

The Cullman Tribune

SERVING CULLMAN – IN THE HEART OF DIXIE – SINCE 1874

VOL. 151 • 50¢ PER COPY | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2024 | USPS 139-700 • NO. 155

SUBSCRIBE TODAY



TRIBUNE.STORE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

OBITUARIES

Joyce Carolyn Widner, Troy Lawrence, William Devon Ellison

» PAGE 7

WEATHER

59 47

SOURCE: WEATHER.GOV

PARTLY SUNNY

Community Calendar

» PAGE 2



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

– SPORTS –

No. 3 Cullman handles Pike Road 70-40

» PAGE 4

7 93888 98541 4

United Way invites business owners to Business Alliance Lunch

Jen Baker
jen@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The United Way of Cullman County invites business owners to its Business Alliance Lunch on Thursday, Jan. 16, from noon-1 p.m. at East Side Baptist Church in Cullman.

The event is a thank you to current members and an opportunity for potential new members to learn about the benefits of joining the Business Alliance. "Network, connect with local professionals and enjoy a delicious meal prepared by our team and Board Members!" said the United Way.

"As the resource development & outreach manager, and coming from a family-owned business myself, I absolutely love taking on the Business Alliance and advocating for who you are through our marketing opportunities at each tier," said Resource Development & Outreach Manager Taylor Johnson. "This initiative is not just a way of giving back; there's something in it for you as well. United Way is a brand of community. There is no better partnership you could have."

Business Alliance membership tiers

Tier I

For $500, which breaks down to $9.62 per week, businesses can gain valuable exposure and opportunities through the following exclusive perks:

- Two networking events
- Two social media pushes
- Business listing on website
- Interview on United Way TikTok
- Spotlight in Cullman County Commission on Aging's Senior Magazine

Tier II

For $365, which is $7.02 per week, members receive the following perks:

- Two network- » PAGE 3

Sherry Steele:

The ministry of a pastor's wife



SHERRY STEELE

Sherry and Jeff Steele – 42 years of marriage and ministry

Gauge Day
gauge@cullmantribune.com

The pastor's wife — a pedestaled role in ministry, yet it remains one of the most underappreciated positions in the church. It's a position often overshadowed by the pastor's spotlight or hangs aside as a trophy on display. The pastor's wife can be seen as a supportive figure standing quietly in the background, or as an active partner in ministry, depending on the church.

To the congregation, she is a symbol of balance, standing beside her husband as he leads. She carries herself with grace, often dressed impeccably, her smile a calm and cheerful presence that reassures those around her. There's a distinct quality in how she moves through the church — an aura that sets her apart. It's often easy to recognize the pastor's wife, but much harder to truly understand the depth of her role and the sacrifices that frequently come with it.

What are the sacrifices that come with such a prominent, yet often undervalued role? What challenges does she face that the congregation may overlook?

From managing the emotional toll of supporting her husband's ministry to balancing her own identity within the church, the role of a pastor's wife can be complex and demanding. She often has to navigate the expectations placed upon her — sometimes unspoken but always present — of being a perfect example, an ever-present supporter and a leader in her own right, all while handling the personal strains that come with that unvoiced requirement of perfection.

What parts of her position do we take for granted?

The countless hours she invests behind the scenes, offering hospitality, providing counsel and sometimes acting as a bridge between her husband and the congregation, often go unseen.

What impact do these responsibilities have on her sense of self, her family life and her spiritual journey?

Understanding these aspects reveals the deep emotional and spiritual labor that pastors' wives endure, and the sacrifices they make for the sake of ministry — sacrifices that are » PAGE 8

Sick for the holidays? » PAGE 2

2024 in images



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

"The Nutcracker" performed by Ballet South - the toes, the twirl and the turns are the magic of the story! » PAGE 5

Cullman's Mary Page named to Berry College fall 2024 Dean's List » PAGE 2

Alabama Department of Public Health 2024 year in review » PAGE 7

Alabama DHR addresses expiration of SNAP benefit replacement authorization » PAGE 7

Walking to wellness: 5 tips for a healthier lifestyle » PAGE 6

BRIGHTEN YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON WITH BILL'S DEALS

Bill Smith

BUICK GMC

WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE

ALABAMA'S LARGEST BUICK GMC DEALERSHIP

*Notates all rebates applied, must have 2005 or newer qualifying trade in. Prices are plus tax, title, & fee. Colors may vary.

GMC DEALER OF THE YEAR
6 TIMES IN A ROW!

WAS $96,535

NOW

$87,535*

NEW 2024 GMC SIERRA 2500 HD DENALI ULTIMATE



STK#460592

6.6L DURAMAX V8 TURBO DIESEL | ALPINE UMBER
FULL GRAIN LEATHER TRIM | FRONT/REAR PARK ASSIST |
KEYLESS OPEN/START | GOOSENECK/5TH WHEEL PACKAGE

BILLSMITHBUICKGMC.COM • 1940 SECOND AVE NW • CULLMAN, AL 35055 • 256-734-4472

© 2024 THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman's Mary Page named to Berry College fall 2024 Dean's List

Chris Reinolds Kozelle
Berry College

ROME, Ga. — The Berry College Dean's List honors students who posted an academic average of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale while carrying a class load of at least 12 hours during the semester.

Area students named to the fall 2024 Dean's List include:

- Mary Page of Cullman
- Emma Washburn of Locust Fork

Nationally recognized for academic excellence and as an outstanding educational value, Berry is an independent, coeducational, comprehensive liberal arts college of approximately 2,100 students. For more than a century, the college has offered an exceptional education that balances intellectual exploration, practical learning, and character development. Its 27,000-acre campus is the world's largest. Visit www.berry.edu.

The Cullman Tribune
Subscribe Today



Visit Tribune.Store or
Call 256-739-1351

NOW HIRING CLASS A CDL DRIVERS

SAME DAY APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW + COMPETITIVE PAY AND BENEFITS

SFTWI
PLEASE APPLY AT COLLEGE TIRE
315 MAIN ST. NW HANCEVILLE
256-352-2221

Cullman Stock Yard, Inc.
75 County Road 1339
Cullman, AL 35058
(256) 734-4531
www.cullmanstockyard.com
Hoagy and Callahan Parrish
Cattle Sale – Tuesday - 8:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Submit your calendar items or public notices to wendy@cullmantribune.com

The Crossing Food Bank
The Crossing is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3:30 p.m. We are located at 1503 Second St. SW, Cullman (in the Housing Authority).

Cullman Low Vision Support Group Meetings
Third Tuesday of every month, from 10-11:30 a.m., at the Alabama Career Center, 1201 Katherine St. NW in Cullman. Contact Olivia Wade, case manager, at 256-389-2502.

Baileyton Bargain Days
First Saturday of each month from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the old Baileyton fire station next to the town's park. Beauty and health products, toys, home goods, pet items, food and many everyday items. A donation of $20 will allow a shopper to fill up a bag, and for $40 a shopper can fill a large box. Some of the items of greater value will require a larger donation. There will be some restrictions and product limits on the items. Cash and checks accepted. Proceeds will be used for park improvements and capital improvements for the town.

Alcoholics Anonymous
The Grace of God group of Alcoholics Anonymous has open AA meetings (all are welcome) Mondays and Thursdays from 7-8 p.m. at the Carriage House, located next to Grace Episcopal Church, 305 Arnold St. NE Cullman. Contact phone numbers: 256-347-1097, 256-841-2209 or 256-708-1340

Church Services: Spirit Life Church of GOD
- 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW, Cullman
- Friday, Dec. 27 - Celebrate Recovery. Fellowship and testimonies. Hurts, habits and hang-ups are a part of everyone's life. Come and see how to overcome these and more! Bring a dish, dessert or drink for a potluck meal at 5:45 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30. Childcare provided.
- Sunday, Dec. 29 - 9 a.m. Van runs in the 5 Points Area. Call Betty Hays at 256-338-3728 for pickup. Breakfast at 9:30. Bible study classes for children, youth and adults at 10. Praise and worship and message by Pastor Bobby Dodd at 11.
- Tuesday, Dec. 31 - 6 p.m. New Year's Eve Candlelight Celebration

Alcoholics Anonymous
Sundays, 3 p.m. at Cullman First Church of the Nazarene, 5415 Alabama Highway 157. CLOSED literature study. Handicap accessible.

TOPS (Take off Pounds Sensibly) Meetings
Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m., at the Donald E. Green Adult Active Center, 1625 Cleveland Ave. SW. The first meeting is free. TOPS, a national program, is a hands-on/pounds-off approach to weight loss and management through weekly meetings providing information, accountability, support and encouragement where you make the changes that make sense to you.

