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ISSUE 18 VOLUME 37 FARRAGUT, TENNESSEE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2025 • 1A

## Town record enjoyed: \$2.75 million fed grant for park along McFee

**STAFF REPORTS**  
editor@farragutpress

Town of Farragut has been awarded a Town record \$2,750,000 grant that will be used to develop park property, which was purchased in 2023, according to a Town press release.

“The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant, managed locally by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, was a 50 percent match of the total purchase price of the property,” the release stated.

“The 70-acre parcel, which includes 15 acres of donated land, is on the west side of McFee Road near the junction with Boyd Station Road,” the release added. “The grant requires that construction of recreational facilities must begin by 2027.

“Farragut Parks & Recreation Department will be soliciting extensive community feedback on desired amenities for the new park,” it further stated.

The FLWCF Grant program is a nationwide competitive grant cycle, according to the press release.

“Funds can be used for land acquisition, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and trail development,” the release stated.



Photo submitted

Farragut Mayor Ron Williams (second from left), Town Parks and Recreation director Ron Oestreich (center) and Town administrator David Smoak (second from right) recently received a federal grant from Brian Clifford, (far left), director of the Office of Outdoor Recreation with Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, and Greer Tidwell, Deputy Commissioner of TDEC Bureau of Conservation, to develop the parkland near McFee Road.

# Growth, game champs, growing concerns, glowing feats

## Top stories of 2024

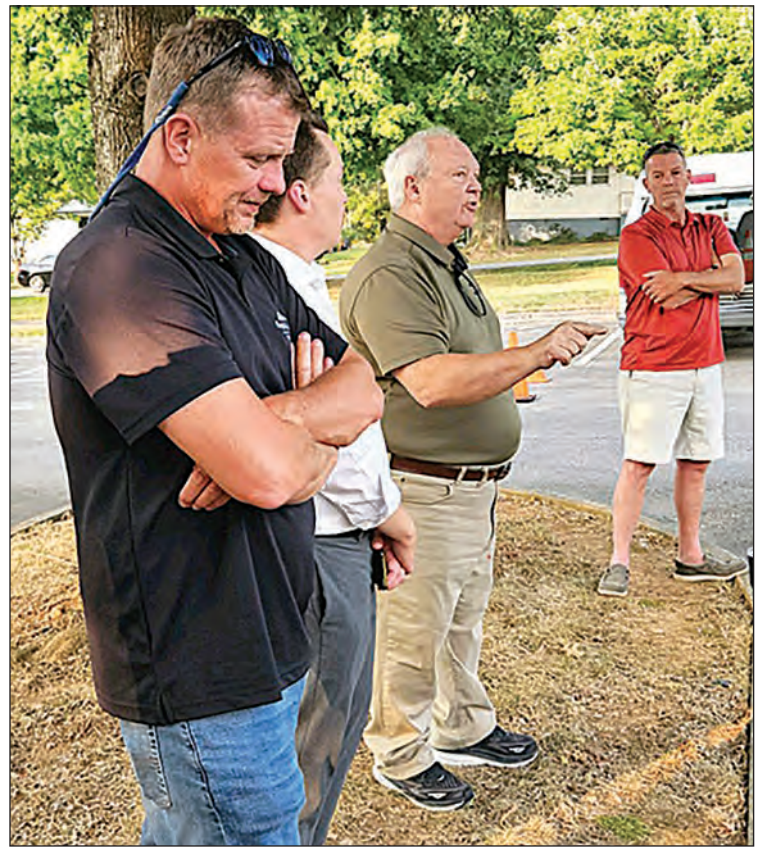
With Farragut Town Center almost ready to become a completely functional unit, in terms of construction, by the end of 2024, Town properties just east of Dixie Lee Junction were becoming new homes (apartments), new facilities (construction of a special Knoxville Temple) and new businesses — opening a new Dollar General and Advance Auto Parts while Dunkin Donuts is under construction.

