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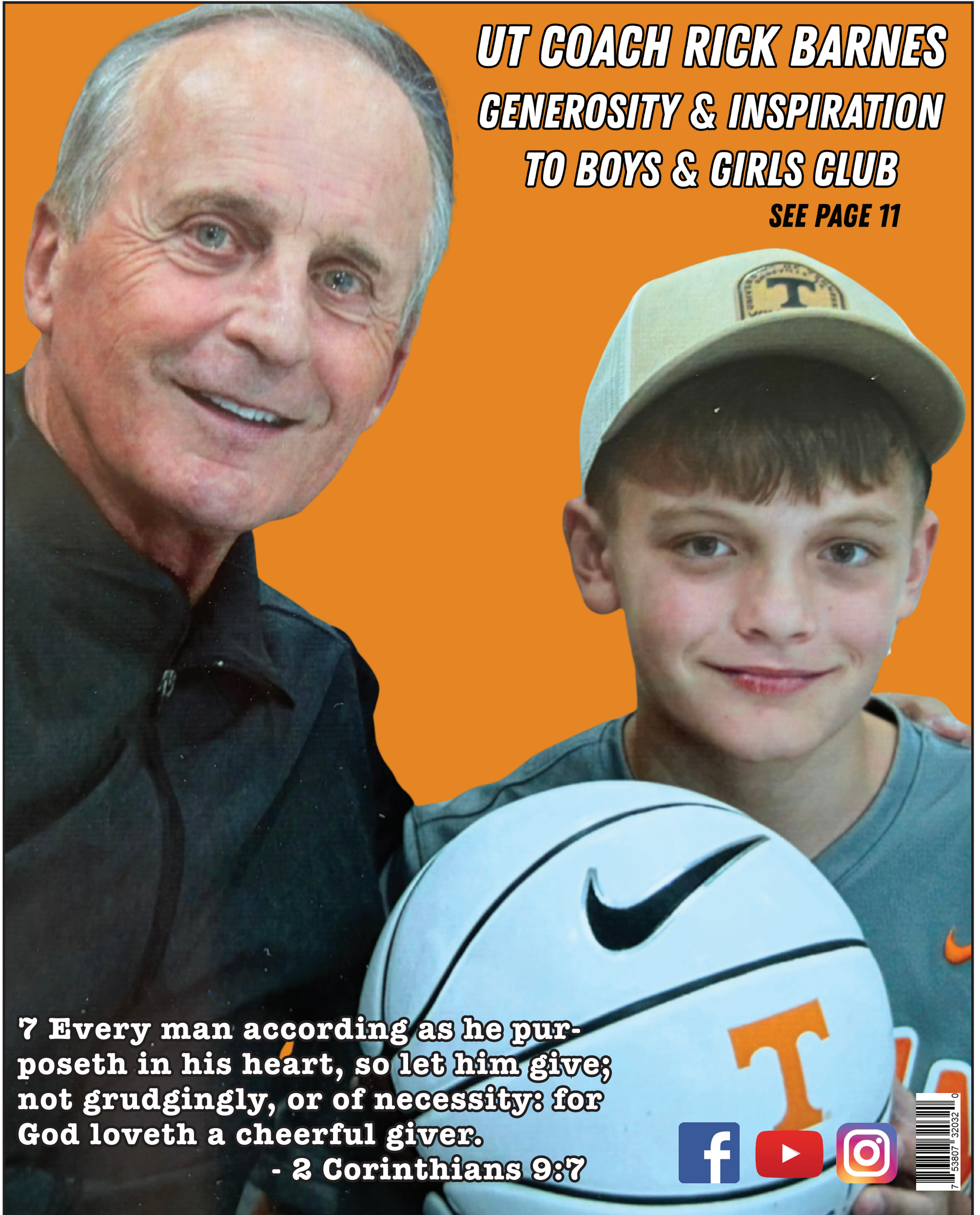
Volume 12 Number 36

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

More Than A Newspaper.

75¢

UT COACH RICK BARNES
GENEROSITY & INSPIRATION
TO BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
SEE PAGE 11



**7 Every man according as he pur-
poseth in his heart, so let him give;
not grudgingly, or of necessity: for
God loveth a cheerful giver.**

- 2 Corinthians 9:7



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PUBLISHER:

TOMMY LEE FRANCIS

PUBLISHER@MOCOTODAY.COM

EDITOR:

HEATHER FRANCIS

EDITOR@MOCOTODAY.COM

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WEEKLY WEATHER



TUE 9/29  78° 52°

WED 9/30  80° 62°

THU 10/1  82° 59°

FRI 10/2  81° 60°

SAT 10/3  81° 61°

SUN 10/4  76° 56°

MON 10/5  72° 50°



Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist

Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

Overdosed, Who Me?

Every month Mimi gives Ms Ivory and me our medicines. One is for flea and tick prevention and the other is to protect against heart worms.

Well, the one to prevent heart worms is YUMMY! Mimi always gives us the gross one before the good one.

She gave me both of mine. Then, she was giving Ms Ivory the disgusting one and put the other one down, so she could use both hands. Ms Ivory was in Pappys lap during all of this. So, I jumped up there and then it happened!

I saw the yummy treat that Mimi calls medicine and I pounced on it. I gobbled it up so quick, I have never swallowed so fast in my life!

Mimi said, "Oh, NO! AVERY PEARL!" I knew then, I was in T-R-O-U-B-L-E. She tried to get it out of my mouth, before it went down. She wasn't fast enough! I was proud of myself because Ms Ivory is always taking my food and toys. NaNa-NaNa Boo-Boo I got her treat!

Any-woof, I haven't saw Mimi that upset since I broke my leg. I thought to myself, "What's wrong woman? All I did was get an extra treat."

She got the box and called the company. I heard her tell them that I OVER-DOSED! Me, sweet Ms Avery Pearl overdosed. I don't know what that means, but it must've been bad for Mimi and Pap both to be upset.

Well, it took a few minutes for the kind lady named Ms Ashley to tell Mimi that eventhough, I took too much, it was still considered in the safe range for my size. Mimi was so thankful to that sweet woman for ensuring her that I would be okay, she almost cried. Ms Ashley told Mimi that I may get an upset stomach, but to keep an eye on me for a few days. Mimi assured her that she would.

When Mimi got off the phone, she hugged me and told me that I was in T-R-O-U-B-L-E and to never, ever do anything like that again. She gave me ear scratches and belly rubs, while telling me that she wuffs me.

So far, I have not had any issues from the "overdose." I am just my happy little self. Thank the Lord.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.



“ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY CANNOT COME AT ANY COST” WHY I OPPOSE THE NUCLEAR LIFECYCLE INNOVATION CAMPUS PROPOSAL

After reviewing Tennessee's proposed participation in the federal Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus project and considering what it could mean for the communities I represent, my conclusion is straightforward: I cannot support this project moving forward as currently proposed. I have shared my concerns with the Governor publicly, and I want my position to be unmistakably clear to my constituents in the 38th House District and in neighboring Morgan County.

Supporters point to billions of dollars in investment, thousands of jobs, and new infrastructure, but those benefits go to the county that hosts the campus, not the counties where the nuclear waste is stored. I advocate every day for Rural Tennessee to be considered when opportunity knocks, because the Upper Cumberland and rural East Tennessee have not always shared in the growth that Nashville, Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Memphis have enjoyed. But we need to be clear about what is actually being proposed. This is not simply a new power plant, research facility, or manufacturing operation. Tennessee's proposal contemplates short- and long-term nuclear material storage at satellite locations outside the primary Oak Ridge campus. Expanding nuclear research and energy production is one thing. Asking rural Tennessee communities to become part of the nation's nuclear storage system is another. That is where I draw the line.

Clay, Pickett, Fentress, Morgan, and Scott counties should not be asked to store nuclear waste, and to carry the long-term responsibility and uncertainty that comes with it, in exchange for promises of economic development. These communities are more than locations on a map. They are home to families, businesses, farms, and a way of life generations have worked to protect, along with Dale Hollow Lake, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, and countless creeks, woods, and wildlife areas. Do we really want to put them at risk?

I support nuclear energy, the work underway at Oak Ridge, American energy independence, and the good-paying jobs nuclear development can create. But supporting nuclear energy does not require supporting every nuclear project. Our sparse population should not make our voice, or our stake in decisions that carry consequences for generations, any less important.

The choice before us is not for or against nuclear energy. It is whether this particular proposal, in this particular form, is right for the communities we have been elected to represent. I do not believe it is, and no level of investment can guarantee the protection of this beautiful five-county region. That is why I oppose Tennessee moving forward with the Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus proposal.

