



Between the dark and the light

# HORIZONS 2025

A progress edition of *The Clinton Chronicle*



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# Citizen of the Year

By Vic MacDonald

Remembrance and looking forward were the themes of the Feb. 4 anniversary of the founding of the Martha Franks Retirement Community. Speakers reminded the audience in the beautifully appointed Rasor Chapel of the center's namesake, missionary and visionary Martha Franks, "When she dreamed, she dreamed big."

For its four decades of service to Laurens County and the State of South Carolina, The Clinton Chronicle proudly names the Martha Franks Retirement Center as its 2025 Citizen of the Year.

After a remarkable career as a missionary to China and Taiwan, "did she really retire?" asked Chaplain Rev. Joey Estes. "No, she did not. God placed on her heart a vision for a retirement community in Laurens. We celebrate all those trips around the state raising money."

Franks started with \$55 and "look at where we are today, amazing, simply amazing," Estes said. "We celebrate today a life that was wonderfully lived."

Estes said the Martha Franks family is celebrating today, and where they are today because of their past, and taking up the mantle to look to the future."

Tom Turner, President/CEO, welcomed everyone to the 40th anniversary commemoration "on a spring-like day,

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Distribution

Printed at The Laurens County

Advertiser - February 26, 2025

Cover Illustration:  
Chris Patterson &  
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as I walked in, someone told me on a previous anniversary, it was snowing on February 4th. Today, we have 75-degree weather. Welcome of South Carolina." He observed that the gem stone of a 40th anniversary is a ruby, symbolic of love and courage, "and compassionate care as Jesus Christ exhibited for us."

Last year, the Laurens County Museum played host to an exhibit for Martha Franks, and her vision of a house of prayer and a house of service.

"When she dreamed she dreamed big," Turner said. "This was 20 years in the making and planning and countless hours of work and prayer."

The \$55 that Martha Franks placed in a sugar jar grew to over \$300,000 to conceive of this place, Turner said.

"I have not in my 17 years done this yet, but I want to at some point try to figure out how many individuals we have cared for. I image it's into the thousands. We have been able to do this because of the heritage of Miss Martha and her dream," Turner said. "We will continue to seek ways to minister and demonstrate the love of Christ on a daily basis."

Robert Spouse, executive director, said, "We will celebrate for the entire year. This is not only a time to celebrate, but to reflect." He introduced Linda Ott, who has 40 years of service with the Martha Franks Retirement Community, and said the center's existence is "a reminder of our everyday blessings - a beacon of Christian care and fellowship."

He said, "One of God's answers to one of Miss Martha's prayers was, 'Begin where you are with what you have.'"

Now with more than 175 residents, and that many staff serving them, the center provides a means for residents and staff to share their lives with each other. "That's all brought about by Martha Franks' vision of a community."

With a reminder of Jeremiah 29:11, Spouse said the center will be undergoing a time of growth and renewal, expanding homecare services, reopening The Villa, remodeling facilities and apartments, and praying for new construction such as an amenities center. It will be more than just bricks and mortar



## Isaiah 46, 3-4

"Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,  
all the remnant of the people of Israel,  
you whom I have upheld since your birth,  
and have carried since you were born.

Even to your old age and gray hairs

I am he, I am he who will sustain you.

I have made you and I will carry you;

I will sustain you and I will rescue you. ..." NIV

- it will be "a nourishing environment guided by our prayers and faith."

Speaking as Executive Director/Treasurer of the SC Baptist Convention, Dr. Tony Wolfe discussed the faithfulness of God as shown in Isaiah 46. He said that half a million South Carolina Baptists worship and pool their resources and relationships for God. "South Carolina Baptists plan to reach every one of our neighbors and people throughout the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. God takes our minimal resources and uses him for his purposes in his time."

Baptists freely give a little less than \$1 Million a year to the South Carolina Baptist Ministries of the Aging and over the years that has amounted to more than \$20 Million to the Martha Franks Retirement Community, "and the ministry that is happening here."

"It is the ministry that we value and want to perpetuate through the generations. It is God who deserves the glory for everything that has been accomplished at Martha Franks. We invest so heavily in this ministry and care for the aging because it reminds us who God is."

"God is author and sustainer of life," Wolfe said. "We (Baptists) are serious about life, from bloom to the tomb. God

is unchanging through the years."

Wolfe said that in 1985 when the retirement community was founded, he was 3 years old - "you know how many things have changed since 1985? Everything changes, except God."

"God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God is sacrificially committed to his children. It is his joy to bear us up."

Scripture translates it to "carry a heavy load" and "bear a burden".

"I will bear and rescue you" as it says in Isaiah 46, 3-4.

"God knows the end of this ministry better than we can ever know," Wolfe said. "I thank Martha Franks for the person, the organization, the residents, the families and the staff. The legacy of this institution has held up the character love and joy of Jesus Christ and the God who bears us up."

Congregational singing for this celebration time was "To God Be the Glory" and the Rankin Family presented "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." It was followed by a reception, a time to view history through scrapbooks of the past 40 years, and to enjoy a painting of The Villa.

"Your faithfulness is great," Tony Wolfe said in his closing prayer. "You alone deserve the glory."



# Teacher(s) of the Year

Ware Shoals High School  
Horizons Teacher of the Year

Dr. Tony Schiera

A 10th grade English teacher and yearbook adviser at Ware Shoals High School, the District 51 2024-25 Teacher of the Year, Tony Schiera (pictured right) has been named to serve on Teach Plus' 3rd National Teacher Policy Council.

For his intense involvement at the Greenwood/Laurens Counties high school, the multi-national view of the world he can bring to his students, and his position with Teach Plus - a national non-profit that empowers teachers as leaders to enhance student outcomes and opportunities - Schiera is named The Horizons Teacher of the Year.

Education:

BA 1994 University New Mexico  
English literature

MA 1998 School for International  
Training (Vermont) Teaching English to  
Speakers of Other Languages

PhD 2020 Indiana University of  
Pennsylvania Composition and Rhetoric  
Teaching:

1994 Language School in Seoul, South  
Korea teaching English

1995-1996 Cuenca Ecuador through  
WorldTeach (a now non-operational pro-  
gram through Harvard) teaching English  
in a vo-tech center

1999 to 2006 Suncheon National  
University Suncheon, South Korea teach-  
ing university level courses in conversa-  
tion and writing (composition)

2006 -2010 Greensville County Public  
Schools Emporia, VA. ELA teacher teach-  
ing 11th and 12th grade English and  
English 101 and 102 Dual Enrollment  
classes. Was also yearbook advisor.

2010-2014 Sutlan Qaboos University  
Muscat, Oman teaching English for aca-  
demic purposes in a bridge program help-  
ing first year university student improve  
their English. Also directed the writing  
center for the university.

2016-2018 Indiana University of  
Pennsylvania teaching English 101 and  
102

2018 to 2021 Shepherd University  
Shepherdstown, WV teaching English 101  
and 102

2021 to present Ware Shoals High  
School ELA and yearbook advisor teach-  
ing 10th grade English

What brought me here:

My wife and I pursued our doctorates  
at the same time, but she finished a year  
before I did. When she went on the mar-  
ket for a position in higher ed, she was  
hired by Lander University and teaches  
in the teacher education program there.  
She moved here in 2020 for the job, and I  
stayed behind based in Indiana, PA so our  
son could finish his senior year of high  
school. I moved down here in 2021 and  
found a position at Ware Shoals.

Dr. Schiera lives in Greenwood with  
his wife, Rachel, their son, Silas (22) who  
is finishing his senior year at Lander, and  
their youngest daughter Tehva (19) who  
is in her freshman year at Lander. Their  
oldest daughter, Tian (24) is a Physicians  
Assistant living in Saipan which is in the  
Northern Mariana Islands.

The Teach Plus National Policy  
Manager Silvia Martinez said, "Dr.  
Schiera has dedicated his career to educa-  
tion and public service and envisions a  
fair and bright future for all his students  
and his colleagues. His experience as an  
academic and an educator both at home  
and abroad demonstrates a deep under-  
standing of what a world class education  
could look like for students around the  
country."

Schiera connects his students to the  
community through partnerships with  
Lander professors, having a local reporter  
talk to the yearbook class, and those class  
members as sales-people. He adds, "My  
students' connection to the world doesn't  
stop at the local level. Over the past few  
years, I've worked with Fulbright teach-  
ers from across the globe, helping them  
with research projects and learning from  
their experiences. These collaborations  
have inspired me to bring fresh approach-  
es into my classroom that connect stu-  
dents to larger, global ideas. One memo-  
rable exchange came from a Fulbright  
teacher from India who introduced me  
to the idea of retelling a story through  
visual cues. I adapted this approach for  
my honors English students, who retold  
Shakespeare's Tragedy of Julius Caesar  
through memes as part of a review proj-



*"It helps when you realize, as a teacher, you aren't the  
smartest person in the room." M. Wager.*

ect. This method helped students see  
literature as more than words on a page—  
Julius Caesar became a story they could  
interact with and reimagine. The global  
perspectives I bring into my classroom  
remind my students that learning isn't  
limited to their immediate surroundings;  
it's a lifelong, boundaryless pursuit."

In his SC Teacher of the Year platform  
essay, Schiera wrote about his interactions  
with 3 challenged students - he opened the  
essay with the statement before the "..."  
and closed the essay with the statement  
following the "...":

"My wife and I are both teachers. Kind-  
hearted and well-meaning people often  
ask us, 'As two teachers, what do you and  
your wife make? Probably not enough.'  
Comments like this often make me think  
about what teachers make. Teachers make  
four, cold cinder block walls feel like  
the safest space on Earth. Teachers make  
even the struggling student feel seen.  
Teachers make a D feel like a gold medal.  
Teachers make all of these things hap-  
pen not through monumental, celebrated  
efforts but through small, daily connec-  
tions that add up to enormous shifts in  
young people's lives. ... Teachers make a  
difference, but in the noise of the world  
around us, we often forget this fact. My  
message to other educators is that we need

to recognize the enormous impact we  
make in the lives of those we work with.  
This impact is achieved through small  
actions, but the sum total of our efforts is  
enormous."



District 56

Katherine Addison is a math teacher at  
Clinton High School in Laurens County  
School District 56. This year—year 22—  
she is teaching sophomores, juniors, and  
seniors in the following courses: Pre-  
Calculus, Probability & Statistics, Algebra  
II, AP Calculus, and AP Statistics. She is



a graduate of Presbyterian College, where she majored in Mathematics (Secondary Education), and then she earned her Master's degree from Converse College in Mathematics (Secondary Education).

Katherine is quite humble in receiving teacher of the year, saying, "I was absolutely surprised. There are many more deserving teachers. I just come in and do what I feel like I'm supposed to do every day."

Katherine was significantly inspired by her math teacher, Mrs. Diane Evans, who taught her Algebra I in 8th grade and Pre-Calculus in 11th grade. Katherine attributes her desire to teach to Mrs. Evans as she had a way of relating to the students and explaining the mathematical concepts in a way that simply made sense. Katherine's mission statement that hangs by her classroom door states, "We are a community where we learn from each other and are not afraid to make and learn from mistakes. I will help you build your confidence in math and see the relevance of what we learn. We will create a comfortable place where we enjoy being ourselves." She believes that her greatest achievements come from the accomplishments of her students: when she witnesses their math abilities—and especially their self-confidence in math—grow, her mission is accomplished.

Katherine is married to Thomas Addison, who is the Director of Golf at Presbyterian College, and they have two sons in District 56, William (15) and Connor (11).



District 55  
Sharon H. Wormley was a Teacher Cadet at Laurens School District 55 High School before attending Winthrop University, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in K-12 Generic Special Education -- Mild Disabilities in 1999. In 2004, she obtained a Master's degree in Education from Southern Wesleyan University. She also holds a Master's degree in Curriculum

and Instruction from Grand Canyon University, which she received in 2023. She is currently in her 26th year of education as a middle school special educator at Sanders Middle School, teaching students with mild disabilities (Specific Learning Disability, Speech/Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disability, and Autism Spectrum Disorder). In the classroom, she has taught students with mild disabilities in resource, inclusion, and self-contained settings to students ranging from 5th-8th grade.

My message focuses on self-advocacy. I define self-advocacy as having a voice and being self-assured enough to know it needs to be heard, even in challenging situations or circumstances. Fear of using my voice -- both literally and figuratively -- led to so many lost opportunities. Writing became an outlet for me because I was literally afraid to speak. I decided to be a writer as I prepared for college, and then I was a Teacher Cadet, and my life changed for the better.

We were created as unique individuals, but it's up to each individual to embrace the uniqueness. Settling for mediocrity, using others' opinions to determine one's value, and taking a backseat when you deserve to be in the spotlight is not acceptable.

Joshua Dawkins, Sanders Middle School principal, says, "Sharon embodies the very essence of what it means to be an exceptional education. With her expertise in special education, she meets each student in their unique point of need, tailoring her instruction to unlock their full potential."

Sharon lives in Laurens with her 2 children: Gabrielle (16), a junior at LDHS and Michael (19), a sophomore at Winthrop University.

Presbyterian College  
Mark Anderson, the Marianna and E.G. Lassiter Professor of Art, was named Presbyterian College's most recent Professor of the Year. With that distinction came the opportunity to speak to the 2024 Graduating Class.

