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August 28-September 10, 2025

Thompson's legacy lives on

BY KIM VON KELLER

On September 13, 2025, The Westside Community Center will host Dr. Beatrice Thompson's Legacy Dinner in recognition of her 50 years as an educator, politician, and community leader. It also serves as a fundraiser to continue the mission of the community center, which has been chaired by Dr. Thompson since its inception.

The celebration, which will take place at the Anderson Civic Center, begins at 2:00 pm with a silent auction as bidders compete for items such as a 7-day Florida vacation, Clemson football tickets, and artwork by local artists. The dinner, which begins at 4:00 pm, will feature food and entertainment as special guests share stories of the guest of honor.

"Dr. Thompson's decades of advocacy

have uplifted countless lives, championed education and equity, and strengthened the foundation of our community," says the Legacy Dinner Committee. "This Legacy Dinner will not only honor her past accomplishments but will also help sustain the legacy she has built for future generations."

Dr. Beatrice "Bea" Thompson was born and raised in Townville, South Carolina. The eighth of nine children, Bea always dreamed of being an educator, with the goal of advancing herself educationally in order that she might be able to help others.

Dr. Thompson graduated from Reed Street High School in Anderson. She earned her bachelor's degree from South Carolina State University, master's

SEE THOMPSON ON PAGE 2





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Thompson

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

degrees from both Atlanta University and Howard University, and a doctoral degree from the University of Georgia.

Her first teaching assignment was something of a homecoming as she accepted a position at Reed Street High School. Her career in education would go on to span four decades.

In 1976, she made history as the first African American elected to the Anderson City Council. While on the council, she worked to address drainage problems, improve neighborhoods, create affordable housing, upgrade the Westview cemetery, and rename a road after Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. She also was the driving force behind the Church Street Heritage Plaza, which commemorates the area where African Americans owned thriving businesses for decades. Dr. Thompson served on the Municipal Association South Carolina Board of Directors and was the first African American and first council member elected as the association president. She received the Municipal Association's E. Allison Farlow Award, the highest honor that recognizes those who have contributed to the advancement of municipal government in South Carolina at the 2025 Annual meeting. She is currently serving as the longest elected official in South Carolina.

Brandy Bell Greer is a member of the committee hosting the Legacy dinner.

"Dr. Thompson gave her heart to providing the leadership and commitment to the renovation of Old Westside High School into the Westside Community Center, widely known as 'the haven on the hill.' From its earliest visionary perception to its committed mission, to its step-by-step development, to its current status, the community has come together to fulfill its mission of 'working together, making a difference' for the citizens in the community. Dr. Thompson has served as Executive Director of the center for 28 years, and her legacy as director uplifted countless lives and strengthened the foundation of our community. She continues to live by the philosophy instilled by her parents, who stressed, Give to the world the best that you have, and the best will come back to you."

If you would like to help celebrate the legacy of Dr. Beatrice Thompson, educator, politician, and community leader, tickets for the Legacy Dinner are \$50. To purchase your tickets or inquire about sponsoring a table, call the Legacy Committee at 864-318-3421 or send an email to westsidecommunitycenter864@gmail.com. Tickets should be purchased by September 10, 2025.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

I use something cosmetic on my face and body every day, like most of us do in our daily beauty routines. What really catches me off guard is do we really know exactly what's in the product. For example, when we're doing our skin care, we don't even realize how it can actually strip the barrier of our face. From parabens to talc, fragrance and dare I even say formaldehyde. I think collectively as a whole, we have all been conditioned to think well, we've used this for years. It's not affecting us in any way, but it can if you're not careful.

There are quite a few toxic things in our bathroom cabinets, vanities and on top of our makeup tables that we use, that we don't even realize are harmful. I'm here to help you know it's easy to start making a switch. I am a perfume addict slash smell good junkie, if you will and I probably will be until the end of time. I love body oils, essential oils anything that smells good, but recently I found a very impressive clean brand called, Good Chemistry. The actual concoction smells extremely Heavenly. I have been wearing the Cocoa Blush and it has notes of coconut water, driftwood and pineapple in it. Most body sprays or perfumes are full of carcinogens and can disrupt our hormones, reproductive system and many other terrible things that harm our bodies. So, if you want to be proactive, start looking into clean perfume brands. They can smell really incredible just like the other brands that we have grown up with and love.