KEISLING
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



KELLY KEISLING SERVES AS STATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR HOUSE DISTRICT 38 WHICH ENCOMPASSES MACON, CLAY, PICKETT, SCOTT & PART OF FENTRESS COUNTIES.

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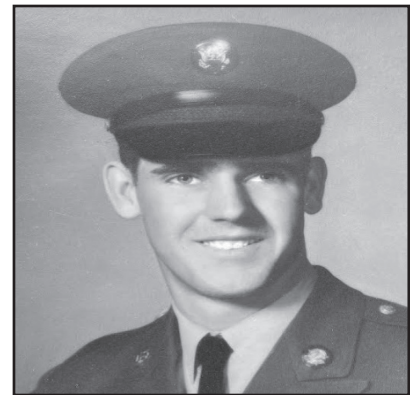
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— In Loving Memory —

Thomas “Tom” Ray Sexton, 78
United States Army Veteran, Vietnam War Vet.



Thomas “Tom” Ray Sexton, age 78, went home to be with the Lord on August 26, 2026 at home surrounded by family.

He is preceded in death by his parents JR and Pauline Wyrick Sexton; mother and father-in-law Arvil and Hester Tilson; precious granddaughter Lee-Ann Taylor; brother David Sexton; sisters Kathy Weatherford and Brenda Melhorn; sisters-in-law Faye Jones, and Wanda Emrihen; brothers-in-law Ray, Paul, Don Tilson and Paul Weatherford.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years Lois Tilson; daughter Crystal Sexton; very special granddaughter Tori Duncan; sister Sherry (Robert) Laymance; brother Merrill (Susan)

Sexton, special sister-in-law Betty Tilson Hobbs (Will); life long best friends who have been there through it all, Doyle Miller and Ronnie Phillips and a host of nieces and nephews.

Tom spent two years serving in the Army during the Vietnam War and that is one of his proudest achievements.

The family will have a funeral on August 29, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at Fork Mountain Church in New River and interment at Beech Grove Cemetery with Bro. Roy Langley and Randell Landrum officiating.

The family would like to thank Best Homecare and Quality Hospice, especially April, for all they did for us during this time.

“Until we meet again, Pap, we love you”

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Thomas “Tom” Ray Sexton.

Shirley Mae Underwood, 82



Shirley Mae Underwood age 82, of Sunbright passed peacefully on Monday, August 25 at the Cumberland Medical Center with her son and daughter at her side.

She was preceded in death by her husband, David Underwood, Parents Orville and Nellie Galloway, Brothers Harold and Buddy Galloway, Sisters, Wanda and Clara.

Three sons survive her: Bill (Crystal), John (Ginger) and Paul Underwood, Daughter: Faydra. Grandchildren: Eugene Underwood, David (Stephanie), Hope (Dylan), Rachel Underwood, Tyler, Savana, Marla, Mason Underwood, and Logan and Shelby England. Also, several great grandchildren.

Shirley was joyful woman who believed Jesus Christ was her Lord and Savior. She did many jobs during her time here on earth but shined when she could bless or help others. She had many special friends and was a grandmother to all.

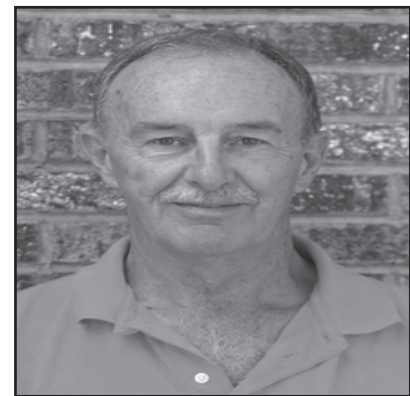
Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Shirley Mae Underwood.

Psalm 86:4-5

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Bobby Dale Crouch, 73



Bobby Dale Crouch, 73, of Shady Grove, passed away peacefully on August 29, 2026, at Parkwest Medical Center.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Gordon Crouch and Mary Schneider, and his grandparents, Arthur and Susie Nance.

Bobby is survived by his wife, Elinor Crouch; his son, Cale Crouch and wife Amanda,

Stepdaughter Telese Sietsema and his grandchildren, Caleigh, Evan, and Reese Crouch, Ethan and Sophia Sietsema.

He is also survived by his brothers, Joe Kerger; Howard Schneider and wife Debbie; Dani Schneider and wife Tami;

and Albert Schneider and wife Kim; as well as his aunt, Mildred Painter, and uncles, Ralph Nance and Bill Nance along with a host of friends and family.

Bobby retired from Morgan County Correctional Complex. He also owned and operated Performance Body Shop for several years. Bobby was passionate about racing and cars. After retirement, he spent his time hauling cars, trailers and heavy equipment across the country as well as traveling with his wife.

Family has chosen private graveside service.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Bobby Dale Crouch.

Julia Grace Byrge, 88



Julia Grace Byrge, age 88, of Devonia passed away August 29, 2026 at Diversicare in Oak Ridge. She was the daughter of the late Eli and Willie Lively Byrge.

Julie enjoyed spending time with family, crocheting and crossword puzzles.

She is preceded in death by her parents; brothers Cordis Byrge, Johnny Byrge, Curtis Byrge; sisters Mary Daugherty and infant sister Laura Byrge.

She leaves behind niece Rhonda (Michael) Byrge; nephew Randy Daughtery (Georgia Phillips), Andy Daugherty, Peter Daugherty, Lee (Laura) Daugherty. Also survived by great nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

The family would like to send a special thanks to Diversicare and Amedysis Hospice for their extended care during this difficult time.

The family will have a graveside service Wednesday, September 2, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Grave Hill Cemetery in Devonia with Bro. Danny Lawson officiating.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Julia Grace Byrge.

— In Loving Memory —

Franklin Lee Hester Jr.



He is survived by wife Syble Hester, daughter and son-in-law, Megan & Caleb Mullins, and grandsons Mason & Avery Mullins.

Frank also leaves behind sister Debbie & Jesse Haney, nephew Wayne Haney & wife Virginia, special nieces and nephews Cassie, Caleb, Addie, Sadie, Toby, Lisa, Matthew, and Erica,

Franklin Lee Hester Jr. went home to be with the Lord September 9th, peacefully, at his home with his loving wife of 34 years by his side. He fought a short battle with cancer. Frank loved the Lord and was ready to go to his heavenly home.

He was a loving and devoted husband, father, and Papaw. He had a laugh and smile that lit up every room he was in. His passion was cars, specifically Mopar, and was known as the Mopar man, and knew every part under the hood of any car. He had many lifelong friends who visited often to laugh about the good ol' days and share memories. Frank was loved by many.

He was preceded in death by his son Jeffery Cross, brother Bobbie Hester, parents Charles and Violet Perkey, grandparents Jesse and Vesta Burgess, and mother-in-law Syble Roberts.

sister-in law Linda Hester, Aunt Glenda & Herbert Daugherty, special great nieces Cassi and Latisha, sisters-in-law Kathy & Tai DeBlonk, Della Murray, and Faye Dagnan, brother-in-law Donnie Roberts, and many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

The family will receive friends Friday, September 11, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Funeral services will be Saturday at 11:00 a.m. at the Wartburg Church of Nazarene with Bro. Sam Wood and Bro. William VanNorstran officiating. Interment to follow at Piney Grove Cemetery in Harriman.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Franklin "Junior" Hester.

Rose Ann (Jones) Aytes, 78



Aytes, a sister Mary Adkins, niece Jessica Martin, brother-in-law George Martin, and sister-in-law Sheila Aytes.

Rose is survived by her daughter Sonya (James) Williams, son Travis Aytes, grandsons Rylan and Crimson Aytes, sisters Teresa Martin of Clinton, Brenda Tucker (Buddy) of Ozark, Alabama, brother-in-law Gary (Glenna) Aytes of Rockwood, and sister-in-law Kathy (Tom) Muse of Knoxville.

The family will gather for a private graveside service at Frankfort Community Church.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Rose Ann Jones Aytes.

Rose Ann (Jones) Aytes, passed away at the age of 78 on Monday, September 14, 2026 after a lingering illness. Rose was born in Oliver Springs, Tennessee on January 4th, 1948, daughter of Garfield and Lena Mae Jones of Coalfield.

She was preceded in death by her husband William David

Danny Lee Hutson, 76
Veteran



Danny was preceded in death by his parents, Ellard and Polly Brown, and his brother, Glen Brown.

