



Chef and entrepreneur Ouita Michel

‘There are times when I feel like I’m spread too thin,’ Michel says

By Collin Kruse

University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Media

Whether it be managing her eight restaurants or coordinating the supper program at Midway Christian Church, Ouita Michel always has a lot on her plate. Michel discovered in high school that she wanted to become a chef; little did she know that the skills she would inherit along the way would someday lead her to become a successful business owner and restaurateur.

After her time in cooking school, Michel took her first steps in the restaurant business in 2000, when she and her husband Chris purchased the historic Holly Hill Inn that would go on to re-open as a fine-dining establishment in May 2001. Michel had already decid-

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Midway Station, once a failure, is becoming a success for city

By Midway Messenger Staff

Midway Station, for years a failed industrial park and then a stalled retail and commercial development, has finally entered a profitable phase – and even lined up a day-care center for the town.

Mayor Grayson Vandegrift said that happened July 8, with closing of a sale to Imperial Asphalt, which says it will be the easternmost developable piece of Midway Station for equipment storage and won't manufacture asphalt there.

“Because the 4.01 acres was not originally platted with Midway Station, the bank does not claim a release price towards the principal,” Vandegrift reported. “For this reason, the Woodford County Economic Development Authority has agreed to use the proceeds, close to \$120,000 after closing costs, to use towards paying the interest due at the industrial park.”

That will relieve the city and county of the need to make an annual interest of about \$40,000 each on the bonds used to develop Midway Station. For 10 years, the interest had been paid by Lexington developer Dennis Anderson in return for an option on the property. Anderson dropped that option in February, leaving the Woodford County Economic Development Authority – or the city and county – responsible for it.

“This is not only a sign of goodwill from EDA to both the City of Midway and Woodford County, but also signals a new phase where our EDA is beginning to become self-sustaining, a fact that is good for the entire county,” Vandegrift wrote.

Midway Station's growth is the main factor in the city's collection of much more occupational tax, which has allowed the city to reduce property tax rates by 25 percent.

Expecting more development in the area, the city recently annexed 138 acres of farmland north and east of Midway Station and rezoned it as industrial. The area is just inside the urban services boundary established by

the county's comprehensive plan.

Recently elected City Council Member Logan Nance said he voted against the annexation because it “assures further industrial development beyond Midway Station,” and “I often have members of the community tell me how much they value the agricultural land and natural beauty surrounding Midway, and fear that it will go away.”

North and east of the annexed property, Brown-Forman Corp. has built, and is building, concrete warehouses to age Woodford Reserve whiskey; that tract is still zoned agricultural but is being developed under a conditional-use permit on the premise that whiskey is an agricultural product.

The most prominent development in Midway Station may be a church, on a six-acre lot scheduled for closing July 30.

The EDA board voted in April to pursue the sale to Journey Ministries Inc., which said in a news release at that time that it plans to build a facility that will seat 400 people and include an “educationally based child-care center modeled after the facility started by Pastor Gary L. Brown in Georgetown.”

Brown said in a telephone interview that the facility is at Grace Church, pastored by his son.

Journey has a church on Leestown Road in Franklin County, near the Woodford County line. It is not affiliated

with Journey Church on Lexington Road in Versailles, EDA Chair John Soper said.

The prospect of a day-care center in Midway was hailed as an important event. “I don't think I can overstate how important this is going to be for our city,” Vandegrift said. “Peo-

“I don't think I can overstate how important this is going to be for our city.” --Mayor Vandegrift, on day-care center to be built at church

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Former Messenger intern studies mass communication in Midway

By Al Cross
Messenger Editor and Publisher

For a town of 1,800 and a ZIP code of about 3,000, Midway is well covered by news and information media. The Midway Messenger provides continuous online coverage of events and issues, with a print edition about twice a year; The Woodford Sun regularly covers City Council meetings and other events in the town; and the Midway Musings social-media site has a large following.

All that was ideal grist for the mill of Sarah Ladd, who interned as a Messenger reporter last summer, recently graduated with honors from UK, then joined the Louisville Courier Journal as a reporter.

For her honors capstone course, she studied mass communication in Midway. The town is a good test bed for "The 11 Layers of Citizen Journalism" defined by Steve Outing of The Poynter Institute in 2005, Ladd said in presenting her study after the monthly community dinner at Midway Christian Church on April 29.

For Midway residents, some of her more interesting findings were the results of an online survey she conducted. It had 62 respondents. Asked where they get daily news, 22 said the Midway Messenger and 22 said Midway Musings, a "secret" Facebook group that has almost 700 members and has become an important communication platform for the town.

After the top two, at 35 percent, came The Woodford Sun's print edition, at 16.1% (10 people); the Residents of Northridge Estates closed Facebook group, 6.45% (four people); other social media, 3.23% (two people) and the Sun online, 1.6% (one person).

The impact of Midway Musings was illustrated in late July when Mayor Grayson Vandegrift said he would appoint a City Council committee to study changing the official name of Main Street to Railroad Street, which it was once called and is still called by some people. The idea was proposed on Midway Musings by local historian and merchant Bill Penn.

Vandegrift told the Messenger, "I hesitated to bring something from Midway Musings straight into potential policy without appearance by an individual at a council meeting, but this really isn't the first time the idea has come up, and the Musings post helped show how much support this might have."

He told Ladd for her paper that he primarily gets news from the Messenger and The Woodford Sun. "I follow Musings and Northridge as well, but consider it communication more than news."

Ladd put it this way: "It's a nice platform that people are using to facilitate news."

In her paper, she noted that the Northridge site spread word of a burglary and the official response, "breaking news."

Midway Musings discourages political content, but a posting encouraging members to attend a City Council meeting to support resolution welcoming refugees to Kentucky stirred such controversy that city leaders delayed action until they could hold a public forum on the issue.

Ladd told the after-dinner crowd, "It was really interesting that a social media group and a newspaper tied for first place," she said. Anticipating that, she included in her survey this question: "If you used social media more than five years ago for any reason, how has it affected



Sarah Ladd discussed the findings of her survey after the April 29 community dinner.

your knowledge of what goes on in the Midway area?" The result: 82 percent said it had increased their knowledge.

Musings founder Blake Jones said, "I want to always support forums where people can disagree without being disagreeable. I love Midway so much, and I think it is a town of exceptional people. Our diversity is our strength."

"Social media gives people an anonymity at times that is not healthy, in my opinion. . . . We must all remember to measure our words, and remember that they can have consequences. Even online."