The address was titled "Art Lessons for Life."

He urged the graduates, students, professors, administrators, and families at the ceremony to be "in attendance" with life.

"In life, as in art, little is achieved when our attention is compromised. Since attention is payable only where and when life is actively unfolding, we strive to make it our practice to remain, as much as possible, alert and attentive, focused on the here and now."

He closed with this, "I am the luckiest person in the world to have been here these years working with brilliant young



men and women. I wish you well!"

Anderson says that somewhere in the early '90s he decided to become good at teaching. He also is a trained and licensed psychotherapist. Now that he has retired from teaching, he says he has enough time to express himself artistically.

"I know that it's overdue," he said in the PC article interview (May 9, 2024). I think the painter is demanding time. That part of me is very excited, and I can wait to devote myself to it."

It was not lost on him that, as he retired, he is "commencing" into a new future along with the Class of 2024. "I've never walked in my own graduations. None of them. High School, college, graduate school, both graduate degrees. I've never attended a commencement on my own. When I walk out with the faculty on that day, I think that's my commencement. I'll feel connected to the this class because I'm commencing with them."

More: [presby.edu](https://presby.edu)

Thornwell Charter School

Elementary Teacher of the Year - Taylor Grogan

Mrs. Grogan is a teacher dedicated to personalizing learning for every child. She is dedicated to learning what each child needs and working to fill any gaps while teaching them the content. Mrs. Grogan supports the school in every endeavor. You can find her at just about every school event ready to support students and staff.

Middle School Teacher of the Year - April Dobbs

Mrs. Dobbs is a champion for her students. Day in and day out she makes sure they have what they need socially, emotionally, and educationally. Mrs. Dobbs is a gifted educator, who does what it takes to make sure that every student has what they need to be successful.

High School Teacher of the Year - Emily Rhodes

Mrs. Rhodes has been at TCS since student teaching. We knew then that she had a gift and we wanted her on our team. Mrs. Rhodes is personable, organized, and an excellent teacher. She is fully invested in her students and it shows every day in the classroom.

ABOVE:

Left to Right - Emily Rhodes, Taylor Grogan, April Dobbs — TCS

-- Compiled by Pat MacDonald



# Beyond what is expected

Ryland Culbertson/Sanitary Market  
By Pat MacDonald

Ryland Culbertson – most of you know the name, if not that you know him, it might be that you know Glenn and/or Til Culbertson. The Culbertson family has been a part of Laurens County for many years.

A little over a year ago, Ryland and his family stepped out on faith and opened the Sanitary Market located on the square in Laurens. “Why the name Sanitary Market?”, you might ask. Years ago, there was a local grocery store on the square with the same name. That was a time of open-air markets and, eventually, refrigeration and “sanitation” became a major selling point to discerning shoppers. His dad, Glenn, mentioned the market at Squealin’ on the Square in 2023. Ryland took the name and has made it his own.

Their whole vision is favoring a healthy eating lifestyle. Even if he tells someone the item is better for them, “we are all worried about what the receipt says.” On the research side of things, it’s all about nutrition density. Why is yours more exp? “100% of our beef is actually beef. If you send it to the lab, it is 200% more nutritious. They pump theirs with water solution making 25% of the weight water.”

“It is our responsibility to educate. We have your best interests at heart, so we are going to bring in the most nutritionally dense food we can find and charge what we can afford to charge.”

Ryland left Laurens County after grad-

uating from Laurens Academy. He played center as a preferred walk-on for the University of South Carolina. His last 2 years, he was on a football scholarship. This shows his achievement went beyond what was expected.

Beyond what is expected is how Ryland operates.

He is very particular about the products he sells. There is a list of requirements that make his approach as wholesome as possible such as grass-fed beef which tastes better and makes you feel better. Ryland goes so far as to travel to the beef farm each week to hand pick each pack for quality. He does research on every farm he uses by looking at their practices. What do they do to their fields? Do they wipe them out every year with roundup? That is not acceptable.

The staunch requirements come from research that his wife Katy began for her parents who were experiencing health issues. She has a knack for research based on her work in the medical industry. Her parents grew up in a time when processed food became very popular because it was quick and easy. Katy and Ryland are convinced that there is a healthier and more nutritious alternative.

Ryland sees the main challenge as margin. Most companies have minimum order quantities in order to get the best price. Sometimes, they want to fill an entire 18-wheeler just to deliver the product. That is most often not feasible for a small market. “We didn’t do this for the money, but we have to be able to survive. Our seafood distributor says we are crazy not to charge more, but we have to adjust for our customers.”

Ryland’s college degree is in interdisciplinary studies. His focus was business and hospitality. Ever since he was a kid, Emeril was his favorite TV show. When he had cooking classes, he found his niche. Classes also included hotel and venue management.

After college, Ryland worked at ‘Yo Cup for a while as a chef. Later, he got a job at a restaurant for 1 year. He stepped in as general manager and chef. He learned a lot on the job like how to create recipes. He was doing breakfast, lunch, and dinner and worked 90 to 100 hours a week. When an opportunity came along to work at an accounting firm, he was ready for a change. When a client asked a question, he would research the answer if he did not already know it, and this helped him become a better business person. After being at the accounting firm for 7 years, he became the chef at



Wild Heart Brewing Company. He built the pizza business at Wild Heart and fell in love with it. Upon coming back to Laurens, he worked with Daniel Verdin in the ice cream truck and got the trailer idea.

Ryland still continues to do taxes for a few people, though he does not have as much time as he would like to devote to that business. Mom first a teacher in pub-

lic schools, started LA, dad was a postman for over 30 years. Porter is 6, Maxci is 5, Annie Lu is 1 (2 in April).

Ryland said if he can ask the community to do one thing, it is to be a little more open to trying their food. In the future, he hopes to have some taste testing.

To implement some of his vision, Ryland needs more space. “I like the intimacy of the square, so if I can keep it on the square, I would like to do that. The sky is the limit with more square footage. The community has proven the concept – we are very supported.”

The night after he decided to do the market, Ryland ran into Barton Holmes and began a conversation about Tap & Table. Both were looking for an opportunity. “We want to evolve at Tap & Table (a nearby bar, restaurant, and entertainment venue) and have many plans for what we would like to do to expand the offerings. This includes figuring out what is next, what to develop, and what direction to go. We are not trying to force it.”

## TAP & TABLE OFFERINGS

(Check out Facebook often to see what is on the schedule.)

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Sweets (made by Til Culbertson)  
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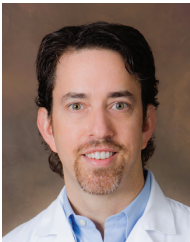
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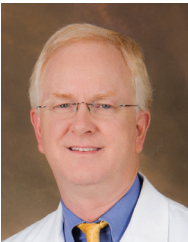
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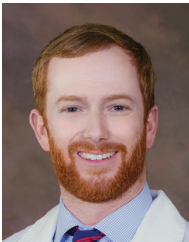
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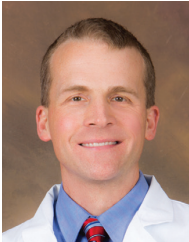
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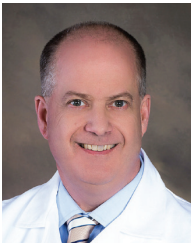
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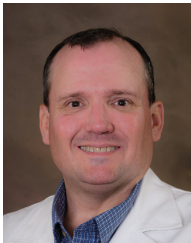
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## Clinton's Own Nick "The Nutshell" Campbell Reflects on Strikefest 17

### *A Thrilling Six-Round Showdown*

Posted Friday, February 7, 2025  
12:00 am  
Victoria Steele - Office Manager

Clinton resident Nick Campbell, aka "The Nutshell," recently stepped into the ring at Strikefest 17 to face off against Kemper Johnson for the TN State Middleweight Championship.

Campbell's dedication and perseverance were on full display as he battled his way through the six-round match for over 25 minutes.

Campbell's training camp was a grueling regimen that began every day at 3:30 am. He would drive an hour to the gym for a 2-hour training session, followed by meal prep, work, and a 5-10 mile run or swimming session at the local Clinton YMCA.

"It was a ton of work, but it's all fuel to my fire when I get in there to fight," Campbell said.

On the day of the fight, Campbell relied on his faith to calm his nerves, listening to gospel and worship music on his headphones. He also made time for a pre-fight meditation session, taking a small hike to center himself.

"Praying helps me stay confident and takes the pressure off," he explained.

The highly competitive match ultimately ended in a tie, with both fighters giving it their all. Despite the outcome, Campbell's confidence in his striking abilities has been boosted.

"The outcome of the fight helps my confidence in striking in MMA and proves that I have what it takes to step into the ring with the best boxers in the world," Campbell said.

As he looks to the future, Campbell plans to continue pushing himself, focusing on self-improvement and exploring new ways to grow as a fighter. "Fighting is all a mental game. You have to make sure your mind is where it needs to be during the whole fight camp," he advised.

Campbell expressed his heartfelt gratitude to his fans, stating that their support means everything to him.

"The support alone means the world to me. I do this all for my fans, and to make them happy, makes me happy," he said.

As Campbell looks to his next challenge, he's already reflecting on what he could have done differently in the fight. "The only thing I think I should've done differently is, at times, let loose a little more to ensure a knockout," he said. With this newfound insight, Campbell is poised to come back stronger and more determined than ever.

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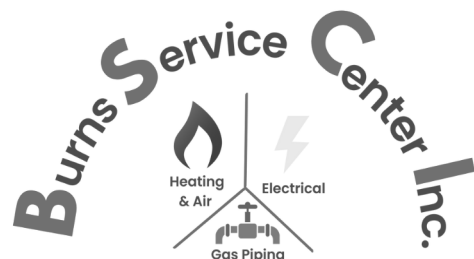
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# Cal Pitts - what hard work & success looks like

Cal Pitts is the latest Clinton Red Devil Football senior to show the younger guys that hard work pays off. Head Coach Corey Fountain made that clear on Feb. 14 as Pitts prepared to sign a National Letter of Intent to attend and compete for Coastal Carolina University in Conway-Myrtle Beach.

The signing took place in the CHS main gym during the last period class devoted to football conditioning. Family, coaches, and the rest of the Red Devil football team were there for the event - they had been there for a Coastal signing one time before, when Kadon Crawford inked his contract with the Chanticleers.

"This is a really special time, any time that we can sign a player to go on and extend his playing career not only playing football but becoming a student athlete," Fountain said. "Cal is a really awesome young man. I've had him since he was a 7th grader. Never really would have thought about this today; but the hard work you young guys put in, the hard work he put in as a 7th grader and an 8th grader pays off, and not only the work that he put in while he was at school but he would go home and work on his craft and he would go to extra training. We tell you guys if you work hard, awesome things will happen. We want to win a championship; well, he got to experience that on the first level. All the work he has put in as a 7th grader and now he's a senior and wins a championship. No better feeling than that."

It certainly did not hurt Cal's recruiting resume that he played in 2024 for the Class AA State Champion football team. The Red Devils secured that title - the program's 9th overall - in mid-December against Barnwell playing at SC State University in Orangeburg. Pitts re-habbed an injury just in time to be on the field for that, potentially, once-in-a-career moment.

"Cal had some adversity at the beginning of the year. He got hurt, as you guys know - he pushed through that and was able to play in the state championship game. I'm proud of you, Cal; I appreciate your parents and a brother getting him to practices. He was up early at school, at early morning workouts at 6:30 a.m. or 6 a.m. I'm proud of you; I'm proud of your accomplishments."

"I want to thank God. This opportunity would not be possible without Him. And I would like to thank my coaches; they have helped me along the way. Thanks to my family and you guys," Pitts said.

And, with that, he made his commitment to Coastal Carolina.

"It's been a dream school of mine for the longest," Pitts said in an interview. "I really love the place, love the atmosphere there. I think it's a great opportunity for me. I am ready to get to work."

Cal expects to compete for an offensive line job and, once basketball season ends, he will bulk back up to playing weight of 280 and get back into the weight room.

His former Red Devil teammate Kadon Crawford told him "it's a good fit for me; I'm ready to be back with my teammate."

"I'm just ready to get there, show what I can do, and just be the best teammate I can possibly be."

The Coastal coaches "have told me they really like me, they want me there, and they're ready to get to work with me."

He believes Coastal will be "a pretty solid team; the coaches showed me some film, I like the way they run the team. I think it's going to be a great next year."

He wants to major in physical education or business.

Cal carries with him the senior year honor of being named to the Touchstone Energy Bowl team.

Coastal Football is starting the 2025 season at Virginia. Then comes home game Sept. 6 vs Charleston Southern and Sept. 13 vs East Carolina. The nonconference schedule ends Nov. 22 at South Carolina

Sun Belt Conference games at home are Georgia State, James Madison, Marshall, and the University of Louisiana Monroe.

Sun Belt games away are Appalachian State, Georgia Southern, Old Dominion and South Alabama.

Coastal was 6-7 in 2024, winning their first 3 games before losing to Virginia. The team's leading rusher was Braydon Bennett, 781 yards, and quarterback Ethan Vasko threw for 2,110 yards. The head coach is Tim Beck, who was the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at NC State, replacing Jamey Chadwell, who became the head coach at Liberty after Hugh Freeze left for Auburn.