Ilia beauty has gorgeous makeup if you're ready to switch over to a healthier brand. From foundations to skin tints, concealers, mascaras, blushes and lips. They have it all. They're committed to safety and what makes them really top-notch is they're cruelty free, which is very vital to me. Many of their

products are meant to nourish your skin have an SPF and give you a natural beautiful glow, plus a good coverage. They have sample boxes you can buy if you want to try. If you want to be really ostentatious aka bougie. You can always try Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop line.



Kristine March

She's super committed to making really high-class products that are definitely on the pricey side, but actually work and get the job done. Some of her best sellers include body oil, eye masks, and even something that you can drink every morning in a powder form. I personally want to try her glycolic acid peel pads. They say it's like an actual chemical peel, but just in a little packet form. You can also tell the difference in as little as two weeks. Sign me up.

Another thing that you can add to your clean beauty routine that is very cost effective and easy to do, is just simply making it yourself. For example, yogurt and honey masks, coconut oil and beeswax lip balms and even Do-It-Yourself toners made out of witch hazel and rose water. These would even make for beautiful gifts for friends. There are endless options when it comes to clean beauty and changing up your routine just to be a little more aware, conscious and more sustainable. You can always do research on your own and start checking your brands. Ask a dermatologist or ask the people at your makeup counters. Start becoming more aware, and it will make your life even better. How are you going to start making some of your beauty routines cleaner? Remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters. Stay healthy y'all.

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A conversation with Anderson artist Nat Morris

You were born here in Anderson. Were you a kid that loved to create?

"I did love to create when I was a kid, like all the time; painting and drawing and playing, acting out movie scenes."



Lisa Wilson

Did you have somebody in your life that encouraged you to pursue art?

I used to watch my dad paint when I was growing up. That's probably where my love for it started. And my high school art teacher was a pretty big influence.

So you've been creating your whole life. What got you to the point where you decided to become a painter?

I didn't want to get older and look back and wish I had tried it. So I decided to give myself a year of painting and if it doesn't work out, then I can say I tried. And it's been working out ever since.

This collaboration that you did with Shea Abramo is an incredible exhibit. I hate that I missed the artist's talk, but she said it was recorded, so I'm looking forward to hearing that. But from what she said, y'all worked independently and didn't really talk about what you were doing.

"We met up and discussed what the theme of the show would be. Topics and stuff like that. And then, when we finally got it together we went our separate ways and worked on our stuff. While in the middle of working on some of my pieces and researching I came across two images that inspired the name of the show."

Do tell!

"I came across the painting American Gothic by Grant Wood and next to it was a photograph by Gordon Parks with the same title. And I had never seen that photograph before, and I thought it was cool that two different artists were talking about the same subject with contrasting perspectives. And I thought that was like me and Shea; like, we're both doing a show on the same subjects, but from different vantage points. And spelling Amerika with a K, I got that from author Franz Kafka. He wrote a book called The Trial. And in that book, the protagonist, Josef K, is just sitting in his home, and the police come to arrest him and then never tell him what he's getting charged with. And he has to go through this crazy trial and everything, and he's found guilty. And he's still never told what he's been accused of. And I compared that to lynchings in the past. People like Emmett Till and thousands of others dragged from their homes and wrongfully accused."

And you and Shea are also going to do another collaboration, right?

"Yeah, this show is the first installment of a Trilogy. We've got American Gothic. And then next year will be American Beauty and the following year will be American Dream"

That sounds awesome! I saw you also are doing tattoo work. How'd you get into that?

I had been curious about it for a while and my friend, Keith Freelin always wanted me to try it out. He said if he ever opened up his own shop then he wanted me to be his apprentice. He opened up Lost Sailor Studio and gave me a call.

Well, you obviously passed your apprenticeship. "Oh yeah, I've been in it for a while now."



What does your ideal future look like?

Me sitting in my home studio painting, listening to music, talking to my wife and hanging out with my dogs.

Do you ever think about moving? Probably not out of the upstate.

So you've got roots here.

I do. Majority of my family and friends are here. I really like the pace here.

Do you have a favorite artist or favorite influences?

I have a few favorites. Salvador Dali, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Norman Rockwell."

