

Back in the Day

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Service Board, succeeding Henry C. Standard who has served since 1961. Other board members are Sim Dill and Marvin McAvoy.

25 years ago this week

Coach Butch Brooks, head football coach and athletic director at WWCHS since 1981, has been selected as a visiting speaker at the annual Nike Coach of the Year Clinic at Birmingham, Alabama, this weekend.

Greyson G. Pinkston, son of George and Gladys Pinkston of Washington, has been nominated by Congressman Charlie Norwood for West Point Academy in New York, the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., and the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Pinkston is a student at Washington- Wilkes Comprehensive High School where he is a member of the golf team, the football team, and the school band. He is also a member of the 4-H Club, is secretary for the Adasburg Hunting Club and is Sunday School treasurer at his church.

When Ruth Tutt, a champion cake decorator, celebrated her 80th birthday last week, she had a real treat. Her granddaughters, Freda and Elisabeth Hoffman of Chatsworth, baked and decorated her three-tiered birthday cake and surrounded it with daffodils which Ruth's mother, the late Ruth Booker Garrard, had planted in the 1920s.

Doug Renahan, author of several children's books, visited the Washington- Wilkes Primary School on January 30 and talked about his books with the students. Mr. Renahan and his family live near Tucker, and he says that his career as a writer actually began with his telling of stories to his own children. He has three published books.

Wednesday, February 5, at 12 noon, was the first time that college teams could officially sign outstanding high school athletes to football scholarships in 1997, and it was a double-barreled banner day for two members of the W-WCHS Tiger football program, their families and friends, and for the entire Washington-Wilkes community. Ed Wilder and Nicky Callaway, among the most outstanding players ever to come through the Tiger program, signed football scholarships to Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, respectively, at the earliest time available.

With a new president at the helm, The Wilkes County Chamber of Commerce introduced an innovation Tuesday morning, February 4, with hopes that it would bring chamber members into closer contact with chamber activities and spark new enthusiasm in its multiple community efforts. The innovation was the first of four quarterly "Eggs and Issues" breakfast meetings in 1997.



First week of session with the Georgia General Assembly

By REP. TREY RHODES
Georgia House District 120

(Trey Rhodes serves as chairman of the House of Representatives Game, Fish, and Parks Committee and is a member of the Banks and Banking, Economic Development and Tourism, Special Rules, and Ways and Means committees. He represents Greene, Oglethorpe, Taliaferro, and parts of Wilkes and Putnam counties.)



Last week was "Budget Week" at the Capitol. The Senate and House Appropriations Committees met jointly to hear from the state agencies and to review the Governor's proposed Budgets.

We will first consider the Amended FY2022 Budget. This is called the "Little Budget" and will make adjustments to the FY2022 budget as needed. The FY2023 or "Big Budget" will then be considered.

As both budgets move their way through the Senate and House Chambers, changes will be made

and then finally reconciled through a conference committee made up of Senate and House members. Once the conference report is agreed upon, each bill will go to the Governor for his signature.

I wanted to highlight just few of the proposed funding measures we are considering:

Healthcare

To strengthen Georgia's health care workforce, the Governor's proposed budget calls for \$1 million for the University System of Georgia to expand nursing programs to support up to 500 students a year for five years, and funds for the Technical College System of Georgia to add up to 700 nursing students.

The plan also would invest \$2.5 million for 136 residency slots and allocate \$1 million to Mercer University to address rural physician shortages.

The FY 2023 budget includes an additional \$85 million for physicians through improved Medicaid provider rates.

Extend maternal Medicaid coverage from six months to 12 months for women on the program after they give birth.

Teacher Pay Raises

A recommended a \$2,000 raise for Georgia teachers

State Employee Raise

Proposed a \$5,000 pay raise for state employees

We will reconvene on Monday for day five of the 2022 legislative session. It will be a busy week of committee hearings and welcoming constituents to the Capitol.

NOTICE TO READERS

Articles published on pages four and five of *The News-Reporter*, with the exception of "Don't Forget" entries, are the opinions of their authors, not necessarily of this newspaper, and are not to be considered news reports.



Bradleytown and Cherry Grove Schools - A story of faith, self help, and sacrifice

by
REV. ED ANDERSON, SR.

My maternal grandfather, Deacon Charlie Cofer was born in 1886 in Danburg, GA. For several of his formative years, he lived near a host of black families with the surname, Bradley. In fact, much of the community on and near Flat Rock Road was and is still called Bradleytown. Not only were the Cofers and Bradleys neighbors, they were all lifelong faithful members of New Ford Baptist Church. Deacon Cofer's father, Pope and the parents and grandparents of the Bradleys had been born during the era of enslavement. Immediately upon gaining their freedom, many established their own small farms, churches, schools, businesses, and other important institutions needed in the Black community to support their families and their new life as free men and women.

The black Bradley land owners in the 1880s contributed the land on which they personally built a modest, one-room, one-teacher, rural, primary through grade seven schoolhouse called Bradleytown School to educate the children. As a young boy, my Grandpa Charlie attended Bradleytown School in the 1890s. This was apparently before many of the established rural black churches built their one-room schools.

Bradleytown School was not spoken of by retired Wilkes

County educator and author, Kay Finnell in her 2003 book entitled *The African American Experience: Education in Wilkes County, Georgia from 1922 to 1970*. A former student at Bradleytown School, ninety year old, Mrs. Annie Bradley Hill, who now lives in Baltimore, Maryland, believes that the school operated until the 1930s or maybe the 1940s. It has since been torn down.

