

Barrett...from Page 1A

for the opportunity to take his soccer talents to the next level like his sister.

In recent years, Barrett and his family have traveled far and wide to see his sister's games. Starting next season, however, the Barretts can enjoy some collegiate soccer right here in their own backyard, as can members of the community.

"I think it makes my family proud, and I'm just happy to represent them," Barrett said of signing with the Mountain Lions, and his parents wholeheartedly agreed.

Barrett has had a stellar career as a striker for the Indians, accounting for 23 goals over his freshman, sophomore and shortened junior season. Last year, Barrett got out to a hot start, scoring eight goals in just three matches before the season was canceled due to COVID-19.

An innately talented youth, Barrett has been able to augment his natural gifts with good old-fashioned dedication, putting in plenty of time playing the game he loves not only for the Indians, but also with club soccer and countless hours of practice during the offseason.

"Peyton is one of the hardest workers I have ever coached," Coach Thomas said. "I tell my players all the time, 'We're only as good as our offseason because of the work we put into our offseason.'"

A former Mountain Lion himself, Thomas said it's refreshing to have players show up at the varsity level and love the game as much as Barrett.

Rain, snow or shine, Thomas knows he can count on the senior to be out there working on his individual



Indians Head Coach Rollie Thomas is excited for the future of Peyton Barrett, who is both naturally talented and an upstanding young man.

Photo by Chad Stack

game, making him that much more of an asset on the field, especially in the face of such stiff competition.

The Indians compete in one of the toughest regions in the state, going toe to toe with some of Georgia's most highly skilled teams, and Thomas said having a player of Barrett's caliber improves the performance of other players and the overall strength of the team.

Over the course of his college career, Barrett said he will be looking to take his soccer skills to the next level, because following YHC graduation, he hopes to play soccer professionally.

Of course, athletics are important to Barrett, but he has other interests as well.

While donning the purple and white uniform for the Young Harris College Soccer Program, he'll also be pursuing a degree in piano

with accompanying music and academic scholarships. Just like soccer, Barrett has been playing the piano for most of his life and enjoys it immensely.

And attending college in his home county of Towns will, again, come with the added benefit of easily allowing his family and friends to watch him excel in the game he holds so dear.

The 2020-21 soccer season just started at Towns County High, and Barrett is looking forward to one last semester as an Indian. He scored two goals with an assist in the Feb. 12 season-opening home scrimmage, resulting in the Indians defeating Hart County 4-1.

Barrett was named winner of the 2019 Towns County Golden Boot and has been selected to the GHSA 8-A All-Area First Team.

Sanctuary...from Page 1A

System.

According to the resolution, Bradshaw and Henderson see such efforts as a "full assault" on the Second Amendment, clearly spelling out a "threat to the framework for our basic freedoms and democracy."

"The citizens of Towns County expect their God-given rights as written in the Constitution of the United States to be protected and defended against tyranny," the resolution reads.

Continuing, "The commissioner and sheriff of Towns County publicly express opposition to any law that would unconstitutionally prohibit or restrict the rights of the law-abiding citizens of Towns County to keep and bear arms under the Second Amendment."

The signing occurred in Bradshaw's regular monthly meeting at the Towns County Courthouse, during which he took an informal poll to ask people in the room their opinion on the Second Amendment, and he was met with a universal "yes" in favor of support.

He said the sanctuary resolution was actually a long time coming, having been in the works since before the pandemic, though admittedly, it got put "on the backburner" because of COVID-19 and all

its attendant complications.

Additionally, it was around the time COVID first hit last March that the election for Towns County Sheriff really got going, and Bradshaw decided to hold the resolution until after the swearing in of a new sheriff.

It turned out Sheriff Henderson and Bradshaw were on the exact same page, as Henderson went into the commissioner's office last month to discuss just such a resolution, prompting Bradshaw to share what he'd been working on, and the two men found themselves in total agreement.

"As I stand here tonight, I just can't explain how honored and humbled I am to serve the people of Towns County as your sheriff," Henderson said. "I'm going to work very hard every day to do the best job that I possibly can do and surround myself with good people."

"I want to say thank you, commissioner, for this document," Henderson said before turning to the courtroom audience. "As (Bradshaw) said, we took an oath to uphold the Constitution."

"And it's important for the citizens to know - I, as your sheriff, will never, ever go for any kind of legislation or support anything that would infringe on your right to bear

arms. And that, so help me God, I promise I'll stand with you all the way."

Ultimately, the two men resolved that "the United States Constitution is the Supreme Law of the Land, the Second Amendment is contained therein, and (we) hereby declare Towns County to be a Sanctuary for the same."