Those are three very different, incredibly different styles. That's so interesting, like none of those are similar at all, which I love, you know, because that gives you range. Your brain is not stuck in a mode.

Do you have a website or anything with your artwork?

Yeah, it's called Oil and Mischief. I need to put some of these pieces from Amerikan Gothic on there."

Do you have something that you try to live by?

"That's a tough question. Just be better than you were yesterday, right? Be kind to people. That's how I try to go, yeah, day to day."



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THE KING OF TIDES

High tide was approaching as we looked out over the marsh, while relaxing on the porch of our creekside beach rental. We knew just about where the high tide stopped during each cycle, so were surprised to see that the water was rising higher...and higher...and higher. The water flooded the entire boat launch driveway, coming almost up to the house. We learned through a little research that what we were experiencing was a king tide.

A king tide? I'd heard of spring tides, which occur when the earth, sun, and moon are all in a straight line, causing high tides to "spring" higher and low tides to be lower for a day or two. But spring tides aren't enough to cause the water to rise as high as this did.

A king tide is an extreme form of a spring tide, where not only are the

earth, moon, and sun in a straight line, but the moon in its orbit is closer to the earth than at any other time.



Ann K. Bailes

That's called perigee, and the closeness of the moon to the earth causes extreme variation.

This phenomenon is scientifically known as "perigean

spring tides"—but the common term "king tides" certainly describes them with more imagination.

This year, king tides occurred on the South Carolina coast in March, April, and May, and are also forecast for October 7-11, November 4-9, and December 3-6. They are predictable because they occur at

specific times of the moon's orbit, but are worse if they coincide with rain and storms. People who live or are visiting near the coast should be aware of flood zones and especially prepare for king tides if bad weather is forecast at the same time.

The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services has developed an initiative for studying king tides, and they would like the public's help. Anyone who is near a king tide is asked to take photos at or near peak high tide, at places where the height can be gauged against familiar landmarks like buildings, roads, bridges, and sea walls. Of course, be safe and stay away from dangerous situations and conditions when taking photos. The SCDES will evaluate the photos uploaded to <https://mycoast.org/sc> and use them for analysis and



planning of the effect of king tides. They may also use the photos in their publications and websites.

This statewide effort is part of a much larger king tides study along both coasts and even worldwide, so photos taken by South Carolina citizens can be used in developing a

major scientific data base.

Next time we're at the beach, enjoying watching the water rising in the marshes, we'll try to be aware of the king tides schedule. We don't control nature; we just need to know how to respond to what she throws at us — especially with king tides!



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DOWN WITH PHONES

Our Governor, Henry McMaster, has just signed a bill that will prevent us from grabbing our phones while driving. That's right, starting September 1, 2025, we will not be



Neal Parnell

able to hold or support any mobile device with any part of our body while driving. We cannot read, compose, transmit e-mails, text, or watch videos while dodging potholes.

I am convinced that we should no longer call ourselves superior, top of the food chain humans, as I now believe that we are only animals that can talk. And boy, do we love to talk. It's gotten so bad that we now must pass laws to remind us to "keep our eyes on the road". Just think about that a minute. How can a supposedly highly evolved being surmise that they can travel sixty miles per hour with other cars all around them and look down for even a sec-

ond without there being a law that says they can't? We are nothing more than adults who need a babysitter at all times and can't be trusted not to throw litter out the windows, stop for a school bus, use a turn signal, or wear a seatbelt without a law telling us what we should already know.

There were no cell phones when I was a teenager; we only had landlines coming into the house. One of the worst punishments a parent can impose on a teen is to take away their phone privilege. When this happened to me, the first thing I wanted to do was call all my friends and tell them that I couldn't use the phone.

I called my mother the other day, she answered, and we chit-chatted for a few minutes before she abruptly said, "I'm driving." I hung up on her immediately. I refuse to distract anyone, especially my 90-year-old mother, while driving. Yes, she should not have answered, but after September 1, she'll be breaking the law if she does.

