

# Hardin County Schools to honor 5 distinguished alumni

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

In a continuing of its tradition, Hardin County Schools will honor five graduates at an annual luncheon.

District officials will bestow HCS Distinguished Alumni Awards at a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Sept. 25 at the Hardin County Schools Early College and Career Center.

"We are thankful for all of the nominations we received," HCS Community Relations Specialist John Wright said in a news release announcing the honors. "We are proud of all HCS alums and the success they have achieved. These five individuals are a true representation of how HCS graduates utilize their curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular experiences to excel in their chosen career fields and communities. We look forward to honoring them next month."

The awards will be given to Matt DeMasters, a 2002 North Hardin High School graduate; Nancy (McHodgkins) Parson, a 1989 North Hardin graduate; Tory Stanley, a 2006 Central Hardin High School graduate; Ashli Watts, a 2000 Central Hardin graduate; and Hardin County Sheriff John Ward, a 1980 East Hardin High School graduate.

DeMasters has served in the U.S. Secret Service for the last 18 years.

He has been an investigator with a dual mission of dignitary protection and the development of financial and cybercrime investigations. His protection responsibilities include site planning and physical security of high-level protectees, to include the President of the United States, vice president, foreign dignitaries, presidential candidates and former heads of state.



**Matt DeMasters**



**Nancy (McHodgkins) Parson**



**Tory Stanley**



**Ashli Watts**



**John Ward**

Some of Agent DeMasters' additional investigative responsibilities include day-to-day interaction with assistant United States attorneys for case progress, development of operational plans to include undercover operations and surveillance, and fostering working relationships with local business and law enforcement entities. He has worked specifically with President Barack Obama's family - while serving as a Special Agent in Chicago - and has driven the President's secure limousine - also known as "The Beast" - for President Donald Trump while serving as the Assistant to the Special Agent in Charge in Washington, D.C. He is currently the Resident Agent in charge of the U.S. Secret Service Branch in Dayton, Ohio.

Parson graduated with honors from North Hardin High School in 1989. She earned a four-year ROTC Scholarship from Eastern Kentucky University.

She retired in 2023 after dedicating 30 years to the United States Army Nurse Corps. She served in a variety of clinical and leadership positions to include the Department Chief of Maternal Child Health at two Army Medical Centers, the Director of Women's Health Service Line at the Office of the United States Army Surgeon General and the Commander of Weed Army

Community Hospital at Fort Irwin, California.

Parson made significant contributions to the Army Medical Department during her 30-year career. After retirement, she was selected to serve as the Vice President of Clinical Operations at the United Healthcare Community Plan of New Mexico.

Stanley, CPA, is an audit senior manager at LBMC with more than 13 years of comprehensive experience in public accounting. He is a licensed CPA in the state of Kentucky and has experience auditing multiple industries, including manufacturing, construction, health care and nonprofit organizations. As a senior manager in the audit division, his responsibilities include managing multiple assurance engagements, scheduling resources and mentoring staff.

He also has experience in researching accounting and auditing issues, assisting and advising clients with their accounting and business-related concerns, and preparing financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and other financial reporting frameworks. Before joining the firm, Tory was an audit associate with KPMG in Nashville, Tennessee, an assurance senior associate at PwC in Louisville, and

an assurance senior manager at MCM CPAs Advisors - now part of Cherry Bekaert, where he worked on a variety of privately held entities.

Stanley serves as the chapter president of the NABA Greater Louisville Chapter, a board member for First Tee - Louisville, and also is a Big Brother in Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana. Tory was named the 2025 NABA Central Region Outstanding Member Service Award winner, was recognized as one of the inaugural members of the Kentucky Wesleyan College Forward Under 40 Class of 2025, was named the Chapter President of the Year for the NABA Central Region, named as of the 2022 Young Professionals Association of Louisville Award winners and was named as one of the "20 People to Know" in Accounting by Louisville Business First.

Watts was named the president and CEO for the Kentucky Chamber, the state's largest business association, in November 2019. She joined the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce in November of 2012, and served as senior vice president of public affairs before being named president and CEO.

