

Looking back to Dec. 8, 2018

Written by Jonathan Wright

The following information was entered into the Dec. 8, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent:

Locals up the hype for Thomas
FLEMINGSBURG — Having made it among the top eight contestant this past week on NBC’s “The Voice,” MaKenzie Thomas’ hometown has decided to ante up and host an even larger event to root for her during the show’s semifinals.
Another viewing party for Thomas’ next live performance on “The Voice” will be held Monday, Dec. 10, at Fleming County High School gymnasium. According to a post on Facebook by MaKenzie’s mother, Teresa Thomas, there will be concessions available and proceeds from the concessions will go toward the FCHS Music Department.
MaKenzie Thomas secured her advancement into the competition’s top eight by singing “Because You Loved Me,” by Celine Dion as the final performance Dec. 3. Having triumphed over the blind auditions and invited to join team Jenifer Hudson, winning her battle round with a song by Mariah Carey, then subsequently moving the artist to tears when Carey saw Thomas’ knockout round performance, the Fleming Countian performed Monday night to garner votes to enter into the final four contestants and the semifinal round of live performances.

When MaKenzie Thomas competed to reach the top eight, her hometown gathered at the local Dairy Queen to watch her perform as a community. MaKenzie Thomas has received full support from her home. Everywhere you look in Flemingsburg you can find signs in favor of MaKenzie Thomas and to vote for her when she performs.

MaKenzie Thomas’ parents are proud of their daughter in seeing her pursue her career and passion.

“It’s been awesome, a little surreal,” said Enoch Thomas, MaKenzie’s father. “We’ve been watching her sing since she was 3 years old, and have always, as parents you have a bias there but, knew that she had an amazing voice — she always has — and she just loves music.”

The community also shares in the parents’ pride, as shown with the next venue for the public viewing being at FCHS. Keith Coleman, band director at FCHS, said the school’s band and choir will also entertain visitors at the viewing with performances during commercial breaks.

“The support online has been phenomenal,” Enoch Thomas said “Local family, friends, community support, has been phenomenal. Every time she’s (MaKenzie) on the air, me and Teresa’s phones just go crazy after she performs, so much that we just can’t answer everybody, we’re up till hours trying to communicate with people and there’s just so many.”

The doors at FCHS will open at 7 p.m. on Monday, with everyone invited to attend. “The Voice” airs Mondays and Tuesdays at 8 p.m./7 central on NBC.

Quinn Minute: Late greeting cards

Rix Quinn

A friend asked me if it was OK to delay sending holiday cards until late December.

I asked two questions: (1) Will you send me a card? (2) Does it contain a gift certificate?

Actually, I believe a late card is a great card. Here are three good reasons — and two average ones — to delay mailing:

1. Excited recipients – Before the 25th, your loved ones got greetings from friends, plus people who could sell them some-

thing. The week after, they’ll welcome any card that doesn’t require monthly payments.

2. Longer shelf life – It’s likely those early cards got tossed out with wrapping paper. Not your later arrival, which might sit around until late January. (Money-saving hint: Add heart stickers to the envelope, call it a “Yuletide Valentine.”)

3. Enclose a letter – Between Christmas and New Year, recipients have nothing better to do, and will love to read letters about

folks they met once at either a childbirth class or a school play.

4. Enclose money – Last year my old football coach got a card containing 25 cents, along with the message “I heard you needed a quarter back.”

5. Personal delivery – For an interesting night out – and perhaps a free meal – hand-deliver those cards to each door. When I tried this, some of my friends pretended they weren’t home.

But that’s OK...I hung around until breakfast.

Kentucky Lantern sues UK for records related to internal governance change

University of Kentucky refuses to release emails referring to faculty leader who challenged administration plan

Mckenna Horsley
KentuckyLantern

The Kentucky Lantern is suing the University of Kentucky after it refused to release records related to a \$375,000 settlement with a faculty leader who had challenged the administration’s decision to disband the University Senate.

The Lantern filed the lawsuit on Nov. 26 after Attorney General Russell Coleman’s office rejected the nonprofit news outlet’s appeal of UK’s decision. Under Kentucky’s open records law, parties can appeal the attorney general’s decisions in a local circuit court.

Earlier this year, the Lantern sought records of email exchanges that preceded the university signing a \$375,000 separation agreement with DeShana Collett, who had been a tenured professor in physician assistant studies. A provision in the agreement between UK and Collett required her to withdraw her request for emails among UK administrators that mentioned her. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) had earlier ruled that under state law Collett was entitled to the records.

Collett played a prominent role last year in opposing a change to UK’s internal governance and presided over a vote of no confidence in UK President Eli Capilouto. After the vote, Collett warned faculty that the administration was taking steps that she thought could lead to retaliation against the president’s critics. Collett entered the separation agreement in June 2025.

Filed in Fayette Circuit Court, the Lantern’s complaint says that while “the University’s denial and the OAG’s rubber-stamping

of the denial based on a dangerous interpretation of the preliminary records exemption should concern” Kentuckians, the “bigger picture is the University’s attempt to buy its way out of the Open Records Act.”

“This Case calls upon Kentucky’s courts to yet again tell its largest state university that the Open Records Act means what it says: disclosure is in the public interest, and the law’s exemptions must be narrowly construed,” the complaint says.

The lawsuit has been assigned to Fayette Circuit Judge Lucy Ferguson VanMeter.

Michael Abate, who is representing the Lantern along with Jeremy Lister-Perlman, said in a statement that the case is important “for anyone that cares about transparency or the governance of the state’s flagship university.”

