

North Georgia News

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Zell Miller remembered for his wisdom, friendship

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

The family of Zell Miller held three public services last week in celebration of the man who spent his life leading his home state of Georgia into the future.

Miller, 86, passed away at his home in Young Harris on Friday, March 23.

The first of his memorials took place fittingly at Young Harris College, Miller's alma mater and former teaching grounds.

There, his son Murphy Miller – Chief of Court Judge of the Enotah Judicial Circuit – opened the doors of his memory, inviting everyone in attendance to contemplate the Miller family household of his youth.

Zell Miller loved baseball. In fact, he started the Young Harris College baseball program in 1960 and coached

three winning seasons, and he helped to ensure that the Zell B. Miller Stadium became a reality on campus in 2000.

So, it should come as no surprise that Zell used the great American pastime of baseball to impart many valuable life lessons to his children Murphy and Matthew, such as going the extra mile – or extra base – at every opportunity.

"To him, this maneuver demonstrated your personal character," said Murphy Miller during the March 26 memorial service in Young Harris. "At least you had tried something bold, that you had come to play ... And tell me, my friends, who stretched more singles into doubles than Zell Miller?"

A common theme among speakers remembering Miller since his passing has been the remarkable bond he and his wife Shirley shared, borne out over 64 wonderful years of marriage.

Politically, the former

governor and U.S. senator will be remembered for his myriad worthwhile contributions to his home state, including the HOPE Scholarship and Georgia's Pre-K Program.

His contributions extend beyond Georgia to the nation and the world, however, in the words of wisdom he left behind in his books, speeches and other writings.

In his Celebration of Life Service on Tuesday, March 27, at the Peachtree Road United Methodist Church in Atlanta, three former U.S. presidents – George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter – paid their respects to Miller and shared what they had learned in their friendships with Zell.

"He never forgot where he came from or where he was headed," said President Bush, describing Zell as a humble man who put service above self. "As he said in his senate farewell, 'Everywhere I've

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The Georgia State Patrol Honor Guard carrying former governor and U.S. Sen. Zell Miller into his memorial service at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church in Atlanta on Tuesday, March 27.

Photo by Miller Institute Foundation

Georgia Hands-free driving law expected to save lives

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

As soon as Gov. Nathan Deal signs the new distracted driving bill into law, it will be illegal for Georgia drivers to use their cellphones and other devices without hands-free technology.

HB 673 passed the Georgia House on the final day of the 2018 Legislative Session, and backers believe the bill will cut down on the number of distracted drivers in Georgia.

The number of roadway fatalities has risen in recent years, likely due to the trend of increased cellphone use while driving.

Last year, 1,549 people died on Georgia's roads, and those who support HB 673 are aiming to make Georgia the 16th state in the nation to adopt hands-free driving measures to save lives.

"I'm in agreement



with it," said Union County Sheriff Mack Mason. "We've got enough distractions with driving as it is. Our roads are crowded, we've got a lot of people here, and people should be paying attention to their driving."

Continued the sheriff: "I think it's a good bill. It targets everyone, it doesn't single out younger, and inexperienced drivers. I'm satisfied with it."

Gov. Deal is expected to sign the bill.

Also at the state capital last week, Gov. Deal announced that education initiatives all around Georgia were about to get a shot in the arm, thanks to an increase in the Fiscal Year 2019 state revenue estimate of more than \$194 million over initial projections.

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UC Fire Department stays busy with rescue, crash and blaze

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

The Union County Fire Department is always ready at a moment's notice, thanks to the dedicated first responders who make swift emergency responses possible.

Sometimes, however, first responders can get to feeling a little strain when multiple emergencies begin to pile up, like on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 28.

"We had three things going on pretty close to the same time," said Fire Chief David Dyer. "We had several regular medical and other calls like we usually do."

"But about 2 p.m., we got a call for a person who had fallen on the Appalachian Trail and hurt their ankle. When we got to the guy, he was about 250 meters off the trail. We had to do a rope rescue to get him to the trail, and then we had to carry him out to the



The Union County Fire Department sent four crews into this Crawford Road house on March 29 to battle a blaze that spread between floors. Fortunately, no one was home or injured.

med. unit." Just as the rescue was coming to a close, Union County E-911 Dispatch received two new calls back to back.

"Then, we got a call for a motor vehicle accident on Loving Road, and it was a pretty significant accident,"

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UC Sheriff's Office uses voice stress analysis to detect deception

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Det. Marc Pilote of the Union County Sheriff's Office has completed training to become a Computer Voice Stress Analyzer certified examiner.

Loaded up on a computer, CVSA software becomes a truth verification instrument similar in nature to a polygraph test, though the two technologies are fundamentally different.

A polygraph measures blood pressure, respiration, heart rate and skin conductivity, and requires that the person

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UCSO Det. Marc Pilote is now fully certified to use the Computer Voice Stress Analyzer, a truth verification instrument. Here he is with NITV Senior Instructor Michael McQuillan.

Late night shopping to begin in Downtown Blairsville

By Mark Novak
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville Downtown Development Authority Darren Harper announced that businesses in the downtown area will begin to stay open later to accommodate their customers in the warmer spring months.

Harper and others discussed these plans in a monthly DDA Merchant's Meeting hosted by Cabin Coffee on Tuesday, March 27, and those gathered went over other upcoming events.

"Shop Late Thursday" See Shopping, Page 2A



Blairsville DDA Program Manager Darren Harper in the March 27 Merchant's Meeting at Cabin Coffee in Downtown Blairsville.

Photo by Mark Novak

Panel Built expansion serves as sign of the times

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Georgia has become one of the hottest states for business, and industry is flourishing in Union County and beyond.

Last summer, Advanced Digital Cable announced a \$15 million expansion project right here in Blairsville, and several months later, local business Panel Built Inc. expanded its own production capabilities to keep up with growing demand.

Brothers Pat and Mike Kiernan founded Panel Built in 1995, and they started the business with the construction of pre-manufactured buildings.

"Today, Panel Built offers a complete line of custom modular offices, mezzanines, exterior booths, pre-assembled security buildings and cleanrooms," per PanelBuilt.com. "All our multiple product lines are produced on site, in four state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities."

Panel Built has expanded several times in the last 23 years, most recently in November 2017, when the company moved its line of welded steel and ballistic-rated buildings from a 10,000-square-foot facility on Rock Road to a 40,000-square-foot facility on Patton Place.

This move was necessary because, as Mike Kiernan put

it, they were "bursting at the seams."

Since settling in to the new production space at the old Jimmy's Metal Roofing building five months ago, Panel Built has managed to add eight new jobs companywide, and overall, business has been good.

"We've got a couple of facility plans," said Kiernan, looking ahead. "We have about five acres next to our headquarter building (on Beasley Street), and we're looking to build a 60,000-square-foot facility there in the next three years."

Continued Kiernan: "Our goal is to grow about 20 percent a year. That doesn't mean that we

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Panel Built owner Mike Kiernan and Mitch Griggs of the Union County Development Authority with Panel Built employees at the manufacturer's new site on Patton Place in Blairsville.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

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