

# Kimsey...from Page 1A

that, just as "iron sharpens iron," so did his good friend sharpen "everyone that he came into contact with."

He then described Hellen using Proverbs 31:17-21, admiring her as a "hard worker, strong and industrious."

"She knows the value of everything that she makes and works late into the night," said Lambert. "She spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth. She is generous to the poor and needy. And she doesn't worry when it snows because her family will have warm clothing."

Former Towns County Sole Commissioner and School Superintendent Bill Kendall thanked Kimsey — who he said belonged to "the Greatest Generation" — and all veterans present for their service, and he recounted the history of the Iwo Jima monument at Foster Park, giving Kimsey much credit for how well it turned out.

Kendall spoke on Kimsey's formidable talent as a coach, and how he inspired much from the athletes who played for him, including Kendall himself.

He also commended Hellen for her many years teaching at Towns County Schools and Young Harris College, and for her dedication to local libraries as a former director of the Mountain Regional Library System.

Current Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw delivered remarks in the service, sharing with everyone that he



**Iwo Jima Vet Clarence E. "Bud" Johnson offering words of remembrance for his dear friend Todd Kimsey.**  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

smiled every time he thought of Kimsey, a man he was proud to call his friend.

Kimsey's grandson, Kevin Potts, revealed that table tennis was one of Kimsey's many talents in life, and that because he never let his grandson win, Potts learned the valuable lesson of working hard to achieve one's goals.

Clarence E. "Bud" Johnson, himself a U.S. Navy veteran who aided the Allied effort at Iwo Jima, said that his friend was one-of-a-kind.

"I've met a lot of people in my travels over the years, and I've had a lot of friends, but I've never had a friend like Todd Kimsey," said Johnson. "If he told you something, you'd know it was gospel — it was the truth."

At Hellen's request, Greg Bailey, chaplain at Regency

Hospice, sang "In the Garden," and in closing, American Legion Post 23 Adjutant Mel Halfon thanked the American Legion Riders and the Ladies Auxiliary for their support that day.

Also part of the memorial service were photos — sitting out and in a slide presentation — chronicling some of the many happy times the Kimseys shared with those they loved, plus several of Todd's personal and other items related to his life and time in the service.

Many veterans attended Kimsey's Celebration of Life service, including fellow World War II Veteran Frons Goring.

Kimsey's final resting place is Laurel Hills Memory Gardens in Young Harris. He will be missed by all for his kindness, his sharp wit, his wisdom and so much more.

# Silvers...from Page 1A

Toxicology results returned by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in North Carolina, alcohol played no part in Silvers' erratic driving the night he died, and it appears that no other substance screenings were conducted in the case.

"While the OCME Toxicology Laboratory screens for more than 600 compounds, including benzodiazepines, toxicology testing is performed based on the circumstances surrounding each death," said Kelly Haight of the NC Department of Health and Human Services. "In the event of a motor vehicle-related death when the cause and manner of death are readily apparent, the OCME Toxicology Laboratory typically performs limited testing for ethanol."

As it stands, whether Silvers was impaired at the time of the accident or not is likely

to remain a mystery, though the fallout from the crash will surely have a lasting impact beyond Silvers' tragic death.

Following the accident, many people began publicly second-guessing the response of the Towns County Sheriff's Office that evening, though it's unclear that a different course of action would have prevented the tragedy.

Furthermore, Heather Segars, the woman who placed the terrifying 911 call that brought so much attention to the accident, has suffered psychologically from witnessing Silvers' harrowing journey toward his own death.

On top of everything, Stewart and her minor grandchild were injured in the accident, and they, too, have suffered emotionally and psychologically.

Muddying the waters

even further is the incident that occurred about 24 hours prior to Silvers' death, when the now-deceased man wrecked his truck on private property on Bugscuffle Road.

Silvers passed two field sobriety tests administered by a Towns County deputy after the Bugscuffle wreck, though local residents familiar with his alleged history of drug abuse later expressed doubt over his condition to drive that night.

And several of Silvers' family members, in mourning his death, asked publicly in the days following his death why more wasn't done to prevent the Feb. 23 tragedy.

According to local authorities, Silvers was known to have had extensive run-ins with law enforcement over the years, including arrests for various offenses such as operating a motor vehicle while on drugs.

For now, many questions remain that may never be answered.

