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SWRANKIN NEWS

Good News You Can Use

Vol. 5, No. 10 | October 2020

The Pearl News

THE NEWS RICHLAND

THE FLORENCE NEWS

A light-hearted joke leads to lengthy career

By Alexa Haik

Employed with the City of Pearl since 1998, Thomas Mayo recently announced his retirement from the City of Pearl's Solid Waste Division. In response, the city celebrated his long tenure with a special drive-by parade. According to his daughter, Jennifer Kelly, "it meant so much to him that Mayor Jake Windham, the fire and police departments and also the City employees threw him a surprise retirement parade with firetrucks, police cars and many other vehicles. With the sirens blaring and before the neighbors knew it was a parade, many had called to check on them to see if they were okay. A lot of excitement on their street that day."

A resident of Pearl for sixty-five years, Mayo has been married to his wife, Rachel, for sixty-four years. They have three daughters, seven grandchildren (all Pearl graduates) and nine great grandchildren.



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Pictured (l to r) are: Rachel and Thomas Mayo.

Mayo began his employment journey after graduating from Sebastopol High in 1954. His first job was as a Bellhop at the Heidelberg Hotel in Jackson. He went on to become a warehouse manager at Capitol Tobacco for forty-four years.

Then the unexpected happened. While visiting the city's Public Works office to pay a monthly water bill – Mayo ran into the Mayor at the time, Jimmy Foster, and Public Works Director Bud Overby. They asked him what brought him to town. In jest, he replied that he was "looking for a job." Unbeknownst to him, Foster and Overby began completing a City employment application on his behalf. Foster and Overby then requested Mayo return to finalize the application. At the time, Mayo would only commit to a year of employment. That one year turned into over twenty. His official title: Manager of the Compactor Station.

In the twenty-plus years Mayo remained with the City, a lot has changed, especially in regards to the "Compactor Station" Mayo occupied. What was once referred to as the "small shack" and held only one trash dumpster has evolved quite a bit, with the addition of air and heat and three extra trash dumpsters to boot.

Mayo will retire from the City with a sterling record, never once receiving a reprimand from a higher up.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and being "eighty-four years young," Mayo made the difficult decision to retire and return home to cut grass and work in his garden. The family says that "We think our dad has the best tomatoes and butterbeans in Pearl." When asked what he will miss the most about his job, he says "[He] will miss his good friend and co-worker, Mack Costello, and the many friendships he has made over the years."

The City of Pearl offers autumn fun for all

Special to The Pearl News

For an evening out, the City of Pearl will be celebrating its forty-seventh birthday on Friday, October 30, with the "Pearl Day Concert" at Trustmark Park. Country star Jamey Johnson will headline the 2020 concert, which will also feature opening performances by country favorite Frank Foster and Pearl's own singing sensation Zach Bridges.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the City has made plans for the annual event to be set up as a "drive-in" concert on the south side parking lot of Trustmark Park (the Sam's side). Existing ticketholders had until Monday, October 5, to notify Ticketmaster whether they still plan on attending. Once the final number of existing ticket-holders is established, the City will decide if any additional tickets will be available for purchase.

Pearl Day Concert is scheduled to kick-off at 5:30 p.m. More details will be

announced as the date approaches.

For Pearl families, the 2020 "Trick or Treat Street and Boo-cycle Ride" will be held October 31, from 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Muse Center on the Pearl campus of Hinds Community College. The Boo-cycle Ride begins at 4:30 p.m., and Trick or Treat Street will follow at 5 p.m.

For Pearl residents over the age of fifty-five, there are several upcoming events scheduled in October. Join Mayor Windham at the Mississippi Braves Stadium Friday, October 9, for the Annual Mayor's Wellness Walk. This is a free event for Pearl seniors which promotes a high quality of life through healthy lifestyle choices. Check-in begins at 9 a.m., and the walk follows at 10 a.m. Those who missed the September



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17 deadline may still attend but are not guaranteed a t-shirt or lunch. Participants will be presented with a medal by Mayor Windham as they cross the finish line.

Tuesday, October 13, beginning at 9 a.m., Pearl Senior Services (PSS) is holding a "Drive-Thru Donut Day" in honor of "Breast Cancer Awareness" month. Interested parties are encouraged to

drive through the parking lot of the Pearl Senior Center, located at 110 Valentour Road in Pearl, and grab a donut. PSS will also be handing out pink ribbons in support of the fighters and survivors of breast cancer.

Wednesday, October 14, from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., HealthPlus Pharmacy and Wellness will be offering free flu shots at the Pearl Senior Service building. Participants who provide a Medicare or other health insurance card will receive a shot for free; those who do not have insurance may receive a shot for a fee.

Monday, October 26, at 1 p.m., Pearl Senior Center will screen L. Frank Baum's classic, *The Wizard of Oz*. Starring Judy Garland as Dorothy, it follows an innocent farm girl whisked out of her mundane earthbound existence into a land of pure imagination.

For further information about October events in Pearl, visit cityofpearl.com.

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In Memoriam: K-9 Rico of the Richland Police Dept.

By Alexa Haik

K-9 Rico died early in the morning, August 31, 2020, after battling several medical problems. He was originally imported from Holland and trained in Kaplan, Louisiana, at USK-9 Unlimited. In January 2014, he was tested and selected to join the Richland Police Department as a dual purpose K-9, meaning that he was trained in narcotics detection, along with criminal apprehension. K-9 Rico and his handler, Sergeant Brian Hamilton, were assigned to the United States Marshals Gulf Coast Regional Fugitive Task Force in February 2019.