Midway Musings' competitive impact, at least among people who voluntarily took the online survey, has been greatest on the Sun. Asked whether they had paid more or less attention to the Sun in the last five years, 39% said they paid less attention, 43% said they paid the same

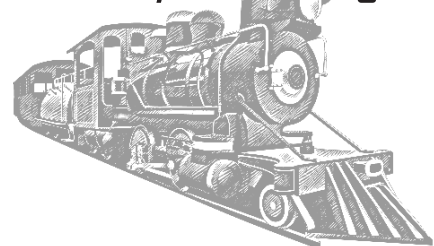
amount of attention, and 18 percent said they paid more attention.

Asked the same question about the Messenger, 68% said they paid more attention to it than five years ago. Ladd didn't provide exact figures for the other respondents, but had a chart showing that by far, most of the rest said they paid the same amount of attention.

Ladd's paper noted that Sun Editor John McGary used "open sourcing" through social media to get sources for a story. "It's so much different than having a straight, pre-approved list of experts you might call for something," she told the dinner crowd.

Ladd concluded in her paper, "The success of Midway's current communication systems seems to be largely thanks to its size. The education levels and the sense of community trust cause the level of quality communication the small town enjoys."

Midway Messenger



The Midway Messenger is a primarily online publication of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues in the School of Journalism and Media, part of the College of Communication and Information at the University of Kentucky. **A print edition is produced each semester, more or less, depending on events.** Many stories appear only online, at <http://midwayky.blogspot.com>. Stories of continuing interest may appear at www.MidwayMessenger.org. The Messenger also has a Facebook page. Staff members of the Messenger are students in community journalism classes taught by Extension Professor Al Cross, director of the Institute, or student interns with the Institute. Contact him at Al.Cross@uky.edu, 859-257-3744, on Twitter [@ruralj](https://twitter.com/ruralj) and on Instagram at [alcrossmidway](https://www.instagram.com/alcrossmidway). Students contributing in some way to this edition were Kristi Fitzgerald, Thomas Franconia, Chadwick George, Abbey Huffman, Collin Kruse, Sarah Ladd, Sierra McLean, Ana Neal, Christie Netherton, Alex Otte, Tyler Parker, Akhira Umar and Hannah Woosley.

Thanks to Wesbanco for sponsoring the printing of this edition, at the Georgetown News-Graphic. See ad on back page.

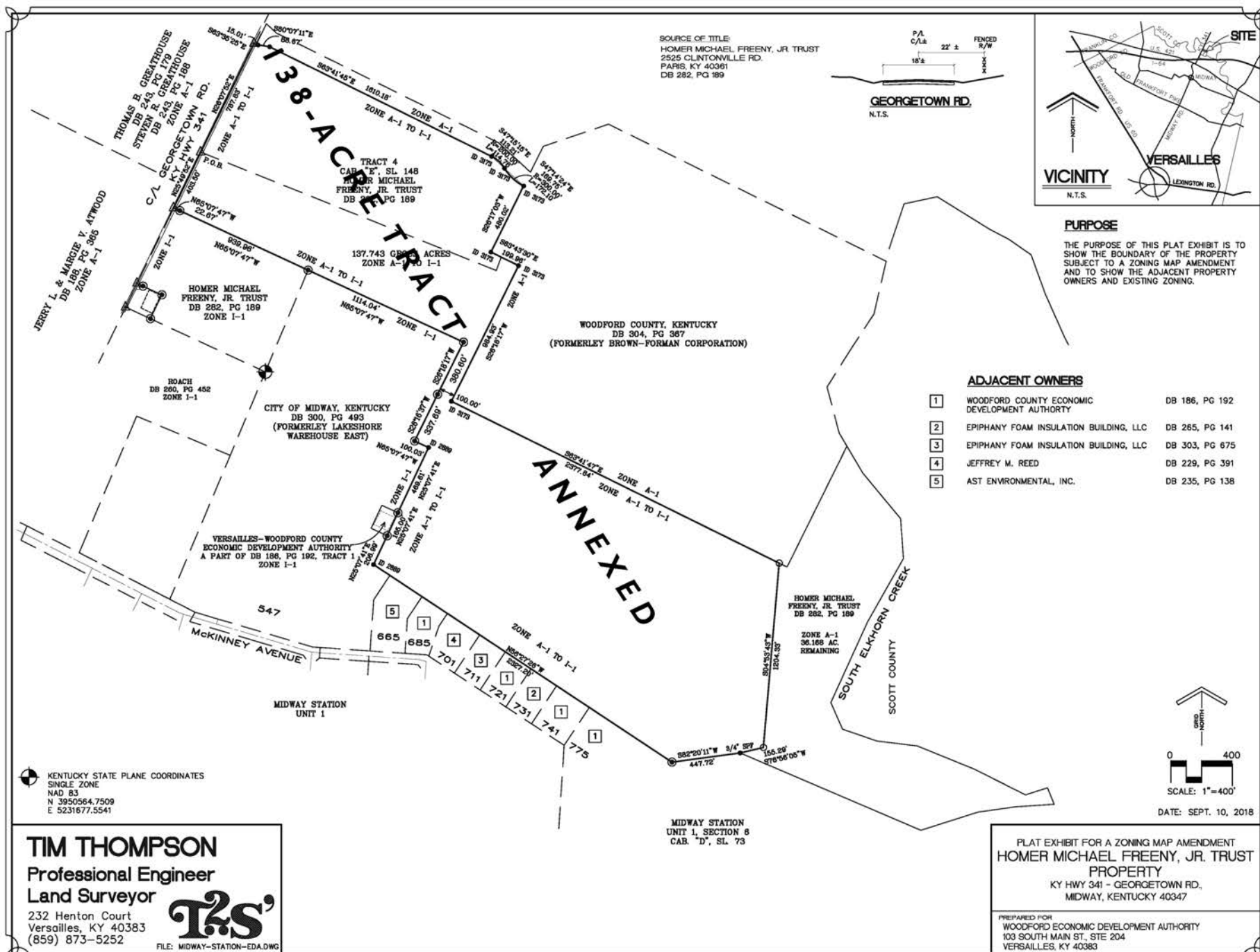


Diagram labeled by the Midway Messenger shows the 138-acre tract, between Midway Station and Brown-Forman warehouses, that the city annexed and zoned industrial.

As Midway Station lots sell, city annexes adjoining tract for industry

-- Continued from front page --

ple are literally driving 30 minutes in the opposite direction from their work to get good day care."

Journey Ministries also "wants to create and offer private-sector business options at the site; these may include a coffee shop, a doughnut shop and other entrepreneurial opportunities," it said in the release.

Soper said the various enterprises are

expected to create 70 jobs in two to three years, exceeding EDA's goal of 10 jobs per acre for property sales.

Crown Stair, which is relocating from Lexington to build a 19,000 sq ft facility and showroom in Midway Station, bought a lot at 670 McKinney Ave.

Vandegrift said the firm "will employ approximately 25 full time workers, and we can eventually expect more, as they

have purchased 3.3 acres with plans for future expansion. They will likely build in 2020."