It's a little weird that on Sept. 1, you won't

even be able to legally have a phone in your lap while driving, but you can have a cat there. You read that correctly. You, your baby, and all of your passengers must be strapped in with a seatbelt or car seat, but at this point, your cat can legally crawl around the inside of a moving vehicle with no restraint at all. Your doggie can also roam around, hang its head out the window, and sleep in your lap if it chooses to. Of course, it's not safe. One backfire or any sudden movement could send that little ball of fur and claws into a screaming, frenzied, scratching panic, causing a ten-car pile-up that it walks away from with its tail in the air like nothing happened. It took hundreds of horrible phone-related accidents for this new law to be enacted, and not one of them involved a cat, except for those that were watching cat videos instead of the road.

There is one thing that causes more accidents than pets, alcohol, or dialing a phone, but there is no law against having them in your car, BUGS. Yep, insects cause more



drivers to spaz out, hit the brakes or the gas, swerve into traffic or off the road than any other distraction, and unfortunately, just like the cat, it usually gets away unharmed.

Remember, if you are the driver, you are in control and responsible for everything inside the vehicle. It's up to you to make sure everyone and everything is safe, so please, Secure your Pets, Keep Your Eyes on the Road, and check for bugs before heading out.

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- ♦ Remind yourself, the journey is about progress and not perfection. It takes time to grow skills, and the practice is where the magic happens. Let go of the self-critical voice and replace it with a voice of confidence and pride.
- ♦ Spend time with people who are on your team. Connect with people where you can be your authentic self and where you feel safe. Prioritizing yourself builds worth and confidence.
- ♦ YOU are not responsible for how someone else responds, reacts, or thinks. If someone is unkind or not respectful, it does not mean that you deserved or caused it. Let go



- of the heavy burden or backpack full of heavy bricks.
- ♦ Your body is not a problem to fix. Our bodies are meant to grow and change. If you stop fighting the process and embrace what is, most people feel more comfortable, confident, and grateful for what the body does every day.
- ♦ Be curious, not shameful. Growth is blocked when we go down a shame spiral. Even if something does not work out as planned or there is a bump, it does not mean

- that you failed, are unworthy, or stupid. It is part of your journey and process. Learn from it and move forward.
- ♦ We all need connection. We all want to belong. There is a big difference between fitting in and belonging. The former requires you to change something about the self to be accepted. The latter focuses on acceptance and embracing who you truly are.
 - ♦ Reels and social media feeds are often painting a picture of the best moments. You don't see behind the scenes, so try not to compare your behind the scenes to their external picture portrayed. Negative comparison fuels shame and inadequacy.
 - ♦ Practice self-compassion every day. What you say to yourself matters the most. Treat yourself as you would a close or best friend.

Mary-Catherine McClain Riner, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.S., is a Licensed Psychologist with Riner Counseling, LLC. Visit www.rinercounseling.com or call 864-608-0446.

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THE GARDEN SHOP

Summer successes and reviews



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As September draws near, it seems natural to review summer, what grew well and what didn't. Over the years, for numerous reasons, some containers have gone along the wayside. All container plants survived this year except some marigolds in a concrete pot that, as I was told, came out of the abandoned Anderson Hardware Store downtown. It's a unique concrete pot, and it's definitely old. One side of the bottom is chipped. It seemed to fit some sentiment from my young, struggling days living at The Wilmary downtown. My apartment overlooked the Anderson Hardware building and

Bailes Shoe Shop. If anything gets put in that pot next year, it will need to be moved to a shadier spot. A few marigolds are coming up in it from seed. As the plants were dying, I gathered, and scattered, seeds in the front garden. We'll see what happens next year. A trident maple tree now shades the breezeway. Several pots will need to be changed next year. A favorite pot that has lady's faces on it has gotten a geranium put in it each year. The geranium did not bloom at all. Even some house plants don't get enough sun in their usual summer breezeway spots anymore. A very pleasant come back this summer are cup plants (*Silphium perfoliatum*). A big, bold perennial that is sometimes listed as weedy. After many years, deer finally decided they liked it. The same sites that say it's deer resistant. Growing on average about eight feet tall, it is