Sgt. Hamilton remembers Rico as "having the best temperament of any K-9 that I have worked around, and I say that because he was well known around the metro area for apprehending criminals but yet he had a switch that he could turn off and be a pet, or a friend to the children around the community. Rico could go out at night, tracking criminals through the thickest terrain you could imagine and apprehending criminals, who would fight with him, punch him, choke him,



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K9 Rico.

etc. - and then we could go to a school, to do a demonstration for the children, and the children could be all over him, petting him, loving on him, or he would go home to family and play in the yard with two young children. Most police K-9's do not have the switch to be able to separate work life from home life, which made him very exceptional in the K-9 world."

One of the most cherished memories of K-9 Rico occurred on February 20, 2015, at approximately 1 a.m. Sgt. Hamilton and K-9 Rico were patrolling a local apartment complex and encountered a suspicious person standing next to a vehicle in the middle of the parking lot.

Sgt. Hamilton confronted the individual, and a foot pursuit ensued where the suspect began throwing down narcotics as he fled. Sgt. Hamilton was able to catch the suspect, and both fell to the ground, knocking Hamilton's radio loose, which prevented Hamilton from calling for back up. Once Hamilton caught the suspect, the incident turned into a life or death situation for him. The suspect, who was much larger than Sgt. Hamilton, began fighting with him, at one point, headbutting Sgt. Hamilton in the face. The next option for Sgt. Hamilton was K-9 Rico, who was several hundred yards away, in the rear of the patrol car. Sgt. Hamilton had a button on his duty vest that could open the back door of the patrol vehicle to let Rico out of the car, but he was so far away, Sgt. Hamilton was uncertain if it would work. However, not long after hitting the button, K-9 Rico responded, found Sgt. Hamilton, apprehended the suspect and held him on the ground while Sgt. Hamilton retrieved his radio to call for backup. That night, Rico proved himself to Sgt. Hamilton, and their bond from then on out was undeniable. An investi-

gation later revealed that the suspect had cocaine, marijuana, PCP, and alcohol in his system and was in possession of cocaine and marijuana.

K-9 Rico was nominated for the hometown hero award in 2018 alongside Sheriff Bryan Bailey and Officer Drew Decker and was voted by the citizens of Rankin County as the Hometown Hero. Rico also placed second in a United States Police Canine Association National narcotics certification, along with winning several other regional awards, including narcotics detection and criminal apprehension.

Rico was loved greatly by locals, especially the children in the community and Rankin County Schools...in their minds, he "was one of their own." He had nearly twenty-five criminal apprehensions, not to mention the hundreds of criminals that gave up rather than being engaged by K-9 Rico. Rico was responsible for seizing approximately a half million dollars worth of illegal narcotics or narcotics related currency. He was an exceptional canine law enforcement officer and a hero.

Visit page 7 for photospread.

October in Richland, festivities for all ages

Special to The Richland News

Richland Senior Services will host an "Outdoor Senior Fall Fest" for residents fifty-five and older. It will be held Tuesday, October 20, from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

There will be informational vendor booths, door prizes, food, and entertainment. All participants are asked to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) social distancing protocol by wearing a mask. Richland Senior Services will also provide additional face masks and sanitizing stations during the event.

Senior Fall Fest will include informational vendor booths, lunch, door prizes and entertainment.

In case of inclement weather, the event

will be rescheduled for October 27.

Those interested in attending the fall festival must contact the Richland Senior Center at 601-420-3401 to register for lunch as well as to be eligible to win door prizes. The Richland Senior Center is located at 371 Scarbrough Street, Richland.

For local youth, Richland is presenting "Nightmare on Harper Street: Monster Maze," the annual haunted trail. It will open Friday, October 23, beginning at 7:30 p.m. and running until 10 p.m. and also Saturday, October 24, same

time. Children eight years and up may attend, and the cost per participant is \$5.



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The trail is located behind the Richland Community Center on 410 East Harper Street in Richland. For more informa-

tion, call 601-420-3402.

For family fun, Richland's Mayor's Youth Council has partnered with Riverwood Shopping Center to host "Richland Fallfest Car Show 'Spooktackular'" on Saturday, October 31, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. The cost is \$25 per vehicle, and door prizes will be awarded for: best decorated car, best dressed driver, best dressed child, best dressed pet and an overall best in show. All winners are chosen by public vote. There will also be a fifty-fifty pot, children activities and food trucks. Festivities kickoff at Riverwood Shopping Center, located at 915 U.S. 49 Frontage Road.

For more information about Richland's Nightmare on Harper Street or Car Show 'Spooktackular,' call 601-420-3402.



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Animals of Florence: It all began with a garden

By Alexa Haik

"It started out because I love gardening," says Terry Wynn, a nine-year resident of Florence and California native. "I started growing plants and stuff like that, and, of course, you grow more stuff than you can consume, so I started putting it out there by the road...then folks started leaving money...we'd find a dollar bill here or five dollars [there]." With the additional funds, funds that accumulated quite by accident, Wynn began building dog houses, because he saw a need. Then things evolved into much more.

Considering himself a kind of a guardian of the funds for the folks in the Florence area, Wynn says his main purpose these days is to help raise money for lost animals in his neck of the woods. Located only a mile away from where Rankin, Hinds, Copiah and Simpson Counties meet, there is a lot of territory to cover. With the money raised from

his gardening endeavors, his approach is simple and straight forward: "If a dog hits me in particular and really needs a few bucks, whether it be a puppy's first



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shots or a dog with a broken leg, and the owners can't afford the visit, (I have a mobile vet who I can call) I will pay for the procedure, there's all kinds of things to do."

