

Jerry Boyd

Boyd named principal at Upperman High School

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Herald-Citizen Staff

Jerry Boyd is no longer "interim" principal at Upperman High.

Yesterday, he was officially appointed to the position which he has held since last August.

Putnam Schools Director Michael Martin went to Upperman High yesterday to announce to the faculty that he has chosen Boyd from among other applicants to be principal of the Baxter high school.

Two other principalships currently held by interim appointees, those at Prescott Central Middle School and Cane Creek Elementary, will be decided later this school year after the positions are posted statewide.

Right now, Kim Stringer Wright is the interim principal at Prescott, and Eulene Locke is interim at Cane Creek. Both principalships became vacant recently due to the retirement of Mary Higdon at Prescott and Bill Dyer at Cane Creek.

Jerry Boyd was assistant principal at Upperman until last August when the principal of that school, Wayne Shanks, was transferred to the principalship at Cookeville High.

Boyd was then named interim principal. He applied for the job on a permanent basis.

Boyd had been assistant principal at Upperman since 1997 and was a high school science teacher in Morgan County from 1995 to 1997.

He holds a B.S. degree in biology, a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction, and an Ed.S. degree in instructional leadership, all from Tennessee Tech.

When Boyd wrote to Schools Director Martin last September asking for the job of Upperman High principal, he said that as assistant principal there he had developed "strong relationships of mutual respect and admiration with those that I serve."

"While insisting on nothing short of excellence from myself and others, I have advocated fairness, trust, openness, and responsibility."

He also said, "I embrace the opportunity to rise to the many inevitable and welcomed challenges that lie ahead for Upperman High School."

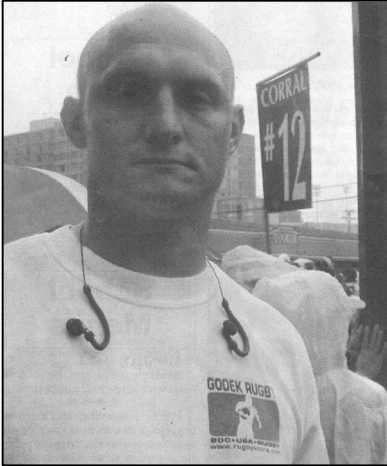
Boyd said his objective is "to provide leadership and vision as principal of Upperman High School, maintaining a community of learners focused on academic excellence striving for success for all."

Schools Director Martin told the Upperman faculty yesterday that the position of assistant principal at Upperman, which has remained vacant all this school year, will not be filled before school is out in May.

Martin told the Herald-Citizen today that during this year's budget process, he will evaluate all school administrative positions across the system.

Marathon runner

Running was *not* part of the daily routine of Upperman High School Principal Jerry Boyd when the idea came to him last fall to run in a marathon.



By BOBBIE BRUTON

HERALD-CITIZEN staff

"Last September, I just decided to do this as a personal goal -- to challenge myself," said Boyd, who at the time was not involved in any regular fitness program.

When Boyd told his students that he was going to run in the Country Music Marathon, held in Nashville last Saturday, their reactions ran the gamut from betting that he wouldn't finish the race to concern for his health.

"After I got to thinking about it, I decided it would be a good idea to get the faculty and students involved with it as a fund-raiser for the school," said Boyd. "We wouldn't have to go out and sell anything but just get pledges for the distance I ran. Regardless, I was going to run in the marathon, and I just thought it would be an opportunity for a fund-raiser for the school."

After students returned from spring break, pledge forms were distributed in each home room, and students were asked to talk to their families and church groups about getting per mile pledges.

"I presented it from the reality that I hadn't trained very hard," said Boyd with a grin. "I told them, I may make 10 miles or I might make the whole 26 miles. You know -- we'll see. But I was determined I was going to finish it, if I had to crawl or walk. Plus, I wanted to do something that would be a school-wide effort."

This was Boyd's first marathon, but the weekend before the marathon, he did get some experience at an organized running event when he entered the 10k run, hosted by the ROTC at Tennessee Tech University.

Still somewhat surprised at his newfound interest, he said, "If someone had asked me a few months ago if I liked running distances, I would have said 'no.'"

His goal for the Country Music Marathon was to finish in five to five and a half hours. His official "gun time" was five hours and 25 minutes.

"I thought I could do it. It turned out I was able to do it. The disappointing thing was you wear one of these little chips on your shoe that keeps your time, and apparently mine malfunctioned. So when they published all the times the chips had gathered, apparently mine didn't work, and I was listed as 'unknown runner.' There's something to be said about being anonymous," he laughed. "But just from the finishing time, I knew that was mine. Of course, I wasn't competing against the other runners. I was just trying to achieve my own goals."

"To be honest, I guess being a goal-oriented person I really hadn't set any personal fitness goals in the last while, and I think that by signing up and committing to a marathon that I was forcing myself to develop a personal fitness plan. I think it was more my stubbornness that helped me finish than it was health-wise.

"I ran a little bit last fall, but when the holidays hit, like everyone else, I got out of my routine and never did recuperate from the holidays. But when we got out for spring break, that was my wake-up call. I knew that in a month I would be running in the marathon. Then I started running in the afternoons. About a week before the marathon, I'd worked my way up to running about half a marathon -- about 10 miles."

Reflecting on the race and the 26.2 miles he ran, he said that the distance allowed him time to think and collect his thoughts, although it nearly pushed his body to its limits.

Some of his students were surprised he completed the marathon.

"Some of them, like myself, had a hard time thinking about how far 26 miles is. You drive a car 26 miles, and you don't really think about how far that is. So I guess a lot of them still have that concept. They think it is a long way, and it is," he said.

"The winner of the marathon ran it in two hours and 14 minutes. That gave me a greater appreciation for what someone could do in less than half the time it took me," he continued.

"It is humbling to be out there with so many people who had the same goal, with maybe a different version of finishing it in maybe two hours or five hours. Everyone was out there giving it everything they've got. And the spectators were cheering everyone on -- not just family and friends -- but everybody."

As he scanned the list of entrants, he saw that Putnam County was well represented in the race that included more than 16,000 runners.

"Some of them finished ahead of me," he observed.

Bands were set up every mile or so, playing a variety of music.

"That gave us something else to go for every mile or mile and half -- music and water. I didn't take any water for the first 10 miles, because I just didn't want to stop. But after that, I pretty much stopped at every water stop. I learned quickly that it's so much easier to slow down and walk while you're drinking. It slows your rhythm down, but if you don't slow down, then you're going to spill half of your water, and you won't get what your body needs," Boyd said.

"Apparently, I hydrated well, because I didn't get any cramps. It happened that the weather cooperated. About 11 o'clock, the sun came out, but it didn't get hot.

The race was delayed for 30 minutes because of thunderstorms with lightning. Rain continued at a steady pace for about an hour after the race started. Runners had the option to run the complete race or half the distance.

"I'd say the number was about 50-50 between those who ran 13 miles and those who completed the race," said Boyd. "I came away with a greater appreciation for people who run long distances."

"I'd like to develop a program and involve students to run with me, if I ever decide to run again," he laughed.

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