Swallowtails enjoying cup plant

narrow at the bottom, usually only a couple of feet wide. Some years, it has been easily 10 feet tall. Bright yellow flowers at the top of big square stems are butterfly magnets. Other pollinators enjoy it also. This plant fits the adage that all mints have square stems, but not all square stems are mints. Cup plants are in the aster family. Leaves hold water at the stems, hence its common name. Goldfinches love this plant too and can often be seen drinking water from the "cups". In 20 years, the plants have only multiplied to about a dozen or so. Some have been divided and sold at the

master gardener plant sale. This year, there are eight plants, hardly enough to be called weedy (in my opinion). Deer ate a few cup plants when they got about knee high. After spraying the plants with Bobbex, deer have left them alone. Cup plants rarely flop either, even being 10 feet tall. The stems are big and strong. The garden seems to have more butterflies this year. It's been busy all summer. Once cup plants started blooming, about early/mid-July, there have been more swallowtails on the plants than I could count. Our state butterfly is the easter tiger swallowtail. The picture shows two males, and one female, with blue on her wings. I've never tried deadheading cup plants to see if they will bloom longer. Nor have I saved seeds to start in pots. Speaking of starting seeds, while tending and cleaning the front garden, a baptisia, commonly called false indigo, that had grown into the path was cut back. Seed pods are usually left on the plants because they dry

wonderfully and add another layer of interest. But I decided to see if growing from seeds would be successful. Dividing this native baptisia can be difficult. Roots are very thick and difficult to cut through. Pods were cracked open, shook over containers with potting soil, then pods laid on top to mark what is in the pot. Some pods were simply laid in other pots, left to their own to crack. Wow, the pots are full of sprouts! If I'd known it was going to be that simple, fewer pods would have been put in more pots. Time will tell if dividing them up works. This turned into such a simple, pleasant surprise. Native baptisia has almost true, dark blue flowers. New varieties come in yellow, white, and some bi-color blooms too. They are all very easy to grow in full sun, at least 5 hours, and deer resistant. Dried pods last a long time and have been used in winter containers through the years. Regardless of those brutally hot days, the garden fared pretty well this summer.

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CELEBRATING OUR 250TH BIRTHDAY

BY RICH OTTER

Throughout the State of South Carolina plans are underway to celebrate the Country's 250th birthday since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Anderson County has a 250 Committee that has been meeting under the auspices of the Anderson County Museum since 2022 and coordinating with city and county agencies for the occasion.

The Anderson County area did not host any battles during the war, so the committee is looking at alternate historical moments with projects to recognize occurrences and their early impact upon the county. In fact, the county did not even exist at the time. It was Cherokee territory and later part of the Pendleton District. There are those who did engage in the ensuing fight whose final resting place is here, and they will be recognized as best they can be identified.

A search is on for a fort that was said to have existed near Pendleton along the 18 Mile Creek. General Andrew Williamson has been confirmed as having camped at the fort but the exact location has been lost in time. A map of the general's campaign has been studied and a tracing of his movements have offered clues, but proof has been elusive. If the exact location is identified, it is anticipated a historic marker will be erected.

One of the most interesting trails that passes through Anderson is what is known as the General's Road. It denotes travel between General Andrew Pickens' home and Abbeville. His friend, and battle commander, was Robert Anderson during the Revolution, our town and county's namesake. Coming from Abbeville, the route took a traveler northwest across the Little River at Campbell's Mill and



then to the Temple of Health before entering the Pendleton District.

The Temple of Health was said to have been an inn owned by the Wakefield family, including a post office, and the community also bore the same name. The next stop was the famous stage stop at the Varennes Tavern, built in 1780, under the proprietorship and postmaster Jesse Ward Norris. The tavern had been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but sadly burned in 1982.

There was little habitation on the trail thereafter passing through what would later become Main Street in the city of Anderson

until reaching the Whitehall Tavern somewhere close to where Clemson Boulevard and Concord Road now intersect, and then past Three and Twenty Creek to about where La France Industries is currently located. Thereafter it angled to Pickens' Hopewell Plantation. A marker for the road will be placed on the General's Road (Anderson's Main Street), near the center of the city.

A very exciting program being developed with Anderson University professors for area teachers and students constitutes Traveling Trunks.

They include a compilation of historical information to be checked-out from the Anderson County Library with a library card for a period of 21 days. The trunks offer age-appropriate lessons following South Carolina educational standards with "hands-on" experience that transport students straight into the heart of South Carolina during the Revolutionary War period.

The trunks are equipped with materials to spark curiosity about South Carolina's history, including letters, maps, reproduced artifacts, and ready-to-use lesson plans and activities.

Collaboration with the Arts Center, Anderson University and others will offer

Revolutionary themed art shows by area artists. Programs will be offered at local schools. Students of all ages in the community will be engaged in art and literary projects, including home schoolers.