Many times, two times for example,

Wynn drove northwest to Carthage to pay a vet bill, to ensure that the money went directly to assist the dog that was in need. "They give that money out of the goodness of their hearts...and I want to make sure that when I give their money out it goes to where they believe its going to go, and that is to help an animal. I don't have any facility to keep dogs. I have to tell people I am not a shelter and I am not a rescue. I am not even fostering any dogs." This grass-roots effort to aid local

animals has now been going on between six and seven years.

Although it's mostly dogs that receive assistance, Wynn says he has helped a cow down the road a little bit, goats, it doesn't matter, any animal will do. But

the focus is primarily on dogs, because there seems to be more of a need there.

Currently, a service offered by Animals of Florence is free tags and identifications for folks in the local community. Every few weeks on the Animals of Florence Facebook page, Wynn will offer this additional service to the members, always emphasizing the fact that this service is all paid for by the people of the community. If someone contacts Animals of Florence about a need for a tag, Wynn will order it, show up and present the tag in-person. As a result of these efforts, over the past year and a half, there have been between two or three hundred different ID tags that have been placed out.

Wynn will continue his efforts for the foreseeable future and encourages anyone who is either interested in learning more about Animals of Florence, or who would like to inquire about getting involved, to visit them on their self-titled Facebook page.

FHS alum, Samuel Day, graduates from NFPA

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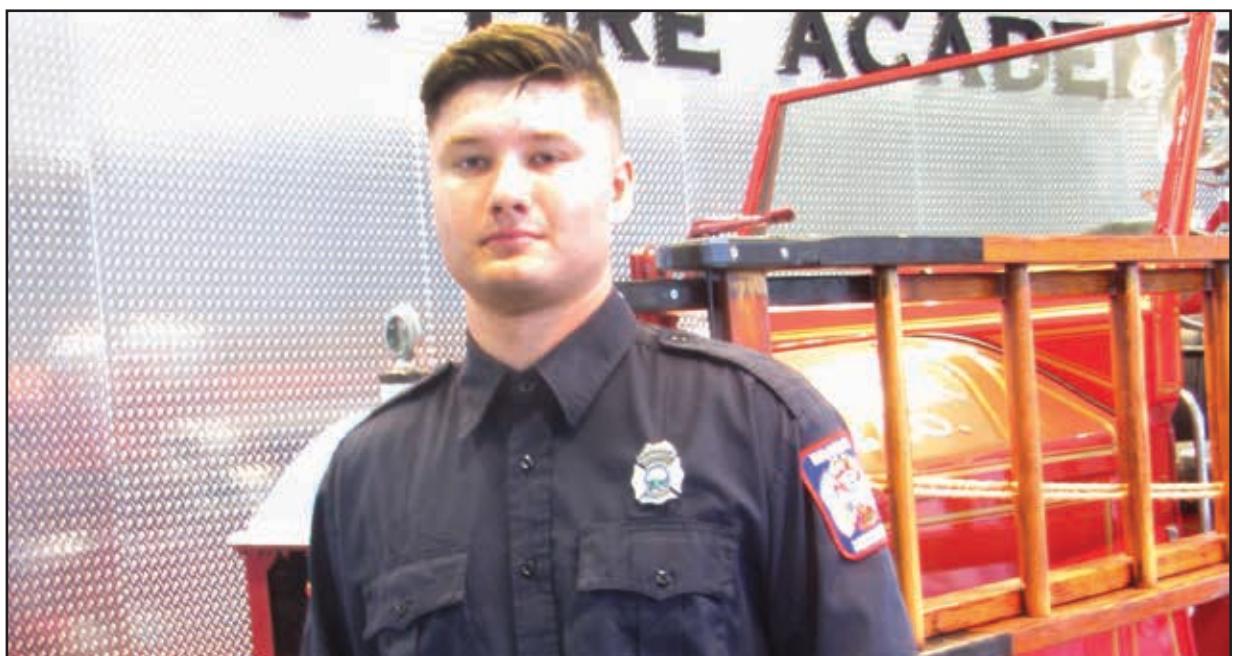
Firefighter Samuel Day of the Brandon Fire Department graduated September 17, 2020, from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Firefighter I-II course held at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Jackson.

This intense seven-week course included classroom and hands-on instruction in the areas of fire behavior, fire suppression, rescue, incident command, hazardous materials and other fire related topics. This course meets and exceeds the National Fire Protection Association for Firefighter Qualifications and the uniform minimum training standards stated in the Mississippi Code section 45-11-7.

The Mississippi State Fire Academy is a division of the Mississippi Insurance Department. Commissioner Mike

Chaney and Academy Executive Director Terry Wages conclude that firefighters, through their newly acquired skills and knowledge, will be an asset to the fire departments they represent in implementing fire protection and prevention for their community.

He is the son of Jerry Day, Jr. and Kelly Day of Florence. He is also a 2018 graduate of Florence High School.



Samuel Day

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Florence PD seeking new recruits



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The Florence Police are currently looking to fill three vacancies in their department. The positions are for full-time, night-shift patrol officers, with a full benefits package.

Requirements for potential applicants include: completing a FPD employment application, scheduling an interview with the police chief, and submitting to a thorough background check.

The primary qualification for employment includes being a certified law enforcement officer in the State of Mississippi.

Applicants are not required to be residents of Florence.

The FPD, led by Police Chief Rich-

ard Thomas, is dedicated to protecting the citizens who reside, visit, or pass through the Florence community. The department is dedicated to local youth, and has officers trained to teach D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) in the local schools.