Danny leaves behind his beloved wife, Margaret Hutson; his children, Sandy, Daniel, and James; his grandchildren, Sarah, Preston, Jonathan, Kelly, and Dale; and his great-grandchildren, Zoe, Hattie, Rosie, and Luke; and his sister, Connie Davis; and two beloved friends that stood by him and cared for him until the end, Kelly Swint and Kenneth Hicks.

In Loving Memory of Danny Lee Hutson

Danny Lee Hutson, 76, of Sunbright, Tennessee, passed away on September 10, 2026.

Danny was a man who rarely sat still for long. He was a true jack of all trades and seemed to have a knack for fixing, building, or figuring out just about anything. If something was broken, Danny was likely the person you called.

Danny had a lifelong love of cars. He enjoyed fixing them, building them, and racing them. His hands were always busy creating something or working on the next project. One of his greatest accomplishments was building the home where he and his beloved wife, Margaret, spent their life together.

Danny was known for his generosity and his willingness to help anyone who needed him. He gave freely of his time, talents, and knowledge and never expected anything in return. He was simply the kind of man who believed that if you could help someone, you did.

When he wasn't working on something, Danny was always ready for a little fun. He never turned down a game of horseshoes, a chance to go fishing, or an opportunity to light off some fireworks.

Above all else, Danny was a God-fearing man who loved his family deeply. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and the love he had for his family will continue to live on in each of them.

Danny will be remembered for his hardworking hands, generous heart, willingness to lend a helping hand, and his ability to stay busy. His family and friends will miss his presence, his stories, and his companionship.

Although Danny may have finally put down his tools, the things he built; both with his hands and within the hearts of those who loved him, will remain for generations to come.

He lived a full life, worked hard, loved deeply, helped generously, and left this world having made it a better place for those around him.

Danny Hutson will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered, and never forgotten.

The family will receive friends Monday, September 14, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-2:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 2:00 p.m. Interment will follow in the Union Grove Cemetery in Sunbright with Military Honors.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Danny Lee Hutson.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.



— In Loving Memory —

Michael Stephen Brown, 71
United States Coast Guard Veteran



Michael Stephen Brown, 71, passed away on September 9, 2026, leaving behind a lifetime defined by faith, hard work, devotion, laughter, kindness, and an immeasurable love for his family.

Michael was born on July 13, 1955, to Charles and Dorothy Brown. Throughout his life, he was a man deeply rooted in his faith and devoted to providing for and caring for the people he loved. He worshipped at St. Mary's Catholic Church and carried his faith with him throughout his life.

For more than 50 years, Michael worked as a U.S. Coast Guard Licensed Chief Marine Engineer. He was also a proud member of LIUNA Local 818. His long career reflected the work ethic that defined him—a hardworking and dedicated provider who always made sure his family was cared for.

Of all his accomplishments, however, Michael's greatest source of pride was his family.

He was a devoted husband to the love of his life, Joan Mary Brown, affectionately known as "Beebus." Michael and Joan shared 51 years of marriage and built a beautiful life together. Some of Michael's favorite moments were also the simplest: sitting on the porch beside Joan, spending quality time together and enjoying the life they had created.

Michael loved classic rock, Joan's home-cooked meals with their family, and spending time with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He could always tell a good, funny story and had a way of bringing laughter to the people around him.

One of the things that made Michael so special was his genuine kindness. Anyone who had the chance to meet him remembered what a nice and good-hearted man he was. Michael never met a stranger and was liked by all who knew him. He believed in doing the right thing and, throughout his life, consistently chose the path he believed was right. His kindness, character, and ability to make people feel welcome left an impression on everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Most importantly, Michael never let his family wonder how much they were loved. He made sure to tell them often. At the end of each night came the familiar words that will forever remain

in the hearts of those who loved him: "Sweet dreams, don't let the bed bugs bite. Mwahh."

Michael was a remarkable example of what it meant to be a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, and friend. His family and those fortunate enough to know him could look to him for wisdom, strength, guidance, and love. Although his presence will be deeply missed, the lessons he taught and the love he gave will continue to live through his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren for generations to come.

Michael was preceded in death by his parents, Charles and Dorothy Brown, and his brother, Charles Brown.

Michael is survived by his beloved wife of 51 years, Joan Mary Brown; his children, Danielle Brown; Michael and Christina Brown; and Stephenie Brown Bozdogan; his grandchildren, Mikhaila and Dillon Wilson, Gabrielle and Noe Banales, Ethan and Hannah Argus, Abigail Argus, Brielle Brown, Lilliana Brown, and Myriam Bozdogan; and his great-grandchildren, Owen Wilson, Hudson Wilson, James Holloway, Juniper Holloway, Caspian Argus, and Aliana Banales.

He is also survived by his sister, Cheryl and Kevin Dunne; his brother, Thomas and Lisa Brown; his brothers-in-law,

Robert and Judy Mutch, John Mutch, and Roy Mutch; and his sister-in-law, Joyce and Ryan Baldauff.

Family and friends are invited to gather in Michael's memory at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on Saturday, September 12, 2026. Family and friends will gather from 10:00 a.m. until 10:45 a.m., with the funeral service beginning at 11:00 a.m. A reception will follow at 12:00 p.m.

Michael leaves behind more than memories. He leaves behind a legacy—a family shaped by his love, strengthened by his example, and filled with stories that will continue to be told.

His wisdom will be carried forward. His funny stories will be repeated. His music will bring back memories. His kindness will be remembered. His love will remain in the family he worked so hard to provide for.

And at the end of the day, those who loved him will always be able to hear his familiar words:

"Sweet dreams, don't let the bed bugs bite. Mwahh."

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Michael S. Brown.

Harvey Eugene Ward



On Saturday afternoon of Sept 12, 2026, Harvey Eugene Ward passed away peacefully at his house. He departed this world for his heavenly home and his last words spoken were THANK YOU JESUS!

A retired coal miner, Eugene loved Jesus, his family and his country. He was a wonderful Godly example for anyone who

was blessed to be part of his life.

He believed actions revealed a person's character more than words and never wanted any recognition for his good deeds. His family could call on him anytime for guidance, wisdom and love. He will be deeply missed, but the knowledge he shared will be passed down for generations to come.

Preceded in death by his late wives Dovie in 2001 and Norma in 2019. Siblings Charles F Ward Jr, Florine Jackson and Kenneth Ward. Great Great Grandson Ayvian.

Survived by his children Garry, Teena & Gina Ward.

Bonus Sons and daughter in

laws: Jr & Teresa Meredith, Jeff & Carol Meredith, Jason & Carolee Meredith.

Grandchildren: Eric (Stephanie) Oakes, Derick (Stephanie) Oakes, Craig Ward, Jen (Will) Patterson, Kelly (Jason) Burton, Adam (Shayna) Montgomery, Morgan Meredith, Farrah Meredith, Matthew Meredith, David Ward and Allison Ward.

11 Great Grandchildren and his baby sister Shirley (Charles) Foster.

A host of nieces and nephews, additionally family members, church family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family request that donations be made to American Heart Association or

Mossy Grove Baptist Church.

The family will receive friends Saturday, September 19, 2026 at Mossy Grove Baptist Church from 11:00-12:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 12:00 p.m. with Bro. Jim Disney officiating. Interment will follow in the Western Cemetery in Coalfield.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Harvey Eugene Ward.

— In Loving Memory —

Jeff Wiley Hall, 60



Jeff Wiley Hall, age 60, of Deer Lodge passed away at his home on September 1, 2026. He was born April 27, 1966 to Randall and Eva Hall.

Jeff loved working on Mopar cars, camping and fishing, traveling, he loved teaching and his leadership was amazing to watch. But most of all he loved his family and spending as much time with them as he could. He loved his job at Morgan County Correctional Facility where he gave 29 years of his dedication. He was a correctional Sargent/K9.

He is preceded in death by his mom Eva Maxine Hawn Hall.

He leaves behind wife of 9 years April Hall; children Gabby Hall (Ronald Smith), Michael (Laquita) Hall, and RT Hall, stepchildren Mahala (Nicholas) Miller, Bailey Norris; grandchildren Zoie, Tennessee, Eva, Lilly, Kielon, Kimora, Lola, and Lyla; father Randall Hall; brother Scott Hall; sister Miranda Hall and a host of extended family and wonderful friends who will miss him dearly.

The family will receive friends Saturday, September 5, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-2:00 p.m. with a memorial to follow at 2:00 p.m. with Bro. Mitch Hawn officiating.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Jeff Wiley Hall.

Carolyn Beatrice Bell, 63



Carolyn Beatrice Bell, age 63, of Knoxville, TN, passed away on August 10th, 2026. She was born on October 10th, 1962, in Knoxville, TN, to William Bell and Wanda Bell Roche.