Was Terry Silvers operating a motor vehicle while on drugs the night he was killed? If not, why was Silvers driving erratically on Feb. 23? And, ultimately, why did Terry Silvers die that fateful evening?

Tragically, the circumstances surrounding Silvers' death may forever be a mystery.

# North Georgia Chamber Symphony Spring Concert schedule

North Georgia Chamber Symphony Spring Concerts: Friday, May 17th, Blairsville, Historic Courthouse on the Square, 7 PM. Saturday, May 18th, Dahlonega United Methodist Church, 7:30 PM. Sunday, May 19th, Gainesville, Grace Episcopal Church, 4 PM.

Program: Panamanian Folk Song - El Arborito, arranged by Daniel Allen.

Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin, viola and orchestra, in E flat Major. Our guest conductor for this piece will be Martin David Jones, and our good friend Laura Tomlin will play the solo violin. Director Laurin Smith will play the solo viola on this lovely 3 movement piece.

Grieg's Holberg Suite, includes a prelude, two dance movements, a religious air and an exciting lively French dance with violin and viola solos.

American Folk Song Suite (Shenandoah, Sourwood Mountain, Black is the Color of my True Love's Hair, Turkey in the Straw.)

Lady Gaga Fugue, a modern piece with a baroque twist.

# Attention Artists and Crafters

There are several booths still available for Mountain Fling, an indoor Arts & Crafts Show held on June 22 & 23 at the North Georgia Technical College, Blairsville.

For more information please call Artworks at 706-896-0932.

# Eller...from Page 1A

beneficial programs in Towns County, such as the Explorer Program for youth interested in law enforcement, as well as having at-risk elderly residents call in by a certain time every morning to say that they were OK.

During his time as sheriff, he inspired the careers of many local individuals, and he even talked a few officers who had taken employment elsewhere into working closer to home.

Union County Sheriff's Lt. Daren "Bear" Osborn said he was just 10 years old when Sheriff Chastain died, and that his death and the circumstances surrounding it greatly influenced him to want to go into law enforcement.

Years later, after Eller was elected sheriff in '96, Osborn left a "pretty good gig" as assistant police chief in Helen to work as a school resource officer and patrolman for Eller.

"He was always kindhearted," said Osborn. "He felt sorry for people and always wanted to help the poor. He was a good man, a very fair man."

In 1998, Pat Williams, who is now captain over the Criminal Investigations Division of the Union County Sheriff's Office, was working part-time for the Registrar's Office in Hiwassee.

One day, she went into the Towns County Courthouse to apply for a gun permit, prompting then-Magistrate/Probate Judge Wayne Garrett to ask if she would like to be paid to carry a gun.

Sheriff Eller was in sore need of female deputies at the time, and when the judge called him to talk about Williams, Eller came right over to meet her.

Williams believes that she never would have become a peace officer had she not been approached and subsequently recruited by Eller in '98.

"Rudy had a love for law enforcement," said Williams. "If you were doing something wrong and putting yourself in danger by doing it wrong, he'd correct it."

"And he always made you feel good about yourself, you know, 'You're doing a great job, but it might be better if you did it this way.' He was a good teacher. I loved going to work every day. I loved working for him."

Brandon Hogsed started with Eller in 2000, having been recruited away from a career as an EMT to train and serve as a Towns County deputy.

Hogsed is now a staff



**Former Sheriff Rudy Eller with Pat Williams.**

sergeant with the Union County Sheriff's Office, and coming up on 20 years as a lawman, he remembers with fondness his time working for Sheriff Eller.

"I looked up to him. He's one of the best bosses I ever had," Hogsed said.

Pam Henderson patrols for the Hiwassee Police Department these days, though she started in law enforcement in July 1997, when Eller hired her to work at the old Towns/Union jail.

Like others who served under Eller, she recalls a big man — Eller was quite the imposing figure, standing over 6 feet tall and weighing in excess of 200 pounds — with an even bigger heart.

"Rudy was just fun to be around. He was always a prankster, and he made work fun," said Henderson, pointing to Eller's penchant for plastic wrapping people's personal vehicles and placing crank calls.

Added Henderson, "It was almost like working with him rather than working for him. It wasn't like walking on eggshells. If something needed dealt with, he would deal with it, but it was like family back in those days."

Tommy Holbrooks is currently the chief jailer in Union County, and he worked for Eller for a few years at the old Towns/Union jail in the '90s.

