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COVID-19 Weekly Focus

2019 Knox County Total Population
470,313

Total Confirmed COVID-19 Cases
12,343

% COVID-19 Cases/ Total Population
2.6%

Total COVID-19 Deaths
99

% COVID-19 Deaths/ Total Population
.0002%

BE SAFE - WASH YOUR HANDS - WEAR A MASK - SOCIALLY DISTANCE

SOURCES: 1. U.S. Census Bureau 2. Knox County Health Department data from 10/24/2020



Dwayne Sanders's wife and kids on the dais as the banner is dropped revealing the dedication sign on the gym. Sanders was a long-time coach and mentor for Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which joined forces with Emerald Youth Foundation.

Dwayne Sanders – Christian, coach, mentor – honored with gym dedication

By Bill Howard

If you didn't know Dwayne Sanders, there are at least two things about him you can be sure of. The first is that he died way too young; he was 52 when he died of cancer in April of 2018. The second? He touched many lives, and a whole lot of people thought a whole lot of him.

On Tuesday, Oct. 20, the memory of Sanders – a longtime basketball coach and mentor to inner-city youth – was honored when the gymnasium at the Emerald Youth Foundation on Broadway Avenue was named for him. Some 125 people – friends, family, colleagues and mentorees among them – attended the ceremony.

One of the many speakers was Cumeucus Cates, a Fulton high school grad currently attending



Dwayne Sanders's wife Lisa poses with Cumeucus Cates after the Oct. 20 ceremony at the Emerald Youth Foundation. The gym was named for Sanders, who worked for some 25 years with area youth. Earlier, Cates told the crowd what an enormous influence Sanders had been in his life, as both mentor and basketball coach.

Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky. "Dwayne for me was much like a father figure," said Cates. "My

dad has been in prison most of my life, so I haven't had him around. I've been blessed with

people like Dwayne Sanders and many other coaches who are God-fearing men. I give Dwayne a lot of credit for where I am today."

In 1992, Sanders went to work for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Knoxville. In 2012, he approached his friend and former Maryville College roommate, Steve Diggs – founder of EYF – with the idea of the two organizations joining forces. Sanders thought the combined effort would result in a broader outreach that could help more kids and do more for the community. Diggs was on board.

"Dwayne wanted to combine his passion for urban youth sports and his commitment to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, so he came up with the

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Commission, public forums discuss Board of Health

By Mike Steely
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During the Knox County Commission Work Session last week newly-elected Commissioner Terry Hill brought up the possibility of abolishing the Board of Health but said she cannot accept such a move. Yet,

"We don't like it from an unelected board," Hill told the many anti-board speakers. "I'm listening to you and 90 percent agree." But she went on to mention that many elderly people are afraid of the virus pandemic.

"We're sick of it too," she said of the mandates and COVID-19 and added, "When this settles I promise you I will lead the charge but I'm not prepared at this time to demolish the Board of Health."

Two motions from Commissioner Kyle Ward will go on to the commission's regular meeting tonight. One of the motions would form a separate health and economic advisory body that could take over when and if the Board of Health is abolished and the other would require the Board

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Mini-Ribbon Cutting held in Powell for Collier Preserve Park

By Mike Steely
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There's a new park coming for Knox County next to the Powell Branch Library. Twelve acres were donated to Legacy Parks four years ago by Dr. Bob Collier, whose grandmother, Stella Moore Collier, farmed the land as did her ancestors. The park will, among other things, feature benches donated by the TVA Retirees Association.

Legacy Parks Foundation Director Carol Evans spoke recently at the Powell Business and Professional Association meeting. She said that Legacy Parks owns the land and will implement grants to develop the park and turn it over to Knox County.

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BNA's purchase of AJ Building may not happen

By Mike Steely
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A glaring withdrawal from today's Knox County Commission meeting agenda is the resolution for the approval of the sale of the Andrew Johnson Building to BNA Associates.

It appears that the buyer, BNA, has altered its plans for the historic building to a point that the county cannot agree. The 2017 contract agreement to sell the Gay Street building was approved by the commission. Proceeds from the \$6 million sale were destined to go toward relocating the Board of

Education Administration Offices to the TVA Towers building.

The final purchase contract was approved this past February with BNA talking about turning the building into a "boutique hotel" with apartments and retail shops. But apparently those plans changed and as the county was preparing to close the deal BNA came back with changes the county can't or won't approve.

The Knoxville Focus reached out to Mayor Glenn Jacobs office for comments and sought information from several other county officials.

The dispute between the

county and BNA is that BNA wants to hold off for five years on building a boutique hotel. During that time the company would instead create "micro-apartments." The reason given has to do with hotel occupancy being down and COVID-19 creating a slump in travel and lodging.

The Knoxville Commission will ask the commission tonight to set a new deadline for closing the sale at December 31, giving the county time to renegotiate with BNA. The company is asking for a 20-year PILOT tax break. Should an agreement not be reached by

the new deadline the AJ Building would be back up for sale and a Request For Bids issued.

A spokesperson for the county told The Focus that the relocation of the school offices is ongoing and will be financed with a budget surplus, issuance of bonds or money from an eventual sale of the AJ Building. The school offices are expected to be in the TVA Tower by the beginning of next school year and some offices may be moved there during spring break.

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