

Coal Bucket, Candy Bucket

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Aileen Boggs First Grade Class at McKee circa 1955

By Carolyn Coffey Pennington, Annville

Dressed in a two-pieced wool suit with perfectly manicured, unpolished nails, the teacher put a right-handed old glove on and opened the door to the round-bellied coal stove in the center of the first-grade classroom. The open door to the stove threw out light from low-burning flames across the room as the students, all 35 first-graders, practiced their numbers and letters. She reached down in the coal bucket, picked up two or three blocks of coal, and tossed them to the back of the stove. Then she picked up the poker to “poke up a fire” to allow oxygen to gather inside the blocks and combust and give off heat. After two or three hard pokes inside the stove, the flames lit up in blues and reds. The teacher closed the door to the stove and set the black-tipped poker down beside the coal bucket. She pulled off the glove and hung it across the coal bucket handle to await the next fueling of the fire in her classroom at McKee Elementary School in Jackson County.

There was another coal bucket, a new one in the classroom, but it never stored coal. It stored candy money collected early in the homeroom before classes began, just after the morning announcements and the pledge. The bucket was filled with nickels, dimes, quarters, and a list of the candy bars alongside the name of each child who had paid for the afternoon recess candy treat. The price of the candy: one nickel per candy bar in 1954. Students who chose not to buy candy were allowed to bring their own afternoon recess snacks. Two students were chosen by the teacher to carry the candy bucket from the classroom to the principal’s office in a building on top of the hill where the candy was purchased and the order was filled. The students, each with one hand on the candy bucket, returned to the classroom. The coal bucket of candy sat by the teacher’s desk until afternoon break, when the candy and sometimes change were dispensed to whoever purchased each bar. I am one of the students who carried the candy bucket often and learned to carry the buckets of life with confidence because of Mrs. Aileen Boggs

Picture above from Anne Shelby: “Here’s a picture of the first grade class I was in, taken at the gym in at McKee about 1955. Teacher: Aileen Boggs. The class included Carolyn Pennington, Mike Norris, Brenda Norris, Jim Hayes, Loretta Lakes, Karen Lynn Anderson (whose father was principal at the high school at the time) and others, whose faces are still clear in my mind, but whose names I’ve forgotten. My name was Anne Gabbard then. My father, Luther Gabbard, taught vo ag at the high school. My mother Jessie Bishop Gabbard, taught English and drama.”

Kentucky Organ-Donation System Faces Uncertain Transition After Federal Decertification

Network for Hope plans an appeal as federal agencies prepare to monitor services and eventually select a replacement organ procurement organization.

Kentucky’s organ-donation system entered a consequential transition this week after federal officials began decertifying Network for Hope, the organ procurement organization that serves all 120 Kentucky counties and portions of Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the action Aug. 5, saying reviews by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration found persistent patient-safety failures despite warnings, corrective-action requirements and monitoring. Network for Hope has said it strongly disagrees with the decision and will appeal. CMS has set Nov. 3, 2026, as the date it would terminate the organization’s Medicare agreement and qualified-OPO certification. However, the agency said Network for Hope’s donation service area will not be opened to competition until the administrative appeals process is completed or abandoned. CMS may temporarily extend the agreement to support a handoff to another organization. Federal findings drive the decision Federal officials said HRSA examined 351 cases from 2021 through 2024 in which donation was authorized but not completed.

According to HHS, 103 cases—29.3 percent—had concerning features, including 73 involving neurological signs described as incompatible with organ donation. The review also cited weak neurological assessments, poor coordination with medical teams, questionable consent practices and possible errors in classifying causes of death, particularly in overdose cases. Those are the government’s findings and allegations in support of decertification. Network for Hope disputes the conclusion, says it complies with national transplantation policies and points to a “pause in procedure” protocol designed to stop recovery activity when a potential donor shows a change in neurological condition or other signs requiring reassessment. Donation and transplant services continue For now, the federal action does not end organ-donor registration, hospital referrals, transplant waiting-list management or transplantation in Kentucky. HRSA officials have said patients in the service area will continue to receive care while CMS manages the replace-

ment process and monitors the transition. Organ procurement organizations do not perform transplants themselves. They coordinate with hospitals and families, evaluate potential donors, obtain authorization, arrange organ recovery and help move donated organs into the national matching and allocation system. Kentucky transplant centers and the national Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network remain part of that broader system. Kentucky adds a new safety backstop Separate from the federal action, Kentucky lawmakers approved a “pause in procedure” safeguard in 2026. The measure requires organ-recovery activity to stop when there is a suspected or observed neurological change, an indication of life or another unresolved uncertainty. Medical staff, transplant personnel or a patient’s spouse may request the pause, which must be documented and reported. The law reflects the central challenge facing Kentucky after decertification: preserving a dependable pathway for lifesaving donations while restoring confidence that potential donors are evaluated with rigorous, independent clinical judgment.

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LEGAL

Notice is hereby given that Cassie Lee Martin McQueen has been appointed Executrix of the estate of Regina McQueen by the Jackson County District Court. All persons having claims against the estate of Regina McQueen are requested to present same, verified according to law, to said

Executrix within six months from 8/10/2026. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to pay said indebtedness to the Executrix. Attorney: Hon. Jacob Roberts Case # 26-P-00102

Notice is hereby given that Louise Smith has been appointed Executrix of the estate of Letha Thompson by the Jackson County District Court. All persons

having claims against the estate of Letha Thompson are requested to present same, verified according to law, to said Executrix within six months from 8/10/2026. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to pay said indebtedness to the Executrix. Attorney: N/A Case # 26-P-00099

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