I'm going to deal with in the future," Maggie said.

She is honored to carry on her family's heritage and looks forward to serving in her hometown as the next generation of Lynch lawyers. **GN**



▲ A photo of Ben Lynch and his wife, Margaret, taken in the mid-1980s — a reminder of the namesake of his granddaughter and the family's enduring bond.



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# 'SMOKIN' GOOD TIMES'

*High on the Hog Festival draws thousands*  
*By Amanda E. West // Photography by Brooke Snyder*

**C**ORNHOLE TOURNAMENTS, carnival rides, live music, loads of craft vendors and a world-famous barbecue competition — this was the annual High on the Hog Festival where there's always "smokin' good times for the whole family."

This year's theme was "Follow us to the Hog." Coordinator Brenda Long said, "Mother Nature was very kind to us. The weather was beautiful. This event kicked off on the second Saturday in May, and the barbecue competition was held on the third weekend. The Kiwanis Club of Franklin County is celebrating 25 years, and we've sponsored this event for the last 22. Over 10,000 attended the carnival, which is a fundraiser for local children's charities. We are still tallying the amount of funds raised, but in 2024, we raised over \$25,000 with 100% of funds staying inside our county."

Because of the excitement surrounding this annual event, the Kiwanis Club plans to host more events throughout the year. They invite visitors to come out next May for the best High on the Hog Festival yet. According to Long, a community 5K is in the works for September, and because the disc golf competition was such a success, they plan to add another level next year.

The Kansas City Barbecue contest is part of the largest barbecue competition in the world, with over 20,000 members worldwide.

"We had competitors from five to six different states in our Kansas City Barbecue competition. The grand prize champion and winner of \$1,000 was Alan Nichols from Belews Creek, North Carolina, who owns DogPatch 'Q' BBQ Team," said Long. **GN**







▲ Alexis Love and Tate Love



▲ Steven and Paige Majors



▲ Williams, Bradford, and Simmons



▲ Robert Hunt



▲ Regina Blankenship, Mindy Morris, and Ava Grace Morris



▲ Meyia Vanzent, Montrez Vanzent, Nyaa Vanzent, Ezekiel Vanzent, and Tristan Holt



▲ Teagan Kildoo and Jason Morris



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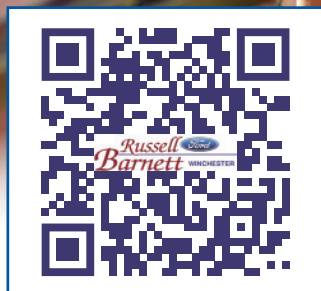
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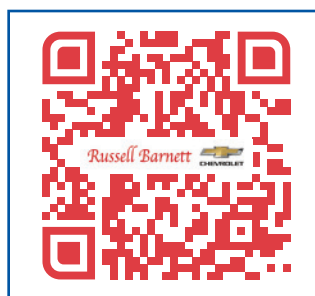


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