Carolyn will be remembered for her warmth, quiet strength, sense of humor and devotion to her family.

She is survived by her Mother, Wanda, Sister, Charlotte, children Mitchell, Dustin and Aaron, grandchildren Alex, Austin, Kamden, Sierra, Alek, Nick and Ansley, great nieces Shaianne and Ella, great nephews Coy and Cash and many friends, and was preceded in death by her father, William Bell, her nephew Doug Mount and grandson Brayden Pearson.

A memorial service will be held on August 22nd at Schubert Funeral Home. Her family is grateful for the kindness and support shown during this time.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Carolyn Beatrice Bell.

Psalm 123:1

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

Linda Hope Bunch, 74



Linda Hope Bunch, age 74, of Petros, Tennessee, departed our world to be with our heavenly Father and her loving husband William Bunch on August 23rd at 12:42 am. Paradise gained a wonderful soul and she once again can hold the hand of her prince charming and hear his voice. They had been together for 59 years and she yearned to hear his voice once again.

She is survived by her two sons Roger and Brian; grandchildren Michael Bunch, Matthew Bunch, Marrkus Bunch, Jacob Bunch and Allison Bunch;

great grandchildren Jaxson Bunch, LeLand Bunch and Jase Bunch; niece Elizabeth Lawson; sister Nancy Matlock and sister-in-law, her little Betty Boop, who along with Nancy stayed by her side through it all. She was a beautiful butterfly in this world, bringing much love and joy to us all and she will be sadly missed. We rest easy knowing that in her last days she professed the Lord Jesus Christ to be her savior. He always was and always will be, she said.

We will miss you. Go fly high our sweet butterfly, loving mother, grandmother, sister and dear friend. Go be seated with our Lord and hold your husband's hand. Until we meet again, we will all love you forever.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Linda Bunch.

JP Durham Jr., 58



JP Durham Jr., age 58, born August 28 1967, passed away Sunday August 23, 2026 at home surrounded by his family, his life-long partner and best friend of 40 years Millie Howard Durham; sons Justin Durham and Joshua Durham (Marian).

JP is also survived by many family members, several aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews that were dear to his heart. Also, his dog and

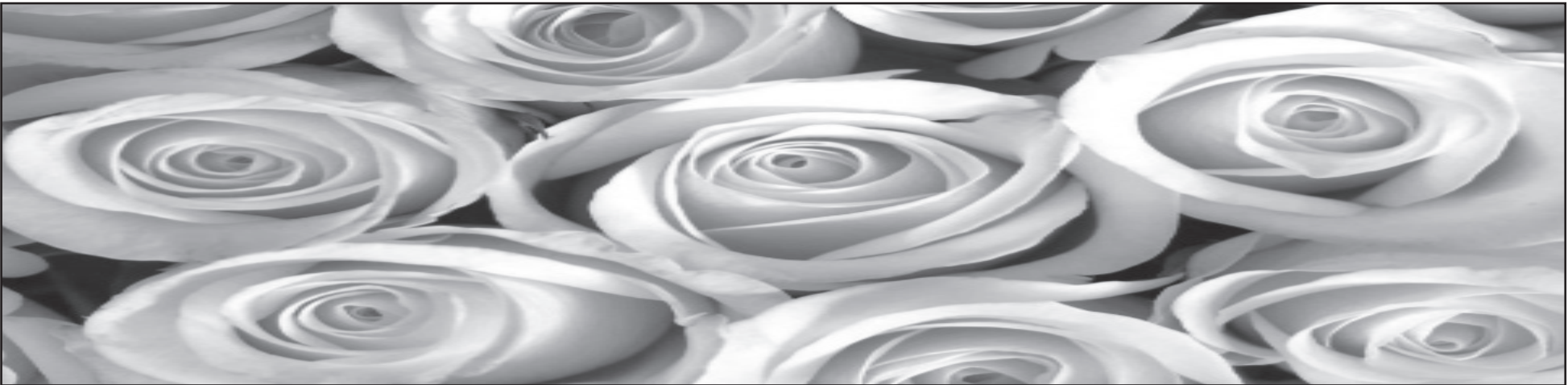
best friend Mocha and several close friends he considered family.

JP is preceded in death by his father JP Durham; his mother Judy C. Hall Durham; brother Tommy Durham and his beloved dog Oreo.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation/contribution for funeral expenses to Schubert Funeral Home Wartburg, P.O. Box 326, TN., 37872.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of JP Durham, Jr.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.



— In Loving Memory —

Lawrence “Julio” Valdivia, 60



Lawrence “Julio” Valdivia, age 60 of Knoxville passed away peacefully at home Monday, September 14, 2026.

He was an avid Nascar fan with Jeff Gordan as his favorite driver. He was a collector of almost everything but especially Hot Wheels! Recently he built a mancave to showcase his collection. Also, he was into RC drift cars and enjoyed racing them at Hobbytown. He worked construction, specifically as a concrete finisher.

He is preceded in death by his parents Ray and Shirley Valdivia; and brother Richard.

He is survived by his wife Linda Valdivia; son Anthony Valdivia; sisters Ann, Theresa (Jim), Gloria (Bill); brother Dennis (Pam); sister-in-law and brother-in-law Debbie and Terry Smith and a host of cousins, extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends Monday, September 21, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Grave-side services will follow in the Nelson Cemetery.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Lawrence “Julio” Valdivia.

Hobert Lynn Phillips



Hobert Lynn Phillips passed away Saturday September 19, 2026 at his home surrounded by his family.

The family will receive friends Friday September 25 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Schubert Funer-

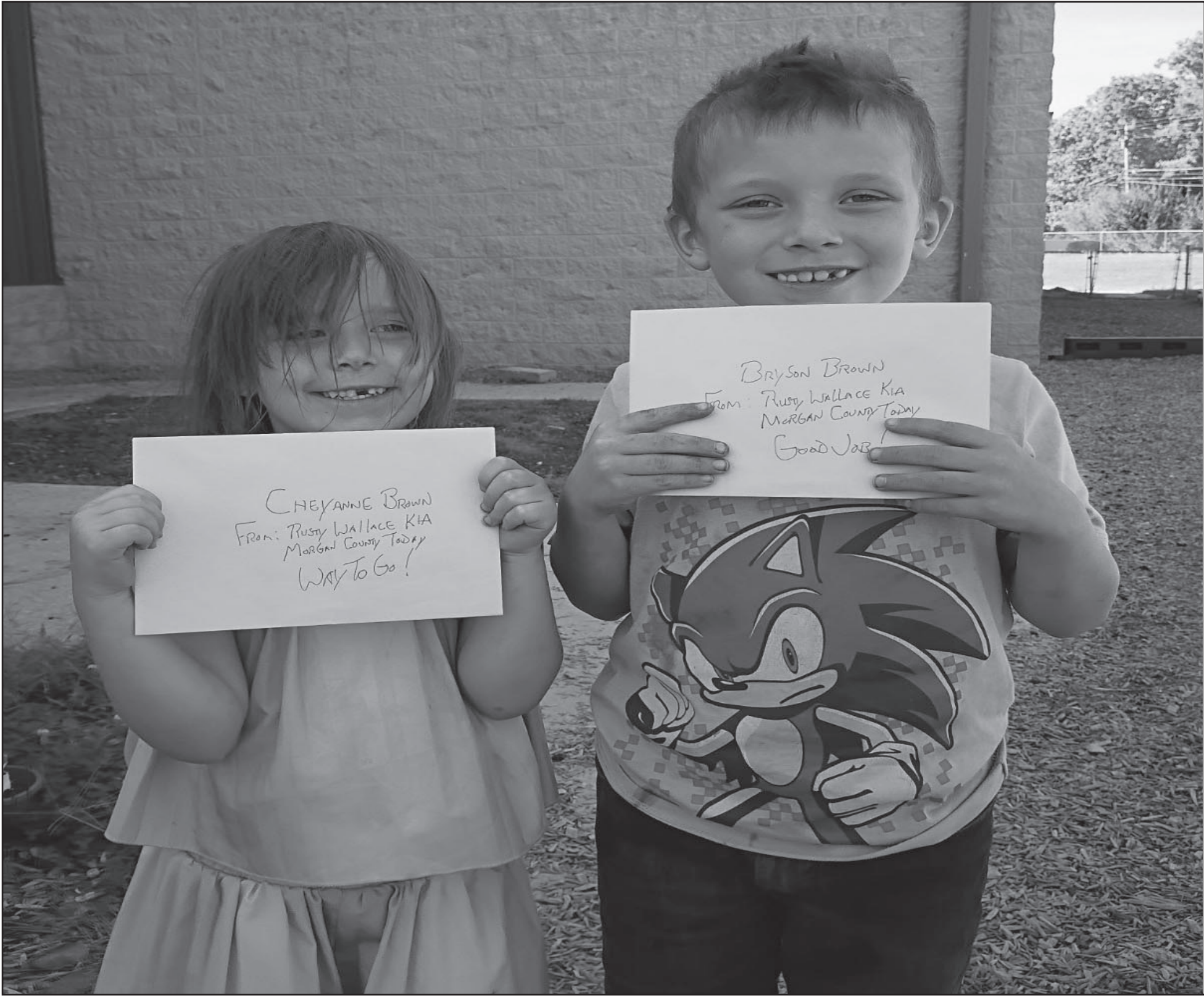
al Home in Wartburg with the funeral to follow at 7:00, Bro. Jimmy Byrge officiating.