Bradshaw also shared one of his favorite statements about the importance of safeguarding the U.S. Constitution and the rights enumerated therein, delivered by none other than former President Ronald Reagan.

"It's a nasty truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun control laws," Reagan said. "I happen to know this from personal experience. You won't get gun control by disarming law-abiding citizens."

"There's only one way to get real gun control: disarm the thugs and the criminals, line them up, and if you don't actually throw away the key, at least lose it for a long, long time."

Check back next week for additional coverage of the Feb. 16 county meeting, including an update on progress toward improving Shake Rag Road on Bell Mountain.

Rodeo...from Page 1A



Georgia Mountain Fair President Matt Turpin accepted the award for "Best New Outdoor Rodeo" on behalf of the Fairgrounds in Philadelphia, Missouri, on Feb. 5.

Photo/Submitted

the award is a sign that people want the rodeo here, and she is confident that the event will continue to grow with time.

"The Southeastern Professional Rodeo Association had a big banquet down in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and they gave us the award," Thomason said. "The Southern Rodeo Company is who does the rodeo for us, and we won the award after our first time having the rodeo."

"This gives us a lot of publicity for the event, which is coming up again on Memorial Day Weekend. So, we get a lot of press and publicity making awareness that we have a great rodeo here in Towns County. It is an honor to win it."

To accommodate the anticipated levels of attendance in 2021, the Fairgrounds will be expanding the event and giving guests more places to sit.

"We are going with more bleachers and a bigger arena because we needed it," Thomason said. "It was such a huge success that we definitely will expand it and make it bigger and better. Hopefully, we will have more contestants this year."

"Memorial Day Weekend is always a big time here in the mountains anyway, because it is the kickoff for summer and things are starting to happen again."

"We think adding the rodeo to the beginning of the season will provide more for people to do while they are here, and we can bring more people into Towns County (to promote tourism and the area)."

More live shows are returning this year, as well as annual events that didn't occur last year because of the pandemic. In fact, live shows have already returned, with the Drifters, Platters and Cornell Gunter's Coasters performing in Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, Feb. 13.

"People were so happy to get out and be able to go to a live concert," Thomason said. "We are planning on April 30 and May 1 to have the Memory Lane Classic Car Show, and Josh Turner will perform that weekend on May 1."

"We have already sold 1,200 tickets, so if you want tickets, I recommend getting them, because I do think it is

going to sell out."

With all signs pointing to a successful year ahead for the Fairgrounds and, by extension, the community, Thomason said she is happy for the ability to make up for lost time by bringing more events in 2021.

"We have a lot more concerts planned," Thomason said. "We have three more that we had to carry over from last year, and then I have booked Tracy Lawrence. We are going to have the Fair, the Fall Festival, and the EggFest will be returning this May."

"We are also working with the Mountain Arts & Crafts Guild, and we are going to have two craft shows with them this year. Of course, we will have the Mustang Show again. We just have a lot of events scheduled and are still booking. It will be a good season."

Tickets for the May 28-29 Hiawassee Pro Rodeo and upcoming concerts are available now and can be found alongside a growing roster of events at GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

Johnson...from Page 1A



Ron Tanner, Richard Hoibraten and Don Sullivan of the North Georgia Honor Guard salute their friend and fellow veteran Bud Johnson during his memorial services last week.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

He was himself a veteran of Iwo Jima who witnessed the raising of both flags on the island, and Johnson took it upon himself in life to organize an annual Iwo Jima remembrance in Towns County, which this year had to be canceled because of COVID-19.

In furtherance of his mission to honor and advocate for veterans everywhere while keeping the memory of lost service men and women alive, Johnson's pursuits included such treasured public monuments as the Towns County Veterans Park and the Iwo Jima Memorial at Foster Park.

Carrying out the memorial services were many of his longtime veteran friends, all of whom valued immeasurably the World War II veteran's service to his country and to his community and veterans therein.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, and American Legion Riders escorted Johnson's ashes, which were in the care of Cochran Funeral Home, to the cemetery.

Members of Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment #783 and the North Georgia Honor Guard conducted the ceremonial honors, with Navy Seabee veteran and Chaplain Richard Hoibraten performing Johnson's last rights.

Included in the ceremony were a folding of the American flag that accompanied Johnson's urn for presentation to his daughter, Marilyn Johnson Sardella; a 21-gun salute via firing party; and the playing of Taps.

Serving as Honor Bearers representing the military branches were: Bernie Fontaine, U.S. Army; Charley Andrews and Ted Nesius, U.S. Navy; Ash Todd, U.S. Marine Corps; Brandy Creel, U.S. Air Force; and Scott Drummond, U.S. Coast Guard.

