



Noah ready to keep building Ky. career
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THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026

Community leader Jack Denny Johnson dies at 95

By Casey Roberts
Interior Journal

STANFORD, Ky. — Jack Denny Johnson, a longtime Lincoln County educator, school administrator, banker and community leader, died recently at the age of 95.

Johnson was a lifelong Lincoln County resident whose life was marked by service to local schools, civic organizations, Stanford Baptist Church and PBK Bank.

A graduate of McKinney High School, Johnson spent 37 years serving Lincoln County students as a teacher, coach and administrator. He later served

as superintendent of Lincoln County Schools and was leading the district when Lincoln County High School opened in 1974.

When the consolidated high school first opened, it did not have a gymnasium. Student-athletes practiced and played home games at what was then Memorial High School in Kings Mountain until a gymnasium was later added at Lincoln County High School.

Johnson and his staff worked to help secure support for the project, which was funded after voters in the Lincoln County school district approved a tax levy. The gymnasium went on to serve as the home of Lincoln

County's athletic programs for decades.

Johnson retired from Lincoln County Schools in 1983, but his support for education continued long after his formal career ended. He remained involved with local schools, visited classrooms, gave presentations to students and supported school programs and special projects.

Eric Ralston, president of PBK Bank, said Johnson's commitment to education and Lincoln County was an important part of who he was.

"Jack was so passionate about education," Ralston said. "He

See **JOHNSON**, 2A



FILE PHOTO
Jack Denny Johnson spent his life serving Lincoln County through education, community leadership, Stanford Baptist Church and PBK Bank. Johnson died recently at the age of 95.

Lincoln County native earns third place finish at Miss Kentucky

By Casey Roberts
Interior Journal



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Chloe Ralston, second from left, poses with the top five finalists after the 2026 Miss Kentucky competition, where she finished as second runner up.

STANFORD, Ky. — Lincoln County native Chloe Ralston capped off months of preparation with one of the state's top honors after finishing as second runner-up at the 2026 Miss Kentucky competition.

Representing Miss Cedar Creek through the Miss Wilderness Trail Scholarship Organization, Ralston placed third overall in the statewide pageant held in Bowling Green, joining fellow Wilderness Trail titleholders in a strong showing. Reagan Earlywine was crowned Miss Kentucky 2026, Claire Yates finished first runner-up and Jenna Briley Evans was also named a second runner-up.

For Ralston, hearing her name announced among the competition's top finishers was

See **LINCOLN**, 2A

Four Generations now Main Street Gifts + Decor

By Christopher Brown
The Interior Journal

STANFORD, Ky. — A longtime fixture of downtown Stanford is beginning a new chapter.

After 12 years of serving Lincoln County, Four Generations has officially reopened as Main Street Gifts + Decor,

with a ribbon-cutting and grand opening held Tuesday, July 6.

The business is now owned by Jane Berry, with her daughter, Amy Sparks, serving as co-owner. Sparks' daughter, Bailey Sparks, will serve as manager, merchandiser and

See **FOUR**, 2A



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Bailey Sparks, Jane Berry, Mike Berry and Amy Sparks mark the reopening of Four Generations as Main Street Gifts + Decor in downtown Stanford. The family-owned store held its ribbon cutting and grand opening July 6.

Former Lincoln County deputy sentenced in theft case

Staff Report

STANFORD, Ky. — A former Lincoln County Sheriff's deputy will serve jail time and later be placed on probation after pleading guilty to charges connected to the theft of cash during a search warrant.

Ron Luster, 55, of Hustonville, pleaded guilty in Lincoln Circuit

Court to abuse of public trust, tampering with physical evidence and first-degree official misconduct, according to Commonwealth's Attorney David Dalton.

The case centered on a March 29, 2025, search at a Lincoln County residence. According to court records and information from Dalton's office, Luster turned off or removed his body

camera while searching the residence. During that time, he handled a bag containing cash and kept a portion of the money before resuming use of the camera.

The matter came to light in February 2026 after an attorney in a trafficking case reported concerns about Luster's conduct. Kentucky State Police investigated the allegation, and the



Ron Luster

Lincoln County Sheriff's Office assisted in the inquiry.

Sheriff Shawn Hines placed Luster on administrative leave Feb. 4. The case was later taken before a Lincoln County grand jury, which returned an indictment

March 13. Luster was dismissed from the sheriff's office the same day.

Dalton said the case damaged more than Luster's career, forcing prosecutors to dismiss numerous cases and costing law enforcement agencies significant time and work.

"Due to Luster's conduct, we

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