Cullman NAR-ANON Group Meetings
The NAR-ANON family group meetings are a worldwide fellowship for those affected by someone else's addiction. We offer Help by sharing our experiences, strength and hope. We carry the message of hope by letting others know that they are not alone by practicing the 12 Steps of NAR-ANON and changing our own attitudes. We Respect Your Anonymity. Our program is not a religious one, but a spiritual way of life. Meetings will be held at The Ruehl Building (Family Life Center of St. John's Church) Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. Contact Jamie Weathersby Smith 256-708-7122 or Don or Nancy McKenzie 256-736-3327 or 256-736-3470 for more information.

Cullman Al-Anon Meetings
The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of friends and family whose lives have been affected by alcoholism. The Cullman Serenity Al-Anon Group meets each Monday at noon at 1519 St. Joseph Dr. NE. There is also a Zoom meeting each Tuesday at noon. The Courage to Change Al-Anon Family Group meets on Thursdays at 6 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church at 305 Arnold St. NE in the Carriage House, located between the church and the Arnold House on the corner. For more information call 256-734-2231 or 256-531-4429.

The Pantry at The Link
- 708 Ninth St. SE, Cullman, AL 35055
- Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Closed for lunch noon-1 p.m.

21st Annual Winter Wonderland Christmas Light Display
Drive-through only Dec. 26-29, 5-9 p.m. at Sportsman Lake Park, 1544 Sportsman Lake Road NW. Admission is a cash donation of $10 cash per vehicle. Over 1 million lights!

6th Annual Christmas at the Grotto
Dec. 26-28, 5-9 p.m. at the Ave Maria Grotto, 1600 St. Bernard Dr. SE. Christmas lights return to the Grotto! Come and experience the beauty of Br. Joseph's work at night surrounded by lights and music! We have expanded this unique holiday experience to include a Christmas Tunnel at entry and also Santa's Workshop! Refreshments will be available every night.

Admission:
- Adults - $10
- Seniors - $8
- Military/Veterans/First responders - $7
- Teens (13-17) - $8
- Children (5-12) - $7
- Children 4 and younger - free

Cullman County Soil & Water Conservation District Quarterly Board Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 9:30 a.m. at the USDA Service Center, 501-B Fourth St. SW in Cullman.



REGULAR and BIG & TALL SIZES
MR.HICKS
Mens Wear
256-739-1007
www.suitsformen.com
217 Compass Way SW, Cullman AL 35055
MEN'S SUITS – SPORT COATS – PANTS – SHIRTS
FORMAL WEAR FOR PROMS & WEDDINGS

VIRGIL B. FOWLER
Real Estate and Insurance
AGENCY
Quality Since 1935
734-3821
vbfowlerinsurance.com
Successors to
WILLIAM RICHARD & SON INSURANCE
" Established 1885 "
Virgil B. Fowler 1895-1978 - Virgil B. Fowler Jr. 1937-2019 - Dorothy S. Fowler - Jason S. Fowler

Sick (from Front)

Jen Baker
jen@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — No one likes to be sick during the holidays, especially when family gatherings and holiday events are happening. Sadly, you will need to stay home from the fun if you are sick. It is not wise to gift others with sickness this holiday season. Reconnect with friends and family after you are well. Stay home when you are sick and stay germ free when you are well.

According to Cullman Regional Assistant VP, Marketing & Communications Jennifer Malone, the hospital has seen recent outbreaks of sickness.

"In Cullman Regional ER and urgent care clinics as well as Cullman Regional Medical Group's primary care clinics, we are seeing a significant increase of flu type A in adults and pediatric patients," she said. "We're also seeing a significant increase of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in our pediatric clinic."

Always visit a doctor if you are sick. Additionally, get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and keep a healthy diet.

Here are some tips on how to stay germ free:

- Always wash your hands after shopping and before eating
- Keep your environment clean
- Practice good hygiene
- Always cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- Keep tissues on-hand and always throw away dirty tissues

Pediatrician Dr. Chris Dodd with Cullman Regional Medical Group said parents should always feel comfortable taking their children to see a pediatrician if they feel it necessary.

"While these common winter viruses can cause fever and make children feel ill, anytime a fever lasts more than two to three days it's a good idea to see a pediatrician to determine if any secondary complications have developed," he said.

"If parents have concerns at any point during an illness, they should never feel that it's a problem to see the pediatrician sooner.

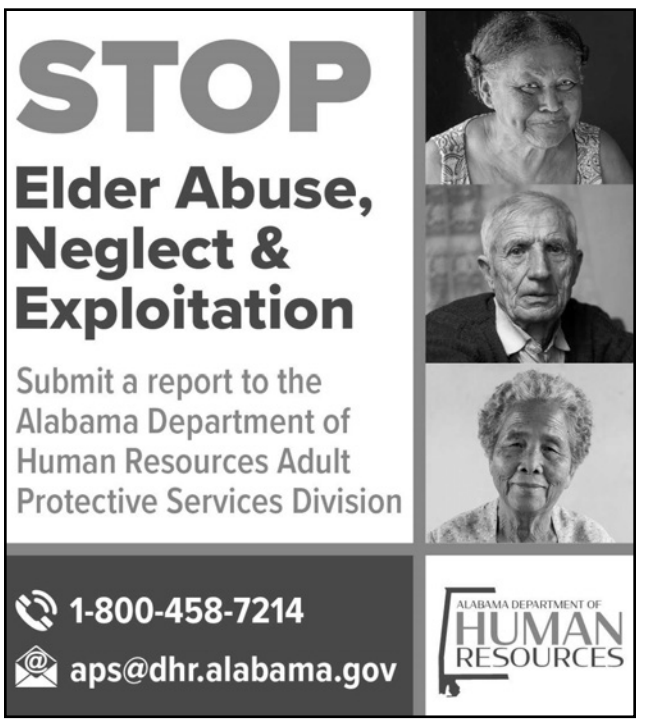
"Parents should always feel encouraged to see their child's doctor when they think something may be wrong."

Find online resources at www.cullmanregionalmedicalgroup.com.

EARL'S BODY SHOP
2251 Decatur Ave., N.W.
734-2406

THE BARN
Portable Storage Buildings
Hanceville, AL
352-2737









SERVICES

SELLING A RV, Tractor or Golf Cart? ADVERTISE STATEWIDE or by region in over 100 Newspapers, reaching over 1 million readers each week! Run your ad in our Classified Network for just $210 per week! Make one call to this newspaper (participating Ala-SCAN newspaper) or call 1-800-264-7043 to find out how easy it is to advertise statewide!

BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-855-405-8901

NEW AUTHORS WANTED! Our publishing staff will help you self-publish your own book. FREE author submission kit! Limited offer! Why wait? Call now: 1-877-567-9754

LONG DISTANCE MOVING: Call today for a FREE QUOTE from America's Most Trusted Interstate Movers. Let us take the stress out of moving! Speak to a Relocation Specialist, call 844-925-3534

WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP & RESTORATION: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals dry out the wet area and do repairs to protect your family and your home's value! If you have water in your home that needs to be dried, Call 24/7: 1-877-727-2344 Have zip code of service location ready when you call!

MEDICARE PLANS HAVE CHANGED!!! Make sure your plan will meets your needs in 2025. Our licensed agents can review the changes, address your needs and make sure you aren't overpaying! For a free quote, Call now! 1-877-730-0711

EDUCATION

ATTENTION ACTIVE Duty & Military Veterans! Begin a new career and earn your Degree at CTI! Online Computer & Medical training available for Veterans & Families! To learn more, call 866-475-1014 (M-F 8am-6pm ET).

HEALTH/BEAUTY

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-855-405-8647

ATTENTION: VIAGRA AND CIALIS USERS! A cheaper alternative to high drugstore prices! 50 Pill Special - Only $99! 100% guaranteed. CALL NOW: 1-855-405-9791

FOR SALE

AFFORDABLE TV & INTERNET. If you are overpaying for your service, call now for a free quote and see how much you can save! 1-866-816-3535

DIRECTV SATELLITE TV SERVICE Starting at $59.99/month! Free Installation! 160+ channels available. Call Now to Get the Most Sports & Entertainment on TV! 844-594-7108

NEED NEW FLOORING? Call today schedule a FREE in-home estimate on Carpeting & Flooring. Call Today! 1-877-568-2248

UPDATE YOUR HOME with Beautiful New Blinds & Shades. FREE in-home estimates make it convenient to shop from home. Professional installation. Top quality - Made in the USA. Call for free consultation: 1-855-405-8839. Ask about our specials!

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-833-683-2005

PREPARE FOR POWER OUTAGES today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 7-Year warranty with qualifying purchase* Call 1-877-323-5516 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

SAFE STEP. North Americas #1 Walk-In Tub. Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our FREE shower package and $1600 Off for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call Safe Step 1-844-871-6175

CALL LEAFGUARD and say goodbye to gutter cleaning for good. No cleaning. No leaking. No water damage. No more ladder accidents. Get LeafGuard today and be protected for life. FREE estimate. Financing available. 20% off total purchase (Restrictions may apply.) Call 1-844-679-2490

DENTAL INSURANCE from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400 plus procedures. Real dental insurance - NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your FREE Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-877-817-4697 www.dental50plus.com/alabama #6258

DONATE YOUR CAR, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a FAST, FREE vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-877-724-3049 today!