Under her leadership, the Chamber has led efforts in passing significant pieces of legislation such as felony expungement, right-to-work legislation, workers' compensation reform, unemployment insurance reform and tax reform. Before joining the Chamber, she worked at the Kentucky Bar Association and the Legislative Research Commission.

Watts graduated from Campbellsville University with a bachelor's degree in political science and history in 2004 and holds a master's

degree in public policy and administration from the University of Louisville. Watts is a 2016 graduate of Leadership Kentucky and currently serves on the boards for Campbellsville University, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of State Chambers and the Louisville Orchestra.

She was appointed by Governor Andy Beshear and confirmed by the Kentucky State Senate to serve on the Energy Planning and Inventory Commission, where she also was elected chairwoman in 2025.

Ward began serving his community at age 12 with the Upton Volunteer Fire Department.

He started his law enforcement career in 1984 as a Vine Grove police officer before joining the Kentucky State Police in 1986. Over a distinguished KSP career, he rose to the rank of captain, serving in leadership roles including post commander, internal affairs branch commander and supply branch commander.

Elected Hardin County Sheriff in 2014, Ward is now in his third term. Known for his hands-on leadership, he is active in investigations, court proceedings and community events, and supports over a dozen school resource officers in Hardin County Schools.

In 2018, he was named Kentucky Sheriff of the Year, served as president of the Kentucky Sheriff's Association and is currently on the board of directors for the National Sheriff's Association, serving on its Drug Enforcement Committee. He was appointed by the governor to serve on the Kentucky Juvenile Justice Oversight Council, where he continues to serve.

## E'town man indicted for possessing child pornography via Dropbox

BY KODEE BRINEGAR  
THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE



**Billie Rowan Patton II**

An Elizabethtown man has been indicted on possession child pornography through two Dropbox accounts.

Billie Rowan Patton II, 44, was identified during a child exploitation investigation.

According to Patton's arrest citation report, two Dropbox accounts, identified in National Center for Missing and Exploited Children CyberTips, were reported Jan. 4 to possess child sexual abuse material and/or child pornography.

The Dropbox accounts were identified through Electronic Service Provider and both accounts had similar email addresses.

A search warrant for the accounts revealed that on March 5, one of the accounts contained four files depicting child abuse sexual material, three of which depict minors younger than 12 and one depicts a minor older than 12 but younger than 18 while the second account contained three files of material with minors younger than 12, an arrest citation reads.

The investigation revealed Patton had care, control and custody of the accounts.

During an interview with detectives from the Kentucky Office of the Attorney General, Patton was interviewed and admitted to owning the email

addresses associated with the Dropbox accounts.

Patton was arrested July 1 and later indicted on six counts of possession of matter portraying sexual performance by a minor younger than 12; and one count of possession of matter portraying sexual performance by a minor older than 12 but younger than 18.

Possession of child pornography of a child younger than 12 is a Class C felony, punishable by five to 10 years in prison per count, if convicted. While possession of child pornography of a minor older than 12 is a Class D felony, punishable by one to five years in prison, if convicted.

Patton is being held in lieu of a \$25,000 cash bond at the Hardin County Detention Center. He is set to appear Tuesday for arraignment.

### OTHER INDICTMENTS

• Howard Craig Bates Jr., 55, Louisville, second offense, first-degree possession of a controlled substance - methamphetamine; possession of drug paraphernalia.

• Brittany Leah Butler, 36, Cecilia, first-degree possession of a controlled substance - methamphetamine; giving a peace office false identifying information.

• Carl Dural, 64, Rineyville, first-degree possession of a controlled substance - methamphetamine; second-degree possession of a controlled substance - anabolic steroid; possession of drug paraphernalia.

• Kevin F. Meiser III, 31, Elizabethtown, three counts of theft by unlawful taking - worth more than \$1,000 but less than \$10,000.

• Delaquone O. Peterson, 30, Owensboro, no or expired registration receipt; failure to or improper signal; possession of drug paraphernalia; possession of marijuana; first-degree possession of a controlled substance - cocaine.

• Keither D. Phinazee, 55, Radcliff, first-degree strangulation; fourth-degree assault - domestic violence, minor injury.

• Randell A. Powell, 38, Radcliff, possession of marijuana; possession of drug paraphernalia; possession of a handgun by a convicted felon; receiving stolen property; first-degree persistent felony offender.

Kodee Brinegar can be reached at 270-505-1413 or kbrinegar@thenewsenterprise.com.

## Baptist Health spotlights teen mental health warning signs

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

Baptist Health is raising awareness about the warning signs of teen mental health concerns and the importance of connecting young people with care.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a timely reminder of how early recognition and support can make a difference.

"Suicide is a leading cause of death among teens," said Imran Iqbal, MD, psychiatrist at Baptist Health Medical Group Behavioral Health, in a news release from the medical organization. "The teenage years bring many changes and pressures, and adults who regularly interact with teens, such as family members,

teachers and coaches, can be instrumental in noticing warning signs early and helping connect teens with care."

According to the American Psychiatric Association, about half of all chronic mental illnesses begin by age 14.

Warning signs in teens might include hyperactive behavior, regular nightmares, frequent extreme outbursts, disobedient or aggressive behaviors, decline in school performance, excessive worry or anxieties about everyday tasks or activities, and social isolation.

"Understanding the signs is the first step, but knowing where to turn can save lives," Iqbal said in the release. "There is no shame or embarrassment in seeking help. Baptist Health offers access to behavioral health

specialists for ages six and older, providing guidance, support and treatment in a compassionate, approachable way."

Baptist Health programs provide a wide range of services to address psychological, emotional and lifestyle challenges.

For those unsure where to start, the Baptist Health Behavioral Health Resource Connection is available at 1-800-395-4435 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily to provide guidance on available programs and services.

For immediate crisis support, individuals are encouraged to call or text 988, the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

To learn more, go to BaptistHealth.com/BehavioralHealth.



# LEGAL NOTICE

**MASTER COMMISSIONER SALES**

To comply with the orders of the Hardin circuit court, the Commissioner will sell the property described in the following actions on **Wednesday, September 24, 2025**, at the hour of **2:00 p.m.** at the Hardin County Justice Center, 120 East Dixie Ave., Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Said property shall be sold to raise the amounts hereinafter set forth, together with interest and the costs of the action, and upon the following terms and conditions:

At the time of sale, the successful bidder shall either pay cash or check, if paying in full, or make a deposit of 10% with the balance on a credit of thirty (30) days. In the event the successful bidder desires or elects to credit the balance, he or she will be required to produce one of the following:

1. An irrevocable letter of credit (MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL, NO COPIES) from lending institute at the time of the sale. Please note that a loan commitment or bank statement will not be sufficient.
2. Post bond and furnish an acceptable surety thereon. If a purchaser chooses to use a surety for the remaining balance of property purchased, THE SURETY MUST PROVIDE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TO THE MASTER COMMISSIONER BY 2 PM THE MONDAY PRIOR TO THE SALE AND BE PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE SALE (if a married individual intends to act as surety, their spouse must also sign.):
  - (i) A COPY OF A DEED WHICH IS UNENCUMBERED AND A COPY OF THE STATEMENT OF VALUE FROM THE PROPERTY VALUATION ADMINISTRATOR (PVA OFFICE), TO WHICH THIS BOND WILL ATTACH.
  - (ii) A COPY OF THE CURRENT ACCOUNT STATEMENT, A SWORN FINANCIAL STATEMENT WHICH SHOWS A NET WORTH OF AT LEAST 2 1/2 TIMES THE SALE PRICE.
3. AN IRREVOCAABLE LETTER OF CREDIT (MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL, NO COPIES) FROM THE LENDING INSTITUTE TO THE SURETY.