In Beck's first season, the team went 8-5 for 2023 and defeated San Jose State in the Hawaii Bowl.

Derek Warehime is the offensive line coach and running game coordinator; he brings experience from coaching at Texas and New Mexico.

It probably wouldn't hurt for Cal to sharpen his pass-blocking skills - Coastal Carolina University football has named Drew Hollingshead as the Chanticleers offensive coordinator. An air-raid disciple of legendary coach Mike Leach, Hollingshead spent the past two seasons helping lead the high-powered Western Kentucky offense as co-offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach. He coached at the power five level for seven seasons, including three in the Southeastern Conference. He coached 2024 Conference USA Offensive Player of the Year Caden Veltkamp, who threw for 3,108 yards and 25 touchdowns while completing 66 percent of his passes in 11 starts.

-- Vic MacDonald



## What is a Chanticleer?

The Chanticleer – a proud and fierce rooster – is the unique moniker for Coastal Carolina University's mascot and athletics teams. The Chanticleer is derived from Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, specifically The Nun's Priest Tale.

How do you pronounce your nickname?

The proper pronunciation is SHON-ti-cleer. You may also hear Coastal's athletic teams referred to as Chants (SHONTS) to shorten the Chanticleer nickname.

History of Chanticleer at Coastal Carolina University

In the early 1960s, Coastal's athletic teams were known as the Trojans. A group of Coastal students and their English professor-basketball coach Cal Maddox brought up the idea of a new mascot. At the time, with Coastal serving as a two-year branch campus of the University of South Carolina, many people began to push for a nickname that was more closely related to USC's Gamecock. Thus, Chanticleer was born, giving Coastal its own identity and one of the most unique mascots in college athletics.

On July 1, 1993, USC-Coastal Carolina College became Coastal Carolina University by splitting from the branch system of the University of South Carolina. Some people thought that was the time to send the Chanticleer packing and make a complete



split from USC. But, as he had before Coastal Carolina gained its independence and as he has since that time, the Chanticleer continues to overcome battles and reigns supreme. Chanticleer has made a name for himself and Coastal Carolina University around the world and has captured a place in the hearts of CCU fans. -- CCU



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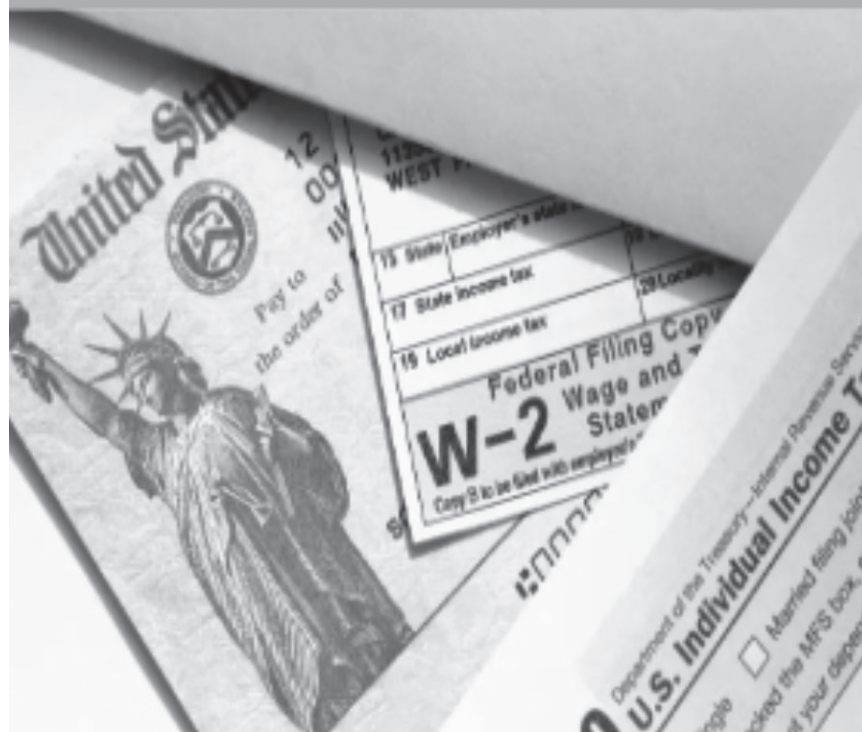
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# An Amazing Journey

**“As Randy says, ‘I am blessed more than I deserve.’ I know where he is, and I’ll see him again.” — Melissa Stevens**

The past 9 months have been “an amazing journey” for Melissa Stevens, the wife of the late Randy “Steam” Stevens, radio commentator, community activist and animal lover, and motorcyclist.

Steam lost his life May 10, 2024, in an accident near Whitmire. Melissa’s observation now - he did not suffer and he went out doing what he loved to do.

This past weekend, Randy was inducted into the South Carolina Motorcycle Riders Hall of Fame.

But that, is only part of the story.

First, there was the memorial service at Laurens District High School. Melissa knows she said words that day, but she’s not really sure what, the emotions were still raw.

Then, they scattered some of his ashes in a national forest and at a white-water falls. That was part of an SC Patriots Guard motorcycle run.

A Laurens County Sheriff’s Office poker run was held in his honor. Proceeds helped kids have a better Christmas.

Someone - and the owner vows it was not him - paid for the meal at India Palace when 17-18 people gathered on his birthday. Melissa does not know who it was, but someone near their table looked familiar (Laurens? Whitmire?) to the family - “I bet it cost like \$400,” Melissa says a little guiltily.

People sent her money. When she told a friend she didn’t want it, a friend put her in her place - “Don’t deny these people their joy.” The money went to Randy’s charities.

And now, at the beach, Randy is getting an award.

He would have hated it.

“Any time anybody wanted to give him an award, he would avoid it,” Melissa said. “He hated it. He always said, ‘I don’t care who gets the credit, as long as the job gets done.’”

Melissa said the Hall of Fame group’s president said after reading Randy’s nomination (which she did not write) that Stevens was “the poster boy for what we want our members to be.”

He kept a close eye on elected officials. His shows and commentaries on WLBG radio in Laurens - to which he motorcycled most early morning from Whitmire - was required listening for the people in “power”; Randy Stevens knew, better than most, that real power comes from the people.

When you read something he posted on the radio station’s news site about the School District 56 board meeting, you could bet it focused on the financials. How “they” are spending your money was important to this radio journalist. Melissa had to hear him talking to himself after

covering some meeting or other about what the powerful people had done, or not done. “I knew more about the people in Laurens County than I know about (leaders in) Newberry County,” she said. “(But also) he paid attention to Whitmire.”

Riding his motorcycle on a back road, woe be to the person that Randy saw being cruel to an animal. He and that person would “have a talk.”

As Melissa explains it, “He couldn’t stand to see an animal abused. He was on the side of the underdog - women and children.”

On his birthday, Melissa kept his Facebook account open to solicit donations for the Laurens County Humane Society, and also contributed to the Newberry County Animal Shelter.

Which brings us to motorcycles.

Melissa says she will ride, but with considerably less joy.

She and Randy rode all year-round - every nice weekend.

And sometimes, out of necessity, when it wasn’t so nice. They rode to the funeral of a U.S. Marine in 2006 in 17-degree weather. Finally, it got up to 22 - it never got higher than 36, all day. She’s planning to ride to the mountains in August - “we usually have very good attendance.”

Randy would “never lose respect” for the motorcycle.

That fateful morning in May, “if he had not had that helmet on, he would have been killed instantly. It bought him some time.” Once they got him to Columbia, “in the trauma unit he was talking one minute, and then he was gone.”

His autopsy showed that he wouldn’t have lived much longer - afflicted with

undiagnosed enlarging of the heart and black lung disease, hardening of the arteries and kidney damage from chronic UTIs. The wreck between his motorcycle and a vehicle severed his spine - so, despite all the broken bones inside his body, “he didn’t feel pain,” Melissa said.

“He would not have wanted to live paralyzed.”

She remembers a trauma doctor taking her and the family into “the small room” and she realizes now, after spending 36 years as a nurse, “when they take you into the little room, it is never good news.” Her initial reaction to that news was, it cannot be true - “He’s invincible.”

She says, “I am grateful, he got to go the way he chose. I did not find him the way I found my mother. He went quickly, he was not hurting, and for that I am grateful. I know God’s promise.”

Since Randy’s death, the death 6 weeks later of their dog, and her own health challenges, Melissa has come to understand that her husband found peace, and not pain, and she can, too. She counsels herself and others that “you can’t know God’s promise if you don’t read His word.”

She says, “I have seen God work so much in my life the last 9 months.” Anyone who is struggling with their faith, she says, “I will witness to you. You will believe, when I’m through with you.”

Much has changed in Melissa Stevens’ life, though children and grandchildren have kept much the same, since Randy’s death. One change he probably would not recognize - she has a new dog, and it sleeps in her bed. It’s a short-hair, kind of a pit bull, so it’s not the long, shedding



Randy Stevens’ celebration of life at LDHS - Chronicle File Photo

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hair of the pup that died of a broken heart after Randy passed. It was hair in the bed that Melissa objected to - now, that's not as much of a problem.

"I sleep good," she said. "A car pulled up in front of my house the other night and I said, 'I've got a pit bull and a .38.' That is security."

Randy would not be able to believe it. His reaction, according to Melissa - "You're letting a dog sleep in the bed with you? Who are you?"

-- Vic MacDonald

A portion of his obituary:

Randy Stevens, 65, of Whitmire, SC, and formerly of Laurens, SC, was involved in a tragic motorcycle accident in the early morning hours of May 10, 2024. He succumbed to his injuries but he was not in pain.

Randy was born February 1, 1959 at Laurens County Hospital. He graduated from Faith Christian School in 1977 and attended Lander College and Atlanta Broadcast Institute. Randy worked as an EMT and paramedic in Laurens, SC, and in Atlanta, GA. He then owned and managed Laurens Insurance Agency and was a vital member of the team at WLBG. He was an active member of the South Carolina Patriot Guard Riders, Laurens County Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Laurens, Laurens Lions Club, Laurens Humane Society, and many other community projects. He never slowed down. He lived life in the fast lane.

Randy was a respected talk show host, commentator, and reporter. He used his platform to engage in meaningful conversations, spark thought-provoking debates, skewer ALL the politicians. His insightful words and steadfast commitment to presenting what was important to Laurens County will make a lasting impact on all who tuned in ... or didn't ... or acted like they didn't.

He was so passionate about the Patriot Guard. He found a role that combined his love for the open road and his insurmountable respect for the men and women of our Armed Forces. Over the last 19 years, "Steam" served in many positions of leadership including Ride Captain, State Captain, Regional Captain, and two terms of service on the National Board of Directors. He was very influential in getting the state organization off to a strong start and later shared his dedication with the entire country. Although he never served in the military himself, he rallied the troops and led the charge, honoring our nation's fallen heroes with dignity and respect. At the drop of a hat, or helmet, he was there.

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At a meeting of the District 56 Board of Trustees, 6-time State Championship, all with Clinton, Coach Keith Richardson, left, shakes hands with 3-time State Championship, 2 with Lamar and 1 with Clinton, Coach Corey Fountain. The state title win in December, 2024, for Red Devil Football was the school's 9th championship. - Chronicle Photo



## THREE MOBILE MANUFACTURING LABS

Piedmont Technical College posted on Feb. 3, "PTC hosted a ribbon-cutting Monday for three mobile advanced manufacturing labs that will bring critical workforce training resources to rural areas across South Carolina. The ceremony at the William H. "Billy" O'Dell Upstate Center for Manufacturing Excellence in Greenwood was the result of a unique collaborative initiative between PTC, Aiken Technical College and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College that was made possible by a four-year, \$4.9 million Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Read more at: <https://ow.ly/IBLo50US-JjV>" --- PTC Photo



## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Megan Bagwell '24 didn't always envision herself in law enforcement. In fact, as a sophomore at Presbyterian College, Bagwell had her sights set on law school. But a pivotal internship with the City of Clinton's police department altered her career path, leading her to a profession that she now calls her true calling. See her story on the back page of this section. -- PC Photo



# Where We've Been

Our friend from Mountville, Zeke Benjamin, recently acquired a family heirloom clock and, upon moving it, happened upon a small box atop the item. Opening the box, he found insights into the former days of Clinton and Laurens. These two newspapers are what we present to you today with the idea of, to paraphrase a quote, we can't tell where we are going until we understand where we have been.

A note before we start: These newspapers pre-date the Civil War so there are some references here to slavery and servants that may be triggering to some readers.

The Clinton Enterprise of April 26, 1887, under a heading News & Note for Women, states, "It is said that Queen Victoria owns some real estate in Washington."

The newspaper includes a fiction story titled, "Had He a Heart?", out of Chicago. Included in the features are "Shopping in Cairo" and "Wise Words." There are no photos, but there is a drawing of Laurens Iron Foundry and Machine Shops Wagon Manufactory.

An article on Town Taxes on Page 2, 5th column, is under an endorsement for the paper by Rev. W.P. Jacobs and a \$1 per year subscription price. The paper's info box says T.B. Crews & Co. are the proprietors, and J.B. Parrott and W.T. Crews are the editors. Beside that is a piece on Invest your money and Notes from Goldville.

