



SPORTS
ALL THREE OLDHAM SCHOOLS
WIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
AT STATE MEET, PAGE B1

The Oldham Era

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS 1876-2026

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Gerstner's reporting on data center wins nationwide award

South Oldham grad claims \$25,000 prize during ceremony in Washington, D.C.

BY STAFF REPORTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The rest of America just found out what the readers of The Oldham Era and Henry County

Local already knew — the editor leading their local newspapers is one of journalism's brightest rising stars.

Grant Gerstner, a regional editor for Paxton Media, won one of the nation's most prestigious journalism awards during a May 19 ceremony in Washington, D.C., when he received first place in the print reporting category during the Center for Integrity in News Reporting's (CFINR) annual awards ceremony.

Gerstner was selected over journalists from more than 35 states and major

publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post and others, and became the first Kentucky-based journalist to win the award.

First prize was \$25,000.

Gerstner, a 2019 graduate of South Oldham High School who joined the Era and Local in 2024 after graduating from the University of Louisville, won the award for his series of news stories about a controversial data center planned

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Photo furnished

Grant Gerstner, editor for The Oldham Era and Henry County Local, after being presented first place in print reporting May 19 at the Center for Integrity in News Reporting's (CFINR) annual awards ceremony. He received a prize of \$25,000 for his efforts.



Photos by Jane Ashley Pace

A member of Boy Scout Troop 167 Honor Guard rings the bell after each name is read of the 43 Oldham Countians who made the ultimate sacrifice for the country.

'WE ARE HERE TO REMEMBER'

Community honors local veterans on Memorial Day

BY JANE ASHLEY PACE
PUBLISHER

It was standing room only at the John W. Black Community Center on Monday as Oldham County American Legion Post #39 held their annual Memorial Day service to remember the 43 Oldham Countians who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our

country. The event is usually held at Veteran's Memorial Park of Kentucky in Crestwood but due to weather concerns the service was moved this year.

The event featured patriotic music by the Oldham County Community Band, presenting of colors by Boy Scout Troop 167 Honor Guard, reading of the 43 names, placing of a memorial wreath and a guest speaker.

This year's guest speaker was Chris Johnson, a Gold Star son. His

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Sgt. Royer and Master Sgt. Kim Hamilton place a wreath of remembrance during Monday's Memorial Day service.



Gold Star son and Army veteran Chris Johnson was the keynote speaker at Monday's Memorial Day service.



Photo by Grant Gerstner

Joseph W. Siami, left, sits next to his attorney, Steven R. Romines, during his May 22 sentencing.

Suspect of fatal DUI collision sentenced to 5-year probation

20-year jail time dropped to 6 months

BY GRANT GERSTNER
EDITOR

After over four years in court, Joseph W. Siami was sentenced Friday afternoon for the November 2021 DUI collision that killed 20-year-old Chase Michael Lawson of Crestwood.

The sentencing arrives after Siami accepted a plea deal in March, which amended his three highest charges — murder and two counts of first-degree assault — to second-degree manslaughter and two counts of second-degree assault. The deal also left probation on the table.

The deal largely came out of the suppression of key pieces of evidence, which were approved due to errors made during his arrest. For example, a breathalyzer test was suppressed due to the length of time between the collision and the time the test was administered.

After over two hours of impassioned victim impact statements, Jefferson County Circuit Court Division 2 Judge Annie O'Connell read Siami his full sentence:

Ten years for second-degree manslaughter; five years for each count of second-degree assault running concurrently; five years for first-degree criminal mischief; 30 days for DUI, first offense, aggravating circumstances; and a \$100 fine for speeding.

The court also granted Siami probation, effectively sentencing him to six months of jail time and five

years of probation thereafter.

"If I send you to serve your time in prison, I will have no control over where you serve that sentence ... whether treatment will be available to you at all [or] if treatment is available, whether it will be suited to your particular needs so that you never make choices like this one again ..." O'Connell said.

"Sending you to prison would allow you to dissociate from these actions for a predictable period of time, after which you would be released without further supervision. Your focus would likely be on survival rather than accountability.

"You stated [the victims] are daily fixtures in your life," O'Connell said referencing Siami's apology statement made prior to the decision. "... I intend to fashion a sentence that make sure that you demonstrate that they are."

In addition to the "highest level of supervision" by reporting to a probation officer weekly, O'Connell ordered that Siami must write written responses to each of the victim impact statements submitted to the court by Nov. 27 — the day of the incident in 2021.

O'Connell also ordered that Siami would complete 40 hours of community service every Thanksgiving week, and that he return to court every Wednesday before Thanksgiving to "demonstrate by proof that [he] is living like Lawson."

Siami will also have to show proof of clinical evaluations for substance use disorder or mental health treatment needs, proof of his engagement in treatment,

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Overall voter turnout reaches 30.7% in Oldham County

Houchens wins county judge executive primary

BY ERA STAFF

The 2026 Oldham County Primary Election was held Tuesday, May 19. Voters cast 16,972 ballots across all of

Tuesday's races, a 30.7% turnout.

The Era spoke with several of the winners who had the most opposition in their races.

"While I was very pleased to see the outcome of the race ... I like the fact that I won in all the locations that there was a voting area in over the person who came in second," said Rob

Houchens, who won the Republican primary for county judge executive by 1,461 votes.

"I've reached out to all of my opponents — and that's what I want people to know: they were my opponents, not my enemies. I'm hoping that by reaching out to them and anybody else that won or lost in local elections that we can

work together to get everybody's ideas on the table and try to figure out what to do that's best for Oldham County ...

"I look forward to trying to get my Friends of Oldham County nonprofit going to that we can do some things that are beyond the

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