

THE CHRONICLE

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Winston-Salem legend Art Blevins loses battle with cancer

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

Known for his kind heart and giving nature, Art Blevins impacted the lives of countless children throughout his nearly 40 years of service in the Parks and Recreation Department. After a brief fight with pancreatic cancer, Blevins passed away last week in hospice care at the age of 62.

Blevins spent time in several recreation centers during his tenure with the city, but is best known for his time at the Hanes Hosiery Recreation Center, where the gymnasium is named in his honor. He was beloved by everyone he met and had a heart for giving that was unmatched.

"It was a little overwhelming, not that it wasn't totally unexpected, but I think you continue to hold out hope until the end and then when you finally get that news, you are overcome with a rush of emotions," said Gary Lash, district recreation supervisor for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Lash recalled the conversations he had with Blevins when he was first diagnosed with cancer in May of this year.

"When he called and told me, we basically just cried together on the phone; it was kind of devastating," Lash said of the conversation. "He helped me get through a lot during my illness last year and I felt it was my turn to return the favor."

During his time with the city, Blevins positively impacted the lives of thousands of children. His wisdom, kind words and selfless acts of kindness are routinely brought up when people speak of Blevins.

"Given the fact he lived in



Submitted photo

Art Blevins

the neighborhood I grew up in, we were around each other a lot," said Ameer Watkins, who was coached by Blevins at the South Fork Community Center. "He was just the kind of person with a wealth of knowledge and was willing to give it to you at any time."

"He would pick us up, drop us off and even feed us. When I got to high school, he used to stick my newspaper clippings in my mailbox and tell us how proud of us he was. As a high school coach, now I see, looking back, that's the type of person you want your kids to be introduced to before they get to you on the next level."

Watkins said it touched him when he heard Blevins had cancer due to the fact he lost his

mother at a young age to the disease. He said Blevins was always a fighter and was hopeful he would pull through, but once he heard of Blevins' passing, he had to take a few minutes to compose himself at work.

Even a brief encounter with Blevins would leave a lasting impression. Jamaal Fowler, a Winston-Salem native, says he met Blevins on a few occasions and could see immediately why he was so beloved by the community.

"He was always nice and always had great things to say about everyone," said Fowler. "When he came to games, he always supported whichever team that was playing. Even when they messed up, he still kept encouraging them. I never heard

him say a negative word about anyone and in today's climate you will not find too many people like that. It's not just Winston-Salem, but the world lost a great one."

Blevins was not only well respected by the kids he coached, but also by his peers. Ben Piggott, former senior supervisor at the Carl H. Russell Sr. Community Center, worked closely with Blevins for nearly four decades and had nothing but high praise for Blevins.

"Art loved children and he never looked at it as a job, it was a ministry for him," said Piggott. "We always talked about the kids and what we could do to improve the life of a child."

Piggott and Blevins retired around the same time and stayed

in touch through phone calls and text messages.

"Art will always be in my heart for the rest of my life," Piggott continued. "When I heard that he passed, I was driving and I had to pull over on the side of the road, because it hit me hard. Art loved people and he will always be missed. I am just really glad he was able to see the gym named after him. Art Blevins will always be an icon and a great role model."

"He will always be my brother and he will always live within me, because we related so much together. I just thank God he was my brother and it was an honor and a pleasure to walk down that aisle with Art when we retired together, but Art's spirit is still here."

Prepare now to vote in November

Here's a must-do list to prepare for the election

BY HOWARD PEARRE

You've heard it over and over: make sure you vote on November 3! But voting is not just a one-day deal. There's work to do now to get ready. Here are a few items for every voter's to-do list:

1. Check the N.C. State Board of Elections website, NCSBE.gov, to make sure you are "Active" and that your address is correct. (Find VOTER/ABSENTEE LOOKUP under VOTER TOOLS.) If you have moved since the last election, even across the street, you may have a new assigned polling place and

your ballot will be different from the one you would have had at your previous address. If you show up at the voting place for your new address but haven't updated your registration, you will be asked to cast a provisional ballot.

To look yourself up in the Board of Elections' database, you can go to the NCSBE website, as above, or Google search NC VOTER LOOKUP, click on VOTER SEARCH, enter your first and last names, click SEARCH, and click on the name and address that matches your information. This will take you to a page with your personal voter information including your status as ACTIVE or INACTIVE. If you are listed as INACTIVE or are not in the database, you will need to submit a new NC Voter Registration Application to the Board of Elections. You have several options how to do this:

*You can obtain an official Voter Registration form from the Forsyth



County Board of Elections office or other source, complete it with your new and old addresses, sign it, and mail, fax, scan email, or hand carry it to the Forsyth County Board of Elections. You must do this at least 25 days before Election Day (Oct. 9).

*If you miss the 25-day deadline, you can go to any of the Forsyth County early voting sites and complete a Voter Registration form. To update your registration (or to register for the first time) and vote at the same time,

you will need documentation with your name and new address such as your driver's license, a utility bill, or bank statement.

*If you have an N.C. driver's license, you can use the Division of Motor Vehicles website to update your voter registration or even register for the first time. Google search REGISTER TO VOTE NC ONLINE, click OFFICIAL NCDMV VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION-NCDOT, and follow the links to use this free service.

*If you can't use any of the above methods to update your registration, you can send a letter to the county Board of Elections advising them of your new and old address. Be sure to sign the letter and include your phone number so an election's official can call you if there are any questions.

2. Learn where the early-voting sites will be. During early voting from Oct. 15 through Oct. 31, you can vote at any early-voting site in the county regardless of your assigned

polling place. The Forsyth County Board's plan is for 17 sites for the November General Election. If the State Board of Elections approves the plan, early-voting sites will be open from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. weekdays; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on two Saturdays, Oct. 17 and Oct. 24; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31; and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on two Sundays, Oct. 18 and 25.

3. Review a sample ballot to become knowledgeable of the candidates in the races. Google search NC VOTER LOOKUP and follow the same steps noted above to find your personal voter information. Click on SAMPLE BALLOTS that will indicate candidates for races in your specific precinct.

4. Don't ignore the "down ballot" candidates. Get to know ALL of the candidates in order make smart choices according to your values and interests. While the major media outlets will provide

See Voting on A3

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