OBITUARY

Joan Clark

Joan Bell Clark, 85, of Mayfield, died Friday, Oct. 16, 2026, at Ray and Kay Eckstein Hospice Care Center in Paducah.

She was a member of Spence Chapel Methodist Church and a retired LPN.

She is survived by one son, Gregory Don Bell of Hickory; two daughters, Alecia Ladd of Mayfield, and Margaret Holder of Hickory; one brother, James R. Baker of Mayfield; eight grandchildren; and five great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, Billy Don Bell; her second husband, Gene Clark; and one brother. Her parents were Robert Andrew and Julia Hargrove Baker.

Graveside services will be held 1 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2026, at Spence Chapel Cemetery. Rev. Ronnie Stinson, Jr. will officiate. Interment will follow.

Visitation will be 11 a.m- 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday at Byrn Funeral Home in Mayfield.

Memorial donations may be made to the Ray and Kay Eckstein Hospice Care Center, 1530 Lone Oak Rd., Paducah, KY 42003.



Graves County Schools

Graves County preschool recognized by state education department

BY MESSENGER STAFF

Graves County preschool was one of 11 preschool programs recognized statewide by the Kentucky Department of Education.

The Office of Special Education and Early Learning, which is under the education department, recognized Graves County and 10 others "for their commitment to Program-Wide Pyramid Model Implementation," according to the Graves County School District.

According to the Kentucky Department of Education, the pyramid model " is a comprehensive, multi-tiered framework of evidence-based practices, rooted in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, that promote young children's social, emotional, and behavioral development." The Pyramid Model was adopted in 2019 as the commonwealth's PBIS framework, the district stated.

"This milestone celebrates programs that have long-term commitments to successfully implementing a sustainable structure with the Pyramid Model Framework to foster social-emotional growth and manage behavior in preschool classrooms," the district stated.

Graves County was recognized based on the following:

- Sustaining Pyramid Model practices for two or more consecutive years.
- Partnering directly with RTCs or KDE for ongoing implementation.
- Hitting benchmark standards in coaching, professional development and data collection.

"Congratulations to all of our preschool educators," the district stated. "Your role in laying the foundation for a successful educational journey for our students is invaluable."

Farmers Market holds 'Meet the Candidates' on Oct. 24



Contributed

The Mayfield Downtown Farmers Market is inviting the public to attend a "Meet the Candidates" forum from 9-11 a.m. on Saturday. Oct. 24. This is an "informal meet-and-greet with candidates running for office," the market stated. As a reminder, the General Election is Nov. 3, and the sample ballot can be viewed on the Kentucky Secretary of State website. Graves County Clerk Kimberly Gills announced that in-person excused voting begins Oct. 21-23 and from Oct. 26-28 with early voting being Oct. 29-31 at 1102 Paris Road, Suite 4.

Owens sees path to future through sports, leadership

BY BEN OVERBY
FOR THE MESSENGER

Ayden Owens, a senior at Ballard Memorial High School, plans to pursue an education in engineering or business at Murray State University.

Owens is this week's Murray State University Teen of the Week.

Owens holds a 4.0/4.0 GPA and said he has pushed since his freshman year of high school to become a valedictorian.

"I kind of settled for B's all the way up to high school, and I felt like there's a different side of me that I knew I could be better," he said. "I've had great teachers my whole high school career. My geometry teacher and my AP Stats teacher has been the biggest impact to me as a student, pushing me even whenever I don't want to do my stuff — and even as a man — just giving me life lessons."

Owens is involved in several sports like baseball, golf and basketball.

"Over the past four years, basketball has really grown me as a person," he said. "My freshman year I didn't play varsity because I was injured, so that really grew me trying to figure out how to make an impact without being able to make a physical impact — being a good teammate and having a great attitude, even when I couldn't be out on the floor. And I've learned that you can't let one thing ruin your whole day. You can't let one shot just bother you for the whole rest of your round or game. You've got to keep on going, and that's just life. If you don't get a job you applied for, you can't just give up on it. You have to keep on going, not give up, and try to make the best out of something and keep on pushing."



Contributed

Ayden Owens is a senior at Ballard Memorial High School.

He is also involved in several clubs like the Future Business Leaders of America, Beta Club, Student Council, Future Farmers of America and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

He said FBLA has had the greatest impact on him.

"I've gotten really involved, and I feel like it's just kind of got me ready for real life scenarios," Owens said. "I've learned interviewing skills. Right now I'm taking personal finance — just learning how to budget and how to deal with your finances before you go out into college. We just got done with the college section, and it was very impactful."

Owens said he plans to attend Murray State in the fall because the campus feels like home to him.

"I've kind of grown up around Murray," he said. "I live in Ballard, but I go down to Murray a lot now since my brother goes there. Every time I'm down there, I just love being there. The campus is nice, and I feel like it's somewhere that I want to spend my time for the next four years."

While Owens isn't certain what major he'd like to pursue, he said he has an interest in engineering from shadowing his father over fall break and an interest in business from his brother and classes he's taken at Ballard.

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY
Teen of the Week

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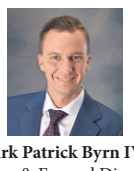

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