The community will be adopting a fun activity replicating a program introduced for the Bicentennial Celebration fifty years ago. It entails painting fire hydrants by youngsters throughout the community to look like Revolutionary period individuals. With help from the city of Anderson (and other county municipalities that may be interested), the Arts Council through its members will develop appropriate designs and instructions. Paint will also be furnished. Student artists will select their favorite hydrant.

The County's 250 Committee, operating through the Anderson County Museum, is a participant in some of the programs, but is functioning as a coordinator calling upon the talents and assistance of other agencies and individuals in a united community activity. Suggestions for appropriate programs or volunteers will be gratefully received.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to SC Statutory Law, personal property from the following unit will be sold on September 15, 2025 at 10am at Stowaway Self Storage, 4350 Highway 24, Anderson, SC 29626.

Unit A85/86 - C. Hunter

Unit appears to have the following items:
Couch, Side by side refrigerator
2 Stools, Small Lamp, Boxes,
Long angel irons (poles) with electric wiring
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Yellow Jackets drop season opener at Byrnes

Nothing came easy for the T.L. Hanna football team when they traveled to Duncan, S.C., to play Byrnes High School last Friday night.



Brian Hodges

Byrnes was excited to play in an upgraded stadium after spending all of last season on the road.

The Yellow Jackets, playing in front of a crowd of 8,000, fell behind 20-0 at the half, briefly fought back, but eventually suffered a 30-10 loss.

It snapped Hanna's four-game win streak against Byrnes.

"We wanted to set the tone, make some history in our new stadium," Byrnes coach

Reggie Shaw said in a TV interview.

Jaylon Watson led Hanna's offense with over 50 yards rushing. He also had an outstanding night as a punter.

The Jackets' first two points came on a safety in the third quarter and then took the ensuing kickoff and drove 47 yards for a touchdown.

On the scoring drive, Hanna had driven for one first down, and then broke out a play-action throwback pass to a wide-open Camden Lawson, who rumbled 31 yards to the 2-yard line.

Quarterback Gavin Magin eventually



scored a TD on a sneak and then completed a pass to Walker Kelley for the two-point conversion. Suddenly it was 20-10, and Hanna had some momentum. But Byrnes responded by driving to the Hanna 20, and they finally settled for a 42-yard field goal

and a 23-10 lead.

In the fourth quarter, Byrnes receiver Chanin Harris caught a finger-tip, 78-yard scoring pass to complete the scoring.

Hanna has a week off before playing at rival Westside on Sept. 5. The Rams lost their opener, 49-7, to Vestavia Hills, Ala.



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OBITUARY

Rhonda Lerea Roberts Agnew

Rhonda Lerea Roberts Agnew, age 54, of Starr, South Carolina, passed away at her home on July 31, 2025.

Born on September 15, 1970, in Bakersfield, California, Rhonda was raised in Piedmont, South Carolina, by her loving parents, James Benjamin "JB" Roberts and Patti Roberts. She was one of six children and grew up surrounded by the lively energy of a big family. From a young age, Rhonda stood out,



she competed in beauty pageants, modeled, and even starred in commercials. She was once crowned America's National Sweetheart and famously appeared as the "Duke's Mayonnaise Baby."

Rhonda graduated from Wren High School and went on to attend Clemson University before beginning her greatest adventure: motherhood. She and her husband, Timothy Agnew, made their home in Piedmont, SC before settling in Starr after the birth of their youngest child. A devoted mother, Rhonda poured her heart into raising her children and later returned to work as an accountant and bookkeeper, a role she excelled in thanks to her sharp mind and natural gift for numbers.

Rhonda will be remembered most for her infectious laugh, her quick

wit, and the way she could make anyone smile with her humor—whether it was dry sarcasm or a classic dad joke. She was the heart of every room and never missed a milestone, game, or celebration. Her pride in her children was unmatched: Garrett, a Clemson graduate and world traveler, and

Crayton, proudly serving in the U.S. Navy with the Blue Angels.