Interested parties may download a copy of the employment application on the City of Florence's website, cityofflorencems.com/job-openings.

Scheduling an interview is recommended but not required. Bring a completed application by the FPD, and, if Chief Thomas is available, he will interview on site.

The FPD is located at 203 College St, Florence, MS 39073.

For more information, contact the FPD at 601-845-7508.

Pearl resident joins Court of Appeals staff

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Alexis Armstrong of Pearl joined the staff of Court of Appeals Judge Latrice A. Westbrook in August. Armstrong works as a judicial law clerk.

Armstrong earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science, cum laude, from Jackson State University, where she served as Chief Justice of the Student Government Association. She earned her law degree from Mississippi College School of Law in May 2020. She was a Dean's List scholar and earned certificates for her pro bono service and her work in family and juvenile law. She was event planning co-chair for the Black Law Student Association. She was a member of the Moot Court Board and earned Best Oral Advocate in Mississippi Moot Court competition.

Armstrong worked as an intern in the offices of the U.S. Attorney, the State Public Defender, the Mississippi Attorney General, the Mississippi Center for Justice and the Mobile County District Attorney. She was admitted to the limited practice of law as a student through the Mississippi College Guardian Ad



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Alexis Armstrong, judicial law clerk for Court of Appeals.

Litem Clinic and during an internship with the Rankin County Youth Court. She also previously served internships in the law offices of Frascogna Courteney, PLLC and Margarett Meeks.

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Obituaries

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Linda Blackwell Herrington	74	Pearl, MS	9/4/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Charles "Tippy" Carter	65	Richland, MS	9/4/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Johnny Davis Thrash	71	Florence, MS	9/5/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
William "Bill" Meadows	91	Florence, MS	9/10/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Mary Armstrong	78	Richland, MS	9/10/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Paulette Wilson	73	Florence, MS	9/12/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
William Guess	83	Magee, MS	9/12/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Bobbie Rae Lowery	83	Florence, MS	9/14/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Denise Richardson	58	Brandon, MS	9/3/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Augustine "Tina" Carter	74	Richland, MS	9/15/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Lavada Martin Powell	86	Natchez, MS	9/20/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home
Johnny C. Byrd, Jr.	65	Richland MS	9/23/2020	Chancellor Funeral Home

Old Truths for Today

By J.T. Morgan



MAKE IT SURE

The Jews asked Pontius Pilate to put a guard on the tomb of Jesus. They had reminded Pilate the words of Jesus where He promised, "After three days I will rise." (Matt. 27:63). Pilate replied, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." (vs. 65). The words of Pilate make a lot of sense even today. How many homes have been burglarized that you know, maybe even yours? It's terrible to think that someone would invade the privacy of a person's home and steal things that you had worked so hard to obtain. When you call the police and they come to investigate they may leave you with some instructions to make your home safer and more secure.

Jesus asked, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). When we think how important it is to make our homes more secure, we need to think regarding our spiritual welfare and "make it as secure as we can." Life is filled with many choices as we journey on life's road. Sometimes the choice is between two things that both seem good and right. However, when closely considered one of those choices is more safer and sure than the other. Peter exhorts, "Make your calling and election sure." (2 Pet. 1:10). Every time there is a choice to be made regarding our spiritual life we should choose what is "sure" for the soul is too precious and eternity too long for us to take a chance. We need to follow the safe course.

Many have the idea that "one religion is as good as another". The idea is that anyone who speaks for any religion is worthy to be heard. The premise is false as well as the conclusion. Jesus said, "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9). It does make a difference what we hear and believe. The tragedy is expressed by Solomon, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12). A false remedy has never cured an illness and a false path will not lead to the desired destination, false teaching will not save a soul. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (Jhn. 8:32).

Only the gospel of Christ, the word of God, can save. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). Who should we listen to? What men say or what the inspired scriptures say? On one occasion Jesus asked the apostles if they would go away and their reply was, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (Jhn. 6:68). Paul later wrote, "When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God..." (1 Thes. 2:13). Jesus asks, "Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" (Lk. 6:46; Mat. 7:21-23). Obedience to the Lord is a matter of conviction, not convenience. The psalmist wrote, "Today if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Psm. 95:7; Heb. 3:15). When it comes to your salvation, "make it sure".

Florence Church of Christ

P.O. Box 277, 220 White Street, Florence, Ms 39073

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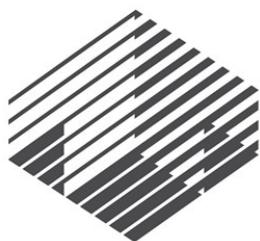
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M-Braves present grant to Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute

Special to SW Rankin News

In conjunction with the Atlanta Braves, the Mississippi Braves are joining together with the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute in their extraordinary effort to empower the youth of color in central Mississippi through education and community activation. In keeping with the Braves' mission to support youth-serving programs in the community, a grant for \$5,000 was presented to the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute at Trustmark Park on Friday, September 11.

"Along with our parent club, the Atlanta Braves, we are proud to partner with the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute in their mission to impact the lives and future careers of the youth in central Mississippi," added Pete Laven, Mississippi Braves vice president and general manager. "In the spirit of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, the M-Braves look forward to participating in the Institute's efforts in providing equitable environments in our community."

The Evers Youth Empowerment Scholars program (E.Y.E.S.) is about providing Mississippi youth of color with education, training, character development, and team-building skills that will empower them to become actively engaged in their communities.