During the service, Chaplain Hoibraten highlighted his friend's love of the Lord and lifelong service to his country and fellow man, saying that Johnson was "blessed with the conviction of helping others find peace in the Grace of the Lord God and Jesus Christ."

Johnson's daughter Marilyn attended from Palm Bay, Florida. Sardella is familiar with the area to which her father chose to move more than 40

years ago, and she expressed her gratitude for the mutual love Johnson shared with his community.

Addressing her departed father directly, she thanked him for always being a wonderful listener and having a heart open to others - including her.

"While your tomorrows will no longer be here on earth, all your yesterdays are in a loving place in my heart, just for you," Sardella said.

She then shared something she'd written on behalf of her father, delivering a message of comfort she felt he would have wanted to impart to those gathered were he able to be there that day.

"To my friends and family, I am writing this from Heaven," Sardella read. "There are no more tears and pain. Please don't be unhappy. I may be out of sight, but I'm always close to where I first began, here on earth, to you and your hearts."

"God said watch over your family and friends, and wipe away your tears with a gentle touch, for I've had a long life on earth and many loving years, many loving friends and family."

"Even though I'm not here, even though I now live in God's garden, I'm closer to all of you than ever before. If you hit a rocky road and feel the climb back is heavy, remember, I now walk beside you."

"And remember always, what you give with your heart you will reap with your soul. When time is called for you to come to Heaven, I will help you claim your (place). You are going to rest in Heaven, and I will be there waiting for you."

Honor Bearer Charley Andrews was a constant companion to Johnson in recent years. Andrews assisted in executing Johnson's final arrangements by helping to coordinate the memorial services and preserve his personal military memorabilia for historical purposes.

"Fairwinds and following seas' was Bud's philosophy," Andrews said, invoking his "adopted dad" by highlighting a mariner salutation often used by Johnson. "And that would be my comment: fair winds and following seas, my lost shipmate."

At the conclusion of services, Johnson's friends transitioned just down the road

to the Towns County GOP Headquarters for a Celebration of Life Open House, complete with refreshments and the Iwo Jima Veteran's own memorabilia on display.

On June 14, 1939, Johnson enlisted in the Navy as an Apprentice Seaman at the age of 17. He made record time advancing to the rank of Chief Petty Officer in just four years, and he retired in 1975 with over 36 years of service in the Navy and Naval Reserves.

During World War II, he served in the Atlantic-European Theatres and was an Iwo Jima veteran of the Pacific. Johnson received 14 U.S. Navy medals and two foreign medals over his career, and served aboard 17 different naval vessels, including fleet boat submarines.

He was a graduate of the Atlantic Merchant Marine Academy in New York City under the G.I. Bill and was employed by Grace Line Steamship Company, Pier 57, as a Ship's Deck Officer. Johnson also obtained a U.S. Coast Guard Ocean Master's license.

Before retiring, he took a position as a yacht captain in sailing and power vessels. Following retirement from his seafaring career, Johnson moved to Hiawassee from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in the late 1970s after visiting and subsequently falling in love with the area.

An avid camper and outdoorsman, he worked campgrounds in retirement as manager, host, security and consultant in Florida, North Carolina and Georgia.

The lifelong patriot loved his country deeply. In retirement, he reaffirmed his commitment to the Constitution by serving in various military associations and veteran organizations, including locally, and he gave 25% of his pay from a small pension and Social Security to community causes.

He was a member of Woods Grove Baptist Church, which owns the cemetery where people may honor Johnson's memory by visiting his headstone situated on a gentle hill overlooking Lake Chatuge.

For his service to country and community, for his friendship to many and concern for all, Bud Johnson, the Christ-centered "veteran's veteran," will be greatly missed in the North Georgia Mountains.

North Georgia Chamber Symphony Quartet now performing on Facebook additional songs weekly



North Georgia Chamber Symphony Quartet

The North Georgia Chamber Symphony is proud to present The North Georgia Chamber Symphony Quartet performing on Facebook, for your pleasure. Available songs include Bizet's Habanera from Carmen, My Funny Valentine, Bach's Air from the Orchestral Suite in D, Pachelbel's Canon in D, Piazzolla's Libertango,

Satie's Je te Veux, Debussy's Clair de Lune, Massenet's Meditation from Thais and a medley from Motown. There is also a brief explanation of each song. Other songs will be added, so check back weekly.

To access the music, go to Facebook.com and search for Northgeorgiachambersymphony; or follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/northgeorgiachambersymphony/>

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Please mark your calendars for live outdoor performances by the Chamber Symphony in Blairsville, Dahlonega and Gainesville on May 7th, 8th and 9th. For further information, contact Betty Florence, 706-867-9444, Bettyflorence@windstream.net