

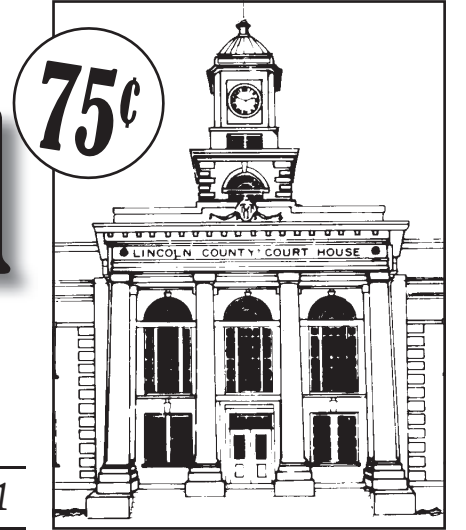
# The Lincoln Journal

"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

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A caravan of cars, trucks, and golf carts made its way from Buddy Bufford Field to the library on Peachtree Street to honor library director Shirley Dawkins on her retirement and to celebrate her birthday on Tuesday, January 26.

## Dawkins retires after 26 years of devotion to library, children

By JANE ELLYN AARON  
staff reporter

After nearly 26 years of service to Lincoln County as library director, Shirley Dawkins has retired and is now on to the "next chapter of her life." Known and loved by many, Dawkins will forever be remembered as someone who put her very heart and soul into the library in caring for its patrons and the many children that circulated its doors.

"It has felt like part of me," Dawkins said, reminiscent of when she first began in June of 1995. "Someone said one time I acted like I owned the library. I did not feel like I owned the library, I felt like it owned me and I had to keep it going as much as I could, and do what was the best. I wanted it to look good, I wanted it to be good, because that was a reflection of me."

From organizing children's programming, seeing several renovations to the library completed, and taking the role of director — along with all its responsibilities — with all creativity and thoroughness, Dawkins explained that the goal has always been to serve as many patrons as possible. And, to serve the community with as many resources as possible, through all available avenues. A standard she has strived for throughout the years.

"It was my child for almost 26 years, but I'm looking forward to retirement," Dawkins said. "It's a



On Shirley Dawkins' last day of work as library director, an inside joke came true, and at her "drive-by" retirement party Kevin Beggs, funeral director of Beggs Funeral Home, pulled up to the library in a hearse and carried her away from her very last shift.

Illuminating us all, Dawkins explained the joke between her and her husband:

"Let me tell you something, Danny Dawkins kept saying the only way they're going to get me out of this library is for Kevin Beggs to back up to the front door and take my body out," she laughed, adding, "I'm not going to get in the back, I'm going to get up front!"

And that is exactly what she did. Pictured is Dawkins jovially riding shotgun before taking off with Beggs.

new season for me now, and I feel comfortable stepping down."

Now, she anticipates spending as much time as she can with her grandchildren, however, Dawkins reflectively took a moment with The Lincoln Journal to look back into the past, examining her career and the growth of the Lincoln County Library.

"I've just always loved books and loved reading and when the

chance came open to work for the library I applied," Dawkins explained. "I had three good people behind me supporting me for the position — Walker Norman, Talmadge Reed, and Bruce Beggs. The job was a Godsend to me, it was perfect, and everything I could have wanted."

When Dawkins first took on the position of director, she had a list

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Along with birthday greetings and congratulations, Dawkins received balloons and cards from well-wishers during the "drive-by" parade held in her honor.

## Ga. House passes mid-year budget, restores state's cuts to education

By DAVE WILLIAMS  
Capital Beat News Service

The Georgia House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a \$26.3 billion mid-year budget last Thursday that uses a large influx of federal aid to help with the state's fight against COVID-19 and restores cuts to education.

The fiscal 2021 mid-year plan, which now moves to the state Senate, cleared the House 149-20. The House doesn't usually act on the mid-year budget before February, but lawmakers are in a rush to get it in place in case the General Assembly has to call a temporary halt to the legislative session because of the virus.

The mid-year budget, which covers state spending through June 30, includes \$58.7 million in state and federal funds to support nursing homes, which have been hit hard by

COVID-19. The House also added \$18 million in state funds for a new computer system to track COVID testing and immunization and \$285,997 to hire three Department of Public Health managers to support the state's pandemic response.

The mid-year budget request Gov. Brian Kemp submitted early this month restores \$567 million of \$950 million in cuts to K-12 schools the legislature imposed last year as state tax revenues slowed due to the pandemic. Combined with \$411 million Georgia has received in federal COVID relief for education, the state actually is \$28 million ahead in school funding.

Local school systems also have done their part to deal with last year's cuts by tightening their budgets, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Terry England told his legislative colleagues on January 28.

"It's a three-way funding partnership: state, local and federal," said England, R-Auburn. "When one of the three partners stumbles ... we always lean on the others."

The House also added just more than \$500,000 to the mid-year budget in start-up costs for the state's new hemp farming and medical cannabis initiatives.

Another \$1 million is earmarked for tourism marketing in a bid to help the hospitality industry recover from huge pandemic-driven losses.

"Once everyone starts feeling comfortable with the vaccine and the pandemic goes away, folks will

start traveling," England said. "We want them to have Georgia on their minds when they do."

The House also signed off on Kemp's request for \$20 million to expand broadband connectivity in rural Georgia.

Several House Democrats questioned why the state continues to use private prisons when President Joe Biden signed an executive order last week ordering the Justice Department to stop using them at the federal level.

