

April: The month that inherited basketball titles

It's mid April. If you remember, we talked about March Madness last month. I find it rather ironic that "March" Madness culminates with April championship games! On April 5, the NCAA Women's Basketball championship game saw the Lady Bruins of UCLA, from the Big Ten Conference, blow out the South Carolina Gamecocks of the SEC. Congrats to Coach Cori Close and her gals for winning their first NCAA championship in program history!

However, if you're a true fan of NCAA basketball, then you know that it is one of many NCAA championships for this university. Many will recall the name of John Wooden and his dynasty of men's college basketball while serving as coach on the men's side of the UCLA arena. Wooden actually won 10 championships at UCLA, which is twice as many as the No. 2 man on that list - Mike Krzyzewski of Duke, with five championships.

What team did Wooden's UCLA team defeat for his 10th and final national champi-

onship?

Some of you diehard basketball fans will know this was none other than the UK Wildcats back in 1975, which UCLA won by a score of 92-85. Note that this was back in the day when March Madness was all played in March; the NCAA championship tournament began to extend into April in the early 2000s.

It is interesting to note that John Wooden retired immediately after the UCLA-UK game back on March 31, 1975.

The championship game for 2026 NCAA Men's Basketball was played on April 6, as Michigan defeated UConn for all the marbles. And then, quicker than you can say "basketball," hoops action is totally over until late fall, much to the delight of baseball fans every-

where!

April is the time for baseball! Batter up, and play ball. While basketball games are played inside sanitized indoor arenas, games played on the baseball diamond have a totally different feel.

You play in the sunshine and the heat, as well as the cool breezes of April along with the occasional drizzle.

It's always around 70 for basketball games in the arena environment, whereas you'd better watch the weather forecast in order to know how to dress at the ballpark, or else there's a fair chance that you're going to be rather miserable due to too many clothes or not enough clothes.

It's amazing to see the flags fluttering in the wind, hear the fans cheer for their favorite team and fuss at the umpire for a bad call, feel the gentle breeze on your arms and face, smell the hot buttered popcorn, taste the ballpark franks - what an amazing experience! I think the last baseball game I attended was a couple of years ago as we made the short drive

from our home in White Plains over to Hopkins County Central's diamond near Morton's Gap for my grandson's game against none other than the Crittenden County Rockets.

The Rockets were by far the better team on that night. Soon after that game, my grandson sustained a career-ending arm injury and had to give up the sport he dearly loved. Max now has a new love - golf.

Even though I no longer attend baseball games, I still love the month of April as the earth continues to wake up from the dormant winter season. Everything seems to come alive - grass, trees, shrubs, bushes, birds, horses, even me!

I feel much more alive in April than I do during the winter months when I have to spend so many days inside. Even my chiropractor notices that my body does much better in April when I'm spending more and more time outdoors. He says that God didn't make our bodies to sit around, that we were created to be moving and busy.

I love the outdoors and look

for any opportunity to go outside and engage in some worthwhile outdoor activity. In fact, I have noticed that it is much harder to meet my article deadlines in the warmer months because I'm spending so much time outdoors! Note to self: Don't be late again with my article next month!

I truly love watching nature come back to life in April. I am so thankful that when God created the earth in Genesis 1-2, He put things in motion so that we could experience the changing seasons. I love it, but I love it best in April, my favorite month. In fact, my wife and I married in April back in 1977, 49 years ago. One of the best parts of April is that we often celebrate Easter - the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ - just as we did a little more than a week ago. I hope that you had a meaningful Easter celebration as you celebrated our Lord's victory over death and hell. HALLELUJAH!

Because HE LIVES, I can face tomorrow!



Chris CLARKE
Press Columnist
Happy Trails

GOP Primary Election May 19

CANDIDATE PROFILES COUNTY JUDGE-EXECUTIVE



These profiles were compiled from standardized questionnaires sent to each candidate. The responses below are presented as submitted.

Perry A. Newcom

AGE 62
OCCUPATION For the past 15 years I have been honored to serve our community as the County Judge Executive. Prior to that I owned and operated a local agricultural/hardware/industrial supply retail business for 16 years. Prior to that I was an assistant manager for a large regional agricultural retail and wholesale business in Kentucky. And prior to that I served our nation as a member of the U.S. Air Force, working in satellite operations group for Global Weather.

EXPERIENCE I have been working on behalf of the public and managing businesses my entire adult life. I consider the opportunities to serve the public as a blessing in my life. One for which I have experienced great joy in being able to provide assistance as needed and sound leadership, advice, guidance and fiscal responsibility.

RESIDENCY I have lived in Crittenden County for a total of 37 years of my life. I have also lived in Henderson; San Antonio, Texas; Biloxi Miss.; Omaha, Neb.; Mayfield and Murray.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND I graduated from Crittenden County High School in 1981, Murray State University in 1985, and attended the University of Nebraska 1992-1993.

OTHER I am or have served on the Board of Directors for the Kentucky County Judge Executive's Association (KCJEA), KCJEA Legislative Committee, Pennyriple Area Development District Board, Pennyriple Allied Community Services Board, Pennyriple District Board of Health, President Trump's Prosperity for Rural America Task Force during his first term, and many other local, regional and national boards or committees. I have been chosen by the KCJEA as a Judge Executive of the Year. I was the Lions Club County Fair Chairman for 15 years and a member of the local club for 21 years. I had the privilege to coach little league soccer teams and baseball teams for several years in Graves County and Crittenden County. I was honored to be awarded an Air Force Achievement Medal for work developing a software program utilized to improve efficiencies and storage of weather data for Global Weather Central. I volunteered for the Nebraska Special Olympics as a track and field mentor. Most importantly I am an active Christian and member of the Marion Baptist Church, husband, father, brother and son.