Holbrooks remained close with the former sheriff over the years, even after he transitioned to Towns/Union 911 director in 1997.

"I learned a lot from Rudy," said Holbrooks. "He was a good people person. If people had a problem, they'd come talk to him — his door was always open. He was a good person, he cared for people and he liked people."

Added Holbrooks, "He was a big inspiration. I spent a lot of time with Rudy, talking with him. A lot of times, I'd ask him how to handle a problem, and he would have me tell him

how I think I should handle it. He was teaching me."

Lt. Darren Jones of the Union County Sheriff's Office remembers well his nine or so years working as a deputy for Eller, which included time as a DARE officer in Towns County Schools.

"Rudy was a good sheriff to work for," said Jones. "He was always there for you, and you never had to worry about anybody not having your back — he had your back. He was just an all-around good sheriff and a good person to work for."

"I can remember back when I was working patrol with him, he would come out on the weekend and go get in the car and ride around with you, or you would get in the car with him, and we would patrol. He was out there with you."

Cecil Dye has held his office as Superior Court Clerk for more than 30 years, and though he didn't work in law enforcement with Eller, he did get to see him on a regular basis in the Towns County Courthouse.

"I always thought a lot of Rudy," said Dye. "Rudy was the kind of man that would help you any way he could. He had a kind heart and would do anything he could to help people. I thought he was a good sheriff up until the point that he tried to protect his deputy, and it cost him."

Eller kept largely to himself in his final years, choosing to live out a quiet life to the end of his days at his home in Hiwassee.

But for the years he spent in the public eye in Towns County, Eller will be remembered for many things: his kind disposition; his fondness of coconut cakes; his love of a good prank; making work fun; enjoying the great outdoors; collecting guns; driving fast cars; spending time with his family; building people up; keeping an eye out for teachable moments; and the list goes on.



**Sheriff Eller with his deputies at the Towns County Sheriff's Office.**

# Grant...from Page 1A

the schools had received \$5,879,000 in property tax collections for the 2018-2019 school year, which is over the budgeted amount of \$5.7 million in expected collections for the year.

"So, we have already met budget on our property taxes, so anything going forward will be additional revenue," Underwood said.

She also reported that the school system as a whole was coming in under budget for the current school year.

Superintendent Berrong updated the board on two upcoming Modernization Projects.

Berrong said that renovations began inside the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium on May 6, including the removal of all the gym seats, with plans to install them in the football stadium after the concrete bleachers are painted.

Furthermore, renovations at the library/media center have been finalized, and Berrong said those should be starting soon.

He also updated the board on the status of the roughly \$1 million artificial turf field during his Superintendent Report.

"Everything has been sent in to those guys, and they should be starting on the turf field I'm hoping the last week of May, if not the first week of

June," Berrong said.

The board approved Erica Chastain to lead the middle school girls' basketball team as head coach next school year.

Chastain is currently the middle school principal, though she will be transitioning to the role of facilities director/federal programs director in July.

In advance of the May 6 meeting, newly appointed head softball coach Clay Livingston had requested Chris Vardo as his assistant coach starting the 2019 season, and the board approved his request.

Vardo will remain as the middle school baseball head coach, though he will be stepping away from his assistant coaching duties with the high school football program to fulfill his role as assistant softball coach.

Also in the meeting, Amanda Coggins and Brandy Roquemore were approved as regular education paraprofessionals for the elementary school for the upcoming year.

Roquemore is the wife of newly hired head football coach Jason Roquemore, who will start with the school system in June.

Lastly, the board talked about the need to increase pay for Towns County coaches.

"We are discussing updating our supplements

to be more competitive with surrounding counties," said Berrong after the meeting. "We have discovered that we are pretty much the lowest across the board with a few exceptions."

The school board met again for its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 13, which occurred after press time.

And on Monday, June 3, at 6:30 p.m., the school board will hold a Public Budget Meeting at the Towns County Board of Education Office.

"The purpose of the meeting is to receive public input on the proposed annual operating budget for FY 2020," according to Towns.k12.ga.us.

# Edwards named to BJU President's List

Seth Edwards, a Sophomore Exercise Science major of Young Harris, was among approximately 540 Bob Jones University students named to the Spring 2019 President's List. The President's List recognizes students who earn a 3.75 or higher grade point average for the semester.

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