You can get a subscription to The Dixie Cultivator, the Laurensville Herald, and the Clinton Enterprise for \$3.50/year.

An Ordinance to Raise Supplies for the Town of Clinton states these levies:

Tax of 18 & 3/4 cents for every \$100 income;

Tax of 12 & 1/2 cents for every



**Clinton High School Basketball Team, 1917 — Left to right: Myers, Joe Davidson, unknown, Gene Galloway, Russell Godley, Thomas Plumer Owens, Phil Richardson. Jack Wilson, unknown (man in overcoat).**

\$100 of sale of goods, wares and merchandise;

25 cents for every \$100 dentistry and medicine;

Business fee of \$1;

\$5/day for traveling salesmen;

Everybody able to work will give 5 days of labor on streets or pay \$1.75 to commute the work; and

\$400 for agricultural shows, circuses or public performances.

Pay these fees by April 1 to W.A. Shands, Intendent.

There is an ad for the News & Courier, Charleston, an 8-page newspaper; these local newspapers are 4 pages.

Page 3 has a long column of local news under the Clinton Enterprise heading.

Beside that is a dispatch from Dorroh, SC, titled "Joe Prince Is Himself Again."

The largest ad is Words of Praise from the World's Dispensary Medical Association of Buffalo, N.Y.

In the Laurensville Herald, Oct. 30, 1857, you can find right on the masthead that the newspaper is devoted to the rights of the South, morals, news, agriculture, literature, and science.

The Lead Article: Chemistry for the Millions.

There are smaller articles about A Spirited Bride, How to Increase Manure, Tobacco Poison, and a small essay about Lead (the metal/element).

R.M. Stokes and W.L. Hudgens are editors of this newspaper, and under their names is the Court Calendar. There is information about accommodations, trains, and cotton money in Clinton. This issue includes obituaries.

There is an announcement about the 2nd Annual Fair of the State Agriculture Society of South Carolina, Nov. 10 - 13, 1857.

There are 4 notices along the lines of Executor's Sales for 150 acres of land on the Enoree River and 14 likely Negroes.

You find out about teachers at the Laurensville Female Academy and an announcement for the Laurensville Male College. There are several Sheriff Sales by J.W. Arnold. Notices of application to the legislature at its next sitting are to be made for the Liberty Springs Presbyterian Church at Cross Hill and Mt. Bethel Campgrounds.

There is poetry - "Yankee Courtship" - and a long essay on "The Fall of the Alamo."

The Laurensville Herald is published every Friday morning, \$2/year for 1 copy; Robert M.



*I have great respect for the past. If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going. I have respect for the past, but I'm a person of the moment. I'm here, and I do my best to be completely centered at the place I'm at, then I go forward to the next place.*  
- Maya Angelou

Stokes is listed as editor and proprietor. There is an ad concerning assessments for the Laurens R.R. Company asking stockholders to make their payments. It says:

"The stockholders are hereby notified that the assesment made at their last meeting was to enable the Directors to pay the debts of

the Company. The debts are pressing, and we urge you, therefore, to come forward, and save us the unpleasant necessity of forcing the collection, which must be done, if you do not act promptly.

"Installments due 1st December 1856 and every sixty days thereafter. J.W. Eppes, Sec. & Treas.

LLRCo., Feb. 24, 1857."

Meanwhile, the editors state that there will be no free advertisements in their newspaper.

That's because in 1856 the newspaper gave more than \$100 in free ads "which we think too liberal" and there will be no free ads except for religious services and Synodical bodies.

On the box is written, in cursive, Geo. H. Davidson "Old Papers". His death notice on Page 1 of the Clinton Chronicle on May 29, 1919, says he was one of the oldest residents of Laurens County and the oldest resident of Clinton

at age 95 - "He was a brave, faithful soldier of the Confederacy and he returned home after the war to meet with the same patience and fortitude the changed conditions that war had brought. He lived the life of an upright citizen and the news of the death of this venerable man will be received with sincere regret by his wide circle of friends and relatives who mourn his loss." He was visiting his daughter, Mrs. J.C. McMillian, at Renno when he died. He was survived by three daughters and three sons, 'all of this place.'"

--- By: Vic MacDonald

# Jim Todd is a Judge

A Laurens native, Jim Todd, was elected as a Family Court judge for the 8th Judicial Circuit by the SC legislature. His wife Ashley posted, "A memorable day as Jim was elected by the South Carolina General Assembly to serve as the Family Court Judge in the 8th Judicial Circuit in South Carolina. We are beyond proud of all of his hard work throughout this process. We love you!!"

The Circuit includes Laurens, Greenwood, Abbeville and Newberry Counties.

He has served as an Assistant Solicitor in the 8th Circuit (2016-18), where his cases have included serious felonies, and he joined Cordell & Cordell, based in Greenville and specializing in family law. In his private practice, Todd was a Regional Managing Attorney and he oversaw the work of attorneys and legal staff.

Todd's appointment is in replace-



ment of Matthew Turner, also a Laurens native, who was elevated to the SC Court of Appeals in April, 2024. Todd is a Presbyterian College graduate (2009, political science and government) and a Doctor of Law degree graduate of the Charleston School of Law (2013).

He leaves the Cordell firm on March 7 and starts as a Family Court judge on March 17, according to an article in the Laurens County Advertiser.



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# Former District 55 superintendent releases new book, 'Today Is a Wonderful Day'

golaurens.com Feb 9, 2025

"Today Is a Wonderful Day," authored by former District 55 superintendent Dr. Ameca Thomas is an inspiring new release that encourages readers to embrace each day with a growth mindset and a heart full of optimism.

This delightful rhyming picture book celebrates the power of positive thinking, affirmations, and living in the moment. With a refreshing approach, the author guides readers through the invaluable lessons about the benefits of positive behavior, the importance of kindness, and the transformative power of gratitude. It emphasizes that whether you're at school, work, or pursuing your dreams, the journey toward confidence and happiness begins with cultivating a positive mindset.

"Today Is a Wonderful Day" equips readers of all ages with mental tools to kickstart their day with uplifting words, helping them overcome negativity and renew their commitment to positive thoughts. Its engaging narrative and colorful illustrations inspire children and adults alike to find beauty in everyday experiences, encouraging them to appreciate life's little joys and spread happiness.

"Positivity has the power to transform our lives," says Dr. Ameca Thomas. "In a world often filled with challenges, I wanted to create a resource that empowers individuals to make every day matter. Every day is a new opportunity to cultivate joy and gratitude. By choosing to embrace the beauty in today, we not only brighten our own lives but also inspire those around us to shine brighter, creating a ripple effect of positivity. This book is for anyone looking to foster a positive environment for themselves and those around them."

Ideal for children, parents, educators, and anyone who seeks to enrich their daily lives, "Today Is a Wonderful Day" serves as a reminder that positivity can be a choice made each morning. By sharing valuable lessons on kindness, appreciation, and gratitude, this book encourages young minds to approach life with enthusiasm and an open heart. There's also a resource in the back of the book of discussion and reflection questions.

"Today Is a Wonderful Day" is now available for purchase at Barnes and Noble, Amazon, and other major book stores. Thomas is also the author of the books You Can Be Anything and You Matter.

Columbia, South Carolina: On Wednesday, February 4, 2025 Palmetto State

Teachers Association hosted the Palmetto State School Counselor Association for a Legislative Hill Day event at the South Carolina State House in Columbia.

Sallie Adair Wiggins (pictured with State Rep. Doug Gilliam) represented School District 56.

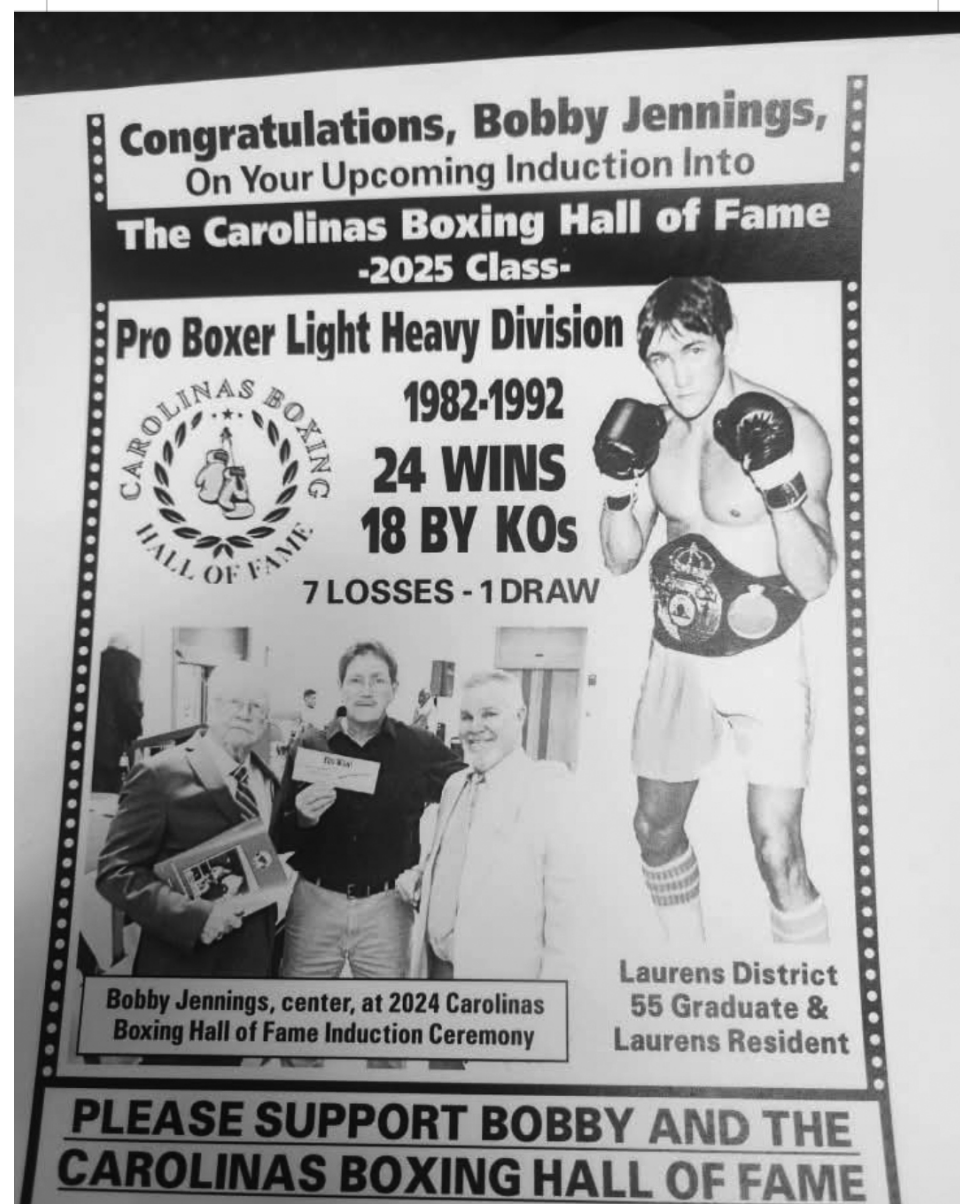
The educators met with legislators who spent time discussing educational issues and answering questions as well as toured the Senate Chambers. PSTA Director of Governmental Affairs Patrick Kelly shared a Legislative Update focusing on legislation directly affecting school districts across South Carolina.



**White Rock Boxing · Follow**

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Bobby Jennings a great light heavyweight South Carolina boxer from Laurens South Carolina is going to be inducted into the Carolinas Boxing Hall of Fame.



The group was introduced by Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort) in the House of Representatives and Senator Tameika Isaac-Devine (D-Richland) in the Senate. Craig King, PSTA Director of Teacher Leadership, and PSTA Director of Association Activities Toni Chewning served as hosts as the group used their educator voices to advocate for the profession and the students of South Carolina!

Palmetto State Teachers Association is the largest professional education association for teachers in South Carolina. PSTA provides professional benefits to support its members throughout their careers in education. More information can be found at [www.palmettoteachers.org](http://www.palmettoteachers.org). - From CHS Guidance



# LCWSC aims for the future



For members of the Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission, their January 28 meeting was sort of a calm before and after the storm.

They've been overseeing the operation of a new water treatment plant on Lake Greenwood and the system's recovery from late September's Hurricane Helene. And in February they likely will be taking a look at the under-construction maintenance facility at the commission's Hwy 221 South, Laurens, campus and getting updates for the next 2 years on \$20 Million in grant projects to include two new water tanks and a major upgrade to the sewer treatment plant.

The Jan. 28 meeting was mostly about reports - and outlines about what's coming - and a closed session discussion about a potential water project on Young Road, south-east of Clinton, with no action taken.

The following Saturday (Feb. 1) commission officials were scheduled to participate in a retreat with Gray Court town officials. A November successful referendum placed the Gray Court water system into the LCWSC overall system, and the parties were expected to talk about growth in the town's sewer system.

It's part of an overall growth pattern for LCWSC - it billed 17,269 water

customers the month before; that's 609 customers more than what it billed in Dec. 2023. It billed 645 sewer customers, that's 46 more than the December before, and it bills more than 900 sewer customers for the ReWa system in Northern Laurens County.

