

CLONINGER

From 1A

Hayes, and other good friends like Post 100 team manager Bill Abernathy, A. L. McSwain, Rocky Homesley and neighbors J. L. and Nelson Sellers, all of Cherryville, and Gene Goforth and Carl Champion of Kings Mountain who are his hunting buddies.

A life-threatening illness causes a man or woman to put things in perspective, says Cloninger, who says he doesn't worry about how many more years he will coach. "I would kinda like to coach two or three more years but God is in charge and I have put my life in the hands of God," he said.

Right now he's enjoying church, family, visits with friends, and his world champion Tree and Walker dogs.

A native of Iron Station, Cloninger graduated from Rock Springs High School in Denver, now East Lincoln High. Because he lived a half mile closer to the Lincoln American Legion Post than Cherryville Post 100, he started playing Legion ball in Lincoln in 1957. He signed with the Milwaukee Braves at age 17 just out of high school and played in the minor leagues. At age 20, he got the nod from Milwaukee, now the Atlanta Braves. He pitched 13 innings for Milwaukee in the first game in Fulton County Stadium and Joe Torre was catcher. The last game in Fulton Stadium he coached the New York Yankees in the World Series in 1997 and Cherryville's Bill Abernathy was in the stands.

No one was more proud of the Post 100 team than Cloninger who cheered them on while listening to the results of the games on the radio. He sent a congratulatory message to the players, saying that Post 100 gave him his first start in baseball and said he looked forward to seeing other young players going straight from the Legion field to sign a baseball contract.

Cloninger's friends used to tell him that his baseball uniform would have to be torn off him because he would not voluntarily take it off. "I love baseball," he said. As a young man he walked a mile to play Legion ball. Cherryville had no legion team in 1978-79 and Abernathy hired Tony to coach the team and he set the ground work for the 1981 Post 100 championship. Post 100 was also 1982 state champion runnerup and some of those players Cloninger trained in 1980. At one time Cloninger also worked for Dudley Sports and then signed a con-

tract to coach the New York Yankees in the minor league organization. At one time during his youth he played on a slow pitch team sponsored by Howard Furniture of Denver.

He said good friend and pitching coach with the New York Yankees Mel Stottlemeyer, also a cancer survivor, supported him during his own challenging cancer experience.

Pitching coolly and effectively, Tony looked more like a seasoned veteran on the mound in 1961 than a 21 year old rookie when his big moment as a pitcher came with the Milwaukee Braves, his initiation into big time baseball with the Braves and subsequently Cincinnati Reds and St. Louis Cardinals. He signed with the Braves in 1958, one of the best pitchers, by all accounts, to come out of North Carolina. He stayed out of baseball for 14 years while his children were growing up.

His envious record in professional baseball includes 12 years as a major league player, 12 years as a major league coach and three years as a field coordinator. For 15 years he was pitching coach and bullpen coach for the New York Yankees and went from the Yankees in 2002 to the San Francisco Giants as a Scout for several months before joining the Red Sox as pitching coach March 15, 2002.

"When I hit the grand slam well it was really something but a second homer was unbelievable," Cloninger said after the Braves demolished the San Francisco Giants with his two grand slam homers.

Torre, the Braves catcher, called him when Cloninger crossed the plate and asked if he remembered touching all the bases.

"It was history, Cloninger wrote a page today," said Braves manager Bobby Bragan at the time. "I'd say that was about as impressive a page of history as I've ever seen written." Memorabilia of those major wins are featured on the walls of Cloninger's comfortable den where a cabinet holds baseballs from every game he coached and family pictures including a painting of his boyhood home in Lincoln County. His two baseball bats from that famous Braves game are in the Baseball Hall of Fame with the words "Tony Cloninger, Hitting Pitcher Deluxe."

Cloninger coached the New York Yankees to win four World Series championship games and saw World Series action as pitching coach and in the bullpen from 1994-2001. He was bullpen coach for the Yanks in 1996

which he said was his most exciting game because the Yankees beat his former teammates the Atlanta Braves. New York also beat San Diego in 1998; the Braves in 1999; the Mets in 2000 and lost to Arizona in the seventh game of the World Series in 2001.

Son of the late Carl and Edna Cloninger, he has four children: Tony Lee Cloninger Jr. and wife Karen of Denver; Darren Cloninger and wife, Angie, of Jacksonville; Michael Cloninger and wife, Kim, and Meredith and Ronnie Sherrill, all of Denver, and one step-daughter, Terry and Marc Byers of Shelby. The family includes 12 grandchildren.