Meanwhile, a new shopping center in that area, to be anchored by Publix, has finished its parking lot looking to lure other future business after construction in 2025.

Follow a concise look at 2024 in all aspects in this week's farragutpress — in all sections.



- community**  
Local Yale president; combat hero turns 100; majorette regional champ; a special 100th anniversary
- sports**  
Recalling all high school, and one middle school, state champions from the Farragut area this year
- business**  
A special celebration of a Town Center biz and a new Parkside apartment complex



File photos



(Top) A happy bunch of Farragut High School Admirals, led by its Class of 2024 super seniors, captured a TSSAA state-record 13th Tennessee baseball championship, as Division 1-4A state champs, going all the way to the crown in Murfreesboro on Memorial Day weekend for the third straight year while going unbeaten versus in-state opponents. (Above) Alex Cain, newly elected Town of Farragut North Ward alderman, takes the oath of office from Farragut Municipal Judge Keith Alley alongside Cain's parents, Michael and Marti Cain, Aug. 22. South Ward Alderman Drew Burnette was re-elected, while North Ward Alderman Scott Meyer was appointed vice mayor. (Left) These men were among roughly 30 Thornton Heights residents meeting with Town officials looking for traffic calming and cut-through solutions Sept. 11, prompted by an FHS student being seriously injured after being struck by a speeding hit-and-run driver in that neighborhood while waiting for her school bus Aug. 8.

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# Tops in '24 Farragut, personal honors; big snow

Town of Farragut was honored in a handful of ways in 2024, including one "best in state" ranking.

Niche, an online platform for connecting people to their future schools, neighborhoods and workplaces, ranked Farragut as No. 1 in "Best Suburbs for Buying a House in Tennessee."

The ranking is based on reviews, survey responses and public data sources, including the Department of Education, U.S. Census and FBI.

### Tree City USA

Town of Farragut staff's efforts to care for and preserve Town trees was recognized when it earned a Tree City USA designation by national Arbor Day Foundation to honor its commitment to effective urban forest management.

"We waited a long time for this," Town Community Development director Mark Shipley said last April. "We worked hard, and finally in February ... the Town of Farragut was awarded Tree City designation by the Arbor Day Foundation."

He added the Town is one of 3,600 communities nationwide to receive that designation.

### Courtney's many honors

Former Farragut High School football head coach Eddie Courtney racked up the honors in 2024.

For starters, Courtney — head coach of the Ads for 28 seasons, winning the 2016 Class 5A state title while and coaching/teaching at the school for 45 years — was named to the 2024 Class of Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame inductees in July; he also was honored with having the FHS entrance-exit drive from North Campbell Station Road named Eddie Courtney Lane last summer.

And to top it all off, the FHS football stadium was named in his honor (see photo) Sept. 28.



Among countless numbers of Farragut, Knox County and East Tennesseans having fun in the snow during a mid-January winter storm dropping up to nine inches of snow, dozens of families and other individuals targeted the hills of Town of Farragut's McFee Park for some good old-fashioned sledding fun. Among those were three generations with strong Farragut ties going down together on a cold early afternoon Thursday, Jan. 18. Susan Davidson, left, was a highly successful volleyball head coach/teacher at Farragut High School who's now coaching volleyball and teaching at Knoxville Central High School. She is joined by her daughter, Stephanie Welch, an FHS alumnae and former Lady Admirals volleyball standout, and Stephanie's daughter, Olivia, 7.



File photos

Dedication of Farragut High School's football stadium as Eddie Courtney Stadium in honor of the 28-year FHS varsity football head coach (in front with Farragut Football sweater) came at midfield prior to the Admirals' Region 2-6A showdown versus rival Bearden Saturday, Sept. 28. Family members to his right in front (all in blue tops) are Geoff Courtney (son), new FHS varsity head coach; his wife, Taylor Courtney, and their daughter, Charley; and Eddie's wife, Anita Courtney. They are joined by Town, Knox County and state political and administrative leaders, FHS principal Dr. John Bartlett, far right on front row; athletic director Donald Dodgen, second from left in back; and Knox County Schools superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk, third from left in back.