JACUZZI BATH REMODEL can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waiving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. (Offer ends 3/30/25.) Call 1-877-205-0836

REPLACE YOUR ROOF with the best looking and longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-833-955-3163

ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS Needing Siding, Window or Roofs. We are opening a branch office and will be using these homes for advertising. SAVE HUNDREDS. 100% Financing*. SR/Military discounts. $1000 OFF with this ad. ENDS SOON *wac 800-350-0591

AUTOMOTIVE

GOT AN UNWANTED CAR??? DONATE IT TO PATRIOTIC HEARTS. Fast free pick up. All 50 States. Patriotic Hearts' programs help veterans find work or start their own business. Call 24/7: 1-855-405-8927

AUTO INSURANCE from $29 month Free 2-minute Quote! We Compare all Insurance providers offers for you! Lowest Rates! Call Now 866-450-0943

STOP OVERPAYING FOR AUTO INSURANCE! A recent survey says that most Americans are overpaying for their car insurance. Let us show you how much you can save. Call Now for a no-obligation quote: 1-877-551-4740

VEHICLE TITLE Problems? We have a solution! Call Jason Steward Enterprises, We're Alabama's #1 Vehicle Title Problem Experts! Free telephone consultation. North AL 1-256-850-0527, Central AL 1-205-267-5735, South AL 1-251-342-8538.

Lunch (from Front)

ing events
- Two social media pushes
- Business listing on website
- Spotlight in Cullman County Commission on Aging's Senior Magazine

Tier III
For $120, which is $2.31 per week, members receive the following perks:
- Two networking events
- Two social media pushes
- Business listing on website

Memberships help fund the United Way of Cullman County and support local nonprofit agencies and programs right here in Cullman.

To RSVP for the January lunch, email tjohnson@uwaycc.org with your name and business name.

"We look forward to celebrating with you and discussing how we can work together to make a lasting impact!" she said.



A-1 Battery Sales
AUTO – TRUCK – TRACTOR
Quality Batteries For Every Need
Since 1979
2152 Co. Rd. 1169 • Cullman, AL 35055
Phone: (Office): 256-734-9438

Borden Family Pharmacy
Established in 1999
Borden
FAMILY
PHARMACY
bordenfamilypharmacy.com
256-734-7535

The Cullman Tribune
Cullman County's Oldest Business, Serving the area since 1874 Publication Number USPS-139-700
Telephone: 256-739-1351 Fax: 1-256-739-4422
HumbleRoots,LLC
Published daily Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 219 2nd Avenue SE, Cullman, Alabama 35055 Entered as periodical material at the Cullman Post Office Periodical postage paid at Cullman, Alabama 35055

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGE TO:
The Cullman Tribune
219 Second Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama 35055
Email Address: robin@cullmantribune.com

ANNUALLY BASED RATES

CULLMAN.....$125.00
OUTSIDE CULLMAN.....$250.00

Noah Galilee - Publisher
Dustin Isom - Associate Publisher
W.C. Mann - Reporter
Gauge Day - Reporter
Nick Griffin - Varsity Sports Editor
SammyConfer-Youth/JVSportsEditor
Bill Piper - Photojournalist
Robin Winton - Newsroom Manager
Janet Chandler - Marketing Specialist

PREP BASKETBALL

No. 3 Cullman handles Pike Road 70-40

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Cullman was back home at Bearcat Arena for one more match-up on the hardwood before Christmas arrives and the 'Cats put together a dominant performance against Pike Road. Cullman smothered the Patriots on the defensive end and knocked down 14 three-pointers on the offensive end to collect a 70-40 win.

Bearcats Head Coach Stu Stuedeman was proud of the way his team bounced back from three-point range after a rough shooting performance at the Jasper Christmas Classic over the weekend.

"Hitting 14 threes after going 0 for 21 is pretty nice. That's why we never put restrictions on our players, we know that they're going to shoot their way out of it. Because that's what we do in practice, and we empower our players to just keep shooting and shooting," Stuedeman said.

"If you restrict your players and start talking about it, you're never going to get any better. You have to be who you are and believe that all your practice and effort you've put in is going to pay off. Going 0 for 21 and then hitting 14 of them the next game is just a testament to who we are."

Gray Hopper and Jake Dorough nailed a couple of three-pointers to give Cullman an early, 6-0 lead. Hopper buried another three to make it 9-0 and Evan Wilson laid one in to keep the 'Cats in front 11-3 later in the period. Brooks Loftin scored the next six points for Cullman to make it a 17-5 game and Preston Gay knocked down a three to make it 20-5. Owens Graves added one more bucket in the final seconds of the first quarter to give the Bearcats a 22-8 lead at the start of the second.

Gay drilled a three and split a pair of free throws early in the second quarter to keep Cullman ahead 26-8. After splitting a pair of free throws, Loftin threw down a couple of fast break dunks to extend the lead to 31-10.

Jake Dorough hit another three, Gay sank a pair of free throws and Wilson scored inside to make it a 38-21 game. Loftin knocked down a three from the right corner just before the buzzer to put the 'Cats on top 41-21 at halftime.

Jake Dorough's third three-pointer of the game gave Cullman a 44-21 lead early in the third quarter. Loftin scored inside and Sam Dorough drained a three to make it a 49-21 game with five minutes to play in the period. Three-pointers from Emery Bonds, Hopper and Sam Dorough stretched the Bearcat lead to 58-28 by the start of the fourth quarter.

Wilson knocked down a three to start the fourth and a couple possessions later, Griffin Carter laid one in to make it 64-31. Max Brooks scored inside and then split a pair of free throws to keep Cullman in front 67-38 and Bonds buried another three to put the finishing touches on a 70-40 win for the Bearcats.

Before hosting Pike Road on Monday, the Bearcats competed in the City of Jasper Christmas Classic over the weekend. Cullman fell to Jonesboro (68-67) and Dutchtown (56-34) out of Georgia in a pair of hard-fought games and Stuedeman was proud of the way the 'Cats battled against some strong competition.

"Those games in Jasper make or break our season because we proved to ourselves that we can compete with teams that are way bigger, way stronger, way faster and in a pickup game they might beat us by 50," Stuedeman said. "We should've won on Friday and then Saturday we were so gassed, but we fought and fought, and it was a 9-point game with five and a half minutes to go in the fourth. So, I'm proud of how we competed down there, and it just shows you what we can be. We were outmatched at every position and our guys didn't back down so that was great."

Loftin led Cullman with 11 points in the win, followed by Jake Dorough, Gay and Hopper who each finished with nine. Wilson added eight points and Sam Dorough and Bonds each posted six.

The 'Cats will compete at the Metro Tournament in Homewood this weekend.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Brooks Loftin led the Bearcats with 11 points in their 70-40 win over Pike Road on Monday.

No. 6 Alabama heads into Christmas break with 81-54 win over Kent State

Steven Gonzalez
UA Athletics

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – The No. 6/7 Alabama men's basketball team closed its pre-Christmas slate with an 81-54 win over Kent State on Sunday afternoon inside Coleman Coliseum.

The Crimson Tide (10-2) had a dominant performance on the defensive end of the floor, limiting the Golden Flashes to 54 points on just 28 percent (21-75) shooting from the field and seven percent (2-27) from beyond the arc.

Alabama also had a season-best seven blocked shots to go with eight steals in the victory.

Mark Sears led the offensive charge with 16 points while Aden Holloway added 13 points and three steals off the bench.

Nelson, Derrion Reid and Labaron Philon each added nine points on the day.

The Golden Flashes (8-3) did not have a player finish in double figures and was led by Delrecco Gillespie's nine points and eight rebounds.

Head Coach Nate Oats Postgame Comments

"(Today) was a much better defensive effort so it will be a much better Christmas break for us. We made defense a big point of emphasis after that (game) in North Dakota. (Kent State) only shot 28 percent and they've traditionally been one of the hardest-playing teams in the Mid-American Conference. I thought our first-shot defense was good, but we needed to rebound a little better on the defensive end. We were able to get the offensive boards well – we ended up with 22 second-chance points and 20 offensive rebounds.

"We're going to figure some stuff out here before SEC play. There were way too many turnovers and missed free throws.

"The good thing for us is that we don't have school for a few weeks, so we'll spend a lot of time in the gym after they get back from Christmas break."