With all the subdivisions that have been permitted there, the commission could see its way to building a sewer treatment facility in the county's northern area (its current sewer plant is between Joanna and the Newberry County line on the opposite end of the county).

LCWSC installed 44 water taps in December and 19 sewer taps for the month.

That fiscal year-to-date total is 312 water and 185 sewer.

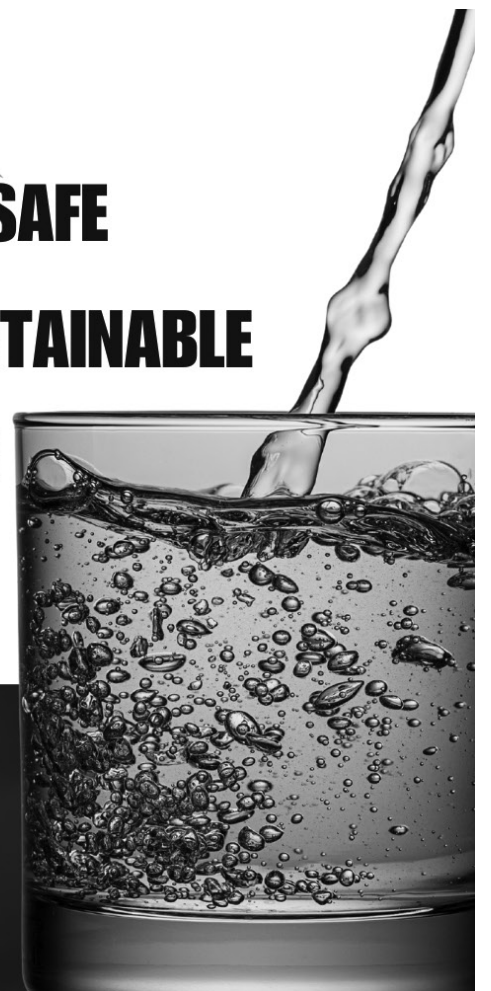
Meanwhile, the Lake Greenwood Water Treatment Place is humming along at 2 Million gallons/day, even as it took precautions against frozen and broken pipes during last month's hard freeze.

The water plant needs to fill a lead operator position, the board was told, and it is training what might be its new generation of operators.

The plant has a pre-apprentice program for high school students, offering practical, on the job experience 2 days a week. - Vic MacDonald



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# Six Triple Eight

80 years later, movie tells story of SC woman's battalion during World War II

'The Six Triple Eight' is available for streaming on Netflix

BY: SKYLAR LAIRD - JANUARY 13, 2025 4:00 PM  
SC Daily Gazette

OPPOSITE: Charity Adams Earley inspects members of the 6888th Postal Battalion in Birmingham, England, in 1945. (Provided/U.S. Army Women's Museum)

COLUMBIA — When Charity Adams Earley was sent across seas in 1944, she was faced with a monumental task: Get millions of pieces of mail to the soldiers meant to receive them.

Under her leadership, a battalion of Black women nicknamed the Six Triple Eight (for the 6888th) sorted and sent the mail in three months — about half the time one general predicted. Their story disappeared in much of the history of World War II, but with a new movie, the Columbia native has hit the spotlight, more than 20 years after her death.

After achieving the highest possible rank for a woman in the Army at the time, Earley became a fixture of the Ohio city where she lived. She died Jan. 13, 2002, 23 years ago Monday.

Charity Adams Earley

Born in Kittrell, North Carolina, Earley's family moved to Columbia when she was young. Growing up in Columbia, Earley excelled. She was among a dozen elementary school students whose test scores were high enough to skip middle school entirely, though her parents decided to keep her in her grade, since she was already several years ahead of her peers.

Earley graduated as valedictorian in 1934 from Booker T. Washington High School, the first Black public high school in Columbia and the largest statewide.

She received an academic scholarship to Wilberforce University in Ohio, a prestigious Black college, where she studied math, Latin, physics and history, according to the National Women's History Museum.

After graduating college in 1938, Earley returned to Columbia, where she taught math and science to middle school students. Over her summer breaks, she studied vocational psychology at Ohio State University.

When the United States joined World War II, Earley applied to enlist in the Women's Army Corps. She was one of 40 Black women chosen to be part of the first officer training class.

By the time she left the service in 1946, Earley was a lieutenant colonel, the highest possible rank for a woman at the time.

The Six Triple Eight

As the military postal service tried to get billions of pieces of mail to soldiers stationed overseas, a backlog piled up. Letters and packages sat in warehouses and

airport hangars, sometimes for years at a time, as morale dropped because soldiers hadn't heard from their loved ones.

By the time the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was sent to Birmingham, England, in 1944, millions of pieces of mail sat untouched. Rats had gotten into some packages containing food, and the warehouses were poorly lit and unheated, according to the U.S. Army.

On top of that, sorting was not as simple as matching names and addresses. Many pieces of mail were addressed using nicknames or common names, meaning the women had to search through thousands of soldiers to find the correct one. Troops often moved before the letters reached them, so the addresses listed were no longer correct. And some soldiers had died, meaning the women had to return the letters to the senders.

Earley, who was commanding officer of the battalion, scheduled the 855 women to work in three, eight-hour shifts each day. She later estimated the women went through 65,000 pieces of mail each day, for a total of more than 17 million packages and letters.

The officials who sent the women there expected the task to take them six months. Instead, it took them three.

"She was a very determined woman," her daughter, Judith Earley, told the SC Daily Gazette. "To her mind, she was probably doing what needed to be done."

After sorting all the letters in England, the battalion went to Rouen and Paris, France, to organize more letters. By 1946, all of the women had returned to the United States, where the unit was disbanded.

Delayed accolades

After disbanding, the Six Triple Eight received several medals recognizing their accomplishments. In the years following the war, however, their story was lost to history, said Stanley Earley III, Earley's son, who lives in Prince George's County, Maryland.

"Things happen when they happen," the 71-year-old told the Gazette. "They should've received recognition decades ago."

That began to change in 2018, when Fort Leavenworth in Kansas dedicated a monument to the unit. The next year, the battalion received a Meritorious Unit Commendation. In 2022, the battalion received the Congressional Gold Medal.

Earley became the first Black woman to have an Army fort named after her in 2023, when Fort Lee in Virginia was renamed Fort Gregg-Adams. The hyphenated title came from Earley's maiden name and Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg, the first Black Army officer to receive the rank of lieutenant general.

The South Carolina House recognized her with a resolution last year.

"Her hard work and contributions have not gone unnoticed, and the impact she has had on this great nation is remarkable," reads the resolution sponsored by former Rep. Ivory Thigpen, D-Columbia, and adopted unanimously in February 2024.

A 2019 documentary, also called "The Six Triple Eight," brought more attention to the story. A magazine article that same year inspired director Tyler Perry's

movie, which debuted on Netflix in December. A stage musical is also in the works.

The recent interest in the women, though belated, is a reminder of other forgotten stories about Black women, said Crissandra Elliott, who has been researching Earley for Delta Sigma Theta, the sorority both women joined.

"Finally, somebody let the world know that what they did mattered," Elliott said.

The movie

Judith Earley was apprehensive when she first heard from the filmmakers that they were interested in turning her mother's story into a movie.

"You never know how these kinds of things are going to turn out," the 66-year-old said from her home in Dayton, Ohio.

Judith Earley and her brother, Stanley Earley, did not play a major role in making the film, other than answering some family questions that came up. But at early screenings, they both decided their mother had been portrayed well.

The movie seemed to be accurate to what they know of their mother's history, both siblings said. At the same time, though, they didn't know their mom as the soldier who Kerry Washington plays in the movie.

To Stanley and Judith Earley, Charity Adams Earley was the mom who remade a ragdoll lost in a house fire to look like her daughter and who played ping-pong with them on the family's table.

Earley sometimes talked about her time in the Army, but the siblings didn't realize until adulthood that their mother was a significant historical figure, they said. When historians several years ago got excited to see Earley's journal from the time, for instance, her daughter was shocked anew at her prominence, she said.

"It's just now coming into focus, because she's my mother and I don't think of her that way," Judith Earley said.

Still, they saw the mother they knew shine through during certain moments in the film.

Soon after Stanley Earley had started a new job for the city of Dayton, Ohio, he found himself across the table with his mother, negotiating an agreement with the Red Cross board of which his mother was a member. She singled out one line of the contract, and Stanley Earley realized she had read every document all the way through.

That level of organization, as well as her ability to negotiate without disrespecting anyone, shone through in Washington's depiction, Stanley Earley said.

"She was always really prepared, and that was always something that made her very successful," Stanley Earley said.

Work after the war

While she told her children stories about the Six Triple Eight and her military service, that was only a small part of her life, Stanley Earley said.

"My mother was never really a person who focused on the past," Stanley Earley said. "She did many, many things after this."

After finishing her master's degree at Ohio State





University, Earley worked for the Veterans Administration in Ohio. She worked for several colleges, including as dean of students at Georgia State College. Earley and her husband, Stanley Earley Jr., spent some time in Switzerland before settling down in Ohio. There, Charity Adams Earley sat on boards for the Red Cross, the local community college and a

utility company. The house in which she grew up still stands on Fairfield Road in Columbia. The Columbia chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, of which Earley was a member, now uses the home as its office, Elliott said. “We’re very, very proud of her,” Elliott said.

Presbyterian College screened “6888” on Feb. 4 as part of its Black History Month activities.

Citizens of the Year	2024 Charles Brewington	Elementary
1996 Jim Roberts	Teachers of the Year	2010 Terri O’Shields, Bell Street Middle
1997 Joel Evans		2011 Erica Coats, Bell Street Middle
1998 Josh and Ella Savage	1996 Howard Pierce, Clinton Elementary	2012 Jenks Howe, Clinton Elementary
1999 Pat Neal	1997 Amy Poag, Clinton High	2013 Jennifer Satterwhite, Joanna-Woodson Elementary
2000 Ted Hunter	1998 Elizabeth Crowder, Eastside Elementary	2014 Jennifer Howard, Clinton High
2001 David Peden	1999 Cynthia Simmons, Thornwell	2015 Nancy Wood, Clinton High
2002 Bailey Dixon	2000 Nancy Morgan, Eastside Elementary	2016 Annette Bodie, Clinton High
2003 Jimmy Revis	2001 Diane Evans, Clinton High	2017 Brian Lyda, Clinton Elementary
2004 Dr. Jerman Disasa	2002 Valerie Jones, Thornwell	2018 Brooke Spatta, Presbyterian College
2005 Wayne Dietz	2003 Paula Pace, Bell Street Middle	2019 Carissa Messer, Clinton Elementary
2006 Lumus Byrd and Russ Emerson	2004 Debbie Green, Eastside Elementary	2020 Caroline Hunt, Clinton Elementary, and Faculty, Summit Classical Charter School
2007 Cynde O’Rear	2005 Courtney Robertson, Laurens Academy	2021 Ryan Caughman, Clinton High
2008 Dr. Bud Marchant	2006 Prondolyn Copeland, MS Bailey Elementary	2022 Kolman McMurphy, Clinton High
2009 Norman Scarborough	2007 Martha Hunt, Martha Dendy Sixth Grade Center	2023 Olivia Gardner, Clinton Middle
2010 Ruth Sharpe	2008 Marjorie Tobias, Clinton Elementary	2024 Dr. Richard Thomas, Presbyterian College
2011 Ron and Nancy Dove	2009 Susan Cauble, Joanna-Woodson	
2012 Norman Pigeon		
2013 Rev. Mims Cam		
2014 Rev. Herb Codington		
2015 Peggy Nibert		
2016 G Ramage		
2017 King Dixon		
2018 Brenda Ligon		
2019 Susan Galloway		
2020 Elton Pollock		
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# Red Devils 1972 & Red Devils 2024

Jan. 24 - Vic MacDonald

In 1972, when the Clinton Red Devil Football Team won the State Championship, its members were fed numerous times by community members, proud of their accomplishment. On Friday afternoon, it was that team's turn to return the favor – to the 2024 State Champions.

The Pride of Clinton Legacy Group has been meeting and renewing acquaintances ever since the 50th Reunion of the championship team a couple years ago. Behind the CHS Cafeteria, they met again, and members cooked steaks on two giant, mobile grills – and they swapped stories about the glory days. Inside the newly remodeled Clinton High School cafeteria, the current Red Devil football team waited patiently – after all, it was better than being in class which, coincidentally, is a last period athletics training class for football. Once it was all prepared – Cindy Jacobs lined up the food service for baked potatoes, salad, and fixin's – everybody enjoyed lunch.

Mission Accomplished – The Pride of Clinton Legacy Group had done for this team what its community had done for them 52 years before.