Another lot is being sold to Barnhill Chimney Co. of Lexington, for a facility to manufacture chimney caps. Soper said only four other companies in the nation make the caps, and Barnhill plans to have seven to 10 employees at opening, 10 to 15 in a year and could have 30 in five

years.

Another lot in the process of being sold to Tru Blue Hemp Co.

"They're kind of the middlemen for the farmers and the oil processors," Vandegrift said as the council approved an encroachment permit, which allows the property owner to construct an entrance on the city's right of way.

Whither water?

Mayor calls for line to Frankfort to avoid continual Kentucky-American increases

By Midway Messenger staff

Mayor Grayson Vandegrift told the City Council June 17 that Midway should run a water line to the Duckers area so it can buy wholesale water much more cheaply from the Frankfort Electric and Water Plant Board instead of Kentucky American Water Co.

Vandegrift spoke as the Kentucky Public Service Commission considered Kentucky-American's request for a 21.5 percent rate increase. Ten days later, the PSC gave the company most of what it wanted, following the rate to go from \$4.053 per 1,000 gallons to \$4.796 per 1,000 gallons, a hike of 18.3 percent, according to PSC spokesman Andrew Mennykovych.

The figure for the old rate is lower than the \$4.21 figure Vandegrift said he received from city staff and mentioned to the City Council on June 17. The difference appears to be the fee that Midway and other users of water in the Kentucky River watershed pay to the Kentucky River Authority.

Vandegrift told the Messenger May 13, "I don't want to continue to basically watch the city be held hostage by Kentucky American's latest rates."

Midway did not pass along Kentucky American's 2017 increase of about 10% to the city's retail customers, but in a letter to the PSC, Vandegrift said, "We will not be able to absorb another rate increase. Additionally, the hard work and planning that went into lowering our rates by 25%, all while improving our ability to invest, will effectively be offset by another rate hike."

He said then that that he expects the company to keep seeking increases from the state Public Service Commission every two years. The latest hike is the company's sixth in 12 years.

Vandegrift and Council Member Bruce Southworth are to meet with Frankfort officials July 30.

Following are Vandegrift's June 17 remarks, as prepared for delivery.

"As you know, I have been looking into our options as they pertain to our wholesale water supplier. In 1985 the city signed a 40-year contract with Kentucky American Water, meaning that this contract will expire in 2025.

"It is the opinion of our city attorney and his associates that the contract is, at least for now, a valid one. The Kentucky Supreme Court has a case before them which argues that such a contract shouldn't be valid because Kentucky American should be considered a franchise, not a utility. That case is unlikely to be overturned, and even if it were, the planning for an endeavor such as switching water providers would be a process that could take that long time regardless.

"I have been in discussions with executives at the Frankfort Plant Board, including their chief engineer, and they have assured me that they are ready, willing, and able to sell us water at a wholesale rate. Their current rate for wholesale customers is \$2.55 per 1,000 gallons.

"We currently pay Kentucky American \$4.21 per 1,000 gallons. That means we could get water for 40 percent less than what we're paying now, and we could conceivably cut water rates for our citizens and still flood our water fund with new revenue for infrastructure improvements.

"And this is before the Public Service Commission rules on the current rate increase Kentucky American has asked for. Who's to say how many more increases they'll have received by 2025?

"We owe it to our citizens to find a source of clean, potable water at a reasonable price, and this seems like a no-brainer. We will be responsible for running a water line to the Duckers area, less than two miles from Midway, to hook in with the Frankfort Plant Board's 20-inch supply line.



Kentucky-American Water Co.'s connection to the Midway system is inside this vault.

"This is a large initiative but one that will have an immediate and long lasting impact on our city and its residents for many years after we're gone. It is my firm resolve that we begin now the process of switching water suppliers so that come 2025 we're ready to flip the switch and begin drawing our water from a local, municipal-minded utility as opposed to a publicly traded profit making entity. It has become abundantly clear that Kentucky American's business model is going to continue to be based on frequent rate increases. To me, that is unacceptable, and we shouldn't let ourselves be held for ransom every time they decide they're not making their executives and shareholders enough money at the expense of the rest of us.

"Therefore, I'm asking that the Public Works and Services Committee, consisting of Council Members John Holloway, Kaye Nita Gallagher, and Bruce Southworth as chair, to begin the process of laying out a plan with logistics and probable costs so that on that day in 2025, we're ready to sell good water at a greatly reduced price. I will be heavily involved with the committee's work, but will also respect their autonomy as a committee of our legislative body. The committee should consult with the Frankfort Plant

Board as well as our engineers and/or consultants we may hire to achieve our goals.

"When we lowered our sewer rates by 25 percent I told you that in my opinion, that was just the start. Significantly lower water bills in Midway, once thought by many to be a fairy tale is now underway, with this even bigger step firmly within our grasp. We have the money and the flexibility to finance this project in a cost-effective way, and one could argue the savings alone would finance the project to come within several years. I hope that the city council will enthusiastically join me in beginning this plan, while keeping all options on the table as we go, so that we can finally realize that long sought after dream, and conclusively turn a fairy tale into a reality."

Vandegrift added that he would "keep all options on the table," because construction of the supply line would require research and purchase of easements, and he said he does not believe eminent domain, or condemnation, should be used for the project.

"It would be a complete sea change in the way Midway utility bills work," Vandegrift said. He said he would welcome a counter-offer from Kentucky American, but "They don't care about Midway."

At town hall, Vandegrift and other young execs see spirit of cooperation among Woodford's three governments

By Tyler Parker and Chadwick George
University of Kentucky School of Journalism
and Media

"It's a new day in Woodford County!" Mayor Grayson Vandegrift proclaimed as he concluded his opening statement at the countywide town hall, "We Are Woodford," in Versailles on Feb. 7.

The executives of the three governments in the county began by talking about their goals and ideas.

Vandegrift noted that he, Versailles Mayor Brian Traugott and newly elected County Judge-Executive James Kay are all under 40 (respectively, 36, 39 and 36), and "I'm not sure that's ever happened before."

Vandegrift, Traugott and Kay all said the meeting and the turnout of more than 100 people showed there is a spirit of cooperation.

"What a wonderful sight," Kay said to open their presentations. Vandegrift said there is "a renaissance in the county."

Traugott said, "You can feel it in the air between Versailles, Midway and Woodford County and the Fiscal Court. It's inspiring, and it's a fun environment in which to govern, so I'm looking forward to the next four years."

A hint, and some humor

The only hint of competition came from Vandegrift mentioning the attendance of all six Midway City Council members, while the Versailles council and county Fiscal Court had one and two absentees, respectively.

"I don't want to brag, but Midway wins again!" he pronounced, and laughter erupted from the audience.

