

EDUCATION

BATES
From 1A

was more deserving of having the field house named in his honor than Coach Bates.

"He is a man we all love and respect," Baity said. "He's a wonderful man who puts God first. His positive winning attitude made believers out of all of us. We've often been told that good guys finish last, but here's a good guy that finished first."

Punch Parker, the leading rusher on KM's '60 team which finished 9-1, said Bates' wife, Betty, was his English teacher and joked that the first thing she taught him was the meaning of "Oski Oski." That was what Coach Bates taught his defensive players to yell when a pass was intercepted.

"This is a well-deserved and long overdue honor," Parker said.

Judy Medlin, star basketball player for Bates in his first year here, said Bates made an immediate impact on the team. "We'd run or do anything he wanted us to do," she said.

Jim Medlin, a lineman on Bates' undefeated 1963 team, said players were "truly blessed" to have Bates as a coach and role model. He said Bates taught players the meaning of hard work, discipline, teamwork, leadership and "to never lose the moral high ground."

"Everybody knew to play hard and never use foul language," Medlin said.

Drawing on a quote attributed to the late Vince Lombardi, Medlin said Bates prescribed not to the theory that "practice makes perfect" but that "perfect practice makes perfect."

"When you went out there to practice you practiced it right," he said. "If you don't practice right it's not going to happen no matter what you do. I've tried to factor that into my life."

Pat Murphy, quarterback on Bates' championship 1964 team, recalled walking the sidelines of City Stadium when he was 12 years old and dreaming of the time he could play high school sports. He recalled that in 1959 Bates assisted Fred Withers with the American Legion baseball team and became his "hero."

Bates, Murphy pointed out, followed two legendary coaches in KM - Shu Carlton and John Gamble - and continued the winning tradition that they started.

"This honor is well-deserved," he said. "I know that up in Heaven there is a man with a big smile on his face...and Coach Gamble says 'this is the way it ought to be.'"

Charles Barnes, who now teaches and coaches in Greensboro, gave Bates credit for easing the transition for Black athletes into previously all-white KMHS in the sixties.

"When I came in 1966-67 it was the first full year of integration," he said.

"Coach Bates welcomed us with open arms and immediately we became part of that football team. It filtered right into school and made

it easy. A lot of other schools had problems but we didn't have any of that."

Bates was also responsible for getting Barnes his first teaching job as PE coordinator for Kings Mountain District Schools. "I even had a truck to drive and got a full tank of gas every week. Can I still get that gas?" he joked.

Geeper Howard, quarterback on Bates' final team in 1970, said when he was growing up in the late 50s and early 60s, "football was the biggest show in town" and Coach Bates made an impact on him even before he got into high school and began playing sports.

"He saw a lot more in me as a quarterback than I ever did in myself," Howard said. "The discipline we learned from him helped us be more productive in life."

Bobby Hussey, who began his coaching career at KMHS under Bates and eventually coached on the college level, said he was amazed at Bates' winning percentage when he came on board in 1964.

"I kept hearing about all the games this guy's won," he said. "I wanted to hang around him. He did a terrific job."

Dr. Larry Allen, Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Cleveland County Schools, credited Bates for his tireless efforts in seeing to the construction of numerous athletic and academic facilities in Kings Mountain. In the case of the football field house, he pointed out that funds weren't available to totally pay for the facility so Bates spearheaded a fund-raising effort and enlisted numerous persons around town to donate labor.

Dr. George Litton, chairman of the Cleveland County School Board and former head football coach at Gardner-Webb, said students in the future will reap the benefits of Bates' service. "His legacy will be remembered and honored by all," Litton said.

Friday's night's halftime festivities at KMHS included a brief ceremony in which Gary Stewart, President of the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame, presented Bates a plaque. A permanent plaque has also been attached to the front entrance to the field house under the letters "Bill Bates Field House."

All profits from the Thursday dinner will go to the Billy G. Bates Scholarship Fund at Gardner-Webb. Persons interested in supporting the project may call John Bridges at Gardner-Webb.



Former KMHS and Appalachian State basketball star Charles Barnes, left, chats with his former coach Bobby Hussey at Thursday's dinner honoring Bill Bates at the Patrick Center.

Authors speak to Grover PTO

Authors and reading specialists Laura Beaver and Jill P. Nolen spoke to parents and teachers last week during Grover Elementary's PTO meeting and open house.

The picture book the two created for 2- to 5-year olds, "Into the Tub," is being praised by literacy specialists, early childhood education experts, teachers and parents for its simple message and not just the one for tots about obeying Mommy at bath time.

Catch-phrases like "it's never too early to start learning to read" and "parents make great teachers" are followed by instructions on how to make every story count on the road to a child's reading readiness.

"Parents are told to read to their babies before they're even born, which is wonderful," Beaver said. "But what they haven't been told is that how they read a book aloud can make a profound impact on how easily their children learn to read. "Into the Tub" gives them this direction in a simple, pre-

cise, step-by-step format.

An 18-year teaching veteran, from kindergarten, second grade and third grade to remediation studies for at-risk students, Jill Nolen had seen her share of students struggling with reading. After watching her son, as well as the children of fellow teachers, grasp reading more easily upon entering kindergarten, Nolen came to a realization. The children of parents who had received instruction on how to properly read to them were at a clear advantage.

"Aside from sharing a favorite book with your child, there's no better reward than seeing that child become an expert reader," Nolen said. "Perhaps the best thing about "Into the Tub," is that its teacher-tested and government-certified reading tactics and strategies can be applied to any of the children's books on the bookshelf or in the toy box.

"Learning to read doesn't begin in kindergarten. It begins the first time a child



Authors Laura Beaver, left, and Jill P. Nolen talk during Grover Elementary School's open house last week. The authors shared with parents how they can better assist their children with reading at home.

hears a story or holds a book. Every child should have the benefit of proper reading instruction before

they start school, and it is our hope that "Into the Tub" gives them the edge they need."

Educators' group meets in Bessemer

The Beta Epsilon Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Education Society met last week in Bessemer City at the First Baptist Church. Some 49 members from Kings Mountain, Bessemer City, Lincolnton and Cherryville attended.

The meeting began with a service in memory of Patricia Allen Rhyne who died in August and Genevieve W. Matthews who died in September.

Celeste Weaver welcomed members and Leigh Herman delivered the invocation. Following the meal, President Wanda Lutz of Lincolnton brought the meeting to order. Dr. Lisa Cantrell introduced a DVD which was provided by the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The DVD "From the Sparkle of the Past to the Brilliance of the Future" highlighted the growth and work of the organization since its beginning in 1929 to the present.

The Personal Growth and Services Committee

reported that 16 care bags had been assembled in response to the "Friends Respond and Nurture" project which is part of the "Acts of Kindness" state project.

Kings Mountain members attending the meeting were Connie Bell, Leigh Bell, Mary Ann Gibson, Paula Goforth, Julianne Hambright, Hilda Leonard, Margaret McGinnis, Kaye Putnam and Connie Phifer Savell.

The next meeting will be Nov. 3 at Boyce Memorial Presbyterian Church.

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