The graveside service will be Saturday September 26 at 11:00 a.m. at Rock Hill Cemetery in Briceville, TN.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Hobert Lynn Phillips.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

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UT Basketball Coach Rick Barnes - Boys & Girls Club Keynote Speaker

By: Richard Spears

On Tuesday, Aug. 25, UT Basketball Head Coach Rick Barnes was the keynote speaker at the Boys and Girls Club of the Cumberland Plateau in Oneida. Barnes helped the club raise an estimated \$40,000 for the night’s event, which included a sold out audience and a live auction of unique autographed sports collectibles, all provided by the Rusty Wallace Auto Group. General Managers Jake Bull of RW Kia, Chad Campbell of RW Honda and Gene Morris of RW Nissan were in attendance.

Barnes shared his testimony of how, growing up in Hickory, North Carolina, he played basketball and spent much of his time at a club similar to the Boys and Girls Club. He told the crowd, “I was going to quit school, and there were two teachers there who showed me a lot of love. They told me to stay in school, and I might have an opportunity to play ball. So, that’s what kept me from dropping out.”

Barnes also talked about how his daughter came to him a few decades ago, and said, “Dad, I don’t want you to leave this world without accepting Jesus as your Savior.” Barnes said he regretted that he came to the Lord late in life, but said that “better late than never.”

Barnes talked about his relationship with his college basketball players, and the importance of sharing the truth of the Gospel with them for the short time they are on his team. He stated, “They all have a dream of going on to play in the NBA, but so few players actually get to live that dream. I try to encourage them, and let them know about the most important thing in life, knowing Jesus.”

During the auction, Coach Barnes offered to give \$10,000 to the Oneida Club if 2 people in the audience would pay \$1,000 each for one of 2 signed, personalized basketballs. Two local businessmen, Phillip Jones and Bobby Gray took Barnes up on his offer. After Barnes signed each ball, and wrote a check, his friend Pastor Mike Segers also wrote a check for \$3,000 to the Club.

Club CEO Justin Sharpe stated how grateful he was that Coach Barnes, one of the busiest coaches in the country, could make the time to come and help the Boys and Girls Club of the Cumberland Plateau. “We are so thankful to him and the Rusty Wallace Auto Group, who made all of this possible. God bless them, and God bless Coach Rick Barnes,” Sharpe said.



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Historically Speaking

Chris Jones, Part One

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Benita Albert brings us insight into a doctor whose career path includes nuclear engineering education and heart surgery. I am sure you will be delighted to learn about Chris Jones. ***

Robert Christopher Jones M.D. (Chris), a 1989 Oak Ridge High School (ORHS) graduate, has recently published a book, “The Disease of Me: How Modern Systems Are Changing What It Means to Be a Doctor.” Chris wrote in the Foreword: “It (the book) is at its core, a reflection on what it means to be a physician in this moment in history, and what might still be possible for us if we are willing to look inward as courageously as we have been trained to look outward.”

Chris, a highly respected physician whose specialty is Cardiac Electrophysiology, has practiced in Nashville for more than two decades. He currently serves as a staff cardiologist and the Chief Wellness Officer at TriStar Centennial Medical Center (CMC). His term as CMC’s Chief of Staff (2018-2020) included the difficult transition into addressing COVID-19 challenges. His three-year Chief of Staff appointment required Chris to look beyond himself, to administratively view the broad issues facing the medical profession and to cultivate and encourage a greater inner clarity and purpose for beleaguered medical professionals.

Thus, it was a natural step for Chris to accept the newly created position of Chief Wellness Officer in 2021, a position that has rapidly expanded across medical communities nation-wide since the COVID pandemic. An online American Medical Association posting states, “Creating a Chief Wellness Officer position paves the way for organizations to improve not only care team well-being, but also patient experience, health outcomes, retention of key personnel, and a strong financial position.”

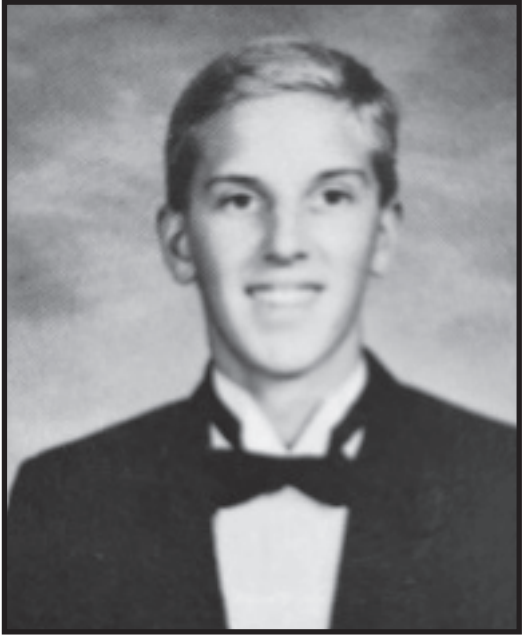
Over the past four years, Chris has reflected, researched, and written a deeply thoughtful treatise on the practice of healing from an insider’s perspective. A second part of his story, to follow next week, will provide more details on Chris’s professional journey, including more from his book. In this Part One installment I have asked Chris to revisit his Oak Ridge roots and his educational path to medical practice. His memories follow below.

Bob and Ginny Jones, Chris’s parents, arrived in Oak Ridge in 1966 immediately after their college graduation. Bob was an engineer at K-25 and Ginny a teacher. They both pursued advanced degrees at the University of Tennessee in their early married years. When Chris was five years old, the family moved to Maryland so that Bob could begin a new work assignment with the Department of Energy, a job he still maintains.

Chris, his mother, and his younger sister Catherine (ORHS Class of 1995) returned to Oak Ridge after his parents divorced in 1977. Ginny began teaching in the Special Education Department at ORHS, a job she held until retiring in 2000. Ginny is known in the Oak Ridge community as a creative artist of custom-made jewelry. Catherine lives in Oak Ridge with husband Bill Bohne and their daughter, Violet, a rising 8th grader.

A roll call of legendary teachers was remembered by Chris from the early years he spent at Linden and Willow Brook Elementary Schools. Those teachers’ surnames included

Burkowski, Wittenberg, Bowers, and Volk. Of Lou Volk, Chris wrote: “If I remember correctly, Mr. Volk was a Vietnam Veteran with an accurate throwing arm. Students who fell asleep in his class would be christened with a ‘yellow stripe of stupidity’ from a chalkboard eraser tossed from the front of the room. Probably frowned upon in 2026, his method was fairly efficient at keeping us attentive, and it makes me laugh to this day.”



Chris Jones in Oak Ridge High School

At Robertsville Junior High, Chris was enrolled in seventh-grade Algebra I with teacher Mary Jane Harned whom he remembers for: “My first taste of excitement in math and a teacher with a great laugh and a joyous presence.” He added, “The most memorable class in junior high was Civics led by the teaching team of Keys Fillauer and Lynn Burkey.” Forty years later, Chris still recalls a planned and staged, in-class altercation between two classmates, a lesson designed to test witness reliability, or certainly unreliability, in the later student witness testimonies.

Of ORHS memories, Chris wrote: “Teenagers rarely count their blessings, and it is only in retrospect that I realize how special many of my teachers were at ORHS. Mr. (Gene) Pickel made US History pertinent to high schoolers, a difficult task, by demonstrating how history gives us a preview to our future. Sandy Christen taught Algebra II and Trigonometry, setting me up for my favorite class to come. Miriam Wankerl planted a kernel of joy for English, as much as could be hoped for me at that time.”