Vandegrift had tried to arrange a joint

meeting of the three government boards when the late John Coyle was judge-executive, but said the Fiscal Court resisted the idea. He said Thursday night that the town hall "really is, I think, a great start in the next step forward about how we work together as communities and as an entire county."

Midway and the county are partners on the Midway Station industrial park. Vandegrift said they and the county Economic Development Authority have been "very fortunate . . . to really turn around Midway Station and take it from what was once called a boondoggle into a boon to our economy." And to the city; the mayor noted that occupational-tax collections have more than doubled since 2014, and "It's changed everything for us."

Farmland preservation a key topic

As the question-and-answer portion of the meeting began, it was clear that the main topic on audience members' minds was maintaining Woodford County's agricultural industries.

Hampton "Hoppy" Henton, long a leader in that effort, was the first to speak. He said the county should, like Fayette County, have a purchase-of-development-rights (PDR) program, in which people are paid for placing a permanent prohibition on development of their property.

Next was Deb Pekny Heckney, who said she hoped that the officials' vision for the county "is to let it always be the unique place that it is. . . . We left Florida because development came in . . . and destroyed an incredibly beautiful part of the world."

Mayor re-elected; council has 3 new members

Midway Mayor Grayson Vandegrift won a second four-year term in the Nov. 6 election, defeating county School Board Chair Ambrose Wilson IV, 588 to 239.

John McDaniel lost his seat on the City Council, running seventh in an eight-way race. Voters elected three new council members: Stacy Thurman, who led the voting with 556; Logan Nance, with 405; and John Holloway, with 401. Re-elected were Sara Hicks (474 votes), Kaye Nita Gallagher (405) and Bruce Southworth (403).

In the race for the Midway-area seat on Woodford County Fiscal Court, Democrat Liles Taylor of Midway defeated his next-door neighbor, Republican Joseph Greathouse, by 2.2 percent of the vote, largely on the strength of his vote in the city.



Mayor Grayson Vandegrift gave opening remarks at the town hall held by the county's three governments on Feb. 7. (Image from KCTCS video on Facebook)

Margaret Reece Newsome of Versailles said she has worked for some of the best people in the horse industry, and said, "People come here for horses – not for shopping."

The most passionate comment of the evening came from Jess Bowling, who said he has lived in the county since 1966, and "I am gettin' tired of seeing it covered with concrete. . . . Stop it or there won't be no farming!"

Stuart Weatherford of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, which hosted the meeting at its headquarters, said the county's horse and bourbon industries are "burgeoning," but so is "the retirement industry," and asked if there is a program to attract retirees who want to live on 10 acres or more with horses.

"They're pure gold," Weatherford said. "They don't have kids, they pay all their taxes, they don't tax the system." He said they can't afford to retire in the Northeast or Northwest and "are looking for places to go."

Vandegrift said there is no such program, "but it's a great point you make." He said taxes in the county "tend to be high," and Midway's property taxes were cut recently "partly to help keep and attract

people on fixed incomes."

Dan Rosenberg said he has been a resident of the county since 1978, and asked about the process of appointments for its committees and boards. Kay said he wants to update and modernize the process by putting it on www.woodfordcounty.ky.gov.

Kay welcomed anyone with questions to visit him at his office on the second floor of the courthouse. "My door is always open!" he announced. He also encouraged everyone who wants an appointment to have an email and to be responsive.

Kay noted that he had created a drug task force to fight the opioid crisis, and will start live videostreaming of Fiscal Court meetings.

Longtime community activist Lillie Cox of Versailles told the executives and the crowd, "I probably know every person in this room. . . . We want to see people working together more. We want to see councils, tourism, the courts, all working together."

State Rep. Joe Graviss, D-Versailles, who acted as master of ceremonies, said the next town hall meeting will be a "county-fair set-up" where "any entity in the county" can have a display.

At ex-member's urging, council funds African American cemeteries' repair with higher fees and taxpayer money

By Tyler Parker
University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Media

The old saying “Put your money where your mouth is” is something previous Midway City Council member Johnny Wilson had no problem doing when it comes to the town’s historically African American cemeteries.

At a council meeting in January, just after he had served out less than a year remaining in the unexpired term of the late Libby Warfield, Wilson raised the issue of the St. Rose Tabernacle and Sons and Daughters of Relief cemeteries.

Wilson reported to the council that 71 of the 303 headstones in the cemeteries need resetting, repair or replacement, and gave \$1,000 to help fund the work.

“I know what little money I put in is not good enough to fix everything, but it’s a start,” Wilson said in an interview. “There’s history there. You want to respect the people that come before you and what they’ve done in Midway.”

Another recently departed council member, John McDaniel, said in an interview, “John definitely put the pressure on them, when he handed them that money.”

Mayor Grayson Vandegrift thanked Wilson for his dedication to the ceme-

teries, but in a later meeting said that the process of getting them fixed up “will take time.”

While the city accepted responsibility for the cemeteries, a committee of council members initially concluded that the graveyards’ upkeep would be more complicated than it initially seemed.

Wilson kept up his campaign at the April 15 council meeting, donating another \$250, this time earmarking in for work at Sons and Daughters. He also gave \$250 to have a tree planted with his name in Walter Bradley Park, “a crabapple or persimmon tree, to fit my personality.”

His persistence paid off. On May 28, the council decided to stretch out construction of a pavilion at the Midway Cemetery over two years, to fund other work at the cemetery and start fixing up the African American cemeteries.

The pavilion, which would provide shelter in inclement weather, is estimated to cost \$45,000. The council voted to put \$20,000 in the budget for pouring its concrete footers and pad, and use the other \$25,000 for other improvements at all three cemeteries.

Vandegrift said Public Works Supervisor Terry Agee has a list of work needed

at the main cemetery and at the other cemeteries, including removal of trees that have upended tombstones. The mayor said Agee sees the tree removal as a five-year process, partly because removal of too many trees would upset the public.

Council Member Sara Hicks, chair of the Cemetery and City Property Committee, said all the tree work in the St. Rose Tabernacle Cemetery should be done first, “so you can start to re-erect the tombstones.” The work there and at the Sons and Daughters of Relief Cemetery will also include installation of lines and taps for watering.

St. Rose Cemetery is located on West Stephens Street just past the Midway Cemetery, while Sons and Daughters is located at the end of West Bruen Street, next to the Midway Cemetery. The two African American cemeteries are about two-thirds of a mile apart, along the northwestern limits of the city.

Wilson said in the interview that a 2018 Memorial Day walk through the city’s three cemeteries prompted his eagerness to get the stones repaired.

“Compared to the main one, the African American cemeteries were in really bad shape,” he said. “The tombstones were down and some were broken. Trees had even taken over some of the



Former council member Johnny Wilson

gravesites.” Tombstones have been upended by two of the largest trees in the St. Rose Tabernacle Cemetery.