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**Publisher**  
Tony Cox .....865-218-8883  
tcx@republicnewspapers.com

**General Manager**  
Kathy Hartman .. .865-218-8878  
khartman@farragutpress.com

**Editorial Department**  
Alan Sloan,  
Editor..... 865-218-8880  
editor@farragutpress.com

**Advertising Department**  
Charlene Waggoner,  
Account Executive.....865-218-8877  
cwaggoner@farragutpress.com

Tammy Cheek,  
Writer..... 865-218-8873  
tcheek@farragutpress.com

**Production Department**  
Tony Christen,  
Production Manager/  
Circulation Manager. 865-218-8872  
production@farragutpress.com

**Receptionist**  
Terrie Ware.....865-218-8871  
Monday – Wednesday, Friday  
receptionist@farragutpress.com

**Glen Coleman,**  
Account Executive .... 865-218-8884  
gcoleman@farragutpress.com

**Laura Sayers,**  
Account Executive ..... 865-218-8879  
lsayers@farragutpress.com

**Linda Tirban,**  
Classified Display,  
Service Directory ..... 865-218-8881  
linda@farragutpress.com

**Editor email:** editor@farragutpress.com **Website:** www.farragutpress.com  
**Press Talk:** Call: 865-671-8255 or email: editor@farragutpress.com  
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## Tops in '24 Farragut growth from Center to southwest side; lawsuit, EZ Stop, pickleball, K-5th

While Farragut Town Center looked like a typical large construction site early in 2024 (see photo, right), it blossomed into a series of business locations, a handful filled, plus an apartment complex on the site's southeastern side that already has a few residents.

Meanwhile, the Town's southwestern side along Kingston Pike saw major construction and growth in 2024 with the construction-turned-opening of a second Dollar General store location and Advance Auto Parts, with a Dunkin Donuts location still under construction.

The new shopping center at the corner of North Watt Road and Kingston Pike will have Publix as its anchor, as crews already have constructed the center's parking lot.

Well under way in this same area is construction of Knoxville Temple for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As for Town growth along Outlet Drive, an Echo Suites hotel is being proposed near Topgolf, subject to the details being ironed out between Farragut Municipal Planning Commission and Town's Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

### Growth Plan reversal

And speaking of growth in terms of a countywide Growth Plan update, which had to be approved by all three county entities: Town of Farragut, City of Knoxville and Knox County to be implemented, BOMA voted, on first reading, against the update, with North Ward Alderman Scott Meyer joining South Ward Aldermen David White and Drew Burnette in voting no.

However, Meyer had a change of heart on second reading, joining Mayor Ron Williams and then Vice Mayor Louise Povlin in favor of the update, allowing it to be enacted — with the city and county already on board.

### Greenway block

To avoid having a Turkey Creek Greenway extension path running through the property of three homes along Turkey Creek Road, these residents fought Town efforts strong enough to hire Knoxville attorney John Neal to fighting this legally.

Neal said he filed a lawsuit against the Town to block the greenway path, stating that a new state law passed April 24,



2024, "prohibits the condemnation of private property for 'recreational facilities, recreational purposes or parks."

"... Suddenly, the Turkey Creek Greenway extension was no longer a greenway project (in name)," Neal further stated.

### Pickleball decision

After months of deliberation on the exact plan for the Mayor Bob Leonard Park pickleball facility, it was decided by BOMA late in the year to go with a plan featuring nine courts in the park's western section

### EZ Stop versus OCRA

With dozens of outspoken Old Concord Residents Association members at odds with EZ Stop's desire to build

a roughly 7,000-square-foot convenience store on 4.7 acres next to historic Old Concord, approval from Knox County Planning Commission for the company's plan was, on appeal to Knox County Board of Zoning Appeals, a reversal ruling demanding EZ Stop reduce its size plans.

