

Rhonda and Blake. As the current mayor of Vine Grove, Blake credits his mom's passion for others as what helped inspire his decision to enter public service.

After her last day at Hardin Memorial Hospital, Barbara began a well-deserved vacation. When she returns, however, no one expects her to slow down too much. As a local columnist wrote when he heard about her retirement, "For Barbara the word retire is a word, that's it. I am certain we still will see her around, everywhere we seem to go." I certainly hope we will. Today I am proud to join with the people of Hardin County in thanking Barbara Proffitt for taking care of so many in her community throughout the years. I ask my Senate colleagues to help me wish her a wonderful retirement.

Mr. President, the News-Enterprise in Elizabethtown recently published an article on Barbara's legacy of service to her community. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the News-Enterprise, May 6, 2018]

BARBARA PROFFITT: ONE OF HARDIN COUNTY'S TRUE GEMS

(By Jeff D'Alessio)

The first time I saw Barbara Proffitt I was standing in a hallway outside of the boys' basketball coaches office at North Hardin High School after a game in 1988.

I stood there, probably with a notebook and pen in hand. She stood there with candy bags in her hands—Tootsie Roll Pops and gum.

She saw me and scooted closer and said, "Are you the new guy?" I told her I was and best I can recall, now 30 years later, she told me to be nice to her boys and to Ronnie—the now legendary coach Ron Bevars.

And then she asked me if I wanted a Tootsie Pop and some gum.

Then I would see her at road games and tournaments, candy bags in tow, without fail, as was a hug for each player—star player or bench warmer—plus the managers and coaches.

I wondered what the deal was with this woman showing up at all these games with candy. The deal was this: That's who she is—kind to the core.

She would cheer, and boo occasionally, at games and she also was there to encourage and comfort. That's one of my Barbara Proffitt stories.

Here's another one or two. Those who know her, have many.

If she likes a column I write, she calls me. If she disagrees, she calls, I think she has once.

When our third granddaughter was born on New Year's Day 2017, she sat in the waiting room with my wife and me for a few minutes wanting to know how everything was going.

She parted with a hug, as she so often does.

The next day, she was there with gifts when McKenna was the first baby born for the year. Again, more hugs.

You see Barbara everywhere—dinners and parades, meetings and announcements.

She has plenty of energy for someone of any age, and for someone who gives and is on the go so much.

She has lived life at a quick pace and now it's time for her to slow down as she "re-

tires" from Hardin Memorial Hospital after 30 years. For Barbara the word retire is a word, that's it. I am certain we still will see her around, everywhere we seem to go.

It is who she is. She's a doer, not someone who stands on the sideline waiting for others to pitch in. I don't think she could stand to be sitting there watching others do what she is capable of doing.

When you talk about community gems in the people that make Hardin County what it is, Barbara is near the top of the list.

I remember Bevars telling me once she was as much apart of his highly successful program as anyone he could think of. She was there for her genuine love and concern for kids and coaches.

When I heard Barbara was retiring, I have to admit, I chuckled. I'm not sure how that word really applies to the most involved person I know.

Whatever it will mean to her, I hope it starts with years of good health and life fulfillment.

Aside from the Tootsie Pops, gum and hugs, there is much more to learn from Barbara: Being nice and genuinely kind-hearted are character traits that are hard to beat.

And you won't find many people, no matter where you go, nicer than Barbara.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALAN WATTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to congratulate Alan Watts, an indispensable broadcaster in western Kentucky, who will soon celebrate his 25th year with WKDZ/WHVO Radio in Cadiz. When the listeners of Caldwell, Christian, Lyon, Todd, and Trigg Counties tune in for the news, a trusted voice provides them with the information important to their lives.

Even before he graduated from high school, radio broadcasting had piqued Alan's interest. He worked part-time at WHOP in Hopkinsville through college, and he proudly remembers that his news career began when he attended a rally featuring Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Alan's time at WKDZ began in 1993 not with a formal contract, but rather with a handwritten agreement with the owner, D.J. Everett. He started by answering phones, writing stories on an electric typewriter, and delivering the weekend news. As the station has grown and expanded during the last 25 years, Alan has taken on more responsibility and has become a well-known local figure.

On weekdays at 5 a.m., Alan goes on air for his "Morning Ag Report." The program debuted in 2008 with the mission to tell the southern Pennyrile region's agriculture story. In his own words, "Each morning I start my day at 3 with a much-needed cup of coffee and a fresh outlook on life." Bringing the latest news to farm families, Alan and his team have earned the strong support of the community, but he doesn't sign off after a single program. Alan also hosts the "WKDZ Country Club" program for 3 hours, sharing news and local events and hosting a number of guests. It is his way to help listeners throughout the region begin their day.

