

After 11 years, Biloxi High principal retires

By REGINA ZILBERMINTS
rzilbermint
@sunherald.com

After 11 years as principal of Biloxi High School and an entire career spent in the district, Pamela Manners is done.



Manners

Not with education — she hopes to continue her work with the state Department of Education. And not with Biloxi schools, either. She plans on going to more than the occasional ballgame or other school activity.

But as of the end of this school year, Manners retired from the top position at Biloxi High School.

The job will be filled next school year by Marcus Boudreaux, who had been principal of Biloxi Junior High.

Assistant Principal Scott Powell will take over the top position at the junior high.

"It's been an interesting time," Manners said. "I can't say that there's been any time here I haven't thoroughly enjoyed."

She ran down a list of the school's accomplishments under her tenure. It was the first Biloxi school to be named a National Blue Ribbon school. It has twice been named to The Washington Post's list of most challenging high schools in the U.S. It is an A-level school.

"They are not just my accomplishments," she said. "They are the teachers' and students'."

Manners herself was one of just six people in 2007 to receive the U.S. Department

of Education for Excellence in Leadership.

When Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, Biloxi High School was used as a shelter, a distribution point for the Red Cross and a FEMA hospital, she said.

She recalled learning how to operate the kitchen equipment so she could help feed the hundreds of people sheltering at the school. She and others raided the drama and athletic departments for clean clothing.

Manners reopened the high school 20 days after the storm, and watching people who had been using the building for shelter depart on buses is a moment she still remembers.

"That was really hard for me, to know people living in our courtyard and in our building had to be put on buses," she said. "But I always heard the way to heal a community is to open the schools. So we had to get the school open."

Though the building itself sustained minimal damage from the storm, Manners had to contend with students and teachers who had suffered tremendous losses.

Now, after a career with Biloxi schools — as a parent volunteer, then substitute teacher, registrar, curriculum coordinator — she will take a break.

She'll visit her grandchild in Atlanta and spend time with her parents on the Coast. She'll continue her work with state education licensing boards.

And she'll keep going to Biloxi High events.

"I don't know how you could all of a sudden give it up after all these years," she said.



Isabelle Millette of Gautier, left, and Jarvious Spivery of Pascagoula taste her winning creation at the Cupcake Wars held at the Pascagoula Public Library on Wednesday.

THE SWEET TO BEAT

Teens compete in cupcake war for top tasty treat

By MARGARET BAKER
mbbaker@sunherald.com

PASCAGOULA — It was an all-out war Wednesday that challenged the creativity of 16 teens vying to be the best designer in the Pascagoula Public Library's first cupcake-decorating competition.

The competition kicked off after the girls and boys from Pascagoula and Moss Point as well as a few others in town, either visiting their grandparents or parents, each went to work decorating a vanilla cupcake.

For accessories, the teens selected four treats from an assortment of Artisan rolled wafers, mini-chocolate chip cookies, colored sprinkles, SweetTarts, Sour Patch gummy candy, Rainbow Nerds, vanilla wafers and food coloring.

Some made colorful decorations, others focused on a theme.

Alyssa Bowman, 15, created a Cookie Monster cupcake. She did some research beforehand, looking up cupcake designs on the Internet.

It didn't take her long to complete her design.

"I like to do a lot of events like this," she said "You get to decorate something and create something of your own."

Jarvious Spivery, 16, decided on a tribute to Baby Jesus.



Aunrea Tyars of Moss Point eats his creation at the Cupcake Wars held at the Pascagoula Public Library on Wednesday.

In the middle of his cupcake was gummy candy representative of Jesus, angels and parents.

After the decorating, three judges toured the tables to make their picks.

Though they said it was difficult to pick a winner, they honored 15-year-old Isabella Millette's creation with the top prize of a goodie bag. Millette, of Pascagoula, said she tried to make her design similar to a chocolate à la mode French dessert, something the judges felt she'd done.