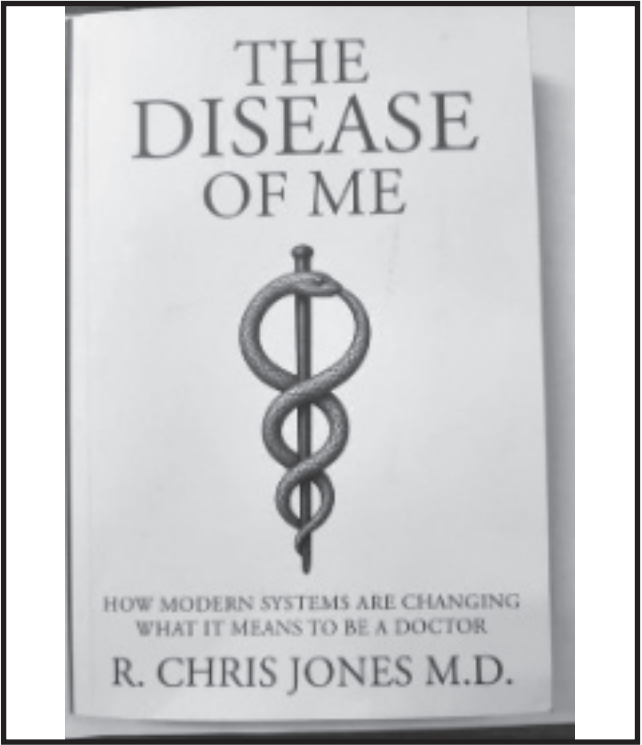
“And then there was Calculus, taught by the incomparable Benita Albert. I truly loved those two periods of the day. At various points in the year, we were simultaneously learning Calculus, Differential Equations, Matrix Algebra, and Non-Euclidean Geometry. I didn’t realize how unusual this set-up was until reading the course list for my freshman year at The University of Tennessee (UTK) and selecting the next course, a senior-level Matrix Algebra class. My natural inclinations at that time were aligned with STEM courses, and I chose high school classes accordingly. I did not take Carol Yoakley’s AP English class, but many of my peers did. I would hear about the books they were reading and always had a sense that I had let myself down.”

“I have been honored to help care for the family members of prior teachers at ORHS since starting my medical practice. It has been so humbling to pay back, in some small way, all that was given to me by the teachers of ORHS.”

Chris spoke to his early career planning, referencing his parents’ and stepdad’s values and expectations. “Advanced degrees were expected. However, not all education was seen as equal in my family: practicality and income-generating were key features of valuable higher knowl-

edge. As my natural aptitudes were in STEM, I developed my math and science skills, largely ignoring the humanities. The upside of these two lessons was a drive to succeed in a competitive medical career path. The downside was a narrow-minded arrogance about what it means to be ‘smart,’ whatever that means.” Later, his academic thoughts would be revisited and modified as an experienced physician choosing to write an introspective book on the health and welfare of medical professionals.

World War II hero, Five-Star General Omar Bradley, delivered a famous and oft-quoted speech on Armistice Day 1948, a speech emphasizing moral guidance in a time of advancing technology and conflict aversion. When Chris read it, the words resonated with him and his own internal conflict with professional success, clarity, and fulfillment. Bradley’s admonition, in part, said, “We have many men of science, too few men of God. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. The world has achieved brilliance without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing, than we know about living.” Chris cited Bradley’s words and added, “I knew that I stood among the accused.”



The Disease of Me by Chris Jones

As for his Oak Ridge social life, Chris noted that Oak Ridge football was in its heyday in the late ‘80s, thus the thrill of Friday night games and hanging out at Big Ed’s pizza was the rage. He joined friends to play on an intramural soccer team called ‘School Bored.’ Chris said, “We had a lot of fun, but we were irreverent (stating it nicely).”

His summers were spent visiting his dad in Maryland and eventually working a summer job at a community pool. He was first a desk clerk before he was old enough to lifeguard. Chris humorously mused, “Luckily, lifeguarding didn’t have benefits, or I’d still be there.”

Actually, Chris’s career planning started early. His memories reach back into his childhood. “I started planning to be an engineer in elementary school. I remember taking some sort of self-assessment, as part of the third-grade curriculum, with questions like ‘what are you good at?’ Of course, I replied with ‘kickball and running’ while my mother gave the answers, ‘methodical, logical’, etc. My dad was an engineer and mom correctly thought that profession was a good match for my strengths, so I was pretty certain early on that I would follow in my dad’s footsteps.”

- Continued on Next Page

Historically Speaking

Chris Jones, Part One

By Ray Smith -

His early plans never wavered, and he received a full scholarship and a stipend to pursue an engineering degree at UTK. He wrote of his transition to nuclear engineering. “After starting my freshman year in the Industrial Engineering Department, I leaned into the heritage and mystique of Oak Ridge, selecting the nuclear engineering major because it sounded the most exotic and impressive. I enjoyed telling others that I was studying nuclear engineering and then waiting for the reaction. My self-worth at that time was completely tied up in achievement and the combination of ‘nuclear’ and ‘engineering’ covered the respective bases of ‘smart’ and ‘lucrative’.”

Due to his high school advanced coursework, Chris earned accolades as Sophomore of the Year in Industrial Engineering during his UTK freshman year. Additionally, he served as president of the UTK student chapter of the American Nuclear Society as well as president of the UTK chapter of the Health Physics Society. After his freshman year of college, Chris garnered an internship in Oak Ridge at K-25 in environmental restoration work. He greatly admired his mentor, J. T. Grumski, who Chris said gave him meaningful work and who served as an excellent role model as an engineering executive.

Recalling his further decision making, Chris wrote: “The only occupations for nuclear engineers in the early 1990s were government, military, or academia. I briefly considered joining the nuclear Navy on a submarine commander track but decided I was more likely be jettisoned out a torpedo tube by the crew than to be made captain. A professor suggested I think about graduate work in health physics. He introduced me to Dr. Gary Smith at UT Medical Center in Knoxville. Dr. Smith, a nuclear medicine doctor, brilliant coder, and first-rate mathematician, was also a caring and compassionate physician. He was in need of a graduate student to help with a project validating a new scanning method detecting cancers. His blend of leadership, caring, and science—especially math- and physics-based science was very appealing. I

almost immediately changed my plans from working in health physics to becoming a doctor.”

“To pivot from a career in nuclear engineering to medicine required substantial extra work on top of the requirements for a MS degree—numerous extra courses (including organic chemistry), studying for the MCAT exam, and preparing medical school applications. And for some inexplicable reason, I placed a self-imposed timeline of one academic year plus two summers to get all this done. It was an incredibly busy year and was more preparatory for the time demands of medicine than any prior experience. Some of my favorite courses for this graduate degree were the health physics courses offered at Oak Ridge Associated Universities.”

Chris received the above-mentioned Master of Science in Nuclear Engineering from UTK in 1994, only five years after his ORHS graduation, and in four more years, he would graduate from Vanderbilt University’s School of Medicine. This was followed by a 3-year internship and residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a 3-year Fellowship in Cardiovascular Medicine with the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. In 2004-2005 he completed a Fellowship in Electrophysiology at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, IN, preceding his return to Tennessee as a staff cardiologist with St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville. He joined the Centennial Medical Center of Nashville in 2007 where he continues his career to the present day.

In response to sections of his book highlighting the pressures of medical school training, I wanted Chris to comment further on this matter. I asked how medical training programs might temper competitiveness while still prioritizing excellence. Chris answered:

“The philosopher Michael Sandel touches upon this topic in his book, “Meritocracy”. The extreme competition we see to get into medical schools is a microcosm of the competition now present in the secondary school environment. It is too much hyperbole to say that high schoolers applying to Stanford now need to have cured cancer to gain admission, but it is not far off. Sandel proposes a lottery system for all applicants who have met a standard set of requirements. If a student has a threshold GPA, ACT score, and extra-curricular activities, they would then enter a lottery for admission.”

“Sandel’s lottery solution is but one of many that could work. I think medical schools need to rely on a combination of lottery and interviews and less on achievements. We also need to greatly expand the size of our medical schools. A system that prioritized interviews would be time intensive, but the end product of physicians who are not driven to “accomplish at all costs” would be a boon to society. Why is the student entering medicine? How does s/he interact with a variety of people? Can s/he look a person in the eye? Is s/he compassionate? Does s/he have life experiences? Does s/he realize the world is a complicated place? These are the types of queries that help distinguish truly great healers.”

The introductory paragraph in Chapter 1 of “The Disease of Me” describes Chris’s decision making as he advanced from academic training to employment. “When I attended medical school (1994-98), the expected career path after training was either private practice or academia (or, less commonly, military service). Attending a private medical school came with strong pressure to pursue academia, but for those of us saddled with hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt, private practice was often the only realistic option if we hoped to pay it off. The choice, in some respects, felt like a trade: autonomy and income in private practice versus political hierarchy and scholarly mastery in academia.”