Buddy Bridges, the Voice of the Red Devils, introduced Principal Dr. Martha Brothers, who said, "I would just like to thank The Pride of Clinton 1972 and I think there may have been some others from different years, thank you for putting this on for us" – and turning to the 2024 team – "I also want to thank you, because we know we wouldn't be here without you guys. For all the hard work you started last year at this time, and it was a grind until December 12. You made this school proud. You made this community proud. It's a great day

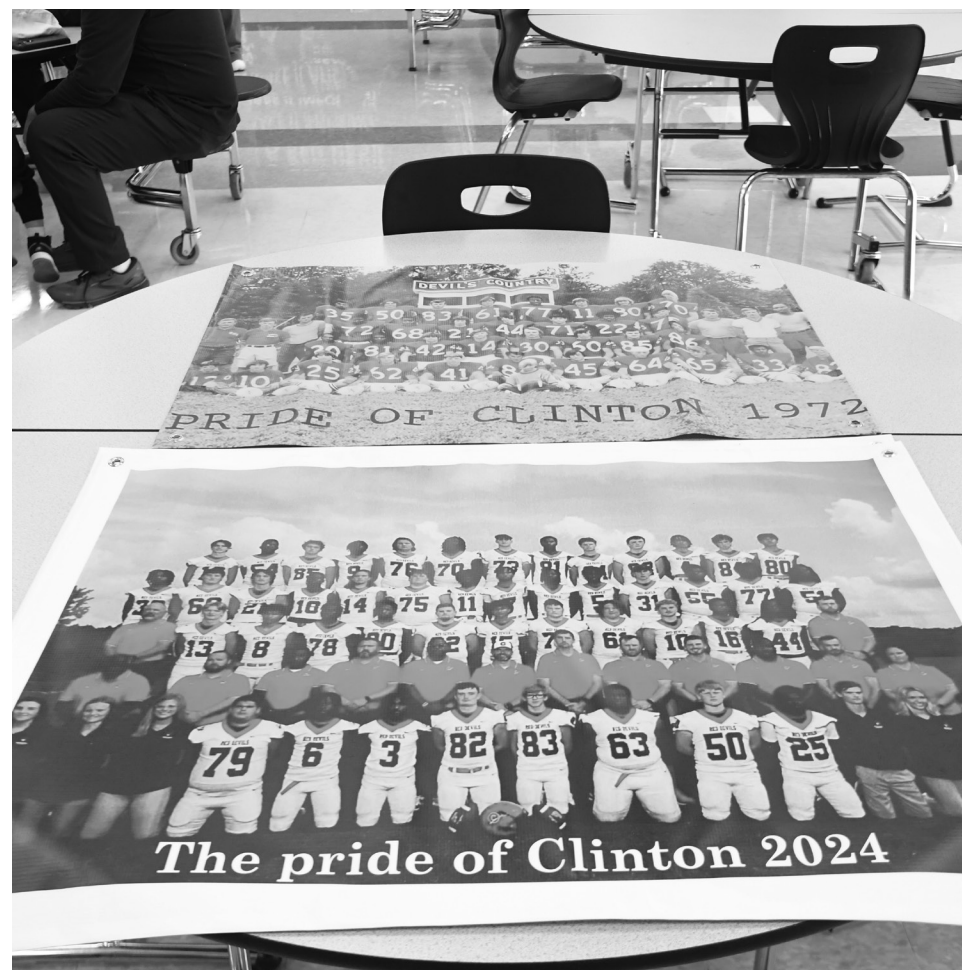
to be a Red Devil and you made it a lot greater to be a Red Devil, so thank y'all."

Bridges made several introductions, including Alex and Steve Riley who presented championship footballs to the cheerleaders, trainers and football players for the 2024 season, from Carolina Stitches, CHS' official outfitter in Clinton.

Bridges said the 2024 team is built on Faith, Family and Football, and said Head Coach Corey Fountain told the community when he was hired, "I respect this tradition and I'm going to build on it."

"And, it didn't take him but 6 years."

Fountain said, "Thanks to the administration from the top down, they made it happen putting into place the football class, the facilities that we have, and being able to have the class, Dr. Brothers, and the administration here in the building, as well. You guys who put this on for us, thank you, as well. You guys set the standard for Clinton football, and we're just trying to carry that out, trying to build young men from the inside out, trying to make sure that they are strong in their faith, strong in their ability to play football and in the classroom, and just being good community members. You guys set the standard for now - you have graduated, you have won state championships, you are owning your own businesses, you are leading this community; and these guys (2024 team) are blessed to see what you do each and every day. The more you guys come around, the better it will be for our football team, as well ... thanks to our coaches for what you pour into our young men and thanks to our young men who embraced the work, because no matter what you do – if you lose that last game, what do



you have to do, you get back to work; if you win, you get back to work; in life you don't always win that last game, that state championship, but you get back to work. We want to represent you guys, our families, our school, and our community with pride in everything we do."

Bridges said, "In 1972 this team took this town on a ride that didn't stop for a long time ... this team got fed just like you did, and they just wanted to give back."

He introduced the '72 team's mentor, the winningest coach in Clinton High Football history, "he's in every hall of fame that you could possibly be in; he won state championships

in 1972, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1985 and 1987."

Chiding Buddy just a little, Coach Keith Richardson said, "It's always hard to follow people who talk a lot. Some people just have the gift of gab. It's not what you say. It's what you do. This (lunch) was not my idea - this was the older guys – they wanted you (the 2024 team) to know, they wanted you to pass this down to the next generation, to the next state championship. You brought us a lot of excitement on the football field. Thank you."

Bridges introduced players from the 2024 team to players from the 1972 team (some of whom have passed





away) and gave this past season's championship players some insight into the 1972 championship players.

He read to the 2024 players, his introduction that went out over WPCC radio - and worldwide on the web at The Large Time Network - to the December 0+12 AA State Championship Game in Orangeburg

- it was the 16th time that Clinton High Football had played for a State Championship - and told those Red Devil champion student-athletes, "Give yourselves a big hand."

Each student trainer, cheerleader, and football player then received their Championship Commemorative Football.



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Richard Kinard Littleton, Sr.

Richard "Kinard" Littleton, Sr., age 82, passed away Monday, January 6, 2025 at Lexington Hospice House.

He was born January 24, 1942 in Clinton, SC and was a son of the late Wesley Brooks Littleton and Vera Powell Littleton. He served his country as a member of the SC National Guard. He also worked for United Insurance Company in Clinton, Modern Woodmen of the World Insurance Co., and later for FEMA as an insurance adjuster.

Kinard was a standout athlete at Clinton High School, where he graduated in 1962. He played football, basketball, baseball, and also ran track for the Red Devils. He was a member of the State Champion baseball teams in 1960 and 1961. Kinard also played football in the Shrine Bowl of 1961. Upon graduating from Clinton High School in 1962, Kinard was a first round draft choice of the Cleveland Indians and later played with the Chicago White Sox organization. His love for baseball and all sports was shared with his children, grandchildren, and anyone who knew him. Kinard never met a stranger, and he will be missed by so many.

Kinard is survived by his faithful wife of 58 years, Irene Vaughan Littleton; his children, Vaughan Littleton Evans (Jimmy) of Chapin; his son, Richard Kinard Littleton Jr. of Clinton; a brother, James Littleton of Whitmire; and his two grandchildren, Cooper and Abby Evans.

A Memorial Service was held Sunday, January 12, 2025 at 3 PM at the First Baptist Church of Clinton with Rev. Dr. Blake Harwell and Rev. Kathy Cinnamond officiating. The family received friends prior to the service in the church sanctuary from 1:30 PM - 3 PM.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to First Baptist Church, P O Box 95, Clinton, SC 29325; Sharon Methodist Church, C/O Joyce Crouch, 110 Crouch Drive, Kinards, SC 29355 or Tourette Association of America <https://tourette.org>

Condolences may be expressed to the family by visiting [www.grayfuneralhome.com](http://www.grayfuneralhome.com) Gray Funeral Home of Clinton assisted the Littleton family with services.

ABOVE: Kinard Littleton pictured at right. - Chronicle File Photo

**Clinton High School Athletic Booster Club**  
**To join, contact:**  
**Buddy Bridges, 864-923-2174, or**  
**Gene Simmons, 864-200-5007.**



# SOUTH CAROLINA RECOGNIZES ITS INAUGURAL “TOMORROW’S 25” CLASS

Twenty-five exemplary leaders are selected  
for fellowship that invests in the work of  
South Carolina’s best high school and middle school coaches

February 4, 2025 – The South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association (SCACA) and the South Carolina High School League (SCHSL), in partnership with the Excellence in Coaching Project, has announced the 25 Coaches who were selected for participation in South Carolina’s inaugural “Tomorrow’s 25” class.

Tomorrow’s 25 is the signature leadership program from the Excellence in Coaching Project. It is a 10-month fellowship designed to invest in 25 coaches from across the state who have been deemed an emerging leader in high school and middle school athletics. Currently, the Tomorrow’s 25 Coaching Fellowship is adopted in South Carolina and Mississippi. “Tomorrow’s 25 was a game-changer in South Carolina and so badly needed for today’s world of coaching,” said Scott Earley, Executive Director of the South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association. “The program is the best thing we have done in a long time.”

All 25 coaches were identified by a selection committee and represent the best the state has to offer.

Final selections had to represent the values of the coaching fellowship – a love of young people and a desire to develop them for life within the context of sports – and had to demonstrate excellence in their sports as ambassadors for the state. Serving on this year’s selection committee were Maggie Jameson (Abbeville High School), Greg Johnson (West Florence High School), John Combs (Spring Valley High School), Thomas Bell (T.L. Hanna High School), and Tydles Sibert (Woodland High School).

Over the course of 10 months, Tomorrow’s 25 Coaches will travel five times to locations in Columbia and Clinton for in-person class, while the other five sessions are done virtually. The goals for each session of the coaching fellowship are to assist in three areas of growth for each candidate:

1. Coaching the Whole Athlete (Leadership, Resilience, Empathy, and Responsibility) - Each participant will be able to implement all sessions’ materials at their current school and share with their colleagues.
2. Opportunity to network with 24 of their peers who have demonstrated the capacity to be the state’s future leaders in athletics.
3. Access to current leaders in the SCACA, SCHSL, College Athletics, and other thought-leaders in education to learn how they can grow their spheres of influence in their communities and across the state.

The first session was held on August 14th, and the coaches recently had their seventh class session on February 12th. This year’s class of coaches will officially finish the program in mid-May. This is also the first year the Tomorrow’s 25 program is in two states (South Carolina and Mississippi) with the hopes that more intentional out-of-state collaboration will foster breakthroughs in the coaching profession.

“Collaborating with other states creates a unique opportunity for the groups to share with and learn from each other,” said Dr. Jerome Singleton, Commissioner of the South Carolina High School League. “It gives them their best chance at success in the coaching profession as it relates to the people they represent and serve.”

South Carolina’s inaugural “Tomorrow’s 25” class members, their sports, and their schools are:

- § Shawn Armstrong, football/strength, South Florence High School
- § **Ethan Campbell, football, Clinton High School**
- § Zach Corliss, basketball, Hillcrest High School
- § Jerran Devlin, football/strength; West Florence High School
- § Thomas Farley, baseball/football/wrestling, Southside High School
- § Samantha Ferguson, basketball/tennis/softball, Dixie High School
- § Greg Hall, assistant athletic director/track, Cane Bay High School
- § Tony Heilbronn, athletic director, North Myrtle Beach High School
- § Lacy Johnson, volleyball/softball, Abbeville High School
- § Garrett Knight, athletic director, Westwood High School
- § Collin Liggett, athletic director, Saint James High School
- § Keith Lowman, baseball, Woodland High School
- § Jim Maciejewski, athletic director, Mauldin High School
- § Bradley Nickles, soccer, Emerald High School
- § Matthew Oberly, cross country/track, Spring Valley High School
- § **Tori Patterson, baseball, Laurens District 55 High School**



- § Chris Perdomo, football, Wren High School
- § Samantha Rizer, softball, T.L. Hanna High School
- § Brian Rosefield, athletic director, Ridge View High School
- § Josh Staley, basketball, Ridge View High School
- § Liz Stojetz, soccer, Greenville Senior High School
- § Brandon Tedder, strength, Hartsville High School
- § Hannah Towery, basketball/softball, Saluda High School
- § Julian Wright, basketball/football, Gaffney High School
- § Cori Zimmerman, cheer, Spring Valley High School

###

More about the Tomorrow’s 25 Coaching Fellowship and the Excellence in Coaching Project:

Dr. Hunter Taylor, an award-winning professor and author from the Southeastern Conference (SEC), is the founder of the Excellence in Coaching Project and the creator of the Tomorrow’s 25 curriculum.

Before making the leap into academia, Taylor spent 10 years as a men’s basketball coach on the college, high school, middle school, and international levels.

“Coach Earley and Dr. Singleton are incredibly serious about making a difference in their home state,” said Taylor. “And we have a plan for this to make a long-term impact in South Carolina – a state that reveres the coach as one of its most trusted moral leaders.”

The Excellence in Coaching profit is a non-profit that seeks to elevate the work of coaches across the United States, and “Tomorrow’s 25” is its signature program - designed to partner with state coaching associations to intentionally invest in their emerging leaders. --- From SCHSL & SCACA



# PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE ALUMNA OLIVIA ALDRIDGE '17 SHEDS LIGHT ON FORGOTTEN LYNCHING VICTIMS

January 31, 2025 - PC

Olivia Aldridge '17

Olivia Aldridge, a 2017 graduate of Presbyterian College and senior health reporter for NPR station KUT in Austin, Texas, returned to her alma mater to share an unsettling but crucial history.