“UK paid almost \$400,000 to a professor that had won an open records appeal against it and made the payment contingent on her dropping her request for records. The public has a right to know what the University was willing to pay so dearly to hide,” Abate said.

“On top of that, the Attorney General’s decision attempts to re-write the narrow exemption for ‘preliminary’ records to include virtually any email or other ‘non-final’ document possessed by an agency,” he continued. “That interpretation, if accepted, would gut the Open Records Act and render most of the documents now accessible to the public off-limits.”

UK spokesman Jay Blanton defended UK’s denial of the records and pointed to the attorney general’s decision in favor

of the university.

“The University believes the Attorney General’s decision is correct,” Blanton said in an email Friday. “Indeed, the Attorney General’s decision is fully consistent with all Attorney General’s decisions since 2021.”

The Lantern’s records request mirrored a request for records from Collett that asked for emails with her name sent by Eric Monday, UK’s executive vice president for finance and administration and co-executive vice president for health affairs, between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. UK denied the request in early September.

That time frame spans campus discussions around shared governance at UK. In April 2024, the UK Board of Trustees voted 19-1 to change the University Senate to a faculty senate — a move that faculty members warned would limit their decision-making power over academic decisions.

The aftermath of the no-confidence vote was the subject of an article in The Chronicle of Higher Education that reported Collett had written to faculty members warning of acts of retaliation by the UK administration after the vote.

In an Aug. 20, 2024, email, Collett forwarded a message that she had shared with faculty members to Lisa Tannock, a former associate provost for faculty advancement, saying that provost office employees were assuming control of the University Senate’s voting system, a PollEverywhere account, which had access to all Senate-recorded votes.

Collett added in her email to Tannock that the University Senate did not keep records of individual

members’ votes and was not required to.

Tannock said in a response that “this matter is under serious investigation with the possibility of becoming a criminal investigation.” Collett’s attorney told the Lantern that UK’s general counsel later said there was no investigation. Tannock no longer works at the university.

Collett’s attorney, Joe Childers, told the Lantern that she decided to leave the university because she was “not comfortable in the environment that she was subjected to” after the controversy over the governance change.

In response to Collett’s open records request, the attorney general’s office issued an opinion partially in her favor in February.

However in the Lantern’s appeal, the attorney general’s office sided with UK, arguing that state law exempts public agencies from disclosing “preliminary” documents in response to open records requests.

“Describing the contents of emails created during its ‘decision-making process,’ the University explains that the emails contain ‘(1) early drafts of documents; (2) communications between various university officials; and (3) communications between the University’s attorneys and other university officials, including requests for advice and providing information necessary for the University attorneys to formulate legal advice,” the attorney general opinion says.

In recent years, UK has gone to court with Kentucky news outlets over denied open records requests, including the student-run newspaper, the Kentucky Kernel.

<https://www.kentuckylantern.com>

THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT

JENNIFER DONAHUE, Publisher
jdonahue@cmpapers.com, ext. 1240
LESLIE BAKER, Sales Manager
lbaker@cmpapers.com, ext. 1119
PEYTON DUNAWAY, Editor
pdunaway@cmpapers.com, ext. 1270
DANIEL MILLER, Sports Editor
dmiller@cmpapers.com, ext. 1273
CHAD SHELTON, Production/IT Manager
cskelton@cmpapers.com, ext. 1224
MELODY EVANS, Graphics/Pagination Manager, melodyevans@championcarolinas.com

News
Story ideas, news tips, etc., should be called in to the newsroom between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Call 564-9091.

Delivery Problems
Circulation Customer Service:
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Comments, Letters
The Ledger Independent welcomes and encourages comments from its readers on a wide variety of local, regional, state, national and international issues. Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and mailed to the Editor, The Ledger Independent, 120 Limestone St., Maysville, KY 41056. We welcome comments 24/7 at 606-564-9091 x 1251. Please speak slowly and clearly when leaving a comment.
The newspaper reserves the right to edit all letters and comments for libelous, obscene or other inappropriate material.

Corrections
The Ledger Independent seeks to correct all significant errors brought to the editor’s attention. If you have a question or correction on news coverage, contact Peyton Dunaway, editor.

Subscriptions
Periodical postage paid at Maysville, KY. I understand that delivery and billing will continue beyond the initial order period unless I contact the newspaper at 564-9091. Rates may change after introductory offer period. Subscription rates are subject to change.

Postmaster/Subscribers
Please send notice of address change or correction by enclosing mailing address label, plus new address, two to four weeks in advance to: The Ledger Independent, 120 Limestone St., Maysville, KY 41056.

Back Copies
Back issues of The Ledger Independent are for sale at our office at 120 Limestone St. in Maysville. The Ledger Independent keeps a file of back issues for at least one month and can often provide newspapers up to a year after publication.

Advertising
To purchase display or classified advertising in the The Ledger Independent, call one of the numbers listed above and an advertising representative will be happy to serve you.

Advertising Deadlines
Placement and cancellation deadlines for classified in-column line ads for Tuesday-Thursday are accepted until 2 p.m. the day before publication. Classified in-column ads for Saturday are accepted until 11 a.m. the day before publication. Ads for Monday are accepted until 2 p.m. the Friday before publication. Display advertising is accepted until 2 p.m. daily, 48 hours before publication date.
Ads that require color, proofs or special camera work require an additional 24 hours added to the above deadline.

THE FASTEST WAY TO GET THE SALES MOVING!

ADVERTISE IN CLASSIFIEDS!