However, at a Knox County Use on Review Planning meeting Dec. 12, upon hearing the EZ Stop proposal, voted to approve the plans with seven pumps, or 14 points of sale. OCRA could again appeal to the Zoning board at its Feb. 20 meeting.

### Traffic System delays

Complete installation of the Town's Advance Traffic Signal Control system — which is expected to significantly reduce traffic congestion in Town by being able to time redlights according to traffic at any given moment — was said to be "five months behind," as told by Town administrator David Smoak in mid-December.

### New school: K-fifth-grade

Following a survey targeting parents, teachers, administrators and the general public in Farragut, combined with Knox County administrative

(Above) This was the status of Farragut Town Center's main street early in 2024, which now includes a handful of businesses but being ready to house many others with the Center's near completion — including a few residents beginning to fill up the adjacent apartments — by year's end.

decisions, it was determined the new school to be built on 41 acres behind Ingles shopping center would be kindergarten-through-fifth-grade, as announced in early January.

## correction clarification

- Concerning the front page story in our Wednesday, Dec. 25, issue on Farragut Town Hall remodeling update, the date given for the estimated day of re-opening, Valentine's Day (Feb. 14), was incorrect according to Town administrator David Smoak.

In an e-mail to farragutpress, Smoak instead gave "late spring" 2025 as the targeted/estimated time frame to re-open.

We regret the error.

- Concerning a headline in our Community section, also in our Dec. 25 issue, referencing The Rotary Club of Farragut guest speaker Jeff Hall, a partner/senior advisor with Rather & Kittrell in Farragut, the headline would have been more accurate if it had read: "Investment falsehoods warning sounded by Hall at RCF."

We regret having a misleading headline.

# Tops in '24 Hardships, turmoil, yet Helene Town relief



Volunteer Jenna Tamborino of Farragut takes a case of water from a Protech Automotive Solutions volunteer while filling a dump truck during a Town of Farragut-led Hurricane Helene relief effort in Faith Promise Church parking lot, West End Avenue, Friday, Oct. 4.

In terms of the darker side of Farragut and local news in 2024, a dead body was discovered in a pond at Willow Creek Golf Club, two anonymous threats were made targeting Hardin Valley Middle School, causing two evacuations — with a minor charged for one of the threats — and the winter weather destruction of a Dock D metal roof at Sun Life Concord Marina (see photo, above right).

**Hurricane relief effort**  
However, in terms of how Town of Farragut responded to Hurricane Helene victims in northeast Tennessee, a huge bottled water relief effort kicked off and culminated Friday, Oct. 4, in the parking lot of Faith Promise Church, West End Avenue.

From Alex Cain, newly elected Town of Farragut Alderman in 2024 representing the North Ward, to Knox County Mayor Glenn “Kane” Jacobs — with help from Town officials — Farragut and the county each contributed big-time with water bottle drives to help these victims.

While Jacobs helped lead the county’s effort in a Knoxville-based water drive Saturday, Oct. 5, from the Town side of things came a water donation drive spearheaded by Cain and Town administrator David Smoak — along with help from several Town employees and at least one local business — in the parking lot of Faith Promise Church, West End Avenue, from early morning to early afternoon, Friday, Oct. 4.

The result, according to Cain, was roughly 12,000 cases (each case having from 40 to 48 bottles ranging from 16 to 20 ounces) collected, which was “two full dump trucks plus a Town of Farragut pick-up truck equivalent of water collected today. ... And that doesn’t count three extra vans full” from Protech Automotive Solutions/Caliber Collision.

As for what prompted the Town’s response, “Monday, (a radio station) and The Sports Animal (radio), they were doing a supply drive at their radio station, and they had a company bring them a semi-truck trailer; their goal was to fill the trailer,” Cain said.