Program components include academic training, community service, and physical activity. These activities instill within our youth, honor, confidence, hope, forgiveness, and responsibility. Values we want to see all of our youth embody each day.

"The Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute is excited and appreciative to begin a relationship with the Atlanta and Mississippi Braves," said Reena Evers-Everette, executive director of the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute and daughter Medgar and Myrlie Evers. "This gift will help support our ongoing efforts for justice and healing, enhancing our organization's abilities to support communities through our youth empowerment initiatives. Now especially, with elevated conversations about racism and demands for change, it is inspiring to have the Atlanta and Mississippi Braves support our mission."

Medgar and Myrlie Evers are widely regarded as two of the most outstanding leaders of the civil rights movement. Medgar Evers was a pioneering visionary for civil rights in the 1950s and early



Photos special to SW Rankin News

Treasurer Alveno Castilla, Mississippi Braves' Vice President and General Manager Pete Laven, Executive Director Reena Evers-Everette and Vice Chair Dr. Corinne Anderson.

1960s in Mississippi. From the beginning, Myrlie Evers worked alongside her husband, Medgar. In the years following his assassination, she continued the pioneering work they began together in 1998. She founded the Medgar Evers Institute, with the initial goal of preserving and advancing the legacy of Med-

gar Evers' life's work. Anticipating the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers on June 12, 1963, and recognizing the international leadership role of Myrlie Evers, the Institute's board of directors changed the organization's name to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute.

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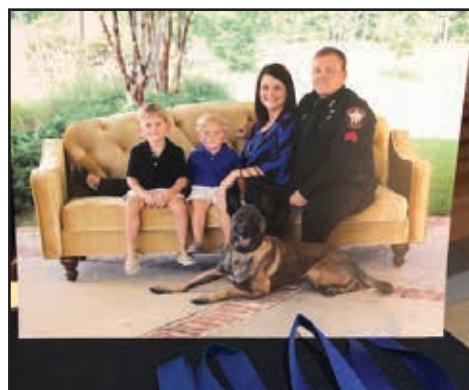
RPD mourns the loss of one of its' own



K9 Rico and his handler, Sergeant Brian Hamilton.



K9 Rico in front of patrol car.



Photos special to SW Rankin News Hamilton family photo.



K9 Rico's final ride.

Special to SW Rankin News

Richland Police Department recently hosted a memorial service for K-9 Rico, who passed away August 31, 2020, after battling several medical problems.

The event was held inside at Richland's Recreation Center located at 410 E. Harper Street, Richland. Members of the press, as well as the public were wel-

comed to attend. Immediately following Rico's memorial, dispatch made his final call on the radio and his final ride through the City of Richland. The ride through began at the Recreation Center, ran through Highway 49 and Highway 80 and ended at the Richland Police Department.

K-9 Rico faithfully served the citizens of Richland for over six years.

\$500,000 AFG grant presented to MSFA



MSFA Director Terry Wages (center at podium) with MSFA Instructors.



Photos special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (l to r) are: MSFA Director Terry Wages, Commissioner and State Fire Marshall Mike Chaney, Congressman Michael Guest, Paul Ammerman (Deputy Administrator of Administration) and Daniel Cross (Deputy Administrator of Instructional Bureau).

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi State Fire Academy (MSFA), located in Pearl, recently received the largest "Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) Grant" in the history of the MSFA. Congressman Michael Guest presented a letter of approval from FEMA to Commissioner Mike Chaney totaling \$500,000. This in turn was presented to Director Terry Wages. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony was held outside in front of the MSFA administration building, in accordance with CDC guidelines and

social distancing.

According to Congressman Michael Guest and Commissioner Mike Chaney, several Washington delegates from Mississippi worked diligently to help secure this grant. MSFA's Paul Ammerman and Vanessa Smith also worked long hours to help write the grant.

These funds will assist in the efforts to refurbish what has been previously referred to as the "old heat building."

The Mississippi State Fire Academy is a division of the Mississippi Insurance Department.

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PHS announces 2020 homecoming maids



The Pearl High School 2020 Senior Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Ashton Spell, Chassidy Roger (Football Maid) and Izzy Garcia; and back row: are Tori Douglas, Olivia Wilson, Voddia Travis, Jennifer Cedeno and Amrit Kaur. Not pictured is Skye Ranson.



The Pearl High School 2020 Junior Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Mikayla Sills and Lindsay Butler; and back row: Anzlee Channell, Aleyah Mosley, Alexandria Villanueva and Zamiya Warner.



The Pearl High School 2020 Sophomore Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Anneliese Renfroe and Kimora Bailey; and back row: Kate Roa and Saylor Foster.



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The Pearl High School 2020 Freshman Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are: Jayden Neal, Dulce Tapia and Layton Ward.