To what does he credit his coaching success? He keeps it simple, he says.

Cloninger is responsible for 25 players on a team and 12 pitchers are selected from a group of 29 or 30 for one position after six weeks of spring training "I try to be fair," says Cloninger. Most important is training pitchers how to pitch to the opposing players. "A pitcher has to be conditioned and have a sound throwing arm," said righthander Cloninger.

Grandson Erich Cloninger, 22, is following in his grandfather's foot steps. He is playing baseball in Lowell, Mass. for the Red Sox organization. All Cloninger's young grandsons are active in Little League. His brother, Ray Cloninger of Denver, played in Cherryville Post 100's first state championship game in 1953. Cloninger also has a sister, Marie Goodman of Charlotte, and one deceased brother, Frank.

"I've played ball all over the country and have many friends in and out of the game," said Cloninger. Some of his top current pitchers for the Red Sox include Pedro Martinez and Derek Lowe. Cloninger has been guest of three presidents at the White House.

Said Cloninger, "You have to have the breaks to win but you have to have talented and dedicated players. I see a lot of talent and dedication in the Cherryville Post 100 team."

Cloninger said his goal now is to give something back to the community which has been good to him.

Life is good and Cloninger tells everyone who calls that he's happy to have been able to work with some of the world's top athletes.

Sports writers said of Cloninger, even as a young rookie, that he had "the right stuff." His goal now is to challenge young people to have "the right stuff" on and off the baseball field.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Tony Cloninger an Shaker, one of his many world champion dogs. Cloninger, who recently has undergone cancer treatment, has been declared cancer free and is ready to return to his job as pitching coach of the Boston Red Sox.

9-11 services planned in KM

By ANDIE BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain will remember the lives lost Sept. 11, 2001 and honor local emergency personnel with a program next Thursday.

The commemoration begins at 7:30 p.m. at the City Hall Amphitheater.

The Loch Norman Pipe Band will play as the Kings Mountain Honor Guard, police and fire departments and rescue squad march in on Gold Street.

Boy Scouts from Troop 95, El Bethel United Methodist, will lead the pledge of allegiance. Shanna Butler will sing the national anthem.

A video from the state Firefighters Association will be shown.

There will be poetry read-

ing. An area choir and local minister will also participate though names have not been released at press time.

After a candle lighting ceremony, there will be a moment of silence followed by a recessional by the pipe band.

City events coordinator Ellis Noell describes the event as a "time to honor those who have and will serve."

The service honors both the emergency personnel who lost their lives in 2001 and the local police, firefighters and rescue workers who continue to serve.

"Our local first responders would do the same thing," Noell said.

He praised their depth and dedication.

The public is invited to the service.

MERGER

From 1A

the attorney.

Allen said the official appeal must be filed by September 9 but that Shaw indicated he will file it on Thursday.

Neither the Supreme Court nor Shaw would speculate about a timeline for the

decision.

"It's just whenever they (the Supreme Court) decide if they will make a decision," Dr. Allen said. "There is no indication from the attorneys at this point as to how long that will take."

Kings Mountain is opposing the State Board's June 1, 2000 approval of the Cleveland County

Commissioners' plan to merge the Cleveland County, Kings Mountain and Shelby school systems.

The basis of the Kings Mountain suit is that the merger plan excludes some 183 students who live in Gaston County but within the city limits of Kings Mountain. KMDS claims that the school district lines are contiguous with the city

limits, therefore the Cleveland County Commissioners plan should have had the approval of the Gaston County Commissioners. However, the State contends that Kings Mountain School District was never authorized by the General Assembly to expand its school boundaries as the city limits expanded.

ADULT

From 1A

remembering reading and math lessons he thought were long forgotten.

"It's bringing it back," he said.

Stone's two children are

too young to realize their mom is back in the classroom. She plans to discourage quitting school as they get older.

"Don't quit. You have to go back," she said.

While Stone may be hard on herself for dropping out,

her teacher is not.

"Everybody has situations in their lives," Ballard said.

The instructor enjoys her job.

"It's rewarding. I admire them for going back."

Ballard is also the librarian at East Elementary.