PLATFORM Following much prayer and discussion with family, friends, and colleagues I agreed to seek another term to serve our community as judge-executive. Managing the fiscal affairs of a small rural community in our Commonwealth requires a great deal of dedication, time, patience, cooperation and effort. I know without a doubt I have all these qualities and have proven my ability to provide the highest level of leadership for our community. I have spent several years building relationships throughout the Commonwealth and United States, not because I seek to be the most popular individual in office, but because I know our community must have these relationships to be able to provide the number of services and opportunities our citizens deserve. I look forward to continuing my service to our community for another four years starting in January 2027 and I ask for your support May 19 to ensure I have the privilege to do so.

Nathan Ratley

AGE 44
OCCUPATION Business owner and manager of Marion Recycling, previous accountant/auditor.

EXPERIENCE Managing employees, customer service, negotiating contracts, governmental auditing, dealing with government agencies and compliance.

RESIDENCY Over 1 year prior to the general election.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND Union County High School, class of 2000; University of Kentucky, Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance & Business Management; Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Master of Business Administration; Murray State University, Accounting.

OTHER Crittenden's 10 under 40 selection. Employed over 30 people from Crittenden County and have put hundreds of thousands of dollars per year back into the hands of people in Crittenden County through my business.

PLATFORM I want to improve transparency and the management of the county's funds. I want to build a better relationship with the jail and improve its operation. I want to improve the drainage maintenance and cold patch inventory at the road department. I want to update some of the ordinances and contracts of the county, like waste management. I want to make Crittenden County an attractive place for businesses to help with economic development. I have a lot of great ideas to make Crittenden County operate more efficiently. I have a proven track record of success and will work hard to make this a better place. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Todd Campbell

AGE 52
OCCUPATION Small business owner and construction professional.

EXPERIENCE Thirty-plus years of construction experience. Owner and operator of a local rental property business, including an Airbnb.

RESIDENCY Lifelong resident of Crittenden County.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND Degree in business and degree in quality control management.

OTHER Successfully built and managed a local small business alongside my wife.

PLATFORM As a lifelong resident of Crittenden County, I am deeply invested in our community's future. Running a county requires a business mindset and strong financial oversight. My degrees in business and quality control management, combined with 30-plus years of construction experience equip me to manage county operations efficiently, meet strict deadlines and stick to a tight budget. I am running for judge-executive to bring straightforward, practical leadership to the fiscal court. My priority is a government that is fully transparent and accountable to its citizens. If elected, I will maintain a strict open-door policy because honest, direct communication with residents is essential for moving us forward. We must focus on responsible growth and learn from past financial missteps to protect our future. My campaign is built on a simple promise: Common Sense Solutions, Real Results, No Excuses.

JUDGE

Continued from page 1
community. His platform centers on continued fiscal responsibility, steady leadership and maintaining partnerships that benefit local services and development.

Challenger Nathan Ratley, 44, is a business owner and manager of Marion Recycling with a background in accounting and auditing. Ratley highlights his experience in financial oversight, regulatory compliance and managing employees as key qualifications for the role.

Ratley points to his business' economic impact, employing local residents and reinvesting money into the community.

Ratley's platform focuses on improving transparency in county government, strengthening operations at the jail, addressing infrastructure needs such as road maintenance and drainage, and updating ordinances and

contracts.

He also emphasizes economic development and making the county more attractive to businesses.

Todd Campbell, 52, a lifelong resident of Crittenden County, is another challenger who enters the race with more than 30 years of construction experience and a background in small business ownership.

Campbell says his experience managing projects, budgets and deadlines provides a practical foundation for overseeing county operations. His campaign stresses a business-minded approach to government, with a focus on transparency, accountability and communication with residents.

Campbell advocates for responsible growth and learning from past financial decisions, promoting what he describes as "common sense solutions" to move the county forward.

All three candidates are Republican. There are no Democrats seeking election in May.

Re-Elect Jailer

ATHENA HAYES

Proven Leadership. Trusted Experience.

- ✓ Incumbent Jailer serving since 2022
- ✓ Nearly 13 years managing state & federal inmates
- ✓ Elected to Kentucky Jailers Association Board of Directors
- ✓ 2026 Jailer of the Year Nominee

Athena Hayes has led the Crittenden County Detention Center through real challenges—rising costs, changing inmate populations, and facility demands—while keeping operations efficient and cost-effective for taxpayers.

She has strengthened partnerships with local law enforcement, secured grants to save tax dollars, and ensured safe, professional management of the jail.

BORN AND RAISED IN CRITTENDEN COUNTY

Committed to serving the community with strength, integrity, and dedication

Kentucky Jails are a critical part of public safety. I believe that supporting the community, while offering effective, proactive incarceration paves the path to a positive future for all of our citizens. Facing the challenges with integrity, determination and perseverance is what it takes to be a Jailer in today's world. It is a tough job and it takes a strong and honest person to perform, every day, regardless of personal hardships and endless adversity.

★

I humbly ask for your Vote for
Re-election as Crittenden County Jailer

Re-Elect Athena Perry-Hayes
Crittenden County
Jailer on FACEBOOK

Keep Experience Working for You

VOTE ATHENA HAYES

CRITTENDEN COUNTY JAILER MAY 19

Paid for by the campaign fund of Athena Hayes

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