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Fulmer addresses annual 365 Days of Hope event



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Phillip Fulmer was the keynote speaker at last week's 365 Days of Hope luncheon.

UT Athletic Director Phillip Fulmer spoke Thursday to the Catholic Charities of East Tennessee annual luncheon "365 Days of Hope" at The Press Room on Broadway and talked about the university's sports program and his support for the Children's Emergency Shelter. A large crowd of business and industry supporters heard Coach Fulmer tell of his years as a football coach, winning the national championship, and incidents in his personal life.

WATE's Kristin Farley and CCETN Executive Director Lisa

Healy also spoke and Juvenile Court Judge Timothy Irwin delivered a video message urging support for the program that shelter children whose parents have been arrested.

CCETN provides programs and assistance for children and adults through shelter and housing, education, pregnancy services, counseling, and immigrant services.

Healy said that the number of children needing shelter while parents are being held is growing and thanked those corporations, companies, and individuals who

donate to the shelter effort.

Thursday also was the day CCETN debuted its new logo and organizational branding.

"CCETN has been a vital provider of care to the vulnerable and underserved members of our East Tennessee community for nearly 40 years. We cherish our role in our region, and we are always looking for ways to improve and expand our services," said Healy.

"We also recognize the vital efforts our corporate partners and community supporters provide by helping us reach those

who are in need. We feel this new look reflects who we are as a traditional, vibrant, and growing service organization in our region."

CCETN program offices are located in Knoxville, Chattanooga and Tri-Cities, with additional services offered in Morristown, Maryville, LaFollette, and Newcomb.

The Knoxville Focus is proud to have helped sponsor the luncheon and anyone can donate to help house children during those stressful days by going online to www.ccetn.org.

Commissioner Beeler speaks up on pension suit resolution

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Richie Beeler, the Knox County Commissioner who represents the 8th District, seldom speaks out on issues but last week the normally silent official spoke up on the resolution he introduced pertaining to the current citizens' lawsuit against the county over the settlement of the case against the Knox County Retirement and Pension Board.

The law director brought suit against the pension board actions that went against the county charter but was stopped by the Knox County Mayor and County Commission who dismissed the suit in a commission vote.

Beeler's resolution was to direct the outside hired attorney to seek the "sole legal issue" and not spend taxpayer money in an attempt to dismiss the case prior to a court ruling.

Continue on page 3

New trustee office to include sheriff's department outpost

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

When the Knox County Commission meets in regular session today they may discuss or consider more than fifty items. The one item they probably won't discuss is a resolution concerning the citizens vs. Knox County. That discussion failed to move beyond last week's work session due to a failing tie vote.

In that work session the commissioners heard from Knox County Clerk Sherry Witt on the relocation of the trustee office in East Knoxville to 4728 Centerline Drive. The East Satellite Office, according to Witt, will also hold space for the Knox County Sheriff's Office.

Witt estimated the cost of remodeling the former Food Lion store at

Continue on page 2



PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Carolyn Graham holds a plaque honoring the memory of her late husband, Larry, for whom the Gibbs Elementary School Gymnasium was named in a ceremony last week. Pictured with Carolyn are daughter Kimberly Muller, son Kendall, Gibbs teacher Susan Hibbett, school board member Mike McMillan, KCS superintendent Bob Thomas, Jerry Tipton, Preston Tipton and Gibbs principal Joe Cameron.

Gibbs Elementary dedicates gym in honor of Larry Graham

By Ken Lay

The Gibbs Elementary School gymnasium has a new name. It was dedicated and named in honor of the late Larry Graham, a longtime teacher and coach who taught physical education and math in the Knox County School system for four decades.

Graham spent 27 years of his career at Gibbs Elementary and in the Corryton Community, where he touched many lives.

The school officially dedicated the gym in Graham's honor in a highly attended ceremony on Monday, Oct. 21, where he was remembered as a family man, a mentor, a teacher, a coach and a friend. Among those in attendance were Knox County Commissioner Richie Beeler, and school board members Mike McMillan and Patti Bounds. The school's fourth grade chorus sang a few of Larry's favorite



PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Members of the Gibbs Elementary School's fourth-grade chorus perform at last week's ceremony dedicating the gymnasium to the memory of Larry Graham. The singers performed "Rocky Top" and "Tennessee Waltz" at the dedication on Monday, October 21.

songs, including "Rocky Top" and "Tennessee Waltz."

Among those who spoke were Gibbs Elementary School principal Joe Cameron, physical education teacher Susan Hibbett (who was one of his students), Knox County Schools Superintendent Bob Thomas, longtime friend Jerry

Tipton, Jerry's son Preston (who was also one of Graham's students) and Graham's son, Kendall (who was accompanied on stage by Graham's daughter, Kimberly Muller).

Graham, who started the Gibbs Elementary School field day and later officiated county wide elementary school track

meets with friend and longtime Powell Middle School teacher and coach Ernie Israel, was killed in an auto accident on Aug. 17, 2015.

But his impact on his friends, family, former students and colleagues remains.

Jerry Tipton recalled his first encounter with Graham when both were students at Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens.

"The year was 1961 and I had just been through the worst four years of my life as a student at Holston High School and my mom told me that I was going to go to Tennessee Wesleyan in Athens," Jerry said. "So she packed up the car and we drove to Athens, I didn't even know where it was and when we got there, she let me out of the car and gave me my suitcase and said goodbye."

Jerry remembers not knowing anyone but he went to

Continue on page 2

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