Generally, upkeep of the two African American cemeteries was the sole responsibility of the families of the deceased. Wilson and McDaniel said that since the last burial in either cemetery was in the late 1980s, and many family members of the deceased are no longer in Midway, the cemeteries should become the responsibility of the city.

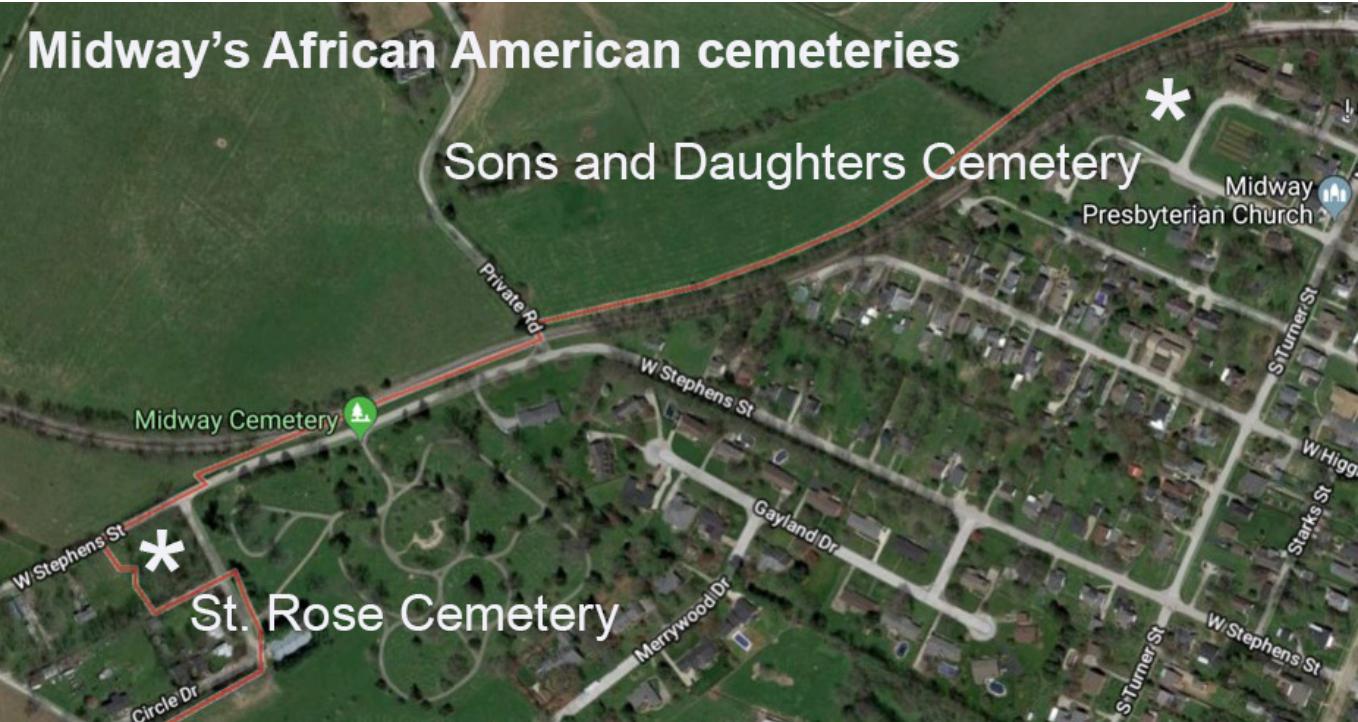
“Some of the stones are difficult to read now,” McDaniel said. “I would like to figure out who is there and at least put a marker to recognize those people.”

Wilson and McDaniel said markers on individual graves would be ideal, as well as regular maintenance and repairs to stones that no longer have a base and that have been heavily damaged by weather.

As the council deliberated cemetery matters, Hicks proposed at the Cemetery and City Property Committee meeting on May 1 that the city provide markers for graves in the Midway Cemetery, if one hasn’t been provided after one year.

The committee added the provision to the ordinance, later passed by the council, that increased the price of a single grave from \$650 to \$750 and increase the cost to open and close a grave to \$700 rather than \$600.

Vandegrift had already approved temporary markers for each grave, which will be provided to families of the deceased two days before the funeral, but with an expectation that each family will provide a permanent marker.



Affordable housing

Special city committee seeks ways to get more moderately priced homes in Midway

By Korrie Harris and Al Cross

University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Media

The Midway City Council created a task force April 1 to help with the lack of affordable housing, and affordable land for housing, in Midway.

Mayor Grayson Vandegrift said the Affordable Housing Committee will make recommendations and suggestions to the full council on a "difficult topic."

With the council's approval, Vandegrift appointed Council Member Stacy Thurman, who serves as chair; Freeland Davis, who the mayor said has worked with Lexington on similar projects; Xon Hostetter, a public defender who lives in Midway; Rob Mills, the owner of Damsel's Gallery; Dan Rosenberg, a blood-stock agent who Vandegrift said can reflect horse-farm interests, and Rich Schein, a University of Kentucky geography professor who Vandegrift said is "ex officio" because he is the city's representative on the county Planning Commission.

Asked after the meeting why the task force was needed, the mayor said he has heard many people say they wish they could find affordable housing in Midway. "A lot of people end up moving to Versailles because it's cheaper," he said. "It's cheaper to buy, it's cheaper to live."

One thing the task force will look into, Vandegrift said, is what affordable housing means in Midway. "Everybody seems to have a different definition for it. So, what do we need as Midway?"

He had part of the answer, saying that affordable housing in Midway shouldn't be defined as housing in which rent is subsidized by the federal government. "We don't mean Section 8. Sometimes people think we mean that, and we don't mean that," he said. There are a few Section 8 apartments in the city.

Also, Vandegrift said he isn't looking for the development of new subdivisions. "Our focus is going to be on infill, to not expand the urban service boundary," inside which housing can be built, he said. "We actually have quite a bit that's even zoned residential, believe it or not, but whether it's for sale or not is another question right now."

"We need to establish what kind of housing do we need, what do we mean by affordable housing," to see if there are ways to "help facilitate people to build

within an urban service boundary where they're able to build right now," he said.

Vandegrift said he would stay out of the task force's work, and chose Thurman as chair because she "showed an interest and she has the leadership."

Thurman said her interest comes from the lack of moderately priced housing. "We've looked for something between Northridge [Estates] and kind of a little step up, then you get to these \$300,000 homes – there's not a lot in between," Thurman said.

She also said that when Lakeshore Learning Materials located in Midway, several workers or prospective workers came by the local library, which she runs, to ask about housing.

Thurman, who got the most votes in the last council election, said the task force will take "a lot of ground work . . . face-to-face, and having conversations."

