

-JERNIGAN

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“When you don’t have security, you don’t worry about it,” Jernigan said. “When you get security, then you start thinking about it.”

Jernigan recalled that when he first entered the legal profession, courthouse security was minimal. A single bailiff often handled security responsibilities, and metal detectors, surveillance cameras and other modern safeguards simply did not exist.

“It’s a different world today,” he said. “You never imagined churches would need security teams, but now many do.”

One of his most vivid memories involved a criminal defendant who reportedly threatened to disrupt his trial. Sheriff Jerry Mayhugh warned Jernigan that the defendant might become violent, prompting two Greenville police officers—who had recently completed Taser training—to assist with courtroom security.

Before proceedings began, Jernigan warned the defendant that any disturbance would be dealt with immediately. During jury selection, the defendant overturned

a table, knocking his attorney from his chair before charging toward the prosecution’s table and in the direction of the jury box.

One of the officers deployed a Taser, ending the confrontation instantly.

“It sounded like a gunshot,” Jernigan said. “I’m sure every juror thought he’d been shot.”

The courtroom was cleared before the trial resumed later.

Jernigan laughed as he recalled veteran attorney Ralph Paxton’s response after order was restored.

“When someone asked if Ralph was okay, he said, ‘He was just coming over to tell me he couldn’t go for him anymore,’” Jernigan said.

Jernigan also reflected on how DNA evidence transformed criminal investigations during his career.

“It was harder in the beginning because everyone was learning how to use the technology,” he said. “But once people became comfortable with it, I think it solved cases that probably never would have been solved before.”

Asked whether

Muhlenberg County’s decades-old unsolved murders will ever be resolved, Jernigan said he remains doubtful.

“It would take somebody coming forward with new information,” he said. “Without that, it’s highly unlikely.”

While many people remember the high-profile cases, Jernigan said those involving abused children were among the most difficult emotionally during his years as Commonwealth’s Attorney.

“There was a period when we had an avalanche of those cases,” he said. “Those worried me to death. If you weren’t successful on one of those, you never forgot it.”

The conversation also included lighter moments. Jernigan laughed while recalling an early courtroom opening when a bailiff accidentally concluded the traditional announcement by saying, “May God save the Commonwealth from this court,” instead of, “May God save this Commonwealth and this court.”

“The lawyers all thought it was pretty funny,” he said.

The interview also touched on the evolution

of community corrections. Jernigan noted that when he began practicing law, Muhlenberg County had only one probation officer. By the time he retired from the bench in 2009, the system had expanded significantly, driven in part by the creation of specialty courts such as Drug Court and an increased emphasis on rehabilitation.

“We started thinking about trying to keep people out of prison and address the problems that got them there,” Jernigan said.

Now retired from the bench, Jernigan keeps his law license active but no longer practices law. Instead, he spends much of his time reading, playing pickleball with friends and serving on community boards and commissions.

“If it’s a non-paying position,” he joked, “you’ll get asked to do a whole lot.”

A graduate of Greenville High School, Jernigan earned his undergraduate degree from Western Kentucky University

before receiving his law degree from the University of Louisville. Today, he and his wife enjoy staying active, particularly on the pickleball court, where they regularly play with friends.

Miller thanked Jernigan for sharing his memories and

preserving a piece of Muhlenberg County history, telling listeners the interview was only the beginning.

“This is Part One,” Miller said. “There are a lot more stories to tell, and we look forward to having Judge Jernigan back to share them.”

LTC Connect

ANNUAL MEETING

Join Us! — **Friday, August 7, 2026**

LTC Connect will hold its Annual Meeting, Friday, August 7 at 7 p.m. at the Logan County Extension Office. Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m. to be followed by the business meeting, prize drawing, and refreshments.

At the Annual Meeting, members will elect individuals to represent them on the board of directors. There are two positions to be determined. After the business meeting, a drawing will be held for cash and prizes for adults and children.

All members of LTC Connect are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting, Friday, August 7, 2026.



-LYLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

resident, Lyle said he is honored to serve the community where he was raised and has spent his entire educational career. Beginning as a classroom teacher, he later served as principal of Muhlenberg County South before being named superintendent.

During the interview, Lyle reflected on one of his first initiatives as a principal. He asked every teacher to ride each school bus route, believing it was important for educators to see firsthand where their students lived and to better understand the families and communities they served.

“The more we understand our students and their families, the better we can serve them,” Lyle said, noting the experience gave teachers a greater appreciation for the challenges and opportunities many students face outside the classroom.

Lyle emphasized that successful educators must care not only about teaching but also about the community itself.

“You have to have heart,” he said. “You have to believe in the little things. You have

to care about what’s happening in your community.”

One of the interview’s most personal moments came when Lyle shared a recent experience involving his young grandson. As he drove away from home, he looked in his rearview mirror and saw the child pedaling his bicycle as hard as he could, trying to follow him down the driveway.

The moment reminded him of a gospel song about a child following an adult’s example, reinforcing what he believes is one of life’s most important lessons.

“Our children are watching us,” Lyle said. “They’re following us. As parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches and community leaders, we have a responsibility to set the right example because they’re learning from everything we do.”

Lyle said that principle continues to guide him as superintendent and remains at the heart of his commitment to Muhlenberg County Schools.

He told listeners he is excited about the opportunities ahead and looks forward to working with students,

educators, parents and the community to continue moving Muhlenberg County education forward.

Lyle thanked Steele and Miller for the opportunity to appear on the program and said he looks forward to returning regularly to keep the community informed about the school district’s progress.

ABOUT THE BILLY & WENDELL MORNING SHOW

The Billy & Wendell Morning Show airs weekday mornings on WKYA and is made possible each day through the support of caring community business owners and leaders who believe in keeping Muhlenberg County informed, connected and engaged through local conversations and interviews.

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