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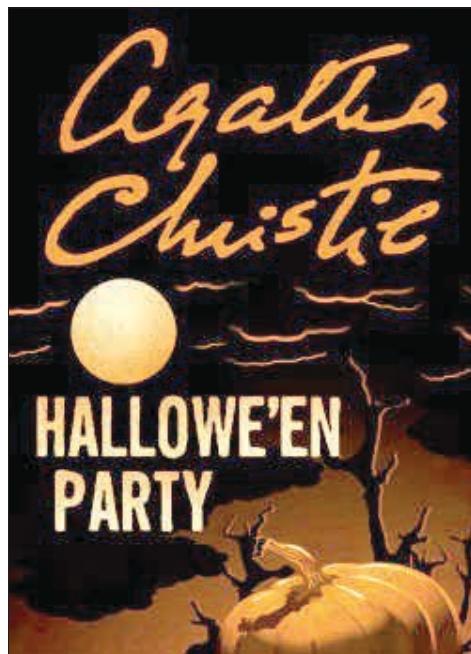
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Book report, courtesy of Friends of the Richland Library

By The Friends of the Richland Library Facebook page administrator

October was definitely in the air, and I was in the mood for a book that fits the season; but not one to give me nightmares. I found the right one, an Agatha Christie mystery entitled, *Hallowe'en Party*, which I borrowed from Richland Library. A quick scan of several paragraphs reacquainted me with Mrs. Ariadne Oliver. She's not the most famous of Christie's fictional detectives; but I liked her in an earlier book I had read. Christie wrote six or seven books featuring her, usually as a helper to the Belgian detective, M. Hercule Poirot. Christie describes her as middle-aged and a successful writer of mystery books featuring a detective from Finland. "Spoiler Alert!" She loves apples and eats them all day long.



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Hallowe'en Party begins in a rush with people who have gathered at the home of Mrs. Drake, who is hosting a holiday party for a group of children aged ten to seventeen. Decorations are going up inside the house, and two slightly older boys are putting lights up in strategic places. Pumpkins are scattered about. Someone brings baskets of apples to be used in a game of, "Bobbing for Apples." A large metal tub is placed on a table in the library for the game. Mrs. Ariadne Oliver, who is visiting a friend living in Woodleigh Commons, is helping prepare for the party--when she isn't resting or munching an apple or two. Some children are busy helping; but, one child, Joyce Reynolds, a girl of thirteen, announces, "I saw a murder once." That's quite a statement.

No one believes her; the adults say she always tells tales to be noticed. Her friends say she is trying to impress Mrs. Oliver, the famous author of crime mysteries.

Hours later, after the party breaks up, no one can find Joyce, until someone

goes into the library to clean up and finds her with her head down in the water of the tub used for apple-bobbing. She has been drowned, and the police are called.

The next day, Mrs. Ariadne Oliver convinces her good friend, M. Hercule Poirot, to come to Woodleigh Commons and find the killer. This puts into motion a complicated process of Poirot's using his "little grey cells" with the assistance of Ariadne Oliver, in sifting information about the people at the party, rumors and facts about several young women who have disappeared or had been murdered. And what is it about the almost magically beautiful sunken garden created from an old quarry by an architect, Michael Garfield, at the behest of wealthy Mrs. Llewellyn-Smythe? Who forged a codicil to Mrs. Llewellyn-Smythe's will, which changes the heir of all that money? What murder did Joyce witness? Who drowned her younger brother a week later? Who will be next? Can Hercule Poirot and Ariadne Oliver solve the mystery in time? Will Ariadne Oliver ever eat another apple?

Richland's UDA Solo Showdown winners

Special to SW Rankin News



Ashlyn Moorhead and Chloe Knippers recently placed nationally in the first virtual Universal Dance Association (UDA) Solo Showdown. Moorhead competed in the Teen/Senior Hip Hop Showdown while Knippers competed in the Teen Contemporary/Lyrical South/Northeast. Each were judged on execution of movement, execution of skill, choreography, projection, and overall impression. They selected their own music, created their own choreography, and executed their routine.



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Tech savvy Florence resident in high demand at UMMC

By Bruce Coleman, UMMC Office of Communications and Marketing

He gets called whenever pediatric clinical employees have reached their wits' end with technology, and quickly sets their minds at ease with a simple joke and dependable service.

He helps shorten wait times for dreaded computer updates by telling tales of his BMX bike races or the exploits of his various farm animals, especially one plucky pet rooster that seemingly lives just to torment him.

He quietly unpacks and prepares essential clinical software systems in the new Kathy and Joe Sanderson Tower at Children's of Mississippi so health care workers will be able to deliver specialized pediatric services when the facility opens this fall.

And in his spare time, he helps sick children stuck in a boring hospital setting connect with their friends, switching their focus to entertaining and instructional video games rather than uncomfortable clinical procedures.

Josh Warren is a modern-day superhero cloaked as an information technology specialist. At least that's the way Kim Barrier, a pediatric nurse educator, likes to see him.

"Anytime we have a computer problem, no matter what it is, Josh is who

we call," Barrier said. "If you were to come to the hospital and see the sheer volume of computers we have, it's overwhelming. He knows everything when it comes to those computers. For every single person in Children's of Mississippi, he's their 'go-to' guy for any computer needs."

She said Warren's expertise - and his willingness to help in a crisis - isn't limited to pediatrics.

"When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, I was part of the Command Center for UMMC Reserves," she said. "We were set up in the School of Nursing, which was outside of Josh's jurisdiction. We had a computer problem, so I texted him and asked if he wouldn't mind looking at it. He came over and fixed our issue, which was just awesome. He is literally one of the best people."

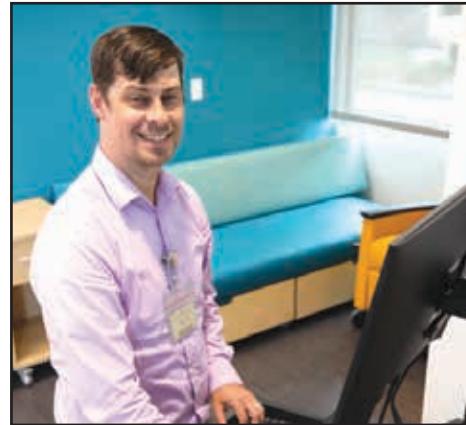
A native of the Pearl/Brandon area, Warren came to UMMC in late 2011 as a contract employee for a third party company and, when an opportunity in the Division of Information Systems came along the following spring, he joined the Medical Center full-time.