Asked if the task force would take an inventory, she said, "That's the first thing I'd like to see, is where all those lots are and who the property owners are."

Vandegrift said, "I think this task force work is gonna take some time."

Accessory dwelling units proposed

Midway has been asked to join Versailles in asking local planning officials to allow accessory dwelling units in residential areas and apartments in commercial zones, and make other changes in the county's zoning ordinance to encourage more affordable housing.

The committee heard the request July 8 from Lori Garkovich, a member of its counterpart committee in Versailles, which already developed recommendations. She said a joint request from both towns to the Planning Commission would "have more traction."

"I think if we went together, it would be more persuasive, and it would be easier to sell to the public," said Garkovich, a retired UK rural-sociology professor who has long been active in land-use issues in Woodford County.

The Versailles group also wants other measures, such as a community land trust to lease land to homebuyers, but those will take more time and effort, and allowing accessory dwelling units "was something they could act on right away," Garkovich told the Midway group.

ADUs can be part of a home or de-



Council Member Stacy Thurman, chair of the Affordable Housing Task Force, listened as Mayor Grayson Vandegrift talked about the need for it and how it would work.

tached from it, and can be occupied by renters, adult children, other family members, caregivers and so on. "We had a vision there would be a mix of private homes, townhomes and apartments," to give people a wide range of choices and flexibility when their living arrangements need to change, Garkovich said.

Thurman noted that there are many details to work out, such as whether detached units should resemble the main house and whether off-street parking should be required.

"I certainly don't think accessory dwelling units are the answer to affordable housing in Midway altogether, but it's a good start," Thurman said. She asked Garkovich what the downside of allowing such units would be.

Garkovich said the usual issue is that people next door to an accessory unit fear it will reduce their property's value, but added that she didn't think that would be a problem in Midway because it has such a small supply of available housing. She said the Versailles plan calls for "quality standards consistent with the neighborhood."

Thurman said, "Most of the people who would be against something like this would be people who don't want Midway to grow at all."

The lack of affordable housing has been a concern in Midway for several

years, but gained more currency with the addition of about 300 jobs, and more to come, at the Midway Station industrial park. Rosenberg said the city could ask Midway Station employers to donate to affordable-housing efforts.

Garkovich said Midway has a choice: have people commute to the town, work here and leave their payroll taxes behind, or capture their consumer spending and reduce traffic by creating housing for them in the area. "You need economic growth, but how do you want it to happen?"

She said some towns, when expanding their urban service areas for development, require "that a certain inventory of workforce housing" be included in developments in the expanded area.

Schein said the fundamental question facing those who want more affordable housing is how local governments can encourage property sales by owners who aren't now willing to sell.

Garkovich said the two committees might want to have a meeting for property owners, developers, bankers and other citizens to discuss the issue.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Aug. 12 at City Hall. The meeting, and meetings of committees created by the council, are public.



Johnny Wilson, who served briefly on the Midway City Council last year, addressed his former colleagues at a public forum on the refugee resolution.

After much public discussion, City Council votes 4-2 in favor of non-binding resolution welcoming refugees to Kentucky

By Al Cross and Korrie Harris

UK School of Journalism and Media

With some disagreement but not much debate, the Midway City Council passed a resolution May 6 endorsing the resettlement of refugees in Kentucky and asking other towns in the state "to join them in supporting a stronger national effort to resettle refugees around the world in need of a home."

The vote was 4-2, with Council Members Bruce Southworth and Kaye Nita Gallagher voting no. "Sorry, Logan," Gallagher told the sponsor, Council Member Logan Nance, as she voted.

Southworth said the resolution wasn't needed. "This is a federal issue, not a local issue," he said. "This is an issue more for the churches than the government, at a local level."

Nance, an Army veteran of Afghanistan, replied that there's nothing wrong with a city saying "We welcome you . . . It would be very weird to live in a place where I don't speak the language and I don't have a home. So for some place to say 'Hey, we welcome you,' it is a symbolic thing, but at the same time I think it's a powerfully symbolic thing."

Earlier, Nance said refugees' world has changed, "and they're just trying to find a place . . . they find a place here that is

now their new home, so anything we can do to make them feel welcome, I think, is a great thing."

Gallagher, saying she was relaying questions citizens had posed to her, asked Nance why Midway would be the only city in Kentucky to pass such a resolution, and if refugees "do end up moving here . . . who is going to help pay for them to be here?"

Nance said cities like Louisville and Lexington "are probably afraid [to pass such resolutions] because of the backlash they would get." He said refugees are self-sufficient after six months, and are helped by Kentucky Refugee Ministries every day, teaching them English and American culture.

Council Member Sara Hicks said she had worked as a family therapist with refugees, and "They were very honorable and good people." As a child-abuse investigator, she added, "I never had a refugee case, ever. I never had a juvenile-delinquent case."

Council Member Stacy Thurman said, "Gestures like this have to start somewhere," and Council Member John Holloway said, "Absolutely." Thurman said "Logan could have easily backed off of this," but took under advisement comments made at a public forum on the issue.

Nance said he redrafted the resolution in partnership with Kentucky Refugee Ministries. An earlier version was modeled after one prompted by Amnesty International, a group criticized by some opponents of the original resolution.

The public reaction to the original resolution surprised city officials. Gallagher said she thought when she first heard of it that it would pass without controversy, but "We've gotten more flak over this than we did about the Fairness Ordinance, which I think is weird."

In 2015, soon after Mayor Grayson Vandegrift took office, the council passed 4-2 an ordinance he offered to prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Gallagher and Southworth voted for it, as did Hicks, the only other current member who was on the council at the time.

Reaction a sign of the times?

Vandegrift said he also was surprised at the opposition to the non-binding resolution, but said, "The political situation in America is different" than it was in 2015.

The closest the resolution comes to political commentary is: "The number of refugees allowed into the United States

has been slashed to the lowest number in decades," though "there are more refugees in the world today than at any time in recorded history." Last year, President Trump, who made immigration a central issue of his campaign, limited U.S. refugee admissions to 30,000, a record low.

The resolution supports refugees' resettlement in Kentucky "no matter their religion, race, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or country of origin" and says Midway "is a welcoming community that celebrates diversity and inclusivity."

About 15 people attended the council meeting. Vandegrift opened the floor for comments, but suggested that those who had spoken at the forum defer to others. No one rose to speak.

Vandegrift, who took no public position on the issue, said before the vote, "The democratic process won out again," and "This city will move forward as a united city."

The council had voted March 18 to table the resolution and hold a public forum on it, after an uproar on social media about it.

"It has clearly begun a discussion in our community that has lighted passions on both sides of the issue," Vandegrift said in a prepared statement he read at

-- Continued on next page --

Refugee resolution

-- Continued from preceding page --

the meeting.