“... I reached out to David Smoak and to (Town Mayor) Ron Williams. I sent an e-mail out to all the aldermen and everybody and said, ‘Hey, can we, as a Town, do something like this?’ Then David Smoak ran with it after that. He coordinated.”



File photos

Pieces of scattered green roofing can still be seen days after the collapse of the metal roof on D Dock at Sun Life Concord Marina on Fort Loudoun Lake from heavy snowfall Monday, Jan. 16. While work continued to clean up the dock, “We’re relieved to report that nobody was injured,” stated Ric Cheyney, chief of marine operations for Sun Life, in a press release. “Safety is, and will remain, our number one priority. ... Our dedicated crews continue their efforts to clean up and remove the damaged dock section ... and enhance overall safety stability.” Marina manager James Bisch said that while some boats were damaged, none sunk. No dollar amount of damage was estimated.

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## Local expansion '24 Chase in Town Center, City West by Parkside Drive signal Farragut- Turkey Creek growth



Chase bank, 11242 Kingston Pike in Farragut Town Center, celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting Thursday, May 9. In front includes Farragut Mayor Ron Williams and Deidre Vonderhaar (with scissors), branch manager. Others on hand, in no order, included Kristy Lindstrom, associate banker; Asa Anderson, associate banker; Suzanne Schriver, a commercial banker; Dale Trezise, relationship banker; A.D. Lavelle, market director for Chase branches; Dan Lally, government banking; Ciara Perrin, private client banker; Mark Cassara, regional sales lead; April Ergenbright, associate banker; and Kevin Bhavsar, a lead associate of operations.

File photos

(Below) City West at Turkey Creek apartments officially opened with a ribbon at the apartments, 10865 Parkside Drive across from Turkey Creek Medical Center, Tuesday June 11. On hand to cut the ribbon were, from left, Tommy Wolf, project manager with Dominion Management Group; Rachele Howell, property manager with Dominion; Dale Torry, back row, vice president of operations for Dominion; Peter Hall (with scissors), Dominion president; Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs; and Daniel Levy, president of DK Levy architectural firm.



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## Concord Christian high school football Lions reinvigorated in 2024; TSSAA ready?

**STAFF REPORTS**  
 editor@farragutpress.com

Is Concord Christian School high school football ready to face the rigors of TSSAA private school competition for 10 weeks in 2025?

After getting a taste of such competition in the fall of 2024, the Lions went 3-2 against varsity-level competition, which included a team from Hayesville, North Carolina during the program's first-ever home game on a rainy Saturday, Sept. 28 (a 37-16 loss).

To compete in the Division II-A East Region, with head coach Steve Matthews having revived the program that played two seasons of TSSAA II-A without winning in 2017 and 2018 — sometimes taking a tough beating — “I thought it was really good for us,” Matthews said about the five-game varsity schedule tune-up in 2024.

Having begun playing junior varsity teams the first five week before finishing against varsity foes, “I thought that was a good way to set it up,” Matthews said. “We’ve got several guys on the team that hadn’t really played a whole lot of football.”

The Lions will play six region games: Webb School-Bell Buckle (Sept. 12), Providence Academy (Oct. 3) and Providence Christian (Oct. 24) all at home, and Middle Tennessee Christian School (Sept. 19), The Kings Academy (Sept. 26) and Chattanooga Grace (Oct. 31) on the road.



With help from senior Lions teammate Zack Langley (1), sophomore Jude Wiggins (14) finds daylight to run versus Hayesville, North Carolina, in Concord Christian School's first-ever football home game, played Saturday Sept. 28.