As if 4 hours of daily broadcast weren't enough, Alan doesn't stop there. This January, he became the host of the Kentucky Farm Bureau's "Across Kentucky" program that airs on more than 140 radio stations across the Commonwealth. He is also a frequent guest on RDF-TV, the first 24-hour TV network with programming focused on agribusiness and rural lifestyles. Winning such praise as the 2007 Kentucky Farm Bureau Communications Award and the 2018 Christian County Friend of Agriculture, Alan has clearly earned the respect of his listeners and his peers.

I have enjoyed my many opportunities to join Alan's program over the phone, in studio, and here in my office in the U.S. Capitol. Covering everything from farm bills to tax reform and the Supreme Court, we have discussed the issues that are important to western Kentucky. When I join his show, I know that my constituents in the region are listening.

I would like to thank Alan for his years of dedication to his agricultural community and, once again, to congratulate him on this milestone accomplishment. As he continues his impressive career, I send my best wishes to him, his wife, Susan, and their daughter Jennie. I urge my Senate colleagues to join me.

Mr. President, the Kentucky New Era recently published a profile on Alan's career. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Kentucky New Era, June 20, 2018]

ALAN WATTS: INTERVIEWS BEHIND THE CAMERA SET STAGE FOR CAREER IN BROADCASTING

(By Tonya S. Grace)

As a youngster, Alan Watts used to go to LaFayette and drop into Jimmy Landers' general store.

He recalls the seeds, which, much like the familiar penny candy sought by eager kids in past decades, were scooped up by the pound by families who bought them for planting on the farm.

"Jimmy Landers had a store (where you) dipped seeds out of a bucket," remembers Watts, a Herndon farm kid who grew up to become the news and farm director at WKDZ/WHVO Radio in Cadiz. "He had a dipper, and you would dip out however much you wanted, a pound or whatever."

Landers operated his store until 2003.

Five years later, Watts' Morning Ag Report debuted on the air, and it has gained a following of folks as nearby as Christian and Trigg counties, as far away as Stewart and Montgomery counties in Tennessee.

Now a resident of PeeDee in south Christian County, Watts has made a living apart from his life on the family farm; in almost three decades in broadcast journalism, he's seen four presidents in person, met Fox news journalist Geraldo Rivera (a tiny little guy, Watts says) and followed his fellow broadcaster and late mentor Dink Embry into the Washington, D.C.-based National Association of Farm Broadcasting.

Only 150 or so people are members of the organization whose programs and services promote agriculture throughout the country,

and Watts says he is honored to be counted among their ranks.

He considers the countless people whose stories he has shared with his broadcast audiences through the years and says it is those stories about people that he enjoys the most about what he does.

"I really care about the people I talk about and the people I do stories on," notes Watts, who celebrates his 25th year with WKDZ come August. "I really love to tell the story of people. It's nothing about me, but about the people you meet, the average common people who are wonderful people."

Some of the stories hurt, the one about the murders of three children in 2008 in Roaring Springs, for example, or more recently, about the murders four years ago of Trigg Countian Lindsey Champion, his wife and daughter.

Champion had been a listener as well as a guest of Watts' Morning Ag Report and was just "a genuinely nice man," Watts recalls. He has fond memories of Champion, who had been retired from the Farm Credit Services office in Hopkinsville and was active in his family's Champion Farms in Cadiz.

Through the years, Watts has gained an affinity, a closeness, with the people he speaks with in his capacity as a broadcaster, the folks who are the subjects of the stories that are his livelihood. There are those who know him even though he may actually have never met them before, Watts muses.

Worth it every day.

They feel like they're a part of my life and I'm a part of their life," observes Watts, who is the second-longest tenured employee at WKDZ. "And that's what makes it worth it every day."

Seated recently inside the studios at the Cadiz station, Watts recalls how Embry, a longtime radio man at WHOP in Hopkinsville, and colleague Bob McGaughey at rival WKOA, first piqued his interest in the medium. The older men frequently interviewed Watts, then a teenager showing his family's cattle and sheep at the Western Kentucky State Fair, for their farm programs.

Watts found the process an intriguing one "Where I really got my interest was watching Dink Embry," Watts explains. "What Dink Embry did on the radio fascinated me."

He eventually began hanging out with Embry, helped him set up equipment and "enjoyed seeing what was going on and learning from him."

He began working part-time at WHOP in 1985 or 1986, conducting farm interviews for the station. Graduating from high school in 1986, he went on to Hopkinsville Community College before transferring to Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, where he received a degree in mass communications with a minor in animal science. Were it not for radio, Watts says, a career in animal genetics would have captured his attention.

He continued to work at WHOP throughout college and, after graduating in 1990, began his career with the station, working as a disc jockey and announcer. For a brief time, he left radio for the insurance business.

But he discovered sales was not for him and so, in 1993, Embry made a phone call on Watts' behalf and spoke with owner D.J. Everett at WKDZ.

Watts came on board in August of that same year, just four months after Cindy Allen Lax, who is now the station's senior marketing specialist.

Watts says he likely is one of the few people who do not have a contract.