In her presentation, “Names We Don’t Know,” Aldridge detailed her investigation into an 1894 racial terror lynching in Travis County, Texas, where three black individuals—two men and a woman—were taken by a jail by a white mob and brutally executed. Their names remain unknown.

The event, Aldridge explained, is memorialized at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Ala., but the victims’ identities and life stories have been lost to time.

“It’s just very, very powerful and very heartbreaking, and I think it’s a part of our history we need to pay attention to,” she said of her visit to the memorial.

In her investigative work for KUT’s ATXplained project, Aldridge sought to uncover details about the lynching, encountering a landscape of missing records, media bias, and historical silence.

## A MEMORIAL WITHOUT NAMES

The ATXplained initiative allows Austin residents to submit historical questions about their city, and Aldridge’s investigation began with one such inquiry: Could anything more be discovered about the three individuals listed only as “unknown” on the Travis County monument at the Equal Justice Initiative’s lynching memorial?

To answer that question, Aldridge traced the history of the lynching, which occurred in August 1894. The victims—a black woman who had worked as a nurse for a white family and two black men accused of being her accomplices—were forcibly removed from a jail outside Austin by a mob. They were tied to stakes in a field and shot to death.

“There was no evidence to support that these people were guilty,” Aldridge explained.

Despite the brutality of the crime, no local newspapers in Austin reported on it at the time, Aldridge said. Instead, the story only surfaced in publications overseas.

“At least three publications covered the incident, all of them foreign newspapers—two based in England and another in Ireland, she said. “It appears that some-



one sent a wire dispatch from Austin to report the lynchings. We don’t know who that person was, but without them, we might have no record of this event at all.”

Aldridge said this was not uncommon, as American newspapers frequently ignored or downplayed lynchings, while international journalists, encouraged by pioneering anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells, reported on them more openly.

“Although lynchings often did follow accusations of rape and other violent crimes, Wells’ reporting proved that many of these accusations were false,” Aldridge said. “But the accused never got their day in court, so questions about guilt and innocence were never settled for the public record. There are so many of these kind of vagaries. Was the person guilty? Did the newspaper tell the right story? Did the event actually happen?”

## SILENCE AND ERASURE

Aldridge’s research also led her to historical archives and local death records in Travis County and surrounding areas, but she found few official documents related to the case. Texas did not require counties to keep death records until 1903, meaning any record of the victims’ deaths was either lost or never created.

Further complicating the search was the fact that the flagship newspaper of Austin, the Austin American-Statesman, did not acknowledge the lynching at the time. However, it did print a letter from then-Gov. Jim Hogg, who denied the lynching had ever taken place.

A later editorial in the Statesman took issue with Britain’s interest in exposing racial violence in the U.S., dismissing concerns about lynching and mocking British activists for their so-called moral outrage. “We would advise the committee not to interfere with the lynching,” the editorial read, “but wait until the curtain drops upon the tragedy.”

## REMEMBERING WHAT WAS LOST

Though official records were scarce, community efforts have helped ensure the lynching is not forgotten. In 2017, a historical marker was placed outside Wesley United Methodist Church in East Austin, a historically Black neighborhood. The marker, spearheaded by the Austin

NAACP, stands as one of the few public acknowledgments of the crime.

The Rev. Sylvester Chase Jr., the church’s pastor at the time, welcomed the marker but noted that many in Austin were reluctant to place it on public property.

“If the church can’t speak the truth, who can?” Chase told Aldridge in an interview. “But people didn’t want it. Even in a progressive city like Austin, people don’t want to be reminded of this history.”

Despite the discomfort, the marker has become a point of reflection.

“Every day when I see people stop and read it, I say thank God that marker is here,” Chase told Aldridge. “They’re going to read that marker regardless of whether they come to church here or know the name of the church. They might not want to know about Jesus Christ, but they’re going to stop and read that sign.”

## ALDRIDGE’S TAKEAWAY

For Aldridge, the story of the 1894 lynching represents a broader issue of historical accountability.

“Three people were killed in this crime,” she said. “Three human beings. We don’t know their names. We don’t know how old they were. We don’t know if their loved ones were able to bury them. It feels like a basic human dignity to have your memory preserved. To at least get the simplest honors our culture offers the dead. An obituary, a headstone with your name on it. For these three people, this is as close to those honors as they get.”

While her investigation could not uncover the names of the three individuals lynched in Travis County, Aldridge’s work ensures their story is not forgotten.

On this day July 04, 1910

White Mob Lynches Norris Dendy and Leaves His Body in a Churchyard

On July 4, 1933, a white mob in Clinton, South Carolina, seized a 35-year-old Black man named Norris Dendy from a local jail cell, beat him, and hanged him. The mob then dumped Mr. Dendy’s brutalized body in a churchyard seven miles from Laurens County. Even though several Black people witnessed the mob seizing Mr. Dendy from the local jail, no one was ever held accountable.

On the afternoon of July 4, Mr. Dendy was picnicking at a lakeside resort with family and friends for a Fourth of July celebration. During the day, an altercation broke out between Mr. Dendy and a white man, and Mr. Dendy allegedly struck the white man. A crowd of white

men began pursuing Mr. Dendy, and he fled the resort, terrified. The white men at Lake Murray alerted officers in the nearby town of Goldville to pursue and arrest Mr. Dendy. Soon after, officers arrested Mr. Dendy for “drunkenness” and “reckless driving.”

By the evening of July 4, Mr. Dendy remained in the custody of Clinton officials at the local jail, but despite the pursuit of the white mob earlier in the day, his cell remained unguarded and unprotected. During this era of racial terror lynchings, white lynch mobs regularly displayed complete disregard for the legal system, and it was not uncommon for lynch mobs to abduct Black people from courts, jails, and out of police custody. In some cases, police officials were even found to be complicit or active participants in lynchings. Law enforcement officials, charged with protecting those in their custody, often failed to intervene, or as was the case here, completely abdicated their responsibility.

Late in the evening, at least four white men arrived at the unguarded jail, where only a single Black janitor remained, and seized Mr. Dendy from his jail cell. Around the same time, Mr. Dendy’s wife, his five children, and his mother arrived at the jail—likely in an attempt to visit Mr. Dendy—and witnessed the mob break into his jail cell. When they tried to intervene, the lynch mob struck Mr. Dendy’s mother and fired a pistol at Mr. Dendy’s family. The mob then tied Mr. Dendy’s wrists and ankles with rope and kidnapped him, driving him away from the jail.

The mob beat Mr. Dendy’s head so many times that he suffered a fatal fracture at the base of his skull. Unsatisfied, the mob then hanged Mr. Dendy before dumping his body next to the Sardis Church, a churchyard seven miles from Laurens County on what is now Highway 72 East.

Despite accounts from multiple eyewitnesses who witnessed the mob’s action, a year later, a grand jury refused to indict the members of the mob. No one was ever held accountable for the lynching of Mr. Dendy.

Norris Dendy was one of at least 11 documented victims of racial terror lynching in Laurens County, South Carolina, between 1877 and 1950. To learn more about how racial terror lynching claimed the lives of more than 6,500 Black women, men, and children in the U.S. between 1865 and 1950, explore EJI’s reports *Lynching in America* and *Reconstruction in America*.



## PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE CELEBRATES LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WITH FAITH, SERVICE, AND DIALOGUE

RIGHT: Alyssa Lucas (center) was presented a \$112,000 scholarship as the 2025 PC JEDI Scholar by Dr. Selena Blair, the Rogers-Ingram Vice President for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (left) and PC president Dr. Anita Gustafson.

Presbyterian College marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day with a series of events blending worship, service, and dialogue to honor the civil rights leader's legacy of justice, equality, and service.

The college's celebration began with generosity and recognition at the Martin Luther King Unity Gala held in Greenville on Jan. 17. At the event, PC named Hillcrest High School senior Alyssa Lucas

as the 2025 Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Scholar and awarded her a \$112,000 MLK Unity Scholarship to attend PC.

### Worship service emphasizes King's spiritual leadership

The commemoration continued on Sunday, Jan. 19, with a worship service at First Presbyterian Church of Clinton. The Rev. Dr. British Hyrams, the Jack and Jane Presseau Associate Chaplain at PC, delivered a poignant sermon focusing on the spiritual foundation of Dr. King's message.

The Presbyterian College Choir, under the direction of alumna Kipper Ackerman '97, provided stirring musical selections that resonated with the spirit of the occasion.



Service Day reflects PC's motto

The college's commitment to service took center stage on Monday, Jan. 20, during its 11th annual MLK Service Day. Student Volunteer Services (SVS) co-director Lyle Jones shared highlights of the day's impact at the Martin Luther King Jr. convocation later in the week.

"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve," Jones said, quoting King as he described the activities that brought over 100 volunteers together. Volunteers, including students, faculty, staff, and community members, participated in service projects across Laurens County, reflecting the college's motto, "While We Live, We Serve."

Projects included clearing debris at Laurens County Park following Hurricane Helene, assisting with animal care at the Laurens County Humane Society, and cleaning and landscaping a local church's cemetery. Other efforts included a trash pickup along Fifth Avenue on campus, gardening at a community garden, playing bingo with residents at Clinton Presbyterian Community, and creating more than 250 Valentine's Day cards for the residents, as well.

While 100 volunteers signed up, Jones noted that several others joined spontaneously, further exemplifying the community's dedication to honoring King's legacy through action.

Keynote address challenges listeners to act

The celebration culminated on Wednesday, Jan. 22, with a keynote address by Dr. Charyse Johnson, a nationally recognized mental health expert, author, and consultant. Speaking to a packed audience in Edmunds Hall, Johnson delivered an impassioned speech centered on the theme "Mission Possible: Protecting Freedom, Justice, and Democracy in the Spirit of Nonviolence 365."

Johnson began by acknowledging the diverse emotions surrounding current political and social landscapes, urging attendees to channel their feelings into constructive action.

"Dr. King's dream was not meant to be a seasonal celebration," she said. "It was and is a call to action that resonates every day of the year."

Drawing on personal experiences, including the loss of her mother to cancer while she was a college sophomore, Johnson highlighted the importance of resilience and community. She reflected on the necessity of building coalitions across lines of faith, identity, and background, echoing King's vision of a "beloved community."

Johnson also addressed common barriers to civic engagement, such as fear of failure or feeling unqualified.

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**"Black history isn't a separate history. This all of our history, this is American history, and we need to understand that."  
- Karyn Parsons**





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She debunked these excuses, challenging attendees to embrace their roles as agents of change.

“Change doesn’t require formal qualifications,” she said. “It requires passion and dedication.”

In addition to King, Johnson invoked other inspirational figures, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, emphasizing the power of individual actions to spark collective progress.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” she quoted Mandela, urging students to leverage their learning for the greater good.

She reminded attendees of King’s insistence on perseverance, saying, “We must accept finite disappointments, but we must never lose infinite hope.” Johnson stressed the value of self-care, particularly for those engaging in activism, and encouraged the audience to find strength in their communities, even amid challenges.

“The road ahead will not always be easy,” she said, “but we must refuse to be defeated. Each of us has the power to create change.”

Johnson outlined 10 common excuses people use to avoid engagement, such as “I’m just one person” or “I don’t know enough.” She countered each one with actionable advice, inspiring attendees to reject complacency and embrace their capacity to influence the world. “The time is always right to do what is right,” she said, quoting King. “Together, we can turn mission possible into mission accomplished.”

## A unified legacy of service and reflection

Presbyterian College’s multifaceted celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day demonstrated a collective commitment to the values King championed. From the spiritual reflections at First Presbyterian Church to the hands-on service projects and the inspirational keynote address, the events underscored the importance of living out King’s dream daily.

“This week has been a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when we come together,” Jones said. “Dr. King’s legacy challenges us to serve not only as individuals but as a united community.” - Presbyterian College

# PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE WELCOMES NEW TRUSTEES

January 27, 2025 -- Presbyterian College has announced the addition of eight distinguished alumni and community leaders to its Board of Trustees, each bringing unique perspectives and expertise to the college’s mission of providing a transformative liberal arts education. “These remarkable individuals embody the values of Presbyterian College and bring a wealth of experience and leadership that will help guide us into the future,” said Dr. Anita Gustafson, president of Presbyterian College. “Their dedication to their professions, communities, and the college is truly inspiring and I look forward to working alongside them to advance PC’s mission of service and academic excellence.”

## THE REV. DR. BRANDI CASTO-WATERS ‘97

The Rev. Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters, a 1997 graduate of PC, serves as pastor and head of staff at Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church in Augusta, Ga. With a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary, Casto-Waters has dedicated her career to ministry and community service. She is also an active advocate for PC’s mission and serves on multiple boards supporting education and faith initiatives.

## STEVE CROWE ‘73

Steve Crowe, Class of 1973, is a record-setting former Blue Hose basketball player and retired business leader. As a four-year starter on the basketball team, Crowe became one of only two players in PC history to record more than 1,000 points and 1,000 rebounds. After a successful career in the manufacturing industry, including serving as president of the Swagelok Capital Projects Company, Crowe remains an ardent supporter of PC athletics and campus development initiatives and is a member of the William Plumer Jacobs Society.