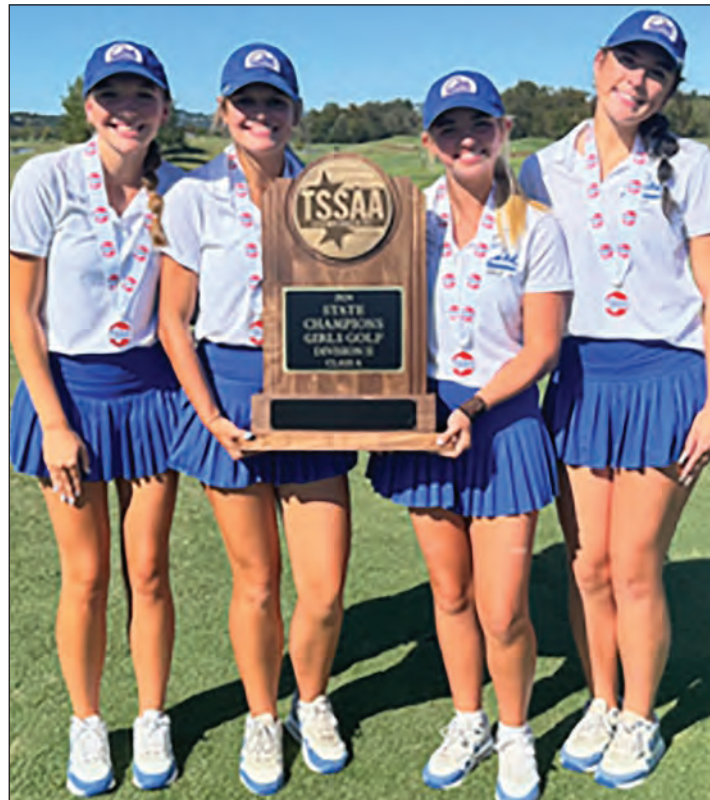


**(Far left)** Several Concord Christian School defenders clamp down on a Hayesville, North Carolina, running back during the Lions' first-ever home game, which took place in a light rain Saturday, Sept. 28.

**(Near left)** Getting a handoff from CCS quarterback Dawson Williford (2), running back C.J. Simpson looks for yardage while getting effective blocks, including one from Jude Wiggins (14).

Photos by Alan Sloan

## Penalty kick clutch, owning links, 3-mile might: state champs '24



**(Left)** Logan Nelson, Bearden High School junior goalkeeper (green), gets a hug from a teammate moments after Nelson's successful penalty kick and stop of a Pk led the SoccerDawgs past Ravenwood 5-3 in Pks to capture the TSSAA Division I-AAA state title in Murfreesboro Friday, May 24. **(Above)** CAK girls golf team was Division I-AA state champs. From left are Ava Iverson (senior), Alexis Fishel (senior), Isabella Coughlin (junior) and Grady Thomas (sophomore). Warrior senior Bryson White was Division II-A individual boys champ.



Seniors Garrett Hawkins, right (fourth), and Gabe Allen (seventh), led Hardin Valley Academy to a TSSAA Division I-AAA Cross Country state title Nov. 8, in Hendersonville. Knoxville Catholic boys earned the Division II-AA cross country state crown led by Irish star runner Keegan Smith, a senior, who won his second individual state championship. Also All-State (top 15) were Radek Molchan (seventh) and Cade Duncanson (11th). Webb School of Knoxville girls captured the Division II-AA state title led by twins Calysta Garner, state champ, and Jazzlyn Garner, runner-up, plus Carolina Areheart, third, Emma Cisna, 12th, and Ariana Vargas, 15th.



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## CONCORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S Christmas Cookie Sale

Concord United Methodist Church's United Women in Faith hosted its Christmas Cookie Sale, which started after church services at 9:30 a.m. until they ran out of cookies, Sunday, Dec. 22, in the Fellowship Hall of the church, 11020 Roane Drive.

"We do this cookie sale every year," said Becky Bishop, UWF president. "Our Mom's Group started it, and every penny we raise goes to local missions."

