



Photo by Grant Gerstner

Reta Underwood, left, leads attendees to the America250 Westport Day in song, while attendees drum along on Sept. 26.

Oldham County History Center hosts America250 Westport Day

BY GRANT GERSTNER
EDITOR

Continuing its ongoing America250 programming, the Oldham County History Center celebrated Wesport's rich history at America250 Westport Day on Saturday, Sept. 26.

The event began with a talk from Executive Director Nancy Theiss titled, "Wesport, Oldham County's Rivertown," followed by Spirit Sound Walkers Native American Drumming and a blessing of the Ohio River led by Reta Underwood.

Then began Pickin' on the Porch at Knock on Wood Restaurant and Store, featuring music by Kaintuck with delicious food prepared by the Wesport gem.

The history center plans to host another of America250 programming in Prospect on Saturday, Oct. 17 from 8 to 11 a.m. at Little Hunting Creek Park, located at 9220 US Highway 42 in Prospect.



A procession from the pavilion at Schamback Park towards the Ohio River forms as America250 Westport Day attendees prepare to bless the river.



A large crowd gathers in front of Knock on Wood Restaurant and Store for Pickin' on the Porch, featuring music by Kaintuck on Sept. 26.



Photo by Grant Gerstner

Bill Harris Jr., surrounded by his family on his 80th birthday, proudly raises a framed proclamation above his head after he was surprised by the basketball court at Springs Park being named after him. Harris was the first Black student on the OCHS basketball team.

La Grange names basketball court after Bill Harris Jr.

BY GRANT GERSTNER
EDITOR

William "Bill" Harris Jr., the first Black man to play on the Oldham County High School basketball team, was surprised with an extra gift on his 80th birthday on Sept. 15 — having his life and legacy forever enshrined by the basketball court at Springs Park in La Grange named after him.

Harris was born and raised on the land where the basketball court now stands. Having grown up during segregation, he attended La Grange Training School before traveling by bus to Lincoln Institute in Shelby County, one of the closest schools available to Black students.

Harris joined the US Army after he graduated from high school. He served for four years during the Vietnam War before

returning to his hometown, where he has lived ever since. In 2022, he was inducted into the OCHS Athletic Hall of Fame in recognition for his lasting impact.

"The City of La Grange wishes to honor Bill and ensure that his history and contributions are remembered for generations to come ..." the proclamation reads. "We made this court serve as a lasting tribute to Bill's life, his story and inspire all who gather to play ..."

"Through all of this, I got saved ..." Harris said after receiving the proclamation. "What a mighty God we serve ... You just don't know the impact that the Lord has on your life — if you choose him. You have to choose him. If you don't choose him, he'll walk right on by you, or you'll walk right on by him."

"Thank you, La Grange, for doing that — they didn't have to do that."

TRIAL

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"a truck hit a pedestrian" on the date of the incident, and that any question of the video's credibility could be brought up at trial, Assistant Commonwealth Attorney Tessa Kilbane Hughes said.

As for the expert opinion of Cornett's toxicology report, the defense said that the report — derived from evidence and receipts collected allegedly showing Cornett drinking at local restaurants before the incident — has "too many assumptions and too many speculations," Attorney Joe Wells said.

Wells also noted that the toxicology report has "changed three times" since it was first introduced, most recently after a detective pointed out an error, which the expert corrected, that ultimately showed a lower blood alcohol content than before.

"Might I just point out to the court,

we don't have a blood draw [test] because the defendant left the scene ..." Commonwealth Attorney Courtney Baxter countered.

Despite the prosecution's objection, Judge Crosby said that he is "inclined" to grant the defense's request for a Daubert hearing — a pretrial proceeding that allows a judge to determine if an expert witness' testimony, scientific techniques or methods are reliable — for the toxicology expert.

Regarding the autopsy photos, the defense said that they believe they will be able to come to an agreement with the prosecution and will not need to litigate on it further.

Previously, the defense requested to suppress "gruesome" photos, as they could cause unfair prejudice or an inflammatory reaction. The prosecution responded that they planned to only present a "limited set of photographs."

The court also heard arguments about evidence the prosecution is seeking to introduce regarding the

prior interactions between Cornett and Preble.

Specifically, Assistant Commonwealth Attorney Josh Clubb said that testimony from former Oldham County Animal Control Director Barbara Rosenman and Preble's friend Reta Snow would namely show Cornett's motive, familiarity and relationship with Preble.

Clubb stated that "Cornett had beef with Margaret Preble," from when she complained about his dog chasing her biting and her jacket while walking by his residence, which ended up in Oldham District Court.

Though the defense argued the testimony would not be relevant, especially noting the interaction occurred about 15 years prior to November 2024, Judge Crosby said he would "do [his] own digging" into the case law to make a decision.

Look for updates on this case in future editions of the Era.

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1. Publication Title		2. Publication Number		3. Filing Date					
THE OLDHAM ERA		4 0 7 7 0 0		09/16/2026					
4. Issue Frequency		5. Number of Issues Published Annually		6. Annual Subscription Price					
WEEKLY		52		\$48.00					
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®)									
105 S WALNUT ST LAGRANGE, OLDHAM COUNTY, KY 40031-1231									
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)									
105 S WALNUT ST LAGRANGE, KY 40031-1231									
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)									
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) JANE ASHLEY PACE 105 S WALNUT ST LAGRANGE, KY 40031-1231									
Editor (Name and complete mailing address)									
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10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)									
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☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months									
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PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4) (see instructions page 4) PSN: 7530-01-000-9931 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com									
13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below							
THE OLDHAM ERA		08/06/2026							
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months							
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		3458 2056							
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		71 64							
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		1748 1662							
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®		248 320							
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)		0 0							
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 13b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		2067 2046							
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 13b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		0 0							
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541		0 0							
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541		0 0							
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)		0 0							
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		1260 10							
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 13d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		1260 10							
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 13c and 13e)		3327 2056							
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		66 0							
h. Total (Sum of 13f and g)		3393 2056							
i. Percent Paid (13c divided by 13f times 100)		62.13% 99.51%							
* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.									
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months							
a. Paid Electronic Copies		169 221							
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		2236 2267							
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		3496 2277							
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 15c x 100)		63.00% 99.00%							
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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership									
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Jane Ashley Pace, Publisher Date 09/09/2026									
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