Team Stats

- Alabama led the contest from start to finish, holding the lead for over 35 minutes and taking its largest lead of 32 points with 3:39 left
- The Tide outrebounded the Flashes by 20, 62-42, and surpassed 60 rebounds in a game for the first time since Nov. 15, 2022 (62 at South Alabama)
- UA had 20 offensive rebounds to result in a 22-14 edge in second-chance points
- Grant Nelson (14 rebounds, six offensive) and Clifford Omoruyi (12 rebounds, four offensive) combined for 18 points, 26 rebounds and 10 offensive boards in the win
- After hitting just 2-17 (12 percent) from deep in the opening stanza, Alabama connected on 7-18 (39 percent) from beyond the arc over the final 20 minutes
- The Tide's defense held the Golden Flashes to just 24 points in the opening half, the fewest allowed by the Crimson Tide in any half this season

First Half

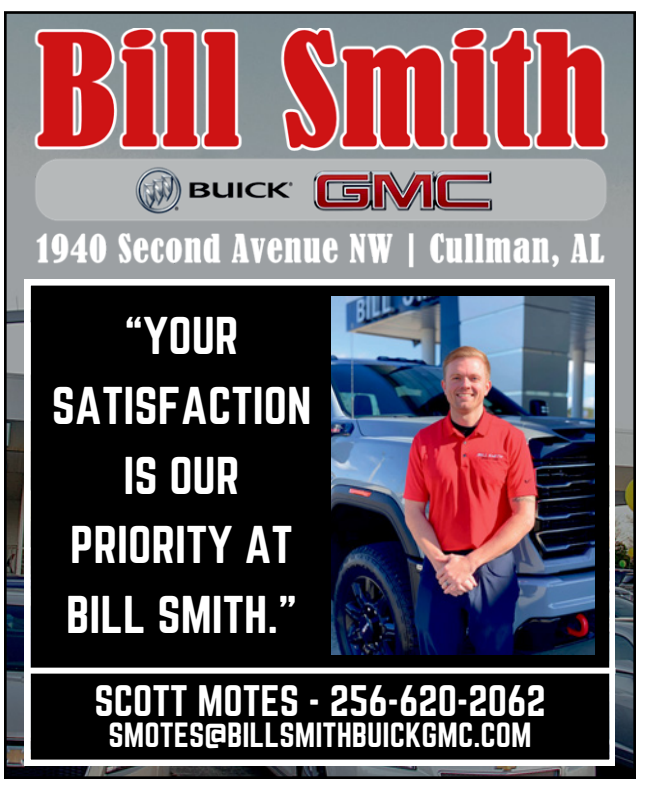
- Poor shooting led to a low-scoring five minutes, as the game remained scoreless after three minutes of action
- Aden Holloway scored the Tide's first field goal with 15:04 to play in the half, which sparked an 18-2 run over 5:56 to open a 20-4 lead
- Alabama's run was propelled by a defensive effort that forced Kent State to miss 19 of its first 21 field goal attempts
- Alabama held a 15-point lead, 39-24, after the opening 20 minutes of play
- Grant Nelson hauled in 12 rebounds in the half, the most in a half for an Alabama player this season

Second Half

- Alabama's offense was more efficient in the second stanza, connecting on 14-27 (52 percent) field goals, compared to 13-33 (39 percent) shooting in the first half
- The Tide went on a 13-2 run which lasted nearly seven minutes midway through the half to turn a 47-33 contest into a 60-35 advantage with just over eight minutes left to play
- Mark Sears (10), Aden Holloway (9) and Labaron Philon (7) combined to account for 26 of the Tide's 42 second half points

Up Next

- Alabama closes its non-conference slate against South Dakota State on Sunday, Dec. 29
- Tipoff is set for 2 p.m. and the contest will air on SEC Network+





2024 IN IMAGES

By: Sherry Brown

As a photojournalist and a landscape photographer, I'm passionate about capturing the world around me through my lens. Every adventure brings a new story to tell and I love getting lost in the moment, whether it's a local community event, a concert, sports or a quiet sunrise. Enjoy my journey!

1. Nico Moon brought the smiles and dynamic music to the stage at the Alabama Strawberry Festival in Cullman.

2. Friendship and smiles at the Alabama Strawberry Festival in Cullman

3. At the Chattanooga Bridge in Tennessee, the glow on the water, the urban landscape in the distance and clouds riding in brought much depth to this view!

4. It was coming a storm at Cades Cove in Tennessee!

5. This tunnel in Tennessee is a leading line into adventure.

6. At Spruce Flats Falls in Tennessee, after climbing quite a few inclines, this beauty appeared. Tripod and feet in the water, what tranquility and peace this was.

7. In Tremont, Tennessee, a zig zag-type of cascade coming off a hillside

8. I was wedged between two rocks with a tripod and camera with this powerful cascade coming toward me. The sound and intensity was a powerful rush of sensations; I feel the spray of water on my face today.

9. Fairview's Landun Smith goes up for the points!

10. In Cades Cove, this beauty watched from the field - the connection of beast and photographer from a very safe distance.

11. West Point Auxiliary Team - are you ready to take the field?

12. Cullman Cross Country Team members Connor Robinson, left, and Andrue Barnett, right

13. A cowboy bows in prayer at the West Point Band Booster Stars and Stripes Rodeo.

14. Laurel River Club Bed and Breakfast (lrcbnb.com) - a misty morning at the Airbnb I stayed at in West Virginia - foggy mornings, barns and fence lines make this country girl happy.

15. Let's get it done! The West Point Band Booster Stars and Stripes Rodeo

16. An exhilarating ride! The West Point Band Booster Stars and Stripes Rodeo brings a pulse of its own.

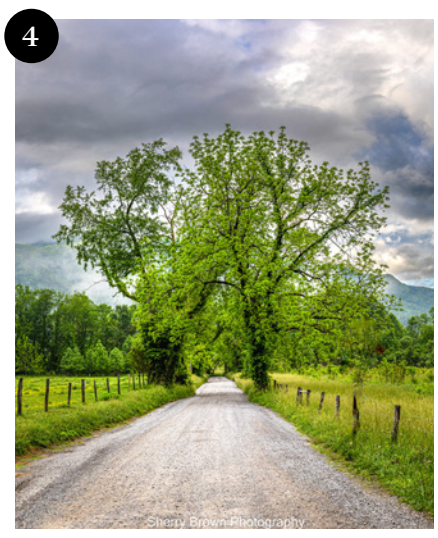
17. Good Hope's Ivey Maddox (left) in the 2024 Cullman County Basketball Tournament

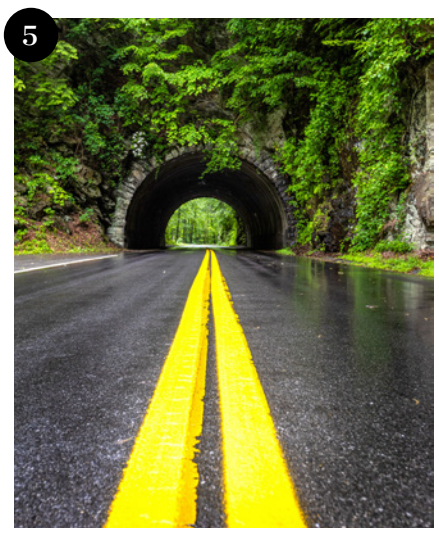
18. Sunrise at Dolly Sods Wilderness in West Virginia - I wandered in while it was dark, with a headlamp, stepping over rock crevices and making my way through brush to set up my gear and wait for this. The color, the misty fog and the clouds were truly breathtaking. It came alive through my lens; afterward I sat on the rocks and enjoyed the beauty.