Bishop thought there were about 50 dozen cookies made by church members for the event, and she expected more to come.

"By 11 a.m., they will all be gone," she added.

The UWF also sells pecans and apple butter. "We bought 14 cases of pecans," many of which were sold during a fall craft sale (in November)," Bishop said. "We have two cases — 39 pounds — left (from the craft sale). We buy these pecans every year fresh, just picked and shelled, from Georgia. We get them the third week in November."

CUMC missions director Jane Currin and a missions group make the apple butter at Camp Dickenson in Virginia in November, starting at 7 a.m. and using kettles outside to make the apple butter.

UWF is a mission-driven ministry focusing on women and children. "We've been around for about 50 years," Bishop said.



Terry Pearson



David Humphreys buying apple butter from Jane Currin



Heather Karnes



Terri McGuire



Anna Grace Humphreys with mom, Katie Humphreys



Jillian Blamer



Michelle Platt



Dena Hoffman



Donna and Eugene Cochran



Judy Boser, left, and Dottie Vining sell pecans



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# 4-peat, Miss Hoops, repeats: champs '24



(Above) Undeclared in her KCHS tennis career, junior Lillie Murphy won the Division II-AA girls tennis singles crown in May after capturing doubles state titles the previous two years, helping the Lady Irish win its third straight TSSAA state title. Meanwhile, CAK junior Allie Faulkner won her fourth straight Division II-A singles title in May.

File photos

(Above) Ella Murphey ended her incredible girls wrestling career at Hardin Valley Academy in 2024, grabbing her fourth straight state title in February to finish high school undefeated. (Above second from left) Knoxville Catholic senior wing Sydney Mains was named Division II-AA Miss Basketball after leading her Lady Irish to a second straight hoops state title in March. (Above third from left) Bryson Thompson claimed his second shot put state crown (Division I-AAA) in May, while FHS senior Braden Ebbert was 1-AAA state No. 1 in 3200-meter run.

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(Above) Dario Antonucci was recognized with a special pin by his son, Richard Antonucci, during a ceremony at Morning Pointe Senior Living-Westland Monday, Sept. 16. Dario, at age 100, was being honored for service to his country in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. (Right) Maurie McInnis, a 1984 graduate of Webb School of Knoxville, took the helm as Yale University's 24th president, and first permanent female president, Monday, July 1, after serving six years as president of Stony Brook University in New York.

## Top Features '24 100th anniversary, Dario, prez, champ



(Above) Dixie Highway Garden Club members celebrate the club's 100th Anniversary Thursday, Sept. 12. Seated from left are officers Becky Durrance, LaQuita Misner, Kay Stokely and Ann Fritts. Officers standing, from left, are Janet Underwood, Catherine Bell, Connie Wallace, Linda Ford, Kathy Lasater and Judy James. (Left) Macy Morgan, a freshman majorette with the Farragut High School Marching Admirals band, won the National Beginner/Intermediate Show Twirl title at Drum Majorettes of America Nationals (12- through 14-year-olds) on the University of South Carolina campus in Aiken, South Carolina, Wednesday through Saturday, July 14-17.

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# Maestro, dance champs: Top performers '24



File photos



(Above) Farragut Middle School dance team was a double state champ in 2024, as was the Farragut High and Bearden High teams, while FHS Cheerleaders were a UCA regional champ in Charlotte, North Carolina. (Left) Internationally renowned violinist Miroslav Hristov, Amadeus Chamber Ensemble concertmaster of Farragut, was a featured soloist in Ensemble's French Opera Jewels program as part of Cathedral Concert Series at The Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in West Knoxville.

# in memorium



Betty Dick

Betty Dick was a Town of Farragut founder who later served on its Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Lou LaMarche, a U.S. Army veteran, was a long-time Admiral Farragut performer and highly respected Town volunteer. FHS employee Neil Clabo was an FHS and UT football star who punted for Minnesota (Super Bowl XI).

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