As his professional responsibilities grew alongside his medical practice, Chris became privy to issues not only demanding of his own consideration but also for the broader healthcare community. Ultimately, he began writing “The Disease of Me” in 2022, a deeply contemplative and scholarly referenced work on the challenges facing modern medicine. Part Two will share much more about the book and the continuing professional journey Chris is on, a passionate pursuit that transcends mere professional obligations.

Thanks Benita, for yet another outstanding review of an Oak Ridge graduate. I am sure readers are anxious for part two.



Altruism in America



John Burns
Opinion Columnist

With the competing views now front and center in America, Who alone can make America great?

The unselfish concern for or devotion to the well-being of others, often involving a personal cost or sacrifice without expecting a reward.

The definition of Altruism and the model upon which God the creator framed the entire plan of creation’s redemption.

When I was a young boy of merely 8, my parents bought a membership to the community pool for the summer. It became my summer refuge until puberty. One episode would shape my life. It occurred on a normal summer day at a large community pool where 200 kids were gathered with supervision.

I was 63 lbs. my father testifies. I had decided to enter the pool in the shallow end by way of stair slide. I had taken a position behind a four year old and his older brother. His brother jumped in the pool and allowed him to climb the 6 stairs alone. I looked up, and he slipped.

I threw out my arms and caught him. Pure reaction deserving of nothing. No heroics just a human trait.

His mother ran the concession stand at the pool and notified my mother she had a thank you for me. I ate free cheese steaks for an entire summer. I still do not feel I deserved it. I was a participant in life, I accomplished the next right thing by catching him. No need for a participation trophy.

When I was 9, while visiting my grandmother, my younger cousin Michael wanted to walk to the basketball court a few blocks from her house. Nana told us be careful crossing the train tracks. So we demonstrated our ideas about careful by walking right down the middle of those tracks.

As my 7 year old cousin and I being 9 entered the fence around the basketball court, we were confronted by other boys playing on another court. I told my cousin to run as I picked up a big rock and smashed the biggest kid in the face while being punched by a second kid. I escaped and ran.

My cousin beat me home barely, and began to tell Nana what I had done. She sent me to my bedroom until Pop Pop got home. He was my Trump card. As long as I was justified and protecting my family, make sure you win the fight once and for all. No reward just sound advice.

He had served in WW2 as a combat engineer. He had seen American altruism and heroism from Sicily to Germany when the camps were being discovered and liberated. He understood what and who he was fighting for. The truly American conundrum. Why we constantly fight wars?

My grandfather on my step mother’s side was a United States marine in WW2. Wounded on three different Islands. First Marine division. He returned home and became a police officer, with his last assignment as the jailer during the Viet Nam war. He helped veterans understand peace.

These were the Americans who raised me. They required I work in High School and taught me trades. Carpentry and Masonry have served me over the course of my life. Then came my opportunity to serve my country in uniform. I had limited opportunity so I joined the Army with a GED.

I became an infantryman. My Military occupational specialty was mortar man because I was good at four dimensional math. My first unit on active duty would be 1/9 Infantry out of Ft. Ord California. My first combat deployment was to the Republic of Panama during operation Just Cause.

I had completed Ranger school prior to combat and I was enjoying the military. I reenlisted for 75th Ranger regiment unassigned while on our combat deployment to Panama.

I had learned the Ranger Creed while a student in the Ranger school, now I wanted to find out if I could become the man in the creed. There is something to be said about men who harness themselves to almost impossible Altruistic creeds in life.

Over the course of the next 30 years I would meet 24 MOH Recipients who told me there stories. By the time I would deploy to Mogadishu Somalia as part of TFR, I thought I possessed an understanding of Altruism, and then our mission into the Black Sea occurred on 3 October 1993.

The average age of the Rangers who went into that fight was 24 years, 7 months in a company of 110. The average Operator was 29. The Seals were all in their 20’s as well as the Air Force contingent. While these men had combat experience globally, very few Rangers were still around after Panama.

These were green sons of Americans who were willing to fight for ideas they never will agree with and for people they have never meant. Our mission was a noble mission regardless of the political motives of the elected officials who are good at beginning conflict and terrible at ending them honorably.

I was a Weapon’s Squad leader in a Ranger assault Platoon. On the October 3d mission I was a Vehicle element leader in a Hmmv at the rear of the insertion convoy. I would have a mezzanine experience watching the events of that day unfold. I saw pure heroism come out in ways I had never witnessed.

The thoughts that went through my head that day are mind numbing even today. I had to switch from point target Raid, to react to contact, to movement to contact, to react to near ambush, and all while being in an insane fatal funnel. I saw so many members of the task force killed or wounded in 5 hours.

I also witnessed young men overcome fear to do things volumes of books are required to document. And the entire time, they were coming good on the ranger creed. Never shall I fail my comrades. Though I be the lone survivor. Two Members of the Task Force would receive the MOH posthumously.

Were we there expecting awards for accomplishing what our creed requires? Has the battle ended for all? After 33 years and 12 known suicides from the task force you tell me? We lost 18 men in that battle on day one, and another two days later. Over 70 members wounded in some way.

American altruism prevailed. Most would receive 0 recognition from superiors. Awards became an abject lesson on being human. I say every young Ranger deserves an award for surviving that day, you could not be in that fight without an opportunity to save your buddies life at some point.

I leave you with a tidbit on the American Ranger conundrum.

My last action that day, while being placed on a stretcher and taken to triage, was to hold the hand of my Number two on my Vehicle as he lay dying. He was a second generation Mexican immigrant whose family brought him here for an opportunity legally. They became naturalized citizens the legal way.

Lorenzo spoke often of his little girl at home in El Paso. The last words he said to me as they wheeled him into surgery was” My Baby Girl will only ever be called an American.” This from a man who loved his Mexican heritage yet loved his adopted home more. He proved America is the land of the dreamer.

And then there is Aaron Weaver. My Ranger buddy for 3 years in Bravo Company. He and I did every mission in Mogadishu. We got fired on often leaving objectives. On 3 October he was 5 feet from me when the first bird got shot down overhead. He witnessed and survived the entire battle unscratched.

He returned home to make a decision to fly helicopters and left regiment to enroll in college back home in Florida. He would attend flight school and graduate and choose to fly reconnaissance helicopters with the goal of one day flying for TF-160th, the legendary Nightstalkers.

At the time of Aaron’s graduation from flight school, he sought me out in Columbus to invite me to his graduation. I was in the darkest valley of substance abuse and Aaron came to a trap house to tell me something. He said you are my Ranger buddy. You and I been through hell and you saved lives.

I would appreciate it if you could attend my flight school graduation. It was the last time I would see my friend Aaron. I attended his graduation. Aaron was assigned to an attack helicopter company in the 82d Airborne Division. Aaron would be diagnosed with Cancer after his unit received deployment orders.

Aaron would beat Cancer and eventually catch up with his unit in Iraq in 2003. He was recalled to a medical hospital while forward deployed. On a medevac flight on January 8, 2004, to go have a routine test to make sure his cancer had not returned, the bird was shot down and everyone on board perished.

American Altruism once again on display. No awards required. He lived by an impossible creed! And he did it because he loves you and I.

Altruism expressed has a source psychologist’s continue to wrestle with. They do not understand the foundation of Altruism in the world of the selfie.

Altruism has a foundation that is inherent in our programming from our creator, most often born out of fear. To the Ranger we fear failing our mission, our men, and our unit. To the Christian we fear failing God in his great commission. Christian altruism begins when forgiveness becomes operational. Our creator programmed us to be able to forgive based upon his love.

His love is profound yet simple. A wooden cross, three Iron nails, a Roman spear, a lonely hill and his willing Son, anchored to his eternal destiny of bridging the gap between God’s righteousness and our software glitch: Sin. Nothing but the Cross can build the bridge to span the gap!

Forgiveness and love are a choice. They are the most powerful tools our creator gave us in this life.

The freedom we possess is because of American altruism. Where 1/10th of 1 % of our population continues willingly paying the freedom debt of 99.9% of our citizenry. Pray God continues to provide America with willing Sons and Daughter willing to pay freedoms cost.

Freedom has a price the protected rarely grasp and never are required to pay themselves. Thank God.

The system we have built requires the altar of freedom to be refreshed by the blood of patriots in every American generation. Altruism should be left to those who know freedom can only truly be understood in a whisper. The idea we birthed is still the most precious the world has ever seen.