"Hospitals don't close," Warren said, "so I thought it was a pretty good chance to have longevity and security."

He's been keeping the Medical Center's diverse pediatric clinical computer systems secure ever since.

"With the ever-changing day-to-day workflow in pediatrics, there's always something different popping up," he said. "It doesn't stop, and it's fast-paced."

It's a job with such a frantic pace - and



Special to SW Rankin News

Josh Warren, an information technology specialist in the Division of Information Systems, sets up a computer for use this fall in the new Kathy and Joe Sanderson Tower at Children's of Mississippi.

a tremendous professional responsibility - that it doesn't often lend itself to solemnity very easily. Yet Warren's even temperament and casual-yet-professional approach to any IT issue is almost legendary among his peers.

"There's a social side to Josh," said his supervisor, Shelvalian Ware. "You're not going to feel down or overwhelmed around him. If you're having an issue,

he'll pick you up."

"Everybody loves Josh - he's the nicest guy, and he is just cool," Barrier said. "He's always got a smile on his face. I've never seen him overwhelmed. He gets called sometimes for the simplest things - I imagine most of his day is like that - but he says it's fine, no problem. He has a totally pleasant demeanor no matter what we call him for. He's super tolerant of us clinical folks, who could probably fix it ourselves if we thought hard enough, but he fixes it anyway and never complains."

It's a quality Ware, field support manager for health care, treasures about Warren.

"Josh's work ethic is strong," she said. "There is no task too small or too large for Josh to tackle. He has a determination and drive to ensure whatever task you set for him, he is going to accomplish. He brings a lot to the team. He helps out his teammates with any task they have and volunteers for others, which is sometimes hard to find in a technician. Whether day shift or night shift, he comes in and puts his name in the hat."

It's a work ethic that is doubtlessly influenced by his home and recreational life. He and his young bride - the couple celebrated their first wedding anniversary this month - share a small farm south

continued on page 11

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Tech savvy Florence resident in high demand at UMMC

continued from page 10

of Florence with seven horses, five dogs, six cats and about two dozen chickens. Keeping up with all those animals could be considered a chore of its own - especially one rather rambunctious rooster named Condor.

"He chases me around the yard," Warren said. "He will run under a car and hide, then shoot out at me to startle me. It scares you - but then you look down and there's this little chicken all bowed up, staring at you. If I take off running or jogging, he'll run after me until he catches me or gets tired trying. He only does that to me. He's very sneaky."

Tales of Condor and the other animals on his farm and his passion for wood-working, working on cars or racing BMX bikes - until recently, Warren served as a board member on the governing body for a local BMX track - have kept his colleagues entertained for years. But those stories have also endeared him to countless Children's of Mississippi patients, as well.

"There are a lot of children who bring their X Boxes and games to play with while they are hospitalized," Ware said.

"Nurses will call Josh because they know he will come help them get set up with the UMMC public Wi-Fi so they can connect with their friends and enjoy their games. The floor receives a lot of donated equipment, and Josh spends

countless hours getting it up to speed so the youth can utilize it for their enjoyment while in the hospital."

"He's even brought batteries and changed them out of a race car so one of the little kids could play with it. That's not something he has to do, but it's something he wants to do. He really does go above and beyond to assist with them and to help them out."

The project keeping Warren most busy these days is the Kathy and Joe Sanderson Tower. Set to open in November, the seven-story, state-of-the-art \$180 million building will serve as an integral part of pediatric care at UMMC for years to come.

"The preparations have added quite a bit to my workload," he said. "We've started to get the new IT equipment in, and all that equipment has to be configured to UMMC's standards for security."

"Me and the rest of my team are pretty busy, but we're slowly ramping up getting the equipment ready for deployment into the expansion. Once installed, should the equipment ever present an issue for Barrier and her team, she'll know exactly who to call."

"On top of being a really knowledgeable person for computer problems, Josh is just interesting to talk to and has interesting stories," Barrier said. "He's just a really neat dude."

PPSD "Child Find" campaign serves disabled youth

Special to SW Rankin News

The Pearl Public School District is participating in a statewide effort to identify, locate, and evaluate children birth through the age of twenty-one who have a disability. The Child Find Coordinator of Pearl Public School District implements this process. Family members, physicians, educators, or other individuals with knowledge of the child, may make referrals of in-school or out-of-school children. Representatives of various agencies such as the Health Department, Mental Health, Head Start and day care centers may also refer children. Early identification of children in need of special educational services is essential.

Disability categories include the following: autism, developmental delay, emotional disability, and deaf/blind disability, hearing impairment, language speech impairment, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, multiple disability, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment. Each school district has special education programs that provide services to students who have been determined to have one or more of these disabilities. Information gathered from contacts with parents and agencies helps school districts determine present and future program needs so that a free appropriate public education can be provided to all children with disabilities.

The Pearl Public School District Special Services Department offers a continuum of services for students with



Special to SW Rankin News

special needs, ranging from students with disabilities to intellectually gifted students.

The purpose of the Special Services Department is to provide a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities, ages three through twenty, who are in need of special education in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) and the Mississippi Department of Education. The PPSD Special Services Department participates in child find efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate unserved children with disabilities.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Special Services office Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:30 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

If anyone needs to refer a child or just wants information, the Child Find Coordinator for Pearl Public School District is Ashley Chism. She may be reached by calling 601-932-7965 or by writing to her at P.O. Box 5750, Pearl, Mississippi 39288.



