

Letter To The Editor

A tribute to Ollie Harris

To the editor:

Valentine's Day, a perfect day to give honor to one who was so loved in the community and throughout the state - Senator Ollie Harris.

At his funeral, his good friend, Marshall Rauch, gave Mr. Harris the name, "Gentle Giant." This gentle giant, so large in stature, but so humble in God's service. He had a zest for living and for giving, acts of kindness we'll never know about.

So, thank you, Senator Harris, for your goodness in

every family you touched. We are truly blessed for having known you.

- O - Outspoken for others.
- L - Lived for Christ.
- L - Loved life.
- I - Inherited the Kingdom of God.
- E - Eminent citizen.

Rev. Patricia Stone
Grace United Methodist Church

Board won't change school calendar

The current school calendar will remain as is and the Board of Education won't reinstate the spring vacation days lost to inclement weather.

Hilda Leonard, president of the Kings Mountain Association of Educators, and Betsy Wells, resolutions chairman, presented the request for the change in the current calendar at Monday's meeting of the school board.

Leonard said that 110 of 163 teacher members or 90 percent surveyed asked the board to reinstate April 10, 11 and 12 as Easter vacations and move up the snow make-up days to June 3, 4, and 5 at the end of the school year.

"The calendar is already set and the board will not consider the request," said Chairman Ronnie Hawkins.

"When a situation like this occurs once every 10 years, you don't

Eight named KMH trustees

Eight Kings Mountain area people have been named to a Trustee Council at Kings Mountain Hospital.

The team is charged with assessing how the hospital is meeting the needs of the community and identifying community support.

Hank Neal, administrator, said the group has held two meetings and is a "think tank" to set priorities and to report findings to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Hospital Authority which leased the hospital last fall.

The members of the trustee board are former KMH board of trustees chairman J. C. Bridges, retired hardwareman; Evelyn Hamrick, homemaker and a member of the city's Moss Lake Commission; Monty Thornburg, the city's administrator of the Senior Center; David Neisler, treasurer of Dicey Fabrics and a member of the Cleveland County Board of Social Services; Rev. Olin Byrum, an officer of the Kings Mountain Ministerial Association and pastor of Kings Mountain Baptist Church; county commissioner Mary Accor, Bethware School principal; Dr. Sam Robinson, Kings Mountain surgeon and a representative of the hospital medical staff; and Max Rollins, planning and zoning committee chairman from the Town of Grover.

For the first time since 1992, Kings Mountain Hospital passed a quality survey that will enable the facility to attract more patients with private health insurance. Neal said the hospital passed a three-day inspection by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, a large and respected body.

Steven Thomas Allen born January 13, 1996

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Allen of Charlotte announce the birth of a son, Steven Thomas, January 13, 1996. He weighed seven pounds.

Grandparents are Tommy and Kay Hawkins of Kings Mountain and Michael and Helen Allen of Shelby. Steven Thomas is named after his grandfather, Thomas Hawkins.

Great-grandparents are Mrs. Ruth Baity of Kings Mountain and Hazel Mullinax of Shelby.

Ms. Allen is the former Zena Hawkins.

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HARRIS

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But he said he'd never forget the time that Ollie left his keys in the hearse with the motor running and the doors locked and no way to unlock the door to take the body in the church.

"After that the folks at Harris Funeral Home always kept extra keys in case the boss man locked himself out," said Rauch.

Rauch called Harris a legislator's legislator, a real public servant.

"He never said no to a worthy cause and his door was always open at both his business and in Raleigh," he said.

But Rauch said Harris' star really shined in mental health issues where he was a respected figure statewide.

"Ollie has a grandson in this audience today who was the impetus for his leadership in mental health issues," he said. Harris had been on the board of Western Carolina Center for 20 years.

Rauch said Harris was a gentle man, a leader, teacher, mentor and a giant when he worked for a cause.

"He treated everybody alike and everybody loved him," he said.

Rauch said he gave some people second and third chances to succeed in life, arranging loans and making outright gifts to many people but when he took a stand on an issue he never faltered.

One of the key legislative issues Harris opposed was the seat belt law, debating and voting against it. After passage of the law he went to his doctor and obtained a letter which indicated that wearing the belt gave him claustrophobia.

"That was Ollie," said Rauch.

"During 22 years in the Senate there was no piece of legislation that his name was not on that was not passed," he said.

Rev. Olin Byrum, his pastor at Kings Mountain Baptist Church, described Harris as a man with a servant's heart and recounted his visits with him in the hospital last week.

"I found him asleep the first day and I didn't wake him up and then returned the next day and he told me that I should have awakened him because there was so much he needed to do," he said.

Since the Senator's death Friday tributes have poured in from all over the state.

"If we ever got in a dark corner and needed to be bailed out we could call on Ollie," said Dr. Iverson Riddle, director of the Western Carolina Center in Morganton. Harris was instrumental in the building of a chapel for

the center where his grandson, David Hambright, is a resident.

"He was always on the phone, always in the middle of things," said Ronnie Hawkins, Harris Funeral Home manager and vice-president.

"He was always the boss and he was a good man, no two ways about it.

He took care of families and he had a style all his own."

Former Kings Mountain Mayor John Moss, who appointed Harris to co-chair the important economic development commission in Kings Mountain years ago, said leadership came naturally for Ollie Harris.

"He was an engaging person," Moss said. "People liked his trustworthiness. They felt they could place their confidence in him."

Local restaurant clientele at Peggy's on Piedmont Avenue and Fred Kiser's downtown will miss

the genial Senator who lunched on Sundays at Kiser's and was a regular at lunch time week days at Peggy's. Ollie and his son and grandchildren frequented the Ranch House enroute from the airport when Ollie Sr. picked up his Texas family and Harris and Rauch lunched at least once a week at Milano's Restaurant in Gastonia.

The renditions of "How Great Thou Art" by Ruth Terres, "The Old Rugged Cross" without accompaniment by Roxanne Scism Bridges and a duet, "It is Well With My Soul" by Marjorie and Morris Jordan were favorites of Harris and included in his funeral service.

Dr. John Sloan, First Baptist pastor, in an invocation gave thanksgiving to God for the life of Harris and prayed for comfort to the many people touched by the life of Harris not only in the Greater Kings Mountain community but in Harris' ministry to the mental health needs of the state.

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Thank You
Terry Holmes
General Manager

DOCTOR

From Page 1-A

Doctor of Medicine degree and graduate school. He took post graduate training at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario and was certified by the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

He was a member of the College of Family Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the Ontario, Canadian and Orillia Medical Societies and was president of the Orillia Medical Society from 1980-83. He served as vice-president of the Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital Medical staff two terms and was vice chairman of the board of trustees of Sir Samuel Steele Art Gallery.

His family hobbies include hockey and downhill skiing of which he is a level one instructor and coach. He has participated in the triathlete swim/bike/run, likes to travel and also lists painting, art, photography and sports medicine as hobbies.

KMH Administrator Hank Neal said the hospital is pleased to welcome Dr. Dawson to Kings Mountain.

"He arrived February 1 and is in partnership with Dr. Ron Delaney," she said.

BOARDS

From Page 1-A

Hawkins said it's likely the boards will look at other areas that each board can target in the future to benefit all three school systems. For instance, Hawkins is interested in advancement placement networking among the three systems and wants to include some discussion and progress reports on Communities-In-Schools and the alternative school program which is in its first full year in Kings Mountain.

BARNES

From Page 1-A

Spencer Neil Barnes, both of Asheville. He was preceded in death by one sister, Marquerite Barnes Leggett on June 11, 1988 and a grandson, Alan Newman Barnes, on November 1, 1972.

The funeral will be conducted at 11 a.m. Thursday, February 15, at the First Baptist Church in Lumberton with Rev. Dr. William Powell Tuck and Rev. Joe Bounds officiating. Burial will be in Meadowbrook Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to First Baptist Church, PO Box 968, Lumberton, 28359.

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