Opponents argue companies that operate private prisons are motivated to put as many convicted criminals in them as possible to maximize profits.

"[Private prisons] are a school-to-prison pipeline, and we have to stop it," said Rep. Donna McLeod, D-Lawrenceville.

England said private prisons save the state money by removing the need to build more state prisons and hire more staff with full state benefits.

"That population has to be housed somewhere," he said.

While stronger-than expected state tax collections allowed Kemp and the legislature to avoid the 10 percent across-the-board budget cuts they imposed last year, England warned of "some headwinds" facing the state this year.

He said state revenues likely will take a hit at tax-filing time as the Department of Revenue issues refunds to a large number of unemployed Georgians whose benefits were taxed.

## DPH confirms 19 cases of COVID-19 variant found in metro-Atlanta

By Beau Evans  
Capital Beat News Service

Nineteen cases of a highly contagious COVID-19 variant originating from Europe have been identified in metro Atlanta, state public-health officials confirmed on Monday.

Early studies suggest the COVID-19 variant is "significantly more contagious" than the original coronavirus strain that sparked a global pandemic last March, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). Georgia is among 30 states reporting cases of the variant so far.

The 19 variant cases in Georgia have been reported in several metro-Atlanta counties including Fulton, Gwinnett, DeKalb, Cobb, Clayton, Cherokee, Carroll, Douglas and Paulding. It has infected Georgians from ages 15 to 61, DPH said in a news release.

"We must ensure we are taking every precaution right now to prevent transmission of COVID and to avoid a surge in hospitalizations and loss of life," said state Public Health Commissioner Dr. Kathleen Toomey.

Toomey added the COVID-19 variant now spreading in Georgia will likely become the "dominant strain" of coronavirus in the U.S. by March after originating in the United Kingdom.

DPH officials are warning Georgians to follow COVID-19 safety measures even more strictly since laboratories have only tested a small number of samples for the variant so far, giving public-health experts a limited view of where the variant might be spreading.

Public-health officials are urging Georgians to wear masks, wash hands and social distance to help curb the highly contagious virus' spread at a time when COVID-19 positive case rates and deaths have started trending down after grueling winter outbreaks.

The variant's discovery in Georgia also comes as state officials, hospitals and pharmacies rush to distribute tight supplies of COVID-19 vaccines to health-care workers, nursing-home residents and staff, first responders, and people ages 65 and older.

Pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna have stressed that their COVID-19 vaccines "appear to work" against the variant, according to DPH.

Nearly 750,000 people had tested positive for COVID-19 in Georgia as of Sunday afternoon, with nearly 160,000 more reported positive antigen tests indicating likely positive results. The virus has killed 12,570 Georgians.

## Grand jury hands down indictments in numerous aggravated assault cases

A list of indictments was released after the Lincoln County Superior Court Grand Jury reported for duty on Monday, January 25, at the Lincoln County courthouse.

Judge Harold A. Hinesley presided over the proceedings.

According to Superior Court Clerk Amanda Doss, during the proceedings the grand jury handed down the following indictments:

Jeffrey Scott Carroll, charged with burglary in the second degree, failure to register as a sex offender, exploitation and intimidation of disabled adult, elder person, or resident, theft by taking, and six counts of forgery in the fourth degree.

Nicholas Giovengo, charged with cruelty to children in the first degree.

Alex Allen, charged with aggravated assault.

Chase Tyler Wiggins, charged with smash and grab burglary, burglary in the second degree, theft by receiving stolen property, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possession of firearm during commission of a felony.

Clint Wayne Bennett, failure to register as a sex offender.

Jeremy Ulmer, charged with two counts aggravated child molestation, child molestation, and enticing a child for indecent purposes.

Darren Smith, charged with hindering apprehension or punishment of a criminal.

Elias Smith, charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of marijuana, more than an ounce, possession of a Schedule I controlled substance, possession of a firearm during commission of a felony, possession of drug related objects, and fishing without a valid license.

Collin Rumble, charged with aggravated assault, family violence, two counts terroristic threats, and simple battery, family violence.

Thomas Edward Quarles, charged with manufacture of marijuana.

Alma Marie Lockhart, charged with aggravated assault, family vio-

lence.

Marcus Booker, charged with interference with government property.

Patricia Willis, charged with two counts of aggravated assault.

Denise Horton, charged with three counts of obstruction of an officer, possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance, and battery, family violence.

Johnathan Casey Morris, charged with two counts of aggravated assault on a peace officer, two counts of obstruction of an officer, and possession of firearm during commission of a felony.

Samuel Wright, charged with aggravated assault, reckless driving, fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, theft by taking, two counts of criminal damage to property in the second degree, driving while license suspended, failure to report accident, and failure to maintain lane.

Stephen Adams, charged with terroristic threats.

Abigail Miller, charged with burglary in the first degree.

Richard Brian Ogle, charged with rape, and criminal attempt to commit a felony.

Ashley Mims, charged with terroristic threats.

Xavier Tyrik Moss, charged with burglary in the first degree, and theft by receiving stolen property.

Marquavious A. Mims, charged with aggravated assault.

Joseph Brim, charged with child molestation.

Troy Adam Pilcher, charged with burglary in the second degree, two counts of theft by receiving stolen property, and obstruction of an officer.

Harold Raymond Barker and Rebecca Barker, as to Harold Barker, charged with conspiracy to commit crossing guard lines with contraband, as to Rebecca Barker, charged with conspiracy to commit crossing guard lines with contraband, and possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute.