

# The Calm in the Courthouse: The Story of Vera Patterson

by LISA JOHNSON  
Clay City News

*"Like my mama always said, ask God for guidance and do something - even if it's wrong. To do nothing is certain failure."*

- Vera Patterson

Those words have guided Vera Patterson for most of her life. They are not just something she remembers - they are something she lives by.

If you've ever walked into the Powell County Courthouse, you've likely noticed Vera. She doesn't raise her voice or seek attention, but there is a steadiness about her that people immediately feel. Vera serves in court security, a role that places her face-to-face with people on some of the hardest days of their lives. She escorts inmates, maintains order, and ensures the safety of the courtroom - always with firmness, fairness, and humanity.

One person said it best: "When Vera's there, things just feel under control."

Vera's path into public service began around 1980, working under Sheriff Jimmy Tipton, her husband at the time. Sheriff Tipton served Powell County with dedication, and through those early years, Vera learned what real service looked like - not power for power's sake, but responsibility to people.

That chapter of her life was marked by tragedy when Sheriff Tipton was killed in a tractor accident. It was a loss that forever shaped her, yet it did not harden her. Instead, it deepened her resolve and understanding of resilience.

Vera continued to prepare herself for service through college education, completing more than a year of coursework related to law enforcement. Her experience has always been earned through training, lived knowledge, and time spent in the real world.

After years away from the courthouse, Vera made a deliberate decision to return to the court system just over two years ago. She didn't return for recognition. She returned because she felt called to serve again.

People noticed - not because she asked them to, but because she listens.

"She doesn't treat people like a case number," one person said. "She treats them like people."

Beyond the courthouse, Vera is deeply rooted in family. She and her husband, Larry Patterson, have five children, 15 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Much of their life together was shaped on a horse farm, where values were taught through early mornings, hard work, faith, and accountability.

And at the center

of it all is her mama's voice - the one Vera still carries with her every day:

"Ask God for guidance and do something - even if it's wrong. To do nothing is certain failure."

That belief shapes how Vera sees leadership today.

She is candid about the need for Powell County to grow - not through division or control, but through listening, fairness, and responsibility.

"If we want Powell County to be stronger, we have to stop looking at leadership as power and start looking at it as responsibility," Vera says. "The right leadership brings people together and gets things done for the good of the whole community."

Vera sees authority as a tool, not a weapon. Something meant to protect, guide, and care for people - never to elevate one name or benefit one person. When power is abused, trust is lost. But when it's used with humility and purpose, communities thrive.

Looking ahead, Vera is considering a future in public leadership, including the possibility of serving as Mayor of Stanton, Kentucky. Her vision is clear: unity.

She believes that Stanton, Clay City, and surrounding communities are strongest when they work together - and she understands Powell County's enormous

potential as a tourism destination that can generate revenue, attract businesses, enhance education, and create better opportunities for children and families.

"I will always make decisions for the betterment of the city and its people," Vera says.

Vera Patterson is not loud. She doesn't seek attention. But she carries something powerful - experience, faith, and a steady hand guided by wisdom passed down from a mother who understood that doing something, guided by God, is always better than doing nothing at all.

She is the calm in the courthouse.

And for many, she represents hope.



**Vera Patterson**



**A Day for Miracles -- Some days remind us that miracles still happen**

On December 13, 2025, at 3:01 p.m., Clay City Fire was toned out for a Chevy Tahoe that had gone off the road on Hardest Creek, landing upside down in the creek below. When crews arrived, the scene looked terrifying - but the outcome was anything but . . .

The gentleman was already out of the vehicle. Unharmed. Unhurt. He simply walked away.

If there was ever a moment to believe in angels, this was it. Looking at the wreckage, it's hard to explain how a life was spared -- but maybe it doesn't need explaining. Maybe someone unseen placed a steady hand on his back that day. (Lisa Johnson)

## Table That Waits: Thank You to China Wok and Family in Stanton

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In small towns, some places feed more than just your stomach - they feed the soul of a community. In Stanton, Kentucky, one of those places belongs to China Wok and its owners.

Recently, China Wok redecorated and reopened the Chinese restaurant in Stanton, and it has quickly become what it always was at its best: a place that's

well used, well loved, and well worth every bite. The food is excellent, the atmosphere welcoming - but what truly sets this family apart can't be found on a menu.

For those of us in the fire service and emergency response, meals don't always go as planned. We'll sit down as a team, plates full, laughter starting - and then the tones drop. Without hesitation, we leave our seats and answer the call.

And here's where China Wok and family quietly show who they are.

When we return, sometimes much later, our food is still there. Plates restored. Meals warmed and toasted. Everything reheated just right. No complaints. No awkwardness. No words are even needed.

That kind of kindness doesn't require an announcement. It simply exists.

That's what it means

to have friends in a community. You don't have to explain why you left. You don't have to ask. You don't have to say a thing. You're just there and they understand.

The China Wok family has shown time and time again that they support not just the fire departments, but the people of this community as a whole. Their actions speak louder than any sign on the door ever could.

So this is simply a thank-you.



**China Wok Family**

## LEGAL NOTICE PUBLISHING

**Kentucky's new tobacco licensing law (Senate Bill 100, 2025) requires all retailers of tobacco, nicotine, and vape products to get a state license from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) by January 1, 2026, with applications handled via the ABC's Online Licensing Portal. A key requirement for new applicants, especially those buying existing businesses, is to publish a legal notice in a local newspaper about their intent to apply, detailing the business, ownership, location, and a protest statement for the public, according to Kentucky Administrative Regulations. Failure to comply results in fines, with penalties increasing for selling to minors, and the law aims to protect youth access.**

Call The Estill County Tribune at (606) 723-5012 or email [news@estilltribune.com](mailto:news@estilltribune.com) to place before January 1st deadline.

Thursday, December 18, 2025 - 6:30pm

Kiwanis Club of Irvine-Ravenna

to visit Irvine Health & Rehab

The Kiwanis Club of Irvine-Ravenna and Lions Club will attend the Irvine Health & Rehabilitation Center's Resident Christmas Party on Thursday, December 18th at 6:30 p.m. to share some Christmas cheer. Members will sing Christmas carols and songs with the clients.

Make a difference in the community by getting involved with Kiwanis that has 103 years of service to our community. New members are welcome. Anyone interested can contact any Kiwanis member.