The desire to learn to read, write and cipher was so strong among both young and not so young people of color that many risked punishment while enslaved in order to become literate. Many, after the long and dark period of enslavement learned to read by using their Bibles as school books. They organized and developed their Sunday Schools and Bible Study classes. In 1889, three years after the 1886 birth of my Grandpa Charlie Cofer, the desire to learn to read the Word of God in the numerous Sunday School classes in black churches was so strong that the Wilkes County Sunday School Union was organized. It consisted of many newly organized Black churches and hundreds of youngsters and adults, and has continued to play a significant role in the Christian development and education of members of the black community for the ensuing 133 years.

After the 1954 US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the doctrine of "separate, but

equal," which had been advanced in 1896 in the US Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, governments and school boards in our county and state took additional years to close down the many inadequate one-room, one-teacher, rural schools. Unfortunately, many more years passed before the actual desegregation process began.

Between the January 1, 1863 Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln, and the actual consolidation and desegregation of our schools in Wilkes County, more than 100 years passed. The overwhelming majority of the children in the rural black community, including the author of this article, relied on schools like Bradleytown School and Cherry Grove School to receive the early part of a basic education. The perseverance and determination of black parents and students was quite exceptional. Through self-help, they built and furnished their rural schools. They maintained a strong faith in God to sustain them and to prepare their children for a challenging future that was ahead. We must continue to work to renovate and preserve Cherry Grove Schoolhouse and similar rural schools, for they are symbols of hard work, faith, sacrifice, perseverance and overcoming. Without the many schools like Cherry Grove School in our history, where would we be? See www.cherrygroveschool.com.

Second week of session with the Georgia General Assembly

By REP. TREY RHODES
Georgia House District 120

(Trey Rhodes serves as chairman of the House of Representatives Game, Fish, and Parks Committee and is a member of the Banks and Banking, Economic Development and Tourism, Special Rules, and Ways and Means committees. He represents Greene, Oglethorpe, Taliaferro, and parts of Wilkes and Putnam counties.)



We convened on Monday, January 24. Session is in full-swing, and the pace certainly picked up.

A priority this session is to address mental health reform in our state. House Bill 1013, filed last week, incorporates many recommendations made by the Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission, which was established by the General Assembly in 2019. This commission has worked tirelessly over the last three years to conduct a comprehensive review of the state's behavioral health system and will continue to identify other areas that need to be overhauled. Mental health reform will likely be one of the most important issues we address this legislative session as nearly every family has been touched by mental health struggles, especially during the last two years, and House Bill

1013 would take the necessary first steps to address this dire issue.

House Bill 1013 would:

Increase patient access to care by expanding the list of practitioners who are able to see patients

Expand telemedicine options

Require insurers to cover certain mental health services

Ensure mental health parity for providers and patients so that mental health coverage is equal to physical health coverage.

Strengthen the state's mental health workforce development initiatives by providing service cancelable loans for mental health/medical professionals who work in pediatrics, psychiatry, mental health, and substance abuse care

Expand the state's transparency and accountability requirements for consumers

Enhance resources and tools for frontline responders and local communities

The recently formed Mental Health Policy Caucus also held its first meeting. This bipartisan, bicameral caucus will work to create a unified legislative vision to transform mental health and substance abuse care for Georgians. During its first hearing, members of the caucus listened to an eye-opening presentation from the co-founder of the Georgia Mental Health Policy Partnership, which is a statewide alliance of organizations seeking to eradicate the stigma surrounding these illnesses. This group of legislators hit the ground running this week and will continue to meet with area experts and further the overarching goal of improving mental health care for Georgians this session.

In other news, the House voted to adopt an adjournment resolution to determine our legislative calendar for the remainder of this session. Our last day of this session, or Legislative Day 40, is scheduled for April 4, which leaves us with roughly nine more weeks to complete our ambitious legislative agendas. You can view this adjournment resolution and our full legislative calendar <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61290>

Throughout the busy weeks I encourage you to use our public website to easily track and check on bills and resolutions as they move through the legislative process.

To keep track of which legislation makes it to the House floor, you can find our daily bill calendars <https://www.legis.ga.gov/documents/House?session=1029&date=2022-01-26T05:00:00.000Z>

You can also find details about each House floor vote <https://www.legis.ga.gov/votes/house>

With roughly two and a half months of session left, our days at the Capitol will certainly grow longer, and more bills will be scheduled for a vote on the House floor as session moves along. As such, I hope you find these resources helpful in the coming weeks.

I look forward to sharing new developments with you after we return to the Gold Dome on Tuesday, February 1 for another full week. As your state representative, my number one goal is to advance legislation that protects, serves, and supports the people of House District 158. To help me in my efforts this session, I encourage you to reach out to me about legislation or policies that interest you.

Deadlines

for *The News-Reporter* are:
ALL news submissions are due no later than Monday at 5 p.m.

Submissions after Monday at 5 p.m. will be considered only if space and time allow.

Specific deadlines are:
Classified and Legal Advertising
Mondays at 3 p.m.

Retail Advertising
Mondays at 5 p.m.

News, Society, Calendar, and
Don't Forget articles
Mondays at 3 p.m.