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Jeff Banister
Texas Rangers - Catcher/Manager/Coach



FAMOUS TEXANS

Jeffery Todd Banister (born January 15, 1964) is an American retired professional baseball player and current manager of the Texas Rangers of Major League Baseball. Before joining the Rangers, Banister spent 29 years within the organization of the Pittsburgh Pirates as a player and coach in both the Pirates' major and minor league system. Banister played baseball at La Marque High School in La Marque, Texas. He developed bone cancer in his sophomore year, which almost necessitated the amputation of his leg. While playing college baseball for Lee College, he suffered a home plate collision that broke three vertebrae in his neck, leaving him paralyzed for ten days. After rehabilitating, he was named a Junior College All-American the next season, and received a scholarship to the University of Houston, to play for the Houston Cougars baseball team. He was then drafted by the Pirates in 1986. After playing in Minor League Baseball, he appeared in a major league game on July 23, 1991, recording a hit in his only plate appearance. He did not appear in another major league game, and ended his playing career after the 1993 season.

Following his playing career, Banister remained with the Pirates. He served as a manager for their Minor League Baseball affiliates from 1994 through 1998, and then as a minor league and major league field coordinator until 2010. The Pirates considered him for their managerial vacancy before the 2011 season, but hired him as their bench coach. He served in the role through the 2014 season. The Rangers hired Banister as their manager during the 2014-15 offseason, and he was named the American League Manager of the Year for 2015.

Banister attended La Marque High School in La Marque, Texas. At La Marque, Banister played for the school's baseball, basketball, and American football teams. During his sophomore year of high school, Banister injured his right ankle while playing baseball. During an examination of his ankle, which was slow to heal, he was diagnosed with bone cancer. He had developed cysts that required skin grafting to treat. An infection in his leg led to the development of osteomyelitis, which spread from his right ankle to just below his knee. Doctors recommended amputation in order to save the rest of his leg, but Banister refused, as he hoped he would be able to continue his baseball career. Doctors performed seven operations on his leg, which saved it from being amputated. In his senior year, Banister suffered a knee injury playing American football, which nearly led to him being cut from the baseball team due to his decreased mobility. His father suggested he change positions and become a catcher, which allowed him to remain on the baseball team.

OVERVIEW

After retiring as a player, Banister remained with the Pirates' organization. From 1994 through 1998, Banister served as a manager in the Pirates' minor league system. He served as the manager of the Welland Pirates of the New York-Penn League in 1994.

As Banister and Daniels began to discuss the coaching staff for the 2015 season, it was decided that Bogar, who had a 14-8 record after Ron Washington's resignation, would not return to the Rangers under Banister. Banister retained Maddux and hitting coach Dave Magadan on his coaching staff, but third base coach Gary Pettis left for the Astros and first base coach Bengie Molina did not return to the team in that role. Banister guided the Rangers to the American League West division championship with a record of 88 wins and 74 losses. The Rangers would end up losing to the Toronto Blue Jays in the American League Division Series. Banister was named the American League Manager of the Year after the season.

PERSONAL LIFE

Banister was born on January 15, 1964. He is originally from Weatherford, Oklahoma. At the age of six, the Banisters moved from Weatherford to La Marque. His father, Bob, coached Jeff at La Marque High School on both the American football and basketball teams. His mother, Verda, was an algebra teacher at La Marque. He has a sister, Carey. In 1988, his father died at the age of 48 due to a heart attack. His grandfather died of a heart attack three weeks later.

Banister met his wife, Karen, while they were students at the University of Houston. Karen worked as a teacher at Clear Lake High School in Houston. The Banisters have two children:

Alexandra and Jacob. Alexandra is a college volleyball player.

The Banisters reside in Keller, Texas. Banister won the inaugural Gilda Radner Courage Award. In 2011, Banister won the "Pride of the Pirates" award or demonstrating his "sports manship, dedication and outstanding character".



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Parker Tillery

Parker Tillery, son of Michael and Amanda Tillery, and lead trumpeter in the Bright Star Christian School Band, was awarded a position in the Four States Honor Concert Band held on January 14th in Texarkana, Texas. The concert was held in the Performance Arts Center and there were over 200 band students from the states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma performing in two concert bands and one jazz band. Parker rehearsed January 12th, 13th and 14th and then played his concert at 2:00 PM Saturday.

Parker responded, when asked about his experience, "This has been an experience I will never forget, and I plan to place in the 4-States next year" (students are allowed to tryout their sophomore, junior and senior years in high school band).

B.S.C.S. band director, Richard Shanks, commented by saying "Parker is an inspiration to future B.S.C.S. band members to work toward 4-States Honor Band in years to come".



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At The Corral Gate



Friends, as I have mentioned numerous times, there's just two things that can make me stray from the corral gate...that's grandkids, and music. Last week, I strayed BIG TIME and followed the music all the way to Cozumel, Mexico!

Some Texas fans of local Elvis Tribute Artist Josh Davis got aboard for the annual Bobby Sox and Boots Cruise, and I went along for the ride! The Carnival Valor was to sail on January 14 from Galveston, but due to heavy fog in Galveston Bay, we were delayed until the following day. So our-5-day Caribbean cruise became a 4-day excursion with a single port call, at Cozumel. Blue skies, white sand, turquoise water, summer sun on your shoulders...that day ashore was awesome, especially with several cruise liners at the dock. Add amazing sunrises and sunsets on the open sea, and end each day with a fabulous concert by "Elvis", well it was a trip I'll never forget!



Josh' mom Debbie Davis was our "tour guide" as well as sound tech for Josh. I roomed with Laura Raley of Sulphur Springs who operates his merchandise table. Also along was Frank Gray and his daughter Abby of The Woodlands where he is a pastor and a realtor. You may remember him; at one time Frank served as a Worship Leader at Shannon Oaks in Sulphur Springs. While "stranded" in Galveston that first day, the six of us walked "The Strand", the city's renovated old town area which is home to great shopping and La King's Confectionary from 1920's.



At LaKing's Soda Fountain.



Stranded on "the Strand".

Aboard ship, we girls...Abby, Debbie, Laura and myself...did the shops, spa and photo ops, sat stage-side at all the concerts and laughed a lot at dinner in the elegant Washington Dining Room where head waiter "WuWu" kept things lively! Although I am no night owl, I managed to stay up late one night for the ship's 10:15pm "Nightclub" stage show with over-the-top sets and costumes.



Laura, Enola and Debbie.



Enola and Abby.

Elvis lives! thanks to a lady named Carol who books the January Elvis-themed cruise and Freddie Smith, emcee for the past 15 years. Remember, 2017 is the 40th year since Elvis "the King of Rock n Roll" died. Thanks for the memories!

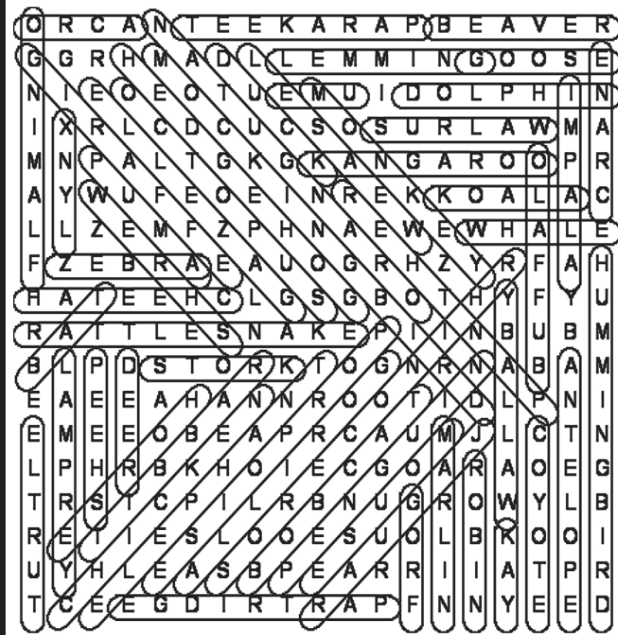
So friends, it's nice to travel but it's oh-so-nice nice to be back home. Til next week, I'll watch for you at the corral gate.