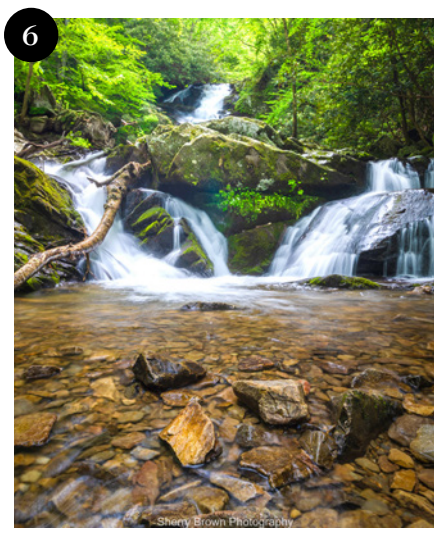

1

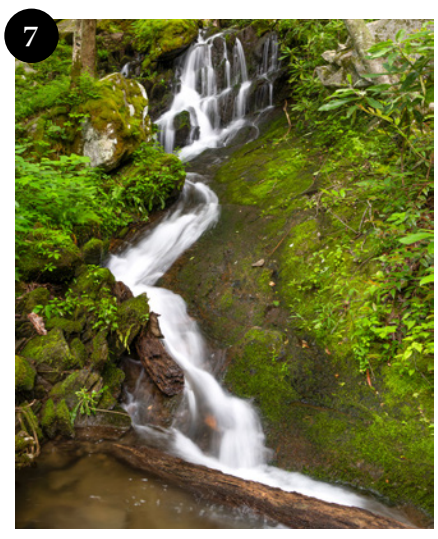

2

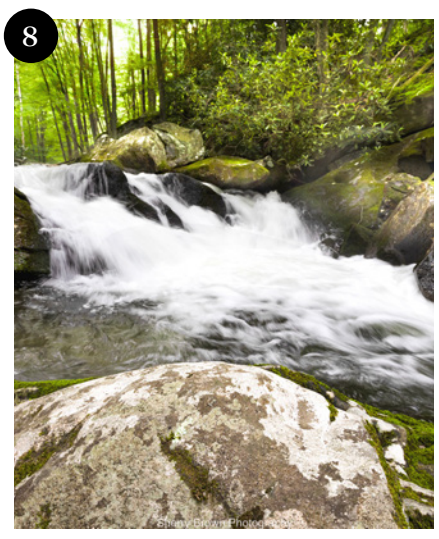

3


4

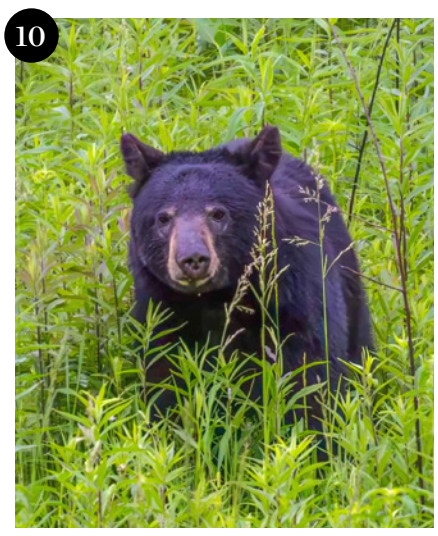

5


6

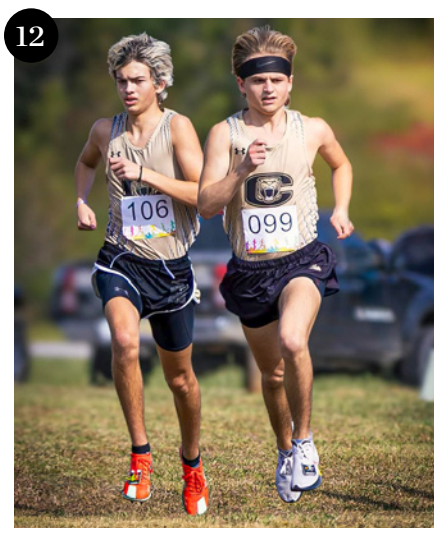

7


8

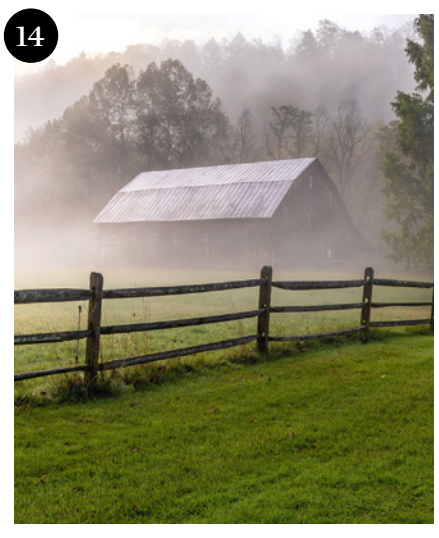

9


10


11


12


13


14



15



16


17


18

Walking to wellness: 5 tips for a healthier lifestyle

UAB Medicine
Contributor


UAB MEDICINE

Walking is an everyday activity that offers numerous benefits. It is accessible to almost everyone and can improve both mental and physical health. Experts at the University of Alabama at Birmingham have studied the benefits of walking and provide five tips to get started.

"There are many ways in which people customize their walking session, including changing the intensity, duration and terrain," said Kelley Pettee Gabriel, Ph.D., professor in the UAB Department of Epidemiology and associate dean for research in the School of Public Health.

"No matter your age, movement capability or environment, you can reap the benefits of walking."

Walking, or rolling if using a wheelchair, benefits everyone by promoting overall health and well-being.

It helps with weight management, reduces disease risk, including heart disease, and improves overall physical and mental well-being.

"Our bodies are meant to move; movement releases endorphins, making us feel happier and clearheaded," Gabriel said.

Find a safe environment

Walking is a great starting point for improving health since it does not require a gym membership or a lot of equipment.

Gabriel says the first step is to find a safe place to walk. This could be a public space or a neighborhood depending upon the person and where they are living.

"You can walk anywhere: a treadmill, a trail, your neighborhood or a local shopping mall," Gabriel said.

"Safety is the most important thing. If you are uncomfortable, you will not get a good walk in."

Choose a well-lit area, especially for early morning or evening walks.

Good lighting helps walkers see the path and makes the walker visible to others. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration advises following road rules and walking as far from traffic as possible if no sidewalk is available.

Plan your walks

When starting to walk, Gabriel suggests planning beforehand for consistency, safety and motivation.

She suggests using a calendar to schedule walks and to try walking at the same time to help maintain accountability and avoid scheduling conflicts.

"Decide how long or far you want to walk each time," Gabriel said.

"You might want to start with 15-minute walks and work your way up to 30 minutes or longer.

"Life can be unpredictable, so if you miss a walk, do not get discouraged.

"Simply adjust your schedule to get back on track."

Exploring new parks, trails or different neighborhoods keeps walks engaging. Gabriel suggests starting with shorter walks and gradually increasing as fitness improves.

Track your steps

Pedometers or fitness trackers can vary in features such as sleep and heartrate tracking; however, Gabriel says, a basic step counter is all one needs to get started.

"A pedometer is useful for tracking distance," she said. "About 2,000 steps equals a mile, so it can be used as a gauge."

Tracking steps can help individuals establish goals and monitor progress.

Studies have shown that about 7,500 steps per day or 30 minutes of moderate physical activity reflects public health guidelines; however, individuals can establish a goal and gradually increase it as activity levels increase.

Start slow

"If I give advice to those just starting out walking, I always recommend starting slow," Gabriel said.

"Walking does not have to be competitive, so you can go at your own pace."

Starting with 10- to 15-minute walks will help the body gradually adapt to the new activity without it being overwhelming.

Warming up with gentle stretching can help prepare the muscles and support gradual improvement.

Light stretching before and after a walk is beneficial, especially as walks become longer. This helps prevent injuries and soreness that would keep someone from consistently walking.

Staying hydrated before, during and after the walk can help support overall health and performance.

Gabriel says to bring a water bottle or have one in the car for before and after the walk.

"Overall, observe how the body feels during and after walks," Gabriel said. "If pain or discomfort occurs, slow down or take a break. It is important to avoid pushing too hard too soon."

Stay comfortable

Part of staying motivated and having a good walk is to stay comfortable by wearing the right attire.

"Depending on the weather, dressing in layers allows for easy adjustment to stay warm or cool," Gabriel said. "Some might like a moisture-wicking fabric to keep sweat at bay, but anything you feel comfortable in is good walking attire."

Protecting the skin from UV rays on outdoor walks is important. Gabriel recommends applying sunscreen or wearing a hat.

Investing in a pair of comfortable, supportive walking shoes can prevent foot pain and injuries.

Brent Haverstock, DPM, co-director of the Advanced Limb Preservation Clinic at UAB, recommends picking a running shoe to walk in as running shoes often provide more support.

He suggests visiting a reputable running shoe store for proper foot measurement and assessment.

"With numerous shoe options available, it is important to find what feels comfortable and meets your needs," Haverstock said.

"Running shoes typically have a lifespan of 300 to 500 miles, so I recommend replacing them every six months.

"However, you may have to replace them sooner if the tread and heel start showing signs of wear and tear."

NOW HIRING
TIRE TECHS
SAME DAY APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW + COMPETITIVE PAY
COLLEGE TIRE
315 MAIN ST. NW HANCEVILLE
256-352-2221

LEGALS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

STEVIE SHARP,
Plaintiff

Vs. Case Number: 25-DR-2024-900321.00

SHANE M. SHARP,
Defendant

NOTICE OF DIVORCE ACTION

Shane M. Sharp, defendant, whose whereabouts is unknown, must answer Stevie Sharp's Complaint for Divorce by January 27th, 2025 or, thereafter, a Judgment by Default may be rendered against him in Case Number 25-DR-2024-900321.00 in the Circuit Court of Cullman County.

Done this the 26th day of November, 2024.

Lisa McSwain
Lisa McSwain,
Circuit Clerk

PETITIONER'S ATTORNEY:
JASON KNIGHT
210 SECOND ST SE
CULLMAN, AL 35055

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF
LOUIE D. HUSSEY,
Deceased.
CASE NO.: PC 2024-179

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters Testamentary having been granted to CALVIN CLEMENT, as Personal Representative of the Estate of LOUIE D. HUSSEY, deceased, on the 17th day of December, 2024, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all persons having claims against the said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Calvin Clement
Personal Representative

Melvin Hasting
Attorney for Petitioner
PO Box 517
Cullman, Alabama 35056-0517

TO: **The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune**

Please publish the above Notice once a week for three consecutive weeks and send an affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE NOTICE

Default having been made in the terms of that mortgage executed on June 29, 2009 by Bonnie J. Mathews & husband Phil E. Mathews, to EvaBank, which said mortgage is recorded in Book MTG 1603, Page 500 in the Probate Office of Cullman County, Alabama, and default continuing, and by virtue of the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the following described property will be sold at public outcry, for cash, to the highest bidder, in front of the Courthouse door of said County, in Cullman, Alabama, during the legal hours of sale on January 6, 2025:

Lot No. 29 in Golf Road Acres Subdivision, First addition, recorded in Plat Book 6, Page 115 (slide a336) in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama.

Said sale is made for the purpose of paying the mortgage debt and cost of foreclosure.

EvaBank, Mortgagee
Thomas W. Russell
Attorney for Mortgagee
2915 Clairmont Ave. S
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

Default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness secured by that certain Mortgage executed by **Rachel N. Becerril and spouse, Adrian Isaac Estudillo Beerril,** to Traditions Bank, as follows: Mortgage securing the property described below, said Mortgage dated July 13, 2022, and recorded on July 14, 2022, in Mortgage Book 2021 Page 330 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama; as modified by that Modification of Mortgage executed by **Rachel N. Becerril, a widow,** to Traditions Bank, as follows: Modification of Mortgage dated July 3, 2024, and recorded on July 5, 2024, in Mortgage Book 2089 Page 352 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama, the undersigned Traditions Bank, as Mortgagee, under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in said Mortgage, will sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, in front of the main entrance of the Courthouse in Cullman, Alabama, on **January 21, 2025,** between the legal hours of sale, the following described real estate situated in Cullman County, Alabama, to-wit:

All that part of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 8, T11S, R3W Cullman Co, AL being described as: Beginning at a point on the North line of said forty 51.7 feet West of the NE corner of said forty; thence South 89 degrees 00 minutes West along said North line 209 feet; thence South 1 degree 00 minutes East 209 feet; thence North 89 degrees 00 minutes East 209 feet; thence North 1 degree 00 minutes West 209 feet to the true point of beginning. Situated, lying and being in Cullman Co, AL.

Property address: 317 Good Hope School Road, Cullman, AL 35057

This sale is made for the purpose of paying the indebtedness secured by said mortgage, as well as the expenses of foreclosure.

PUBLICATION DATES: December 26, 2024, January 2, 2025 and January 9, 2025
NEWSPAPER: The Cullman Tribune

TRADITIONS BANK
Mortgagee
Steven C. Smith
SMITH & SMITH, LLP
P. O. Box 398
Cullman, AL 35056-0398
Telephone: (256) 734-4721
Fax: (256) 734-4774
steve@smithandsmithllp.com

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of
MARY SUE BANISTER,
Deceased.
CASE NO. PC2024-322

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION TO PROBATE WILL AND FOR LETTERS TESTAMENTARY

TO: REGINA WIMBERLY, DEBORAH SHASTEEN LONG, HUNTER SHASTEEN, J.J. SHASTEEN a/k/a JAMES S. SHASTEEN, III, DONNA CAGLE, AMANDA JONES, LARRY SEMEVOLOS, JERRY DILWORTH AND ANY OTHER NEXT OF KIN AND HEIRS OF MARY SUE BANISTER, DECEASED.

Petition to Probate Will and for Letters Testamentary filed by William Thomas Blankenship, Petitioner, through Attorney Clint L. Maze. A hearing has been rescheduled on this matter for the **14th day of January, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.,** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, Alabama.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear if they think proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Done this the 3rd day of December, 2024.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice four (4) successive weeks is said newspaper.

Clint L. Maze
Attorney for Petitioner
Wilmer and Lee, P.A.
725 North Brindlee Mountain Parkway
Arab, AL 35016

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of
DANA LEE REYES,
An alleged incapacitated person.
CASE NO. PC2024-384

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF GUARDIANSHIP

TO: MARCELENA HERRERA, ANTONIO MONTEL TAYLOR, ERIC DERON TAYLOR, JANIE DIANE ABNER, AND ANY OTHER NEXT OF KIN AND HEIRS OF DANA LEE REYES.

Petition for Letters of Guardianship filed in the matter of Dana Lee Reyes, an alleged incapacitated person, by Cullman County Department of Human Resources, by and through its agent, Michael Key, Petitioner, through Attorney Diane L. Dunning. A hearing on this matter has been rescheduled for the **7th day of January, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.,** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County Courthouse, 500 2nd Avenue SW, Room 101, Cullman, Alabama.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear and contest said petition if they think proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Done this the 5th day of December, 2024.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks is said newspaper.

Petitioner's Attorney:
Diane L. Dunning
Assistant Attorney General
State of Alabama
Department of Human Resources
P.O. Box 13248
Birmingham, Alabama 35202-3248

Alabama DHR addresses expiration of SNAP benefit replacement authorization

Staff Reports
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Effective Saturday, Dec. 21, 2024, the Congressional authorization for replacement of stolen Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits expired. The replacement of these benefits was limited to thefts occurring between Oct. 1, 2022, and Dec. 20, 2024.

Therefore, the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) cannot process affidavits with thefts occurring on or after Saturday, Dec. 21. Alabama DHR will continue to process affidavits of theft for incidents that occurred on or prior to Dec. 20, 2024, from households impacted by EBT card skimming, cloning and similar fraud.

Reports regarding these thefts must be submitted to county DHR offices within 30 days of the date the client discovered the fraud.

Location and contact information for all 67 county DHR offices is available at dhr.alabama.gov/county-office-contact.

All reports of skimming, cloning or similar fraud will require confirmation from the client verifying that all information reported in the request is true and correct. Clients may be contacted regarding their request. Clients who purposefully give false information may be prosecuted.

For more information on how to report fraud, ways to prevent benefit theft and other tips, please visit https://dhr.alabama.gov/EBT-fraud/.

Alabama Department of Public Health 2024 year in review

Alabama Department of Public Health

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — In 2024, the dedicated employees of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) came together to face the unique challenges that lie in fulfilling the Department's vision of "Healthy People. Healthy Communities. Healthy Alabama."

In a challenging year that included the unexpected loss of facilities, the need to strengthen an overstretched workforce and finding ways to provide services for the underserved, ADPH staff continued to succeed in its mission of promoting, protecting and improving the health of all Alabama citizens.

Here are a few highlights:

ALL Kids Insurance Program provides coverage for nearly 100,000 children

Children need to be healthy to reach their full potential. To stay healthy, children need access to regular checkups, vision care and dental care, as well as the ability to get medical attention if they get sick or injured. The ALL Kids Insurance Program provides low-cost, comprehensive coverage for eligible children under the age of 19. In addition to regular checkups, benefits include immunizations, prescriptions, mental health and substance abuse services, and more.

The ALL Kids Program, which marked its 27th anniversary in 2024, has enabled over 94,000 Alabama children to access regular health care.

Grant helps boost public health workforce, services

In 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implemented the Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG), a 5-year investment to support public health infrastructure needs across the United States. Over 100 health departments received funding through this grant, including ADPH. Through this $5 billion investment, the CDC hopes to build a more resilient public health system to face future health threats.

ADPH's Workforce Development (WFD) Program, under the Office of Human Resources, directs the use of PHIG funds. In addition to improving the department's data systems, the WFD is developing and implementing strategies to focus on recruitment and retention of public health workers.

In a recent edition of the Public Health Review Morning Edition podcast, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris talked about the tremendous impact PHIG funds have had on ADPH's recruitment process:

"PHIG has been a tremendous success for us. We have found quality candidates we would never have found otherwise."

He added that bringing in new employees to shore up understaffed programs has aided in retaining experienced staff members.

Cancer Division continues support of "Operation Wipe Out" cervical cancer campaign

Alabama continues to be the first and only state in the nation to announce an action plan to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem.

This effort, called Operation Wipe Out, is a call to action to ensure women, parents, health care providers and leaders know that cervical cancer can be stopped in three steps: HPV vaccination for boys and girls beginning at age 9, regular HPV/Pap tests for women age 21 and older, and follow-up to the doctor if the HPV/Pap test has abnormal results.

During 2024, Operation Wipe Out efforts were featured in the Wall Street Journal, the International Rotary Magazine, the Presidential Cancer Moonshot Initiative, the Centers for Disease Control and the Southeast HPV Roundtable. In addition, ADPH has been asked to share our work with over 15 states and several nations. As we enter 2025, we look forward to collaborating with the Rotary Club of Birmingham and the University of Alabama at Birmingham to host a statewide Operation Wipe Out Summit in Birmingham and showcase efforts to eliminate cervical cancer throughout the year.

More information on Operation Wipe Out is available below.

• Operation Wipe Out Cervical Cancer: Alabama launches statewide action plan to eliminate cervical cancer

• We can end Cervical Cancer in our lifetime. Alabama's women need only take three steps to WIPE OUT this deadly cancer.

Butler County Health Department quickly restores services after devastating fire

On June 30, the Butler County Health Department building in Greenville caught fire and was destroyed. Fortunately, the building was empty and no one was injured in the incident.