*Let him who has ears hear what the Spirit is saying.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Even so come Lord Jesus Christ.*





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2 Corinthians Chapter 10 & 11



Melvin Howard

(2 Cor. 10:1-6) An authoritative appeal to the church: Paul begins this controversial section in the most diplomatic fashion possible. He pleads with them in the spirit of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Nonetheless, he goes right to the point. His detractors had charged that when the apostle is with them in person he is quite timid, yet in his letters he is extremely aggressive. He certainly hopes this will not need to be the case with his coming visit. It is not permissible for a Christian to act as he has been so grossly misrepresented (1-2).

Paul contends that while we live “in the flesh,” we do not stoop to the tactics of those engaged in carnal conflicts. Our weapons are not false accusations, hatefulness, destructive tactics, false reasonings, human authority, etc. (If one cannot employ such manipulative maneuvers in destroying others, who would reason that he might use material weapons to kill his foes?) Our instruments are mighty before God (v. 4)---prayer, kindness, teaching, correction, rebuke, and discipline (2 Tim. 3:3:16-17). We analyze and demolish the false “reasonings,” or arguments. We oppose every arrogant teaching that is contrary to “the knowledge of God.” We capture and take prisoner every evil thought---not simply to defeat someone, but to bring them to obedience to Christ. It is to him they must surrender!

Paul suggests that when he arrives he will be assured that their “obedience is made full,” that those who need to reform their conduct might be given the opportunity to do so. He seems to suggest that the church had been remiss in dealing with the critical faction. If necessary an appropriate “avenging” would be implemented. And contrary to the accusations that he was too weak to flex any “muscle,” he would demonstrate otherwise by the exercise of his apostolic office (Acts 13:9-11).

(2 Cor. 10:7-11) Response to criticism: Paul rebukes them for their superficiality---perhaps in the church generally---especially the false teachers. They had a tendency to evaluate strictly on outward appearance. This they had done regarding him, and by that criticism they had undermined his apostolic authority. This was a serious mistake; they needed to turn attention to themselves (v. 7). Paul vigorously asserts his apostolic authority” (a) It was bestowed by the Lord. (b) It was for their edification. (c) He refuses to be intimidated by the opposition (v. 8). The accusation that he deliberately tried to frighten people with his letters (1 Cor. 5:9) was false. The slurs against his “bodily presence” and his lack of speaking ability were as petty as they were false (v. 10). This certainly was not the impression he made when at Lystra (Acts 14:12). The apostle affirms his consistency---whether he was dealing with them in person or by letters, it would be the same (v. 11). His critics would do well to brace themselves for his coming!

(2 Cor. 10:12-18) Rebuttal to false teachers: Paul had been accused of arrogance---namely that he was his own measuring rod. That accusation was mere psychological projection; his opponents were guilty of the very charges they thrust upon him. They were utterly bankrupt of “understanding” (v. 12). The apostle affirmed that he would not make idle boasts, as his antagonists were doing. But he had been appointed certain limits by God, and he would not hesitate to use his authority in attempting to reach them. His nobility shines even in the face of hostility! Paul denies he had overstepped his authority; he was commissioned by God. He was the first to expose them to the gospel; he had a fatherly prerogative.

(2 Cor. 11:1-4) Paul’s foolish boasting: With strong irony the apostle continues to oppose his detractors and defend his own apostleship. “I hope you’ll be patient with me while I indulge a little foolishness; bear with me,” he says. He expresses his affection for the Corinthian saints under the imagery of jealousy. Using the metaphor of marriage, Paul represents himself as a friend of the bridegroom (Christ Jn. 3:29), to whom he has presented the Corinthians (through the conversion process). He felt it was his solemn obligation to keep them pure (v. 2). But his trepidation was undisguised. As the serpent (Satan cunningly deceived Eve (Paul considered her a real, historical person), even so their minds were on the precipice of being corrupted from a sincere and pure devotion to the Lord.

He speaks of him who preached another Jesus, received a different spirit, and proclaimed a strange gospel (v. 4). The passage is difficult and the views of its sense are diverse. It may mean: (a) “If one comes with a better doctrine than I have preached, you would be well-advised to follow him. But none has! You are in error.” Or, (b) “You are highly critical of me and my teaching (on the most superficial grounds), yet when a false teacher comes, who is corrupt regarding Christ and his gospel, you are very tolerant of him! Where is the logic in this?”

(2 Cor. 11:5-15) His apostolic status: His adversaries disputed Paul’s status as an apostle, but he wanted them to know he is not inferior to any of them, even the most prominent (Gal. 2:9). Most especially he was not inferior to the “false apostles” at Corinth. Paul was accused of being “rude in speech,” not a polished orator. He lets that stand. But he was not without extensive knowledge of the Christian system. That had been perfectly transparent to all of them (v. 6).

It amazed Paul that his opponents were so arrogant. His example of humility had produced absolutely no beneficial effect on them. For exam-

ple, he abased himself so that they might be exalted. This is the application. While his labor among them should have been worthy of financial support (1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 6:6), to mute criticism, he had refused such. They were not moved by that act of benevolence. How was he sustained? By other churches. Corinth’s neglect in this matter was “robbery,” though Paul puts himself in the spotlight to soften the blow. The Corinthians had been freeloaders.

When he was with them, there were times when he was in need. But for expediency sake, he would not take advantage of them. Christians in Macedonia had helped in sustaining him (Phil. 4:15-16). But he had not solicited support from Corinth, nor would he. No one would alter his course; he proclaimed it by the truth of Christ resident in him (v. 10). Some apparently accused Paul of not loving them; otherwise he would have taken support. God knew better. His motive was supremely pure. But he would not provide an opening for those who were antagonistic to him (v. 12). The false teachers would like to be able to argue: “Paul takes support; so can we.” He would not accommodate that situation.

The factious leaders were false apostles (not having been endowed by the Holy Spirit) (Acts 2; 9:17), and they peddled deceit. They fashioned themselves into apostles (not being constituted such by God), feigning identification with Christ (v.13). They were impostors who, like Simon of Samaria, were able to dupe the gullible. Their tribe lives on in modern-day Pentecostal charlatan healers. Since Satan is able to appear in a deceptive form (the verb “fashions” suggests a characteristic activity). it is no small wonder that his servants are deceptive as well. But they will suffer punishment commensurate with their evil deeds (v. 15). No specific explanation or illustration is provided underlying Paul’s statement about Satan, and speculation is useless.

(2 Cor. 11:16-21) Apostolic credentials: Paul continues his ironical reasoning. He would prefer they not consider him as foolish, lacking in common reasoning ability. But since they were inclined to do so, he will argue in that vein (v.1). He will glory (boast a bit, as fools normally do). He is not speaking as the Lord ideally would have him do, but from their own perception of him (v.17). Since many brag, he might as well himself (v.18). “You, who fancy yourselves as wise people, are delighted to listen to fools. This is evident from the fact that you yourselves tolerate the false teacher who enslaves you, exploits you, takes you captive, and even slaps your face. You charge that I am weak. Alright, tolerate me while I act weak. Since boasting is a weakness, permit me to brag on myself.”

(2 Cor. 11:22-33) His sacrificial credibility: Paul begins by obviously referring to the Jewish culprits among his rivals. He touts his ancestry and tribulations, and challenges anyone to match them. He had a celebrated Hebrew pedigree (v.22; Phil. 3:4). “Are my faultfinders ministers of Christ? Let them produce their badges of dedication; here are mine.” (a) He labored more abundantly than anyone (v.23). His career spanned some twelve thousand miles of travel. (b) He had been in different prisons (with others yet to come) and had been beaten mercilessly---with 195 stripes on five occasions (Gal. 6:17) from the Jews alone, and with rods by the Gentiles (Acts 16:22-23, 33). (c) He was stoned in Lystra (Acts 14:19). (d) Three times he had been in shipwrecks. Once he was a day and night in the water. This was before the harrowing adventure in Acts 27:1-28:15. (e) Eight times in v. 26 he uses the term perils (a dangerous encounter)---dangers of nature, dangers from men (both outside the church and within). (f) He had been exhausted, without sleep, deprived of food and water, without adequate clothes, and cold (2 Tim. 4:13, which was later. (g) In addition to the external trials, there was the mental stress, his anxiety regarding the churches (including this one!).

He did more that sympathize, he empathized. The former suggests feeling sorry for those in pain; the latter indicates feeling the pain with them. He felt the weaknesses of the weak; he grieved over those who stumbled (v.29). Since he was forced by the circumstances to boast, he would boast in the sources of his most persistent (the verbal force) weaknesses (v.30). How did he endure under such trials? By trusting in the God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is eternally blessed. God knew that his apostle witnessed to the truth.

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