Lee Birdwhistell, who identified herself as a volunteer for Amnesty International, told the council March 18 that the resolution wouldn't "place the burden of resettlement" on Midway.

Asked after the meeting why she picked Midway, she said, "I just had a connection to Logan Nance and I brought it up to him."

Nance explained himself in an essay in the online Midway Messenger on May 1.

"As a United States Army veteran I have seen up close and personal the plight of displaced persons who are forced to flee their homes to seek refuge because of war, natural disaster, and persecution. When I learned about similar resolutions that have been done in many other cities across the country, but never in Kentucky, I knew that it would be perfect for Midway. The resolution commits us to do nothing more than we are already doing. We have several churches and families in Midway that have sponsored the resettlement of refugees and we have refugee families who have joined churches in our community. Writing and introducing this resolution in Midway made all the sense in the world.

"As I researched more about the data behind the refugee crisis I was surprised by several things. I had no idea that refugees granted resettlement in the United States are the most vetted individuals to come into our country. At a minimum it takes three years for numerous government agencies to perform the necessary background checks on ref-



Amnesty International representative Lee Birdwhistell spoke to the City Council about the refugee resolution on March 18.

ugees selected for resettlement, and often it can take longer than a decade. All through this process the refugees are forced to remain in the country to which they originally fled, often in camps with little access to food, water, and medical aid. I also had no idea that the average refugee pays the U.S. government around \$21,000 more in taxes than they ever receive through any kind of welfare payments, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research."

Nance said some people hear or see the word "refugee" and think "illegal immigrant," but "The two are complete opposites."

He concluded, "This resolution was not my attempt to tackle some heavy partisan issue; it just seemed like the right thing to do. Several thousand refugees, predominantly from the Congo, have been resettled in the region, including Woodford County. 25.4 million refugees worldwide are in need of resettlement, according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. Only about 1% of those refugees will ever be resettled.

"The goal of this resolution was to educate citizens on refugees so that they can better understand their plight and if so moved find an organization like KRM or AI to volunteer with, and for Midway to lift its voice with other like-minded communities to call on a stronger national effort to resettle refugees around the world who are in need of a home."

About 50 people attended the pub-

lic forum in the Northside Elementary School gym on April 8. Of the 17 who spoke, eight were in favor, five were opposed and four were skeptical or offered alternatives.

Advocates argue that the resolution would reflect Midway's values as a compassionate community, and opponents said the city has better things to do and shouldn't follow the lead of an outside group that is running a national campaign. There were other arguments on both sides.

Johnny Wilson, who served an unexpired term on the council last year, said "I'm not against refugees coming in, I'm against the resolution," because "They're already coming in" and "We don't have the housing here, or the money." The resolution does not call for resettlement of refugees in Midway.

Wilson said the national situation with immigration is "volatile," and "There's a lot of troubles in this world, and we can't solve them all. Let's do what we can for the city first."

Doug Elam of Weisenberger Mill Road said likewise: "This community struggles with enough issues, much less somebody coming in and wanting to impose this kind of stuff. We can't take care of the world."

Peggy Richardson of the 100 block of South Turner Street challenged the council to "work toward affordable housing and transportation, so that we can invite not only refugees, but other diverse populations to our community." She said the

resolution would be "hollow and shallow if we're not willing to follow it up by really being a welcoming community by providing affordable housing and transportation. Fix those two problems first."

Becky Fisher, of the 200 block of South Gratz, earlier mentioned the need for more and better housing. "Be careful to take care of the people who are here," she said. "We don't have places for people to live. . . . You need to make a lot of resolutions if you're gonna do this one."

Her husband, Sam Fisher, said earlier that refugee matters are best handled by individuals, churches, charities and communities, not local governments, because it is a divisive political issue. "It's going to create further polarization of our community," he said.

But David Shaw, of the 100 block of West Stephens Street, said passage of the resolution would point out that compassionate feeling our community has. Shaw said he has worked with a refugee family for two years and they are "among the nicest people I've ever met."

Several others spoke likewise, including longtime civic activist Helen Rentch, who said welcoming people from other cultures "brings a tremendous richness to our lives, to see how people look at the world," and the area's horse farms couldn't survive without immigrant labor.

The forum was moderated by Tad Long of the Kentucky League of Cities. Each citizen speaker was allowed three minutes.



City Council Member Logan Nance

Dr. Jim Roach's second book, *Vital Strategies in Cancer*, reflects his integrative-medicine approach

By Kristi Fitzgerald

University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Media

"Wow, I'm a doctor now. Now, what?" So said Dr. Jim Roach when he got the title. He wanted to be more than just a typical physician, so he became active in Habitat for Humanity, then focused on smoking, a sensitive subject in a big tobacco state. "The next decade was philosophy, and finally I'm headed on this pathway."

That pathway is integrative medicine, a form of medical therapy that combines practices and treatments from alternative medicine with conventional medicine. It led him to write his latest book, *Vital Strategies in Cancer*, which focuses on integrative medicine strategies to combat cancer.

It dives into the spiritual and holistic methods of healing, characterized by the treatment of the whole person, taking into account mental and social factors, rather than just the symptoms of a disease. Roach places emphasis on de-stressing, cultivating a sense of peace within oneself, forgiveness, energy work, proper nutrition, botanicals, and more.

"Learning those strategies and connecting in spiritually can be transformative and that's what I try to do with all my patients," Roach told the Midway Messenger. He called *Vital Strategies in Cancer* "the most comprehensive book, to date, that has been written on this topic."

"This book has 630 references, 458 pages so it's very comprehensive, but perhaps the most important aspect is the incorporation of spirituality," said Roach. That connects with his previous book, *God's House Calls*, about his patients' near-death experiences.

He explained why spirituality can be such an important component to healing: "My mother died in a car wreck New Year's of 1994 and I didn't get to say goodbye to her. I've been able to spiritually work through that and I'm fine with it now, but at the time it was tough. . . . With cancer, you have a chance to mend fences; you have the opportunity to share with special loved ones and with family how much you care about them. You can live in the moment."

Asked why more medical professionals don't take a holistic or spiritual approach to cancer, he said, "There are financial incentives to go the pharmaceutical route, to go the chemotherapy route because it makes money for hospitals."

Roach says he has seen the results in numerous patients that he has treated over the years and would like to share his cancer-fighting methods with cancer patients, doctors, and anyone who would like to learn about preventative measures one can take to live a healthier life. "If you stop worrying about dying," he said, "that's the perfect catalyst for healing."