County and district staff immediately went to work securing temporary work locations for employees and making arrangements so that client services could continue with minimal interruption. The Jefferson County Department of Health was an integral partner early in the process, providing a mobile unit that was set up in the parking lot of the Greenville location and used for clinical services.

By early September a modular unit was purchased and set up with full utilities and furnishings in the Greenville location's parking lot. This is now the primary location for most client services, although the Environmental and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs continue to operate at a second location.

It is expected to take up to 2 years to rebuild a new county health department facility.

Read more about the fire and the ongoing efforts to restore services in Butler County:

• Butler County Health Department announces opening of modular unit on Airport Road following fire

• Alabama's Health (November 2024)

ADPH's Bureau of Clinical Laboratories begins testing for two additional genetic disorders In newborns

In July, the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) announced it had begun testing for two additional treatable genetic disorders in newborns:

• Pompe disease: a rare and potentially fatal genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of an enzyme resulting in the build-up of stored sugar, leading to severe muscle weakness.

• Muccopolysaccharidosis Type I (MPS I): a rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency in an enzyme resulting in the buildup of toxic materials in cells.

The BCL is the sole provider of blood analysis of newborn screening in Alabama. Approximately 200 babies are identified each year with congenital disorders. These babies usually look and act healthy at birth, underscoring the importance of early screening and detection.

Visit Newborn Screening to learn more.

ADPH on Forbes list of America's Best In-State Employers

In August, ADPH was honored to be listed as the third best place to work on the Forbes list of American's Best-In-State Employers of 2024.

The list was built from the results of an independent survey from a sample of more than 160,000 employees working for companies employing at least 500 people within the U.S.

Final scores were built upon two types of employee evaluations:

• Personal: Measuring employees' willingness to recommend their employer to friends and family.

• Public: Measuring recommendations from friends and family members of employees, or members of the public working in the same industry. Visit Forbes to learn more.

ADPH team aids in Hurricane Helene recovery efforts

On Sept. 26, the category 4 hurricane Helene made landfall on the Florida Gulf Coast. Its path carried it into the southern Appalachians, where it left unimaginable damage in its wake. Entire communities were swept away, billions of dollars' worth of property was damaged, and hundreds of people lost their lives.

ADPH was proud to assemble an all-volunteer support team which traveled to North Carolina to assist in recovery efforts. The group, which included eight nurses and a safety officer, provided services in a mass care shelter.

See photos of the team in the November 2024 edition of Alabama's Health.

ADPH's Perinatal Program promotes the #ClearTheCrib challenge

In October, ADPH's Perinatal Program once again promoted the #ClearTheCrib challenge. This social media initiative highlights the importance of maintaining a clear crib for babies to sleep in, which can help reduce the possibility of suffocation and other instances of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death.

Participants in the timed challenge shared videos of themselves quickly clearing cribs of potentially dangerous clutter like loose pillows, blankets, bumper pads and stuffed animals. Once the items were removed, the baby's stunt double --- a baby doll --- was safely positioned in the crib.

Participants in this year's round of videos included representatives from local high schools, hospitals and universities.

For links to #ClearTheCrib videos and more information on the challenge, visit ADPH's Perinatal Program.

ADPH is proud of its employees who work tirelessly throughout the year, embracing and overcoming any and all challenges that come their way. These are but a few of the ways ADPH continues to strive for a healthy Alabama.

We at ADPH wish you all the health and happiness in 2025.

Obituary Announcements: Dec. 24

Joyce Carolyn Widner, 76

A graveside service for Joyce Carolyn Widner, 76, of Cullman, Alabama will be 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 26, at Laodicea Cemetery in Hanceville. Bro. Jack Bailey will be officiating the service. Ms. Widner was born on Aug. 26, 1948, to the late Chester and Myrtle Smith-Widner. She passed away on Dec. 24, 2024, at Cullman Health & Rehab in Cullman. Hanceville Funeral Home is honored to serve the Widner Family.

Troy Lawrence, 77

Troy Lawrence, 77, of Cullman, Alabama, passed away on Dec. 23, 2024. Mr. Lawrence was born to the late George David and Clara Mae Pierce Lawrence on March 9, 1947, in Cullman County, Alabama. Mr. Lawrence worked in the construction industry for many years as a mason, but his true passion was gardening. He grew vegetables of all kinds including sweet potatoes and peanuts. Troy loved nature and he had a deep appreciation for the trees and flowers. Mr. Lawrence treasured his family and was a loving father and grandfather. He will be missed greatly. Troy is preceded in death by his parents; wife, Debra Freeman; and brother, Wayne Lawrence. Those surviving Mr. Lawrence includes his sons, Chris Lawrence, Allen Lawrence (Tina); several brothers and sisters; grandchildren, Julie Layne Lawrence, Davina Jayne Martin, Ryan Lawrence, Jake Lawrence, T.J. Lawrence, Keylee Martin, Troy Lawrence; great-grandchildren, Jayden Lawrence, and Caden Lawrence. Per Mr. Lawrence's request, a private family graveside will be held at Battleground East Cemetery where Troy will be laid to rest alongside his beloved wife. Holly Pond Funeral Home is honored to serve the Lawrence family.

William Devon Ellison, 84

William Devon Ellison, age 84, of Bremen, Alabama passed away on Friday, Dec. 20, 2024. William was born in Warrior, Alabama on Jan. 24, 1940, to Martin and Rose Young Ellison. William is survived by his wife: Linda Ellison, daughters: Donna Ellison, Maria Ellison, Octavia Ellison, sisters: Naildine Hayes, Veradine Stanley, brother: Frank Ellison, eight grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren and a host of other family. A Memorial Service will be held at a later date. Please share condolences and memories with the family at www.mossservicefh.com. Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

Moss Service Funeral Home
1901 Second Avenue Northwest
734-1821 Service You Can Count On

Cullman Marble & Granite Co.
"Memorials of Quality Since 1910" 734-2353

Free Obituary Listings

HAVE YOUR FUNERAL HOME CONTACT US

Email: robin@cullmantribune.com • Fax: 256-739-4422

Complete obituaries may be found free of charge at CullmanTribune.com/obituaries.

Recycling Collection
Now Available in Cullman County for Residents and Businesses
Cardboard | Plastic | Paper | Metal | Glass

Reduce your garbage volume with Bi-monthly Recycling Pickup
It's Free to Try!

OSIRIS
RECYCLING SOLUTIONS LLC

(256) 615-2510
osirisrecycling.com

Not affiliated with Cullman County Sanitation Dept.
No drop-off location

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS!

WE WILL MEET OR BEAT ALL COMPETITORS PRICES OF LIKE PRODUCTS

COLLEGE TIRE



315 MAIN ST. NW, HANCEVILLE
MON-TUES-THURS-FRIDAY 8:00-5:30
WEDS 8-12 | SAT 8:00-2:00
256-352-2221

...IN THAT WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS CHRIST DIED FOR US. ROMANS 5:8

Steele (from Front)

rarely acknowledged, but deeply felt.

The best way I knew to tell this story was to speak with the pastor's wife who has profoundly impacted my life: Sherry Steele. Wife of Pastor Jeff Steele, a mother to three children, a proud Granna to many grandchildren, as well as a successful gospel music artist and a dedicated leader in our church, Sherry has worn many hats throughout her life.

Sherry knew from an early age that her path in life would be rooted in ministry, though she wasn't always sure what form it would take. Her early years were filled with music, particularly gospel, a passion and talent that would eventually blossom into a successful career on the road as a gospel singer. But life, as it often does, had more in store for her than she could have imagined.

"I kind of always knew that ministry was for me. I started singing young and I knew the kind of direction that my life would take through music, mostly gospel music. Never did I think I would be a pastor's wife though," she reflected.

Although Sherry felt as if she knew the direction her life would head, tragedy and destructive circumstances would shape her journey again and again. At the age of 12, Sherry would lose her father, setting in grief that would take many years to settle. Her mother, left with four children to support, while also working a full-time job, was struck with a burden that would take its toll on the family.

With limited options on the table, the opportunities that would present themselves to Sherry felt like her only path forward. A traveling job as a singer with a Pentecostal group would present itself to Sherry and her mother. Her mother would agree to the arrangement for the summer, setting the stage for her first steps in ministry.

However, grief would fester for her. Immersed in a Pentecostal life she had no prior experience with, she found herself forced to adapt while grappling with the loss of her father and a sense of abandonment from her mother.

"I was grieving my dad. I was angry at the 'Why?' because he was my everything," Sherry shared. "So, I kind of ended up in a rebellious place. Instead of seeing them as my providers, they became more of my enemy because I didn't want that from them. It was like, 'Why y'all? Why doesn't my mother care about me?'"

As the summer came to a close, the traveling group offered her mother a new proposition: to take Sherry in and meet all of her needs.

