

# The Coffeeville Courier

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## Long Day

*Joe with C&M Tree and Debris finishing up a long day with one last cut. If you look closely in the limbs on the right side you can see the moon, almost full, coming up. Thanks for what you do Joe!*

## Life Long Friendship

*By John Beshears Editor*

This past week I had the pleasure of meeting two great gentlemen, Michael Toward and Cody Lyell, both here with their families assisting with debris clean up. Watching these two work together through a 12 hour day is amazing, the way they know what the other one is thinking and just doing the work as the day goes on.

Michael and his wife Cara own C & M Tree & Debris, LLC of Lanexa, VA and they travel all over the place assisting with debris clean ups following major destruction. Michael has been at it for almost 20 years and it shows, I watched him surgically take down an oak tree in Tillatoba the other day like it was nothing. This tree was split on the lower side from the recent ice storm Fern and needed to come down, the tree measured over 51 inches at the base! It was a sight to see. Michael and his wife Cara have a daughter, Willow, who travels with

them and keeps things lively. The Toward's traveled close to 900 miles to be here with a full crew in tow.

Cody Lyell is the Foreman for Lyellco, Inc. out of Lago Vista, TX. Cody went into debris clean up fulltime after graduating high school 10 years ago and also travels with his family. When I asked if he had anything to add to our conversation he said, "I love the work, different everyday!" Cody and his crew traveled almost 700 miles to be here. Cody and his family lives on the Guadalupe River where the July 4th flood in 2025 killed 138 when the water rose over 25 feet in less than an hour with no warning. Cody told me that he lives about 30 feet above the river and water came within 1 foot of his home! Of course Michael and Cara loaded up and headed to Lago Vista to assist with the clean up and search for many missing people in what would prove to be the worst death toll for

*(Cont'd. on Back Page)*

## University of Mississippi Celebrates December 2025 Graduate Clinton Byford

Clinton Byford, of Sardis, MS, is among the more than 660 students who graduated from the University of Mississippi in December 2025.

Byford, who majored in Art, received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College of Liberal Arts.

"Congratulations to our December 2025 graduates who are distinguished by their dedication to academic success," UM Chancellor Glenn Boyce said. "They accomplished so much during their years at the university. I applaud them and can't wait to see all the ways they will continue building their legacies that began here."

December 2025 graduates are invited to walk across the stage at the University of Mississippi 2026 Commencement exercises, which will be held May 5-9. Morning Convocation will be held Saturday, May 9 at 9 a.m. in the Grove.

For additional details and a complete 2026 Commencement schedule, visit the university's Commencement website.



*Volunteers at the Disaster Relief/Red Cross Shelter at the Multi-Purpose Building in Coffeeville pause during Winter Storm Fern recovery efforts. Front row, from left: Donna Robertson, Kevin Robertson and Vincent Robertson. Back row: Braxton Robertson and Larry Harrelson.*

## Faithful Servants Now In Need Of Help

Saturday, February 28, the home of Vincent and Donna Robertson and family burned. This family has served our community faithfully since the beginning of the ice storm in late January, and are still volunteering across the county, helping with debris cleanup.

From Lori Gorospe, Chick With A Chainsaw:

A family that has been helping me cut trees here in Coffeeville Mississippi literally lost everything in a house fire today, including a vehicle. All while out helping me help others. They need absolutely everything. Please help me help them.

Donations can be dropped off in the back of the multi purpose building in Coffeeville.

From The North MS Herald-February 4: When Winter Storm Fern hit Yalobusha County, Vincent and Donna Robertson didn't wait to be asked. They showed up.

The Robertsons arrived at the Disaster Relief/Red Cross Shelter at the Multi-Purpose Building in Coffeeville on the very first day it opened, before the storm's full impact had

even settled in — and stayed until the end.

"Missy (Burney) called and asked if I could help, and I came down. Then I called my husband, and he came too," Donna explained.

Vincent Robertson soon arrived with their family and friends — including sons Kevin and Braxton Robertson and friend Larry Harrelson — providing valuable manpower during the shelter's earliest and most difficult days.

Since that first day, Vincent and Donna have worked every day, often from early morning until late at night.

"Sometimes 8 or 9 o'clock, sometimes later," Vincent said. "Then you get back up and do it again."

Despite health challenges — Vincent is diabetic, has heart issues and retired early for medical reasons — he said he helps as long as he physically can.

"As long as I can help somebody, I'm going to try," he said.

Donna, who retired last year after working in a school cafeteria, *(Cont'd. on Back Page)*