The adult basic education class is sponsored by Cleveland Community College's Learning Center. It holds classes on campus, at East and other locations around the county. For more information, call 704-484-4050.

SHEAR

From 1A

ter. After that, she will student teach in a kindergarten classroom.

"Kindergarten is my heart. I feel like I would be able to make a difference."

Shear already has lots of experience making a difference. She divides her work

day at Grover Elementary between a kindergarten and third grade classroom.

Her already infectious smile gets even bigger as she talks about a recent classroom activity. Shear helped students cut out shapes, then directed them to place the pieces of paper on a larger sheet. The children excitedly realized they had made a human figure.

"All of a sudden they get it. That makes it all worth it," Shear said.

Shear says the faculty at Grover and school administrators have been very encouraging.

Shear estimates she will complete the program by May, 2005 or sooner

"I feel good about what I can do for children. Children now days need all the love and caring they care get."



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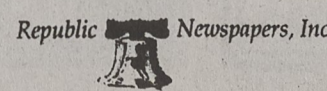
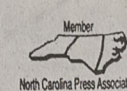
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Mike Blanton.....Publisher
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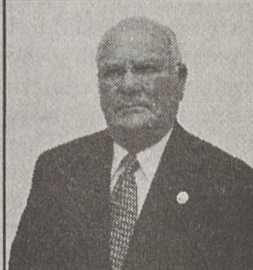
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Gaston & Cleveland County	\$27.00	\$17.50
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Ward 3 City Council

"Elect Tommy for Tomorrow"



Paid for by the committee to elect Tommy Hawkins

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM BAPTIST CHURCH

246 RANGE RD., KINGS MTN.
Making Disciples Ministry
FALL 2003 Bible Study Schedule

This Fall there will be twelve opportunities to learn and grow in the Lord.

Bible Study	Day & Time	Start Date	Teacher
Homes of Honor	Sun. 6:00 PM	Sept. 28th	Ricky & Terry Greene
Discovering God's ways of handling money. (Crown Ministries)	Sunday School 10:30-11:30 am	Sept. 28th	Erik Price & Jamie Black
Woman Making A Difference in Marriage	Wed. 7:00 pm	Sept. 24th	Stephanie Chambers
Precept Study (Genesis 1)	Wed. 6:00 pm	Sept. 24th	Jonathan Laughter
Beginning Steps (New Believers)	Sunday 9:15 am Sunday School	Sept. 28th	Richard Ellison & Rusty Bridges
Mind of Christ	Sunday 6:00 pm	Sept. 24th	Christi Gray
Disciple's Prayer Life	Tues. 6:00 pm	Sept. 23rd	Buffy Gray
Ladies Bible Study (LBS) Year Long Study	Tues. 9:30-11:30 am	Sept. 23rd thru May 11th	Ashley Sullens
First Place (Repeaters)	Wed. 6:00 pm	Sept. 24th	Judy Walker
Bringing Up Boys	Sunday 5:00 pm	Sept. 28th	Vince & Ashley Sullens

ORIENTATION & REGISTRATION DATES: Sunday, Sept. 14th & Sept. 21 at 3:30 p.m. **Location:** Christian Freedom Baptist Fellowship Building. All studies will be small group, classes will fill up quickly. An orientation for each study will be held on these dates, to introduce you to the studies.

Registration will immediately follow orientation. Here you will be able to sign up for the study the Lord has led you, through prayer, to take. At this time, you will pay for the materials needed for the study. If you have any questions concerning the studies contact Vince & Ashley Sullens. 704-734-0964

ATTENTION LADIES

Ladies Bible Study (LBS) will be held on Tuesday's beginning Sept. 23, 2003 from 9:30am to 11:30am at Christian Freedom Baptist Church (Children's Bible Study available). Orientation & Registration will be held on Sept. 9 at 9:30am. This will give everyone a chance to purchase books and become familiar with children class-rooms and etc. This year we will do a 30 week study taken from the Purpose Driven Life - Doing Life Together Series. I truly believe that through this years study that we will not only grow closer together as a group but we as individuals will grow closer to God as we become committed to fulfilling God's purpose for our lives. Registration for Ladies Bible Study (LBS) will also be open on our regular days of Discipleship Registration Sept. 14 & 21 at 3:30 pm (Christian Freedom Baptist Church Fellowship Building) for those who will not be able to come on Sept. 9 at 9:30 am. Any questions please contact Ashley Sullens 704-734-0964.