Still, the judges were torn, and felt compelled to make another top pick, one designed by Micah Thompson, 13, of Jacksonville, Fla., who is in town visiting his dad in Pascagoula.

ONLINE
@SUNHERALD.COM

See more photos from the event

Watch the winners at work

His design featured pink icing, three towering Artisan cookies, sprinkles and SweetTarts, which the judges gave an honorable mention. After the judging, the teens got busy chowing down on their cupcakes.

Gulfport dentist keeps dream alive after husband's death

By VICKI TERRINONI
Special to the Sun Herald

Drs. Christopher and Kinyatta Bennett, both Coast dentists, had one dream — to open a dental practice together. It seemed that dream was coming true. The couple had bought land in Gulfport and hired a contractor.

Then the unthinkable happened — Christopher Bennett died at 30 years old.

Suddenly, Kinyatta Bennett had to be both mother and father to the couple's three children. She also needed to continue the building process to see their goal become a reality.

"The first day back to work I was sick. It was like learning to walk again," Kinyatta Bennett said. She was used to doing everything with her husband and now it was all on her shoulders.

The couple had met when both interviewed at the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Dentistry and were drawn to each other. "We became best friends. We didn't see it going anywhere from there, but our classmates did," Bennett said.

Christopher proposed on Graduation Day, which was May 21, 2010, and they married on May 28, 2011. Kinyatta's mother had died on a May 28, when Kinyatta was 11 years old. She wanted

to marry on that day in honor of her mother.

She also chose May 28 as the ribbon-cutting for the new dental clinic, Healthy Smiles Family Dentistry, at 13179 Three Rivers Road in Gulfport. "I told the contractor May 28 was the day. The best thing for me is to keep it May 28," she said. The practice will open officially June 15.

Christopher Bennett died Nov. 12, 2014, after spending several days in the hospital recovering from emergency surgery for a brain aneurysm. He was expected to go home a few days after he got the blood clot in his brain but he suffered a second brain bleed, from which he never recovered.

One of Kinyatta Bennett's hardest days was when she went to the new building for the first time after her husband's death. "That was the first step. I take it one day at a time, one step at a time," she said.

She credits her friends, family and, most of all, her children for helping her move forward to the goal of opening the practice. "The children have been a great comfort. They can read me and know when I need a hug.

"My children, faith, community and the outpouring of love and support keep me going," she said.

Koch praises Coast's recovery effort a decade after Katrina

By MARY PEREZ
meperez@sunherald.com
Twitter: MaryPerezSH

BILOXI — Bay St. Louis native and former CNN reporter Kathleen Koch shared Katrina stories Wednesday with a roomful of survivors who have their own stories of destruction and resilience in the 10 years since the hurricane.

"Y'all are the elder statesmen in the disaster club," she said during her Katrina +10 presentation at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art. "It's taken us 10 years," she said. "I said it would when I saw the destruction all up and down the Gulf Coast."

A few days after Katrina, she gave CNN viewers a look at her hometown, where she found her high school still standing in Bay St. Louis but the ice cream parlor she loved, and the home where she grew up, were destroyed. She had reported on many disasters before, including 9/11.

"This was different," she said. "This was home."

When Hurricane Sandy hit, Koch connected South Mississippi mayors who'd brought their cities back after Katrina with the mayors who were faced with their own recovery.



Kathleen Koch talks about her experience covering Hurricane Katrina for CNN during her Katrina +10 presentation at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art on Wednesday.

The partnerships worked out so well they've grown into LeadersLink, a nonprofit she just started to share lessons and best practices in disasters.

She has spoken with 16 mayors around the country whose communities were hit by hurricanes and tornadoes.

"All the mayors want to help," she said. "I never had a single one turn me down."

"I worry that there will be more and worse storms," she said, but what she's seen in Mississippi, "it's not the buildings that make a community," she said. "If we could get the people to come back, the cities would, too."