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RHS presents the 2020 homecoming court

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Richland High School (RHS) celebrated their 2020 Homecoming in the evening on Thursday, September 24.



The 2020 RHS senior maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Brianna Alford and Karla Burgos; and back row: Tamora Haymon and Callie Tisdale. Not pictured are Rylea Barrier and Katie Beth Holmes.



The 2020 RHS sophomore maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Alainah Alexander and Emily Bridges; and back row: Chloe Owens and Ciera Johnson.



The 2020 RHS freshman maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Jordan Whittington and Isa Alvarado; and back row: Megan James and Cierra Sheppard.



The 2020 RHS junior maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Lona Quichocho and Sydney Ragsdale; and back row: Ema Roland and Laila Anderson.



The 2020 RHS eighth grade maids pictured (l to r) are: Jaylen Bridges and Skylar Reel.



The 2020 RHS seventh grade maids pictured (l to r) are: Sarah Bates and Peyton Perkins.

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Florence Eagles present homecoming maids 2020



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Freshman Homecoming Maid, Laine Smith.



Freshman Homecoming Maid, Annelise Weathersby.



Freshman Homecoming Maid, Ava Grace Weathersby.



Sophomore Homecoming Maid, Addison Errington.



Sophomore Homecoming Maid, Christina Guzman.



Sophomore Homecoming Maid, Skylar Ingram.



Sophomore Homecoming Maid, Hannah Grace Reed.



Sophomore Homecoming Maid, Brooklyn Robinson.



Junior Homecoming Maid, Coriyanna Benson.



Junior Homecoming Maid, Sydney Leavitt.



Junior Homecoming Maid, Lizzy Mayne.



Junior Homecoming Maid, Gracie McGowan.



Junior Homecoming Maid, ShaeLynn Quick.



Senior Homecoming Maid, Maggy Greer.



Senior Homecoming Maid, Sara Grace Jackson.



Senior Homecoming Maid, Farah Johnson.



Senior Homecoming Maid, Maecy Kate Reed.



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Senior Homecoming Maid, Sadie Woods.

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October online programs presented by CMRLS

Special to SW Rankin News

Although seasonal programs offered by Central Mississippi Regional Library System (CMRLS) programs are available online-only at this time, there is a wide range of activities for persons of all ages-from recorded material to live meetings or webinars. A constantly updated schedule of upcoming activities is available by visiting the CMRLS Facebook page. The following is a list of the many Halloween-themed activities hosted by CMRLS this October:

- **Preschool Story Time** is posted each Monday at 9 a.m., October themes include: Oct. 5, *Pumpkins, Pumpkins All Around*; Oct. 12, *Boo to You*; Oct. 19, *Spiders! Spiders! Spiders!*; and Oct. 26, *Happy Halloween*.

- **KIDS activities** are posted each Tuesday at noon. October postings will include: Oct. 6, *Pumpkins, Pumpkins, Everywhere*; Oct. 13, *Monster Mash*;

Oct. 20, *Spiders, Bats, & Cats*; Oh My; Oct. 27, *There's No Such Thing As...*

- **Teens and Tweens** is posted each Thursday at 4 p.m. October activities include: Oct. 8, *Taco Trivia*; Oct. 15, *National Face Your Fear Day*; Oct. 22, *Narrate a Nightmare*; and Oct. 29, *Show Us Your Halloween Make-Up*.

- **Activities for Adults** are posted each Thursday at 9 a.m. October's lineup includes: Oct. 1, *What's Cooking? Spooky Snacks*; Oct. 8, *Let's Get Crafty*; and the **Adult Facebook Book Club** which provides more information about the book selection for the month.

All CMRLS libraries will be closed Monday, Oct. 12, for the Columbus Day holiday. Regular library hours will resume on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

For program suggestions, email custsvc@cmrls.lib.ms.us. To Follow CMRLS on Facebook, visit facebook.com/CMRLS.Libraries/.



Halloween decorations at CMRLS Libraries in Richland (left) and Magee (right).

Photos special to SW Rankin News

FHS's Taylor receives Legion of Valor Bronze Cross

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School's Junior ROTC program recently announced that Cadet Lieutenant (Ltc) Colonel Jordan Taylor has been awarded The Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement. Cadet Taylor is one of two cadets from Mississippi, and one of only eleven cadets from the southern United States to receive this award. The Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement is the highest award a cadet can receive.

Cadet Taylor was nominated for this award because of her leadership, discipline, courtesy and character.

Cadet Ltc Taylor has maintained a 4.0 grade point average throughout high school and has taken upper level and advanced placement classes. She is currently enrolled in dual enrollment college courses. She is a member of the Talon Entrepreneur and Marketing Academy, current editor of the yearbook, DECA, Phi Theta Kappa, FCA, Random Acts of Kindness and is a founding member of the Future Teachers Club. She currently has close to 300 community service hours volunteering her time in the community.



Special to SW Rankin News

Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Jordan Taylor, standing center.

Taylor was selected to serve as the FHS JROTC Eagle Battalion Commander for the 20-21 school year and she has served as company commander, platoon leader, platoon sergeant and squad leader. She was the facilitator for the service-learning team, a member of the academic and leadership bowl teams, and is currently captain of the drill team. She has received the Superior Cadet Award, DAI/SAI Leadership Award, Order of the Daedalian Award, Commendation, Proficiency, and Good Conduct Awards. She has earned Cadet of the Semester and Student of the Month honors.

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