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Judge Irwin Needs Stuffed Animals

By Focus Staff

Tim Irwin, Judge of the Knox County Juvenile Court, is an imposing man with the demeanor of the grandfather he has become. Irwin began a program years ago, asking the public for donations of stuffed animals. Those same stuffed animals are parceled out to children whose lives have entangled them in the maze of legalities oftentimes resolved at the juvenile court. Judge Irwin is clearly pleased as he attests to the program's effectiveness. "It has worked far better

than I could ever have imagined," Irwin stated. The stuffed animals are given to children who are frightened while at the court.

Charles Susano, Clerk of the Circuit, Civil Sessions and Juvenile Courts, has witnessed just how the program sponsored by Judge Irwin has worked. "One can see



Judge Tim Irwin

children in the building and it can be as scary a place for young children especially," Susano said. "That small stuffed animal makes more of a difference than you might think."

Asking random staff members about the stuffed animals usually brings a grin. The juvenile court staff talks about the boxes

of stuffed animals that have come from the generosity of fellow citizens in Knox County and East Tennessee.

"Seeing those small children, their eyes fasten onto those stuffed animals and those tiny hands clutching them to their bodies, it just melts your heart," says Juvenile Court Director Mary Lindsey. "It really does have a calming effect on those kids and most of them aren't here for a happy reason."

"Fundamentally," Judge Tim Irwin explained, "the

Knox County Juvenile Court is doing all it can to bring about justice, as well as do what we can for fractured families, but most of all, it is about doing everything we can to help the most vulnerable amongst us, the children. We want to make them as comfortable as possible and the donations from people of stuffed animals really has helped thousands and thousands of youngsters."

Those interested in helping children by making a gift of a stuffed animal can drop off donations at

the juvenile court at 3323 Division Street. Donations can also be dropped off at Prestige Cleaners, owned by Eddie Mannis. Known for his charitable work, Mannis has agreed to accept stuffed animals, which will be turned over to the juvenile court.

For those folks who wish to help financially, you can do so by sending a check to the Compassion Coalition at 31.6 N Gay Street, Suite 207, Knoxville, TN, 37917 or 865-251-1591.

EYES ON THE GOLD!



PHOTO BY JOHN VALENTE

Central Head Coach Bryson Rosser and the Bobcats can hardly wait to get their hands on the gold ball trophy in the post-game awards presentation Friday night at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville. Central defeated Summit High 30-7 for its second straight Class 5A state championship in the BlueCross Bowl. Please see game story and other photos in Sports and Recreation, Section C, Page 1.

Mike McMillan to support Bible Time Release

By Focus Staff

Mike McMillan, the Knox County Board of Education member for the Eighth District, announced he would be voting for the Bible time release pilot program. The program is one hour each month and requires the child's parent's permission. The pilot program has been started at Sterchi Elementary School. Some seventy students are currently enrolled in the program out of three hundred.

A flurry of intense opposition to the program has been generated, largely by teachers. McMillan has been communicating with people inside his district, including businesspeople, PTA moms and church leaders. "A community includes everyone," McMillan said. "I have tried to talk to as many people as possible and I think my colleague Susan Horn was right when she discussed parental rights."

"I think parents should have as many practical choices as possible and I much prefer parents making responsible decisions for their child or children than the state."

McMillan said he thought the program ought to be given a chance and will vote for it when the board of education meets on Wednesday, December 11.

Commission to discuss TVA Tower agreement

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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Although the Knox County School Board hasn't given its approval yet the Knox County Commission's work session agenda for Monday has a resolution approving a contract with TVA for easements to the TVA East Tower, Summer Place Complex and the Pritts Parking Lot. The work session may

see some discussion on it but that probably will not see a vote until their regular meeting the following Monday on December 16.

The agreement is for a term easement for the tower and parking lot and a permanent easement for Summer Place. The board of education plans a discussion on the proposed move from the Andrew Johnson Building to the TVA East

Tower on its regular agenda Wednesday. The intergovernmental memorandums of understanding between the board, the county commission and the county mayor call for agreement of all the bodies.

"The County Board of Education agrees to relocate Central Office from the Andrew Johnson Building to TVA East Tower. Knox County Government will use

the proceeds to offset building cost of floors P-6. Additionally, Knox County Government will pay buildout costs associated with the TVA East Tower, and cover moving, expenses," the agreement reads.

Six million dollars is the sale price of the AJ Building and the agreement says that the board of education will incur no cost associated with being at the East Tower

for 15 years. The memorandum of understanding was made on December 1.

The work session resolution authorizes the county to enter into a contract with Tennessee Valley Authority granting Knox County a term easement to the tower and Pritts Lot and permanent easements to the TVA Summer Place."

The following resolution, immediately below the TVA

agreement, authorizes the sale of the Andrew Johnson building to BNA Associates for \$6 million.

Commissioner Charles Busler has placed a motion prior to the commission's agreement to move the school board to the TVA Tower asking the Knox County Mayor to look at purchasing the Knoxville Center Mall for the relocation of

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