

PRINCIPAL PROFILE: HERB LEFTWICH - UPPERMAN HIGH SCHOOL

by Bailey Darrow

Upperman High School principal Herb Leftwich, center, helps students Madison Fox, left, and Mitch Baker, right, with their work. Herald-Citizen Photo/ Ty Kernea

BAXTER -- A 1974 graduate of Upperman High School, Herb Leftwich feels at home in his position as principal of the school.

"It's almost like coming home to your family when you arrive at school," Leftwich said. "You may not always agree on every issue but everyone cares deeply for the success of the other."



Leftwich grew up on a family farm in the Buffalo Valley community in western Putnam County where he still lives today.

"I was born in Detroit along with my two older brothers," Leftwich said. "My two younger sisters were born in Cookeville. I was about one year of age when we moved back to the farm."

As a child, Leftwich wanted to be a carpenter. He did spend some time working as a

carpenter as well as an ironworker, farmer and pastor. His desire to work with young people led Leftwich to education.

"I enjoy working with young people and watching them grow and mature into productive young adults," Leftwich said. "I was influenced by a former teacher, Mr. Terry Edgington as to the rewards of helping young people realize what they were capable of achieving.

"Mr. Edgington is one of those unique individuals who has the ability to see beyond where a child is and to see what they can become and accomplish with help, guidance, direction, and encouragement."

Leftwich earned a bachelor of science degree in education, a master of art in curriculum and development and a specialist in education administration and supervision.

He began his teaching career at Jackson County High School, where he taught for seven years and served as principal for almost eight years. Leftwich then moved to Upperman, where he served as vice principal for five years and has now been principal for five.

As principal, Leftwich said he does whatever needs to be done to make sure the school day runs smoothly.

"I see my primary responsibilities as carrying out district directives, providing leadership, and securing the necessary resources that our staff, faculty and students need to be successful," Leftwich said.

He finds Upperman to be a positive work environment.

"Everyone appreciates and values each other as individuals and the services they provide," Leftwich said. "The faculty and staff at UHS understands and realizes it takes everyone fulfilling their responsibility in order to achieve our goals."

Leftwich's favorite part of his job is watching seniors walk across the stage at graduation, "to be able to receive them as ninth graders, not much more than young children, and to see them grow and mature into young adults who will overcome the challenges and opportunities set before them."

Leftwich has three children of his own: Tonia Wheeler, Nathan Netherton and Matthew Leftwich.

"My first wife was Anita Davis. She passed away about 10 1/2 years ago from cancer," Leftwich said.

Leftwich and his second wife, Lavanaia were both part of the 1974 UHS graduating class.

"Her first husband is also deceased from cancer," Leftwich said. "She works part-time at School House Supply, which is owned by one of our children.

For almost 27 years, Leftwich has served as pastor at Wolf Creek Baptist Church and enjoys farming, fishing, hunting and being outdoors in his free time.

Upperman is his home away from home.

"Both faculty and staff are dedicated to the principle of making UHS the best that it can be and empowering our students to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves," Leftwich said.

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*See Schoolyard Tales at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>



PATRIOTIC EMPLOYER

Putnam County Superintendent, Dr. Kathleen Airhart, at right, and Upperman High School Principal Herb Leftwich, at left, were recently honored with the "Patriotic Employer Award" for their "contribution to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve Force." Presenting their plaques was Col. Larry O'Rear USAF (Ret), center, who is a coordinator with the Tennessee Committee for Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve. Dr. Airhart and Leftwich were nominated for the awards by CSM Terry Scott.

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