"'We can take her in and buy everything for her so that'll take the financial pressure off of you.' That sounded appealing to my mom at the time because she was like, 'They can give her what I couldn't,'" Sherry recalled. "So, she kind of turned me over to them out of desperation, but it felt like rejection to me. I was just trying to sort out all of my feelings. Why doesn't my mother want me? Why can't she make changes to provide for me?"

It was then that Sherry's life would take a pivotal turn. She was isolated from her family, and her mother had no clue about the dark circumstances invading Sherry's life. While that part of Sherry's testimony remains her personal story to tell, she carried the weight of darkness and shame for years — a burden she referred to as "her cross to bear."

Amidst the grief and forced adaptation, however, a glimmer of hope would emerge. While working on an album, Sherry met her future husband, Jeff Steele. At the time, Jeff was a DJ for a local radio station, and Sherry's group approached him for help with the project.

"I didn't really know him. I knew him from a distance," Sherry shared. "We started getting together in preparation for this project, and in doing that, it was like my first outside interaction that wasn't an acquaintance or someone I had ties to. We were usually in, out and gone, with no one knowing what was going on in my life.

"But, and I don't know why, he saw something in the situation that wasn't right. He was picking up on things I was saying about the way the other person was treating me," she reflected. "So, he started to reach out to me without them knowing, just saying a word, giving me a compliment, sending me little notes to the studio. I was like 'Wow, there is someone who cares.'"

Jeff would become the catalyst that would break the chains surrounding Sherry's life. With her group planning a move to California and the isolation between Sherry and her mother growing deeper, Jeff encouraged her to visit her mother — a visit that ultimately became her way out. It was during this visit that Sherry broke the silence on her situation, finally opening up to her family about what she had been enduring.

Life changed quickly for Sherry then. With her silence broken and her family having been involved from a protective side, Sherry would begin to lean closer to her only attachment to the outside world: Jeff.

"When I finally got away from all the mess, we kind of got together and continued talking," she recalled. "I was a kid. In essence, he was a kid. Still lived at home with his parents, not a whole lot of difference between where I was and he was in maturity. So, we kept talking and it became my security blanket."

Those conversations would grow past the security blanket, and set the foundation for 42 years of a marriage that continues to grow today.

Her past would shape her present, allowing her to value even deeper the thing she has grown to treasure most: her family.

"Because of all that I have been through, my family has become my trophy," she stated. "I feel like when I look at my kids and grandkids, I feel like God is saying 'See, you could get through it all. You have made it. It may not have been ideal for you, but look what you are to them. You can overcome.'"

It was these transformative years that Sherry believes allowed her to be who she is in ministry today.

"If we could see the future, what decisions would we make? I'm so glad I didn't know. Have I been perfect? Absolutely not. But I think it has driven me as a minister's wife to think differently than the average," she continued. "Most pastor's wives that I knew growing up were everything I knew I didn't want to be as well. I could have fallen into the trap that so many of them have, being too hard on themselves."

When Sherry began to realize that her life would soon become that of a pastor's wife, the pull to be something she didn't identify as bore down on her. The expectation to be perfect, or at least portray the picture of such, was something she had seen in churches all across her travels. It was the very trap she wanted to avoid.

"So now I'm in this role and now I've got to be perfect. I can't let people see me as me. I have to hide myself, hide my feelings, like I had done all of my life, right?" she shared. "I started trying at first to mold myself into that image of what I thought people expected of me. And I did it for a little while, but the pressure got so great on me.

"I finally said to myself that I'm going to bring myself to the table. I'm going to bring who I am and I am going to trust God that he's going to sort it out where people can see through the position and see the person I am and say, 'I can identify with some of those hurts that she has been through, or identify with her as a mother, as a wife, as a woman."

Although her story cultivated how she interacts in ministry today, she never allowed it to define who she was. In her journey, Sherry reflected on what it means to open up after learning to trust again, to the hurt that comes with ministry and the human politics involved, and the grace required to make it all feel worth it. Learning to balance what is personal and what is her ministry has been one of her hardest challenges, especially when held to such a high expectation.

"I had to realize these are human beings. That I am a human being. These are human beings with a real family. Their children matter. Our children matter. So, give me the same grace that you're asking me to give to you. Because if you can see me in the same way that you see yourself, then you will understand that I am everything that you are. A human being who struggles and carries many of the same things that you do."

Her self-realization pushed her to fight for something deeper, to move past the surface level of what people saw as her position, the fishbowl that people stared at her through.

"I could see it on people's faces that they were putting me in a box, saying, 'Man, what a perfect life, what a great thing she has,'" she expressed. "They saw what they wanted to see, the glamourous part of it, but never behind the scenes. They had no idea who I was, where I came from or what I'd been through."

Time would once again bring her to the crossroads where her testimony would begin to make sense to her.

"We were doing a singing event at a church with a huge platform. They called all of the artists to the stage. And then, this little girl came. She didn't really know my testimony or who I was, but out of all of the artists on stage, she approached me. I saw so much of myself in her. She leaned in and whispered to me, 'Please help me.'

"It was then that I realized – don't ever be so shortsighted to think that people don't need to hear my story. If nothing else, it gives them the courage to keep on. Maybe it gives them the courage to leave. Maybe it gives them the courage to reach out to somebody.

"I realized then that my platform was bigger than I ever imagined," Sherry stated.

From then on, Sherry began to share her story with resolve. Not out of victimization, or a need for pity, but as her ministry and who God called her to minister to. Sherry gave up what the church deemed her position to look at during that time, and pursued a true, reflective part of who she was and who God called her to be. She presented the broken parts of herself, that she was still healing, knowing that there were others like her out there.

Others, who her voice would represent.

To Sherry, her role as a pastor's wife has allowed her many times to not only carry her burdens, but also to help carry those of the people she has been called to minister to. For Sherry, her role as a pastor's wife is a ministry, ordained by God himself as a platform to share her story to the little girl in the crowd, to the woman who is lost in darkness and to the person who feels isolated and judged.

For the greater part of 42 years now, Sherry has served in that role faithfully. She does so without the burden of needing recognition or a reward for her efforts. She does it because that's what she feels called to do. When I set out to tell just a glimpse of her story, I began to realize how many things we trivialize in a role such as hers.

The greatest thing I can say about Sherry is that she is intentional in all that she does. All of the cleaning she does has purpose. She cooks large meals every Wednesday for our entire church, with purpose. She seeks out those with internal conflict, to be an ear, with purpose. She has stood beside her husband in his battle with MS, as his balance, the clarity to his voice when he struggles with it, all with intention and purpose.

She labors on days when many feel called to rest. She seeks the corners that have the dust that many would just pass by, intent to leave it without blemish. She will tell you on Sunday that she loves you "more and more each day," affirming who you are even when you feel empty. She plans and stewards everywhere that is lacking organization. She embodies purpose.

Purpose, driven from a story that never seemed fair, but one she overcame. Purpose formed from a testimony that gives courage to those without a voice in the crowd. Purpose, that the enemy stripped from her, that she would one day reclaim in the name of Jesus.

Purpose that is evident in the lives that would be changed because of her ministry. Sherry has long stood as a steadfast presence in our church, her community, her family and in the lives of many across the nation. Her journey, marked by gospel music, local pastoral roles alongside her husband and a heart for selfless service, has been a testament to who she is. Now, with 42 years of experience behind her, Sherry reflects on the most significant lessons she's learned in her role as a pastor's wife.

"Being a pastor's wife is trial and error. Try to be a better version of yourself. That role is a platform in itself, so we have to take the role seriously. Yes, we are to live up to some of the expectations, but we can't get so caught up in them that we fall into the trap of not being ourselves or isolating ourselves to where we have no one to talk to.

"That isolation can get to you. Find positive outlets to go to. Pray to God to guide you into the areas He wants you in, and to pull you back where you needed to pull back," she continued. "My biggest mistakes in ministry were bottling things up and letting things out. How much do I let out? How much do I keep bottled up? I can't fight every battle. I can't do it alone. So I say, 'Lord, help me.'

"There are things I would change if I could go back: reacting less, saying less and just letting God handle it. I didn't have to defend myself so much. But I came from a place where I couldn't tell anyone anything, and I will never be that again. You'll never do me that way again. And in that, I have learned balance. I wasn't taught it, I learned it, through trial and error."

I posed a final question to Sherry, asking her to share the greatest bit of wisdom she holds dear in her ministry: "Love unconditionally. Love with no bounds and know that any stipulation you put on the mat is man-made. To love like Christ is to love everyone."

Her words reflect the heart of her journey, one of grace, humility and a love that mirrors the teaching of Jesus.

Sherry's story invites us to challenge how we view the role of a pastor's wife in the church. It encourages us to move beyond the pedestal of thought that says a pastor's wife must be perfect, when in fact, Jesus came to save the broken and imperfect.

Her role, often behind the scenes, involves tasks that might seem small — cooking, cleaning, stewarding — but they carry immense value in the kingdom of God, a kingdom full of intention and purpose. Her story in ministry reminds us to love mercy, to always show grace and to embrace the broken people God calls to serve, just like you and me.