"D.J. never had me sign a contract," he recalls of the agreement handwritten on a piece of paper that signified his hiring at the radio station.

Everett, he notes, had great expectations of his new employee and was tough, but he

also became a great friend and mentor to Watts. From Everett, Watts learned a "tremendous amount of knowledge" that taught him how to look for news, how to gather it and how to report the news to listeners.

In his early days with the station, Watts wrote his news on a typewriter in the newsroom, and, at a time when the station had only four employees, he also helped answer the telephones and did things in the business office.

"In those days, you did everything," Watts recalls.

Agriculture is big.

At the time, he said he didn't address agriculture much but did incorporate it into his regular newscasts, something he made a point of doing because "agriculture is such a big industry here," he explains.

In 2007, Watts received the Kentucky Farm Bureau Communications Award, recognizing his efforts to highlight the work that farmers do while also helping others understand the importance of agriculture.

His Morning Ag Report with Alan Watts began the following year, its beginnings taking shape with the germ of an idea after he attended a meeting.

The Ag Edge website was developed not long after the morning show.

Watts and David Fourqurean, an ag extension agent in McLean County, were returning from a Farm Bureau meeting, and Watts decided WKDZ should do something, given agriculture's impact in the area and his knowledge of it.

The program airs from 5 to 6 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Fourqurean and other agents have been frequent guests on the popular program. Watts interviews local farmers, features agriculture-related things going on in the community and highlights other current news events.

People comment about how the program reminds them of growing up on the farm, and they talk about how much they enjoy the conversation.

Watts is mindful of listeners who live on the farm and elsewhere, and for those who are not involved in agriculture, there's a need to explain what that load of tobacco they're following down the highway means to them, he notes.

This past January Watts saw President Donald J. Trump when the president was a featured speaker at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Nashville; Trump was interesting to see, noted Watts, who said the president connected so well with his rural audience on that day.

"He reminded me a lot of (former President Ronald) Reagan, with less finesse," Watts said of the 40th president known as "the great communicator."

Watts saw Reagan speak at Western's Diddle Arena, and he recalled the president's reaction when a balloon popped during his presentation.

Reagan, who was shot by attempted assassin John Hinckley Jr. in 1981, ducked upon hearing the noise and called out "Oh, you missed me."

In the ensuing years, Watts also saw former presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush and interviewed former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. These days, Watts is a frequent guest on RFD-TV, where he shares what is going on in agriculture in western Kentucky with viewers.

He has taken over as host and producer of Kentucky Farm Bureau's "Across Kentucky" broadcast and, in Cadiz, he co-hosts the Trigg County Farm Tour.

Earlier this year, Watts was named the 2018 Christian County Friend of Agriculture by the Christian County Agribusiness Association.

He notes that there are so many neat people to meet in agriculture, and Watts, who rises early every morning to prepare for his Morning Ag Report, declares that he looks forward to those early mornings every day.

"I don't think there's anything I'd rather do," he says of his love of agriculture and of the people he meets in his local community. "It's still fun and exciting every day."

Watts and his wife Susan Watts have a daughter, 10-year-old Jennie Watts, who continues to work on her family's farm in south Christian County.

## SOUTH SUDAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to bring attention to the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, and call on the administration to take further action to help find a sustainable diplomatic solution.

Today, July 9, is South Sudan's Independence Day. Instead of celebrating the seventh birthday of the world's newest nation, we find ourselves lamenting the human costs of South Sudan's 4-and-a-half year old civil war. The situation has created the largest refugee crisis in Africa. An estimated 4.5 million people have been forcibly displaced. An estimated 300,000 people may have been killed since 2013, but the death toll could be far, far greater.

The humanitarian situation is dire. Seven million people—60 percent of the population—require humanitarian assistance. Insecurity has disrupted farming cycles, grazing patterns, and trade routes; local markets have collapsed. Food prices have skyrocketed. Over 1 million South Sudanese children are facing acute malnutrition, and parts of South Sudan may be experiencing famine. While the United States, along with other donors, has taken measures to help those in need, our efforts have been thwarted on a variety of fronts. Relief supplies have been repeatedly looted. Government restrictions and insecurity hinder relief efforts.

The war has been characterized by horrific human rights violations. The U.N. Mission in South Sudan reports that, from the outset of the conflict, "Civilians were not only caught up in the violence, they were directly targeted, often along ethnic lines." The U.N. Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan suggests that ethnic cleansing has occurred. Forces on both sides have reportedly engaged in widespread sexual violence. An attack on a residence for aid workers in Juba in July 2016, during which Americans were assaulted and a local journalist killed, highlighted the dangers facing aid workers and other expatriates. According to the U.N., over 100 aid workers have been killed since the war began. Hundreds of attacks on humanitarian workers were reported in 2017. U.N. officials assert that targeted attacks against civilians, humanitarians, and U.N. personnel in South Sudan by government and opposition forces may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.