**The down payment, in addition to either an irrevocable letter of credit (MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL, NO COPIES) or acceptable surety (see requirements above), must be produced at the time of the sale.** Said bond and/or irrevocable letter of credit shall be for the unpaid purchase price and bear interest at the rate of six percent (6%) per annum from the date of sale until paid. (Unless otherwise court ordered)

- (a) The purchaser shall be required to assume and pay all taxes or assessments upon the property for the current tax year and thereafter.
- (b) All properties are sold subject to the judgment and order of sale in each case which should be reviewed carefully prior to purchase. The Judgment and Order of Sale can be reviewed at the Hardin Circuit Clerk's office, 120 E. Dixie, Elizabethtown, Ky.
- (c) The Master Commissioner does not obtain a title search or investigate for further liens on the properties listed below nor conduct or authorize a survey of the property. **\*\*the purchaser is responsible for title searches and/or any additional liens not named in the judgment and order of sale and for the results of any good and accurate survey of the property.**
- (d) The Master Commissioner does not have access to the properties listed below and therefore makes no representation or warranty of any kind as to the conditions of these properties.
- (e) Bidding is in increments of \$500.00 up to \$75,000.00 and \$1,000.00 for over \$75,000.00. If Plaintiff provided a one-time opening bid, a first-bid increment of \$100.00 may be made.
- (f) If the property sells for less than 2/3 of the Master Commissioner's appraisal amount, there is a 6 month right of redemption period.
- (g) If purchasing as a Corporation, LLC, or Trusts please provide the Master Commissioner's Office by the Monday prior to the sale date with the following:
  - 1.) An updated certificate of good standing for the entity for which they are purchasing.
  - 2.) Entity must provide its EIN Number
  - 3.) Resolution- Proof that the person bidding is authorized to bid on behalf of the entity.
  - 4.) Identification: Current Driver's License and SSN

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**SALE NO. 1**

Kentucky Housing Corporation vs. Hop M. Williams, et al (25-CI-00642)  
Amount of Judgment: \$161,317.94 plus interest and costs  
312 CEDAR HILL DRIVE, ELIZABETHTOWN, KY  
MAP ID# 182-40-02-055 and 182-40-02-056  
Recorded in Deed Book 1546 Page 188 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

**SALE NO. 2**

Kentucky Housing Corporation vs. Jason Leofsky (25-CI-01074)  
Amount of Judgment: \$207,042.17 plus interest and costs  
2632 NORTHERN ROAD, RADCLIFF, KY  
MAP ID# 138-10-00-005.01  
Recorded in Deed Book 1485 Page 256 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

**SALE NO. 3**

Freedom Mortgage Corporation vs. Ashley M. Roten, et al (25-CI-00403)  
Amount of Judgment: \$254,878.01 plus interest and costs  
2857 RINEYVILLE BIG SPRINGS, RINEYVILLE, KY  
MAP ID# 143-00-03-003  
Recorded in Deed Book 1561 Page 239 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

**SALE NO. 4**

Freedom Mortgage Corporation vs. Terri Brinley Duke, et al (24-CI-00976)  
Amount of Judgment: \$217,382.39 plus interest and costs  
91 NALLS LANE, RADCLIFF, KY  
MAP ID# 181-10-00-065  
Recorded in Deed Book 1544 Page 371 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

**SALE NO. 5**

Mortgage Research Center, LLC d/b/a Veterans United Home Loans, a Missouri Limited Liability Company vs. Skyler Rizer, et al (25-CI-00467)  
Amount of Judgment: \$187,664.48 plus interest and costs  
948 HILL STREET, RADCLIFF, KY  
MAP ID# 139-30-04-033  
Recorded in Deed Book 1519 Page 622 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

**SALE NO. 6**

Curtis Ham vs. Brett A. Koppel, et al (25-CI-00612)  
Amount of Judgment: \$ 2,369.42 plus interest and costs  
1030 SCENIC DRIVE, RADCLIFF, KY  
MAP ID# 139-30-02-032  
Recorded in Deed Book 1460 Page 1057 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

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BARRY BIRDWHISTELL  
MASTER COMMISSIONER  
HARDIN CIRCUIT COURT  
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HARDINCOUNTYMASTERCOMMISSIONER.COM