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Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

Every time I even get close to East Texas I call Shelley Cleaver. He lives between Rusk and Jacksonville and has a deep love of Edsel automobiles. He is the publicity guy for the Edsel Owners Association and has attended every annual meeting of that group, no matter where in the country it takes place.

Shelley is interested in the history of his county and is active in all phases of the Cherokee County Historical Association. He appears at events dressed as a civil war soldier and tells tales about his kinfolks who fought in that event.

Mostly, though, Shelley is funny. He has a good time. He ran track for Jacksonville High School and he and his teammates won the state championship in the mile relay. Of course they did it under pressure. They had gone out the previous night when they were supposed to be in their hotel rooms. They were caught and the coach said, "If you win you won't get paddled." So they ran their hearts out. When Shelley got the baton his team was in third place. "I passed those two jokers ahead of me like they were sitting still. Sure enough we got the plaque and the coaches forgot about the whipping. If we hadn't gone out that night we probably would not have set that new record of 3 minutes and 27 seconds. We all ran the fastest we had ever run."

Shelley recorded a song about sitting on the front porch swing. He helped write a cookbook titled Lone Star Licksillet. He is the "go to" person if you want to know about fun festivals in East Texas. He is frequently asked to be the parade marshall at some of those events. He is one popular fellow and is always in a good mood. He is an excellent storyteller. He told me about his grandfather named Bruce Cleaver who had a blacksmith shop in the community of Lone Star. "He made all kinds of wagon wheels, shoed horses, even made caskets to bury people. He'd get this hickory wood to make wagon wheel spokes and it was cut just the right size for stove wood. Some of his neighbors who lived close by had an old house that wasn't built very well and it just had a tin roof. Well my grandpa Bruce started missing that hickory wood, which was hard to come by. He told people around Lone Star somebody was gonna be sorry for stealing his wood. His neighbors bought a new wood burning cook stove from Sears Roebuck. Plum season had come in and they had this number eight tub on the new stove. All of a sudden the cook stove blew up and blew those plum seeds all over the tin ceiling. The couple decided they would sue Sears and Roebuck because the stove blew up. Well, come to find out it was gunpowder that blew the stove up. My grandpa had drilled a hole in one end of a hickory wood log and filled it with black gunpowder. He put a peg over the end so it wouldn't show. The neighbor was stealing the wood at night and didn't notice it. The neighbors decided they would sue Bruce. So they carried it to the courthouse in Rusk. They got on the witness stand and the judge asked them where they got the wood. They admitted it came from the back of Bruce's blacksmith shop. The judge said they ought to pay Bruce for stealing his wood and dismissed the case."

Obits

Wilma Brice

Funeral arrangements for Wilma Brice, of Sulphur Springs are pending with Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Mrs. Brice passed away Tuesday night, January 24, 2017, at her residence.

Aubrey Zane Burkham

Graveside services for Aubrey Zane Burkham, age 80, of Dike, will be held Friday January 27, 2017 at 11:00 A.M. at Conner Cemetery, Dike Texas with Rev. Samuel Glenn officiating.

Mr. Burkham passed away Monday, January 23, 2017, at his residence. He was born on April 30, 1936 in Dike, Texas to Hermon and Marie (Parker) Burkham. He married Nancy Rae Gelnett in Ardmore, Oklahoma on February 16, 1957. He was a retired construction business owner and Texas Longhorn rancher.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy Burkham; sons, Doug Burkham and wife Debbie, Paul Burkham and wife Kim; brother, Mike Burkham; grandchildren, Tiffany Stewart, Jerrod Burkham, Cody Burkham, Alyssa Brady, Caitlin Stroop, Lindsey Burkham, Kolton Sparks, Katelyn Brady and Ryan Brady; numerous great grandchildren.

Zane was preceded in death by his parents and son, Joel Burkham.

Family requests any memorials be made to the National Kidney Foundation, 5429 LBJ Freeway Ste. 250, Dallas, TX 75240 or Kindred Hospice, 2824 Terrell Rd Ste. 500, Greenville, TX, 75402.

Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Robert Dodson

Funeral arrangements for Robert Dodson, age 82, of Kemp, Texas are pending with Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Mr. Dodson passed away Monday, January 23, 2017, at Kemp Care Center, Kemp Texas.

Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Edward Eugene High

Edward Eugene High, age 76, of Sulphur Springs, passed away on Saturday, January 21, 2017 at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. He was born on July 10, 1940 the son of Lacy and Phillis Darlene (Tippett) High. He was married to Joan High and was a retired truck driver.

Ed is survived by his daughter, Karen Callenius; sons, Darrel High, Michael High, Jerry High, Richard Hawkins and Robert Hawkins; sister, Judy Gammill.

He was preceded in death by his wife; parents; sons, Dale High and Gary High.

Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.



Minnie Faye "Ma D" Daniel

Funeral service for Minnie Faye "Ma D" Daniel, age 91, Southlake Texas, will be held at 1:00 P.M. on Friday January 27, 2017 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Chapel with Rev. Justin Wilson officiating. Interment will follow at Cumby Cemetery with Chase Daniel, Josh Skoch, Everett Smith, Mike Burch, Steve Anderson and Vaughn Crowe serving as pallbearers. Visitation will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, January 26, 2017.

Mrs. Daniel passed away Sunday, January 22, 2017 in Grapevine, TX. She was born on March 9, 1925 in Cumby, Texas to John and Minnie (Denton) Smith. She married William Wiley Daniel on January 16, 1946 in Dallas, Texas. She was a homemaker.

Minnie is survived by her son Bill Daniel and his wife Vickie; sister, Jerry Evans; 2 grandchildren.

Eugene McCravey

Funeral service for Eugene McCravey, age 90, of Emory, were Tuesday, 2:00 pm, at Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home Chapel. Interment followed in Dunbar Cemetery. Bro. Benny Chaffin officiated. Visitation was one hour prior to service time at 1:00 pm. Mr. McCravey passed away Saturday, Jan. 21, in Tyler, at Hospice of East Texas.

He was born in Emory, April 26, 1926, to Claude and Bettie Northcutt McCravey. Mr. McCravey married Katie Lou Fischer in Dallas in 1947. He served his country as a soldier in the U.S. Army.

Mr. McCravey was a cattleman most all of his life.

Survivors include: Wife: Katie McCravey of Emory, Daughters: Marian McCravey Justiss (Steven) of Austin; and, Shirley McCravey Buford of Rusk, Sisters: Charlene Gilbert of Coppell, Willie Ruth Tatum of Austin, and, Bobbie Murray of Dallas, Grandchildren: Katherine Elaine Chaffin, Joseph McCravey Justiss, and Daniel McCravey Justiss, Great-Grandchildren: Sean and Seth Chaffin, and Noam Justiss, Numerous other loving family and friends. Preceded in death by: Parents, and 1 Brother, Edmond McCravey.



Christal Jean "C.J." Carter

Funeral services for Christal "C.J." Jean Carter, age 23, of Sulphur Springs were conducted at 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel with Bro. Denver Hines officiating. Interment followed at Greenview Cemetery with Erick Barnes, Keith Nicholson, Tanner Nicholson, Emmanuel Rutledge, Lucas Knighton and John Pool serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers were Charles Carter, Charles Knighton and Thurman Newkirk. Visitation was held from 1:00 to 2:00 one hour prior to service time. C.J. passed away on Friday, January 20, 2017 at Christus Mother Frances Hospital in Sulphur Springs.

C.J. was born on December 9, 1993 in Sulphur Springs the daughter of Chris Carter and Dana Goldsmith. C.J. worked as a cashier at Burger King. She is survived by her husband Dwade Wilcox, son, Braeden Wilcox of Sulphur Springs, mother, Dana Goldsmith of Sulphur Springs, brother, Jonathan Smith of Sulphur Springs and sister, Danyelle Carter of Saltillo.

She was preceded in death by her father.

Arrangements were under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home.

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