

FRANK MEDLEY RETIRING AT UHS

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As the school year comes to an end. Upperman High in Baxter is losing the big guy in charge.

Principle Frank Medley is bring his 34-year career as a teacher, coach and principal to an end, nine of those most recent years at the helm of Upperman High School.

A reception for him and his family was held Sunday afternoon at the Upperman cafeteria, with the faculty and staff as hosts, and, in a surprise announcements, a new reading room for the school was dedicated in his honor.

After graduating from high school in 1953, Mr. Medley joined the US Air Force and took basic training in Texas before being sent to Illinois for technical school. He then was sent to the Far East after special training. During his tour of duty overseas, he was able to visit and work in other countries, such as Japan, Korea, Okinawa, China, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

When Medley came back to the United States, he was stationed in Little Rock for two years. In Oct. 1957, he was honorably discharged from the Air Force.

Medley returned and wasted no time in beginning work on a college degree and entering a teaching career. For three years, he worked his way through Tennessee Tech. Persistence and hard work paid off when, in 1960, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in health, physical education and driver's education.

Then he jumped into the thick of thins, beginning teaching at Jere Whitson Elementary in Cookeville in the middle of the school year, teaching 13 8th-grade students. The next year, 1962, he taught the entire eighth grade class of 35 students.

In 1962, Frank Medley's career took a big change. He came to Upperman High School as a football and basketball coach, as well as teaching health and physical education.

He was head basketball coach for 16 years and recalls that "I had good ball teams, mostly because of the players' determination and dedication. Back then, there were no outside interest like today. The focus was on family, grades and basketball.

Thinking over his athletic teams, he reflects. "One of my teams was all National Honor Society members."

Some time in 1973, Medley received a promotion in the ranks of education, moving from the classroom to the front office as assistant principal. In 1986, he reached the top of those ranks when he became principal at Upperman upon the retirement of Arnold

Brown. By that time he had earned his Master's degree in administration and supervision while serving as teacher and administrator.

Now Mr. Medley will be putting all those years in education behind him. He notes that after retirement, he plans "to do a little farming and maybe some traveling." He says he will be staying busy.

When asked about any stand-out memories, he said: "One highlight I had happened when I first got here in 1962. I made a goal to retire as principal of this school. Thirty-four years down the road, I've reached that goal with the help of students and faculty."

His fondest career memory relates to "the love and association with the students over the years," he said.

As for missing his work at school, Medley replied, "I will miss this tremendously. It is in my blood; however, that will fade away."

Medley reminisced about the differences between Upperman High School when he first began in 1962 and now. "There has been a lot of progress at this school. The faculty as well as the technology has increased," he said. "I hope I have raised the quality of education, as well as developing better relationships with students and faculty.

"If I could go back in time and change things, there isn't a thing in the world I would change. I've enjoyed the students and the faculty. I can't say enough good things about them. I have no regrets. I hope I've been the type to have been fair and honest with students, faculty and the community. I did it to better them and not for my own personal satisfaction."

Medley wanted to pass on some advice for the upcoming students.

"People don't realize the importance of a grade or respect. Prepare yourself for the future; get all the knowledge you can get. I remember a friend of mine James Anderson, used to say, 'Education is free. Bring your own container, whether it be a thimble or a washtub.'"

His message for the seniors of 1995 is: "Pursue a career that you will be happy in. whether it be the job force, vocational school, college, whatever – pursue it. Be productive in whatever you do."

His advice for life is: "You should always be up front, honest, respectful and truthful in every situation you encounter.

Along with work, Medley has another special interest – his family. He has been "happily married" to his high school sweetheart since 1954.

He and his wife, the former Reba Jo Thomas, have two sons – Gary and Roger. Gary works at Bank of Putnam County and has three children – Jonathan, Kristen and Cynthia. Their youngest son, Roger, is married and works at Service Transport.



FRANK MEDLEY AND FAMILY

Surrounded by his family at a reception in his honor at Upperman High School on Sunday is retiring Principal Frank Medley, for whom a new reading room was named. From left, front, are the Medley's grandchildren, Kristin, Cynthia and Jonathan, and in back, daughter-in-law Amy and son Gary; Frank and his wife, Reba Jo; and daughter-in-law and son, Glenda and Roger. Photo: UHS