Koch said she is proud of

ONLINE
@SUNHERALD.COM

See more photos from the event

Watch a video of the presentation

the people who stayed and rebuilt.

"There is no other land mass on the face of this Earth where I would rather be," she said.

SunHerald

Established daily as The Sun Herald Oct. 1, 1985. Formerly The Herald, founded Oct. 4, 1884 and The Sun, founded Oct. 1, 1973. Published daily by Gulf Publishing Company, Inc. d/b/a SunHerald MultiMedia, 205 DeBuys Road, Gulfport, MS 39507; mailing address: P.O. Box 4567, Biloxi, MS 39535-4567

Subscriber Services: 1-800-346-2472 or www.SunHerald.com
USPS 121-290 Automatic renewal available with ezpay

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Gulf Publishing Co. Inc., 205 DeBuys Road, Gulfport MS 39507. Periodicals postage paid at Gulfport, MS and additional offices.

Weekly subscription rates for home delivery print+digital: Daily, \$7; Monday-Friday, \$4.50; Thursday-Sunday, \$3.40; Wednesday and Sunday, \$3.60; Sunday only, \$3.20. Carrier delivered subscriptions include the following premium content editions in 2015: Jan. 30, June 11, July 30, Aug. 29, Sept. 17, Oct. 3 and Nov. 26. All home delivery subscriptions are subject to a \$1 premium day charge for these special editions and expiration dates will be adjusted accordingly.

Daily subscription rates include SunHerald print and digital package. For other options, call 800-346-2472 or select Customer Services at SunHerald.com. All rates subject to change.

HOW TO REACH US
Area code (228)

SWITCHBOARD:
896-2100

ADVERTISING
Classified: 896-2380
Retail: 896-2484

NEWSROOM
896-2390
or 1-800-346-5022

SOUND OFF

THE VOICE OF SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

soundoff@sunherald.com

Anyone know?

Please tell us how to stop all these phone calls from unwanted, unidentified numbers.

Take attendance

Why is it that a city council member job is part-time, and they cannot make all the meetings? We need to remember how many they make and what they have done in 2017.

Recall

There has been a large recall of air bags. Most of them are in D.C.

Scooter etiquette

I realize some people need motorized scooters to get around on casino floors, and I am very grateful that I do not need one, but these people have a responsibility to operate them in a safe and careful manner. I was just hit by a scooter as I walked down the aisle between two rows of slot machines. The operator was backing away from a machine when he bumped into me. The only thing that I got from him was a dirty look as he drove away. I have seen two other people hit by scooters coming from side aisles into the main aisle. I have also seen people that are not considerate of the people on the scooters. Both sides in the interaction between people walking and operating scooters need to share the responsibility to make the situation safe and enjoyable.

Tax breakdown

The middle class does pay about 30 percent of the total federal income tax revenue. That amount is definitely not "almost all the taxes." Those making \$125,000 or more pay 70 percent of total federal income tax. That equals in 2014 to \$2.1 trillion out of the total \$3 trillion received. The middle and low classes paid \$900 billion of total revenue. While not a small amount, it is hardly proof that the middle class pays almost all of the taxes. The reason they need lawyers is due to the excessively progressive income tax structure. Even when you add in state income and sales tax, the rich still pay more than their fair share although the gap between the 70 percent and 30 percent is less. You pay income taxes because you have a job. Jobs do not come from the government. About 65 percent of all jobs come from small business owners who are above the middle class but not necessarily rich.

Uncontrolled government

Uncontrolled capitalism? I think it's more uncontrolled government taxation, regulations and spending. The price of any product or service has many component costs plus profit. One of the component costs is labor. When government penalizes profit or imposes regulations that raise the non-labor cost of production, it reduces the amount of money the company can invest in labor provided the company doesn't want to increase its prices. Folks, private-sector jobs don't come from the government — they come from the reinvested profits generated by economic growth.