## JOHN D’ANDREA ‘81

John D’Andrea, Class of 1981, retired as senior vice president of external affairs at Georgia Power after a distinguished career in business and public policy. A former Blue Hose football player and cadet commander of the ROTC Highlander Battalion, D’Andrea remains deeply connected to PC. He and his wife Ellen, Class of 1983, support numerous campus initiatives, including athletic programs and scholarship funds, and are members of the William Plumer Jacobs Society.

## PAUL GRIER

Paul Grier, a 1984 graduate of Erskine College, brings decades of financial and philanthropic expertise to the PC Board of Trustees. As vice president of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Grier has played a pivotal role in advancing the church’s mission. He and his wife, Susan, are dedicated supporters of PC, with their daughter, Elizabeth, graduating from the college in 2023. Grier’s commitment to education and faith aligns closely with PC’s values and, in 2024, he and Susan were inducted into the William Plumer Jacobs Society for philanthropic contributions to the college.

## SARA HOPPER HAZZARD ‘01

Sara Hopper Hazzard, Class of 2001, is the president and chief executive officer of the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance, where she advocates for the state’s manufacturing industry. A graduate of PC with a degree in political science and minors in business administration and history, Hazzard has received numerous accolades, including recognition as one of Columbia Business Monthly’s 50 Most Influential. She is a passionate supporter of economic development and education in South Carolina.

## DR. FLOYD NICHOLSON ‘14

Dr. Floyd Nicholson, a 2014 PC graduate, is the dental director for the South Carolina Department of Corrections. Nicholson, who majored in chemistry with minors in biology and mathematics, left private practice to address critical needs in public service. An active member of PC’s Alumni Board and the African American Alumni Council, Nicholson just completed a four-year term on the board as a young alumni representative and will now serve a full term as a member-at-large.

## ROBERT THOMAS ‘94

Robert Thomas, a 1994 PC graduate and certified public accountant, serves as chief financial officer of the Alice Company. After beginning his career as an audit manager at Ernst & Young, Thomas joined Alice Company in 2002 and has led the private investment firm since 2008. In 2023, he was honored with PC’s Alumni Gold P Award for his professional success and steadfast support of his alma mater.

## JORDAN ASHLEY YOUNG ‘16

Jordan Ashley Young, a 2016 PC graduate, is the co-founder and partner of 3MC Media, Inc., a full-service marketing agency specializing in social media, short message service marketing, and event marketing. Young, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Accounting at PC and an MBA from Illinois State University, was a standout softball player during her time as a student. An active alumna, she serves on the Scotsman Club Council and is a passionate supporter of PC athletics and student engagement.

*Home of the Blue Hose, where students graduate to make the world a better, more just, and equitable place.*





## New Business Profile -- The Wake and Bake Vape Shop

Christopher Patterson - Publisher

Clinton, SC - The Wake and Bake Vape Shop, located at 200 Willard Rd, is thrilled to announce its grand opening in Clinton, bringing a unique shopping experience to the local community. This newly opened business is owned and operated by a dynamic mother-son duo, Susan and Brandon Medlin, local residents of Gray Court.

The Wake and Bake Vape Shop offers an extensive selection of tobacco and vape products, catering to the diverse needs of vape enthusiasts. From e-liquids to vaping devices, the shop is a treasure trove for those looking for quality products.

What sets Wake and Bake apart is its wide range of additional offerings. The shop will feature a variety of beer and wine options, perfect for those looking to unwind. Additionally, customers can indulge in a large snack and soda selection, making it a convenient stop for those on-the-go.

Susan and Brandon Medlin, the driving force behind Wake and Bake, are committed to building strong relationships within the Clinton community. "We're thankful to be part of Clinton and we're here to be part of the growth and development of Clinton," said Susan Medlin.

The Wake and Bake Vape Shop invites the community to visit and explore its extensive offerings. Whether you're a vape enthusiast, looking for a new beer or wine, or just need a quick snack, this shop has something for everyone.

Store Details:

Location: 200 Willard Rd, Clinton

Hours of Operation: Monday - Saturday 10:30am - 7:00pm Sunday CLOSED

**WAKE AND BAKE VAPE SHOP**

**NOW OPEN**

Mon. - Sat.  
10:30 AM - 7PM

200 Willard Rd, Clinton

**\$5 OFF \$25 COUPON\***  
\*MUST HAVE THIS COUPON



## Thornwell Charter School names Adams Dean as Head Football Coach

Clinton, SC - January 22, 2025 - Thornwell Charter School is proud to announce the hiring of Adams Dean as the new Head Football Coach.

Dean, a lifelong native of Laurens County and a seasoned coach with a passion for developing student-athletes, will take over the program, effective immediately, and lead the team into the 2025 season.

"We are excited to welcome Coach Dean to the Thornwell Charter School family," said AD David Coats. "We know that he will care about our kids. We also believe he will be instrumental in guiding our players toward success and fostering a culture of discipline, hard work, and respect. With the right foundation in place, we will see the program produce positive results."

Dean brings 13 years of coaching experience having served as Offensive Coordinator at Greenwood High School and Laurens District 55 High School. From 2020-2024, Dean's offenses averaged 28 points per game, helping lead the Greenwood Eagles to a region championships.

Dean was also an integral part of Chris Liner's staff at Laurens which produced two region championships in six years. Known for his commitment to character-building and skill development, he has helped many young athletes reach their full potential and succeed in the classroom and on the field.

"I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to lead the football program here at TCS. I am excited to get started and cannot wait to get in the building and on the field with our student athletes," Dean stated. He went on to thank the administrative team at Thornwell Charter School for trusting him with this upcoming opportunity. He concluded, "I am eager to contribute to the success of the Saints."

"We are thrilled to welcome Coach Dean to the TCS Family and look forward to this era of success, teamwork, and growth for our athletes and students both on and off the field," said Melissa Moore, Head of School.

Thornwell Charter School is committed to providing its student-athletes with the tools they need to succeed, both in sports and in life. The hiring of Coach Dean is an exciting step forward as the school continues to grow into a competitor in Region 1-A.

Fans, parents, and community members are encouraged to support the Saints



## SIGNING With Surry Community College

**Thornwell Charter School posted, "On Monday (January 27), Madi Landrith signed her National Letter of Intent to play college softball at Surry Community College. Saints nation is so proud! Congratulations to Madi and her family for this great accomplishment. Go Knights. Go Saints."**

as Coach Dean begins the exciting journey of building a competitive and successful football program. -- TCS

For more information, please contact:  
David Coats Alhleli.c Director  
dcoats@lhom,vellcs.org



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PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE ALUMNA DISCOVERS PASSION  
FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT THROUGH INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Megan Bagwell '24 didn't always envision herself in law enforcement.

In fact, as a sophomore at Presbyterian College, Bagwell had her sights set on law school. But a pivotal internship with the City of Clinton's police department altered her career path, leading her to a profession that she now calls her true calling.

"After that internship, I just couldn't imagine doing anything else," Bagwell recalled. "It was one of those moments where I knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that God put that experience in my life because this was exactly what I was meant to do."

Today, Bagwell serves as a police officer in Spartanburg County. Her journey from a political science major with plans for a legal career to a committed public servant on the front lines of law enforcement is a story she attributes to both her internship and the supportive environment at PC.

Bagwell grew up in Spartanburg County, where she watched her father work as a first responder. Inspired by his career and dedication to serving others, Bagwell had always admired the public service sector. Still, she entered PC with the intention of pursuing law, until her internship experience reshaped her vision.

Her introduction to law enforcement came unexpectedly when she accepted an internship with the City of Clinton's police department under former chief Sonny Ledda, despite feeling that it was outside her comfort zone. The experience proved to be transformative. Working long hours alongside Clinton's officers, Bagwell quickly found herself immersed in the day-to-day realities of police work. For her, it wasn't the adrenaline or the authority of the badge that resonated; it was the opportunity to serve others during some of their most difficult moments.

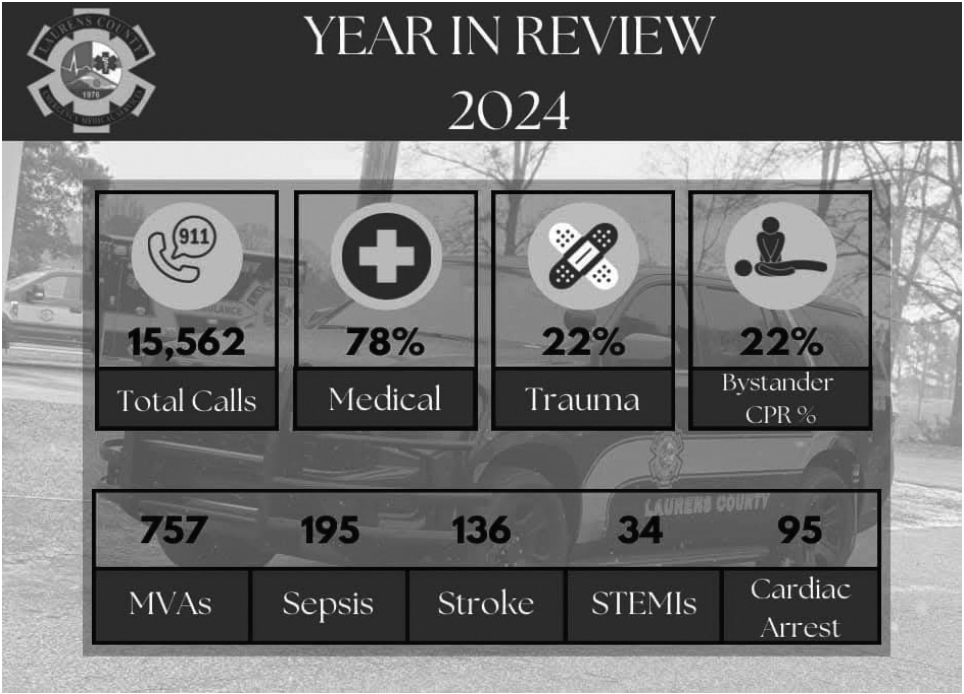
"Every day, I saw people who needed help, people going through tough situations," Bagwell said. "To be able to respond to them, to try to make things a little better, even for a short time — that was something I found deeply rewarding."

Upon completing the internship, she realized her career goals had shifted dramatically. The experience inspired her to minor in criminal justice, a field that PC was beginning to expand thanks to faculty support. With guidance from her advisor, political science professor and current interim provost Dr. Erin McAdams, Bagwell integrated criminal justice into her studies, setting herself up for a future in law enforcement.

"I think it would be wonderful if criminal justice could become a full major at PC someday," Bagwell said. "The minor gave me the foundation I needed to take this path, and I know other students would benefit from that too."

Following her graduation, Bagwell returned to the City of Clinton, this time as a police officer. The city that had first introduced her to law enforcement would become the place where she honed her skills on the streets, developing a deep connection to her community. Bagwell credits the City of Clinton not only with igniting her passion but also with giving her the tools to build a career in the field. It was Clinton that sent her to the academy and helped her prepare for the challenges of police work.

However, life brought changes shortly after she started. Her family was in the process of adopting three young siblings, and Bagwell felt the need to be closer to home.



Though the transition meant leaving her first official role as a Clinton officer, it was a decision that aligned with her values.

"Being close to my family during this time has been so important," Bagwell said. "The City of Clinton will always have a special place in my heart, and I'm incredibly grateful to them for helping me discover this path. But the chance to be there for my family and serve my home county of Spartanburg felt right."

Looking back, Bagwell says her education at Presbyterian College played a critical role in her development, particularly in how she connects with people. She highlights the liberal arts approach of PC, where students are exposed to a wide array of perspectives and are encouraged to engage with diverse communities — skills she now relies on daily. "Ninety percent of my job is about being able to talk to people and calm them down in the hardest situations," she said. "PC's environment really prepared me for that. Just being around students from all backgrounds helped me become a better communicator, which is essential in law enforcement."

Bagwell's work aligns closely with the college's motto, "While We Live, We Serve." She sees her law enforcement career as an extension of this commitment to service. The foundation of helping others and seeking to make a positive impact has been woven into her life since her time at PC, and it's something she emphasizes when talking with prospective students.

"PC was more than just a place to get a degree; they really care about their students and want them to find their passion," she said. "I would tell any new student not to be afraid to step out of their comfort zone. My internship may have been out of my comfort zone at first, but it turned out to be the most rewarding experience of my life. I'm doing what I love because PC encouraged me to take that leap."

A PURPOSE-DRIVEN CAREER

While Bagwell's path may be unusual among PC graduates, she has no regrets. Her experience in the criminal justice field has only strengthened her commitment to her work, which she describes as challenging yet rewarding. She acknowledges the risks that come with her role but says she wouldn't trade it for anything.

"As scary as my job can be some days, I truly wouldn't do anything else," Bagwell said. "There's nothing like being able to help someone on their worst day and try to make things better, even just a little bit."

Reflecting on the journey that brought her from a hesitant intern to a passionate public servant, Bagwell feels a deep sense of gratitude — both for Presbyterian College and for the opportunity to serve her community.

"Not everyone gets a chance to find their true calling, and I feel so lucky that I did," she said. - Presbyterian College