She is survived by her husband of 34 years, Timothy Agnew (62); her children,

Garrett Agnew (26) and Crayton Agnew (24) with his wife, Kaitlynn Agnew (21); her parents, JB (76) and Patti Roberts (75); her sisters, Jamie Lawless (47) and Mary Roberts (35); and her brothers, Erik Roberts (45), Steve Roberts (53), and Ryan Roberts (39). She was deeply loved and will be missed beyond measure.

A private service for family and close friends was held on August 16th. In honor of Rhonda's love for flowers, she never passed up a chance to stop and smell them, those wishing to send arrangements may do so to: The Agnew Family, 220 Devonshire Road, Starr, SC 29684.

Rhonda will be remembered for her radiant smile, her genuine, heartfelt laugh, and the unwavering love she had for her family.

Lord willing and the creek don't rise

Before there were social media influencers, there were great community folks who worked, served others and raised a family inside the town. One of Anderson's favorite influencers is Ms Betty McAbee and usually referred to as Betty Bandid or Nurse Betty. Most everybody in town knows and loves her.

Betty grew up in Virginia and North Carolina. She lived with her grandparents who were tobacco and cotton farmers. Her grandfather would frequently answer questions by saying, "Lord willing and the creek don't rise." Her grandparents soon became too old to care for her and off she went to boarding school at age 13. After high school graduation she attended school for nursing in Lynchburg, Va. where she earned her RN degree. There she also married her husband. Soon after, Bill and Pug were born in Virginia and in 1963 she and her husband moved to Anderson where Libba was born.

Betty started her career in nursing in 1968 at the Anderson Hospital in Intensive Care working the 3rd shift. "It about killed me," she recalled. Soon she left the hospital to join Anderson Surgical Clinic and worked for Drs. Powell, Williams, Perry and Waller. Dr. Roberts and Dr. Cook joined the team a few years later.

"I remember when Donnie Roberts would be on call and the hospital would page him for an emergency surgery and he would call me and say he needed me to go in with him to assist. I would throw on my scrubs and he would swing by and pick me up and we would ride together to the hospital. Once the surgery was over and the patient was stable, he would give me a ride back home."

From there, Betty's career took her to Latham Nursing Home as the head nurse. Latham soon sold to a new owner and Betty left there to join Anderson Dermatology Clinic where she worked for 21 years. She finally quit working at age 92. Valerie Garrison recalls, "Betty McAbee has been a beloved part of the Anderson Dermatology family since 2003 when she first joined us as a nurse. She officially retired in 2024 and we miss her presence, personality and influence around the office. Known for being just the right amount of bossy – the kind that only Betty could pull off. She had a special way of keeping us all on track with a smile, a laugh and a little sass. Her energy continues to inspire us. Betty isn't just part of our past, she's part of our heart."



Betty was a single working mother when the kids were young. Her nursing shift began at 7 a.m. so she was out the door before the kids got up. It was her oldest son, Bill, who got Pug and Libba up in the morning, fixed breakfast, and made sure they were dressed. Then the 3 of them walked to Concord School. On Sundays, if Betty had to work, Bill did the same thing. Once dressed, the three of them walked through the bushes in the back yard to Benji and Sally Smith's house behind their house and got a ride with them to church at First Presbyterian.

Growing up on Hanna Rd, there were 10 acres of field across the street where guys would gather and ride dirt bikes. When it got hot outside, you could just go in to a neighbor's house, like the Hiott's house, and pour yourself a glass of tea. After they enjoyed a cold glass of tea, they would set their glass in the sink and head back outside to play. Nobody on the street ever locked their doors then.

Rosanne Hiott Kinley reminisces, "I call her Mama Betty. She has been like a second mother to me since 1963. I grew up living beside her – eating at their house, playing with Bill, Pug and Libba...and Freckles. I walked into her kitchen recently and it was like I had never left. I love that dear lady"

Pug recalls, "Bill and I would ride our bikes to baseball practice at the old YMCA on Greenville St. When we got hungry, we would go across the street to McCallums Prescription Shop and order a sandwich at the counter." He says he's not sure who ever paid for their food.

During their games he said Betty would yell, "Y'all get on up there and get you a good hit!"

Betty has lived in her house for 62 years. It is warm and inviting. Over the years many of the kids' friends have stayed over and sometimes for long



periods. They still all gather there for Sunday lunch, every Sunday.

For decades Betty has been feeding feral cats. Her neighbor Melanie will come get the new kittens, have them spayed and neutered and return them to the neighborhood. Today, she has 5-6 she feeds at the back door and 8-10 at the front door each morning. Inside, her black and white dog Pepper keeps her company.

Betty drives a 1995 green Toyota Camry that Bob Williams bought for her 30 years ago. Carl Compton helped him find just the right car for her. After 30 years, it has a whopping 85,000 miles on it.

Several years ago, someone suggested in conversation, "Betty you should record a Facebook Live so that we all can catch up on what's going on around town." Well, she did. Every Tuesday at 5 PM, Pug and Libba come over and set up her phone for recording. Betty has jotted down a few highlights in sports, family, community happenings and just words of cheer. During her talks, she stops to say hello to fans who are watching on Facebook.

And like all good newscasters, she signs off with her personal favorite.

"Y'all have a good week and I'll see you next Tuesday. Lord willing and the creek don't rise."

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FROM THE SHELF

On ‘Battle of the Bookstores’ by Ali Brady

Battle of the Bookstores by Ali Brady is one of an surprising number of “You’ve Got Mail” remakes coming out this year. While I haven’t read the others, I’m going to go ahead and blindly state that they won’t compare Brady’s. A bold statement, but Brady takes the time to add different twists that also operate as delightful social commentary. I’m not saying that these other re-dos aren’t also doing so, but based on the sort of ‘blah’ descriptions, I’m being a judgey reader about it.

The big, delightful twist in this book is that it’s two indie bookstores that are genre or reader themed, instead of the indie versus the big bad corporate store you see in “You’ve Got Mail”. I’m not above the criticism of capitalism and the destruction of independent small bookstores, but in this case the competitive tension comes between a romance themed bookstore and a more esoteric/highbrow bookstore, adding to this age-old debate of the validity of romance novels versus more “serious” reading. Wonderfully, our leading lady Josie runs the literary/nonfiction themed bookstore, Tabula Inscripta (the Latin opposite of ‘tabula rasa’ which means ‘blank slate,’ so broadening your mind). Ryan, our leading man, runs Happy Endings, our very on-theme and over the top romance only bookstore. I

love this twist of the dude being the absolute champion of romance and the girl being the queen of the literary tome—it’s delicious.



Sara Leady

Our two bookstore managers are forced into competition when the owner of the building tells them that he’s combining their two stores and the coffee shop between them. They have the next three months to make the most money (while the renovation is wreaking havoc) and thus clench the job of being the sole manager of the new bookstore. Hilarity ensues as they start doing different events and store gimmicks to make the most money. Something I really appreciate is that neither of them is actively trying to sabotage the other despite the competition and extreme dislike (wait, is that attraction?) of each other. Brady makes many great non-typical approaches to tropes like this. There’s no ‘third act breakup,’ nor is there a mass miscommunication issue, even with the mistaken identities via online chatting; it’s refreshing.

Like in ‘You’ve Got Mail,’ Battle of the Bookstores also has the side of anonymous

online book bantering. Both Ryan and Josie are part of an online group for bookstore managers/owners and have been online friends for years. The whole point of this online community is anonymity, so while they’ve been friends for years, they don’t know each other’s names or other defining personal details. Their online relationship is maybe my favorite part of the book. The core of this relationship is literally just discussing books and trading suggestions. It’s here that I truly fell in love with the book because of its celebration of and love of books, regardless of genre or “seriousness.”

A favorite quote from the book, and the big motivation behind this review, is “the best way to truly know someone is by reading their favorite books.” A huge part of how Josie and Ryan fall in love is through their love of books. This is also how they get to know each other on deeper levels without actually realizing that’s what they’re doing. While I absolutely adore the quote, I wonder if perhaps it could be expanded. I think that while you can learn a lot about a person through their favorite books, I think you can perhaps learn more, or at least different things, by reading the books that have impacted the person the most.

I think the books that have the most visceral impact on us might be the bigger repre-



sentation of us as an individual. The experience of ‘visceral’ emotions isn’t limited to positive feelings, which I would most associate with something being a “favorite.” Brady teases this with the quote, “I am the product of every book I’ve ever read and every experience I’ve had, each heartbreak and failure, every moment of sadness and joy.” Here lies the magic of books, and Battle of the Bookstores. It’s a romance on all levels, including the love story between a book and its reader.

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