Roach said he has cancer patients from Rhode Island,



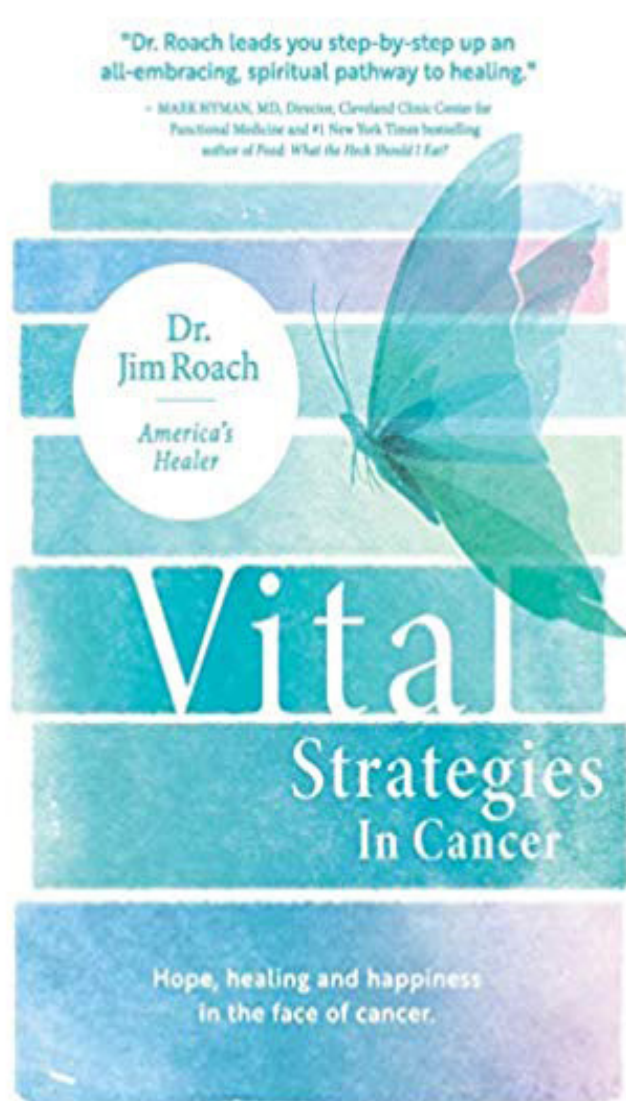
Dr. Jim Roach

Maryland, Florida, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee and Kentucky. "Overall, I have had patients with many different health conditions from perhaps 30 states," he said. "Having twelve years of clinical experience, I have seen the results with my patients." He operates the Midway Center for Integrative Medicine.

Roach said he has "trained under some of the top cancer specialists in the country," been published in *Nutrition and Cancer: An International Journal* and the *Cancer Strategies Journal*, spent over 13,000 hours studying and researching various topics, and seen over 10,000 patients, who have granted him a deeper understanding of cancer and how to heal people, according to the book's website. "I want to see what other doctors can't fix because by being thorough you can accomplish so much more," he said.

Roach said *Vital Strategies in Cancer* can be beneficial for everyone: "This book helps you to appreciate life while you're here, how to get the most out of life, and how to stop worrying."

At 67, Roach says he has no plans for retiring. He continues to work to create better lives for his patients and to inform the public about spiritual and holistic ways to live a healthier and happier life through his book and medical practice.



McDaniel departs council but is called 'Mister Midway'

John McDaniel was twice a loser in politics in 2018, but his place as an iconic citizen of Midway was reaffirmed by the City Council as he left it in December.

The farewell resolution honoring McDaniel called him "Mister Midway," citing his passion for the city, his civic leadership and his honor as Citizen of the Year in 2003. He told his colleagues, "I'll probably be down here harassing you all from the peanut gallery."

McDaniel lost his bid for a second two-year council term in November, placing a close seventh in the nonpartisan eight-candidate race for six council seats.

In May, he finished third in a three-way race for the Democratic nomination for Midway-area magistrate on Woodford County Fiscal Court.

He had joined the council with his good friend Steve Simoff, who chose not to seek a second term but said he might run again. The resolution honoring him said he "showed great care for all public spaces." He said his term was fun and educational.

Johnny Wilson was appointed in March to fill the unexpired term of Lib-



Steve Simoff, John McDaniel and Johnny Wilson posed in December at their last meeting as members of the Midway City Council.

by Warfield, after an application process that discouraged people who were interested in a full term. The resolution honoring him said he has "a great eye for

detail, which he shares with his predecessor."

The resolutions approved by the council, with the subject members abstaining,

named Dec. 29, 30 and 31, respectively, as Johnny Wilson Day, Steve Simoff Day and John McDaniel Day in Midway.

Architects give Cecil award for service to the profession

Retired architect T. Rexford "Rex" Cecil of Midway has received the Oberwarth Gold Medal from the Kentucky Society of the American Institute of Architects.

The award is made "to recognize and honor an individual member who has displayed a long-standing commitment to the betterment of the profession and well-being of architects in Kentucky, and who has dedicated extraordinary time and talent," AIA Kentucky said.

Cecil's resume says he has been a registered architect for 44 years, with broad experience in building design, including "technically complex medical facilities and from new facilities to the complete restoration or renovation of the historically significant." In the administration of Gov. Brereton Jones in 1991-95, he managed facilities and employees for the



Rex Cecil

Finance Cabinet, as well as design and construction activities. He was executive director of the Kentucky Board of Architects from 2005 until early this year. He and his wife Gay live on Old Frankfort Pike.

Ellen Gregory gets public-relations award from UK

Ellen D. Gregory, vice president of marketing and communications at Midway University, received the Excellence in Public Relations Award in November from her alma mater, the University of Kentucky.

The award, to an outstanding Kentucky public-relations practitioner, is given by the Department of Integrated Strategic Communication and the UK Journalism and Media Alumni Association.

During 10 years at Midway, Gregory has coordinated the school's marketing and public relations, including rebranding, its change to university status and transition to a co-educational institution in 2016.

Gregory spent 12 years at the Preston-Osborne PR and research firm in Lexington, the last nine as chief operating officer, and twice won the Public Relations Society of America's Silver Anvil Award,



Ellen Gregory

considered the Pulitzer Prize of PR.

She and her husband, Eric, have three children. The family spends much time restoring Victorian homes, like theirs at the corner of Winter and Stephens streets.



Spotlight Awards at Midway University draws record attendance and amount of money for scholarships

By Al Cross and Akhira Umar
University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Media

Midway University's sixth annual Spotlight Awards dinner Thursday night drew 275 people, the most ever, and raised a little over \$100,000 for scholarships, also a record, Vice President for Marketing and Communications Ellen Gregory said. Last year's attendance was just under 200, she said.

Chef Ouita Michel received the L.L. Pinkerton Vision Award, for her positive impact on improving women's lives and as a role model who displays great leadership, innovation and influence.

Civil engineer Lyle Wolf received the Legacy Award for the time, money and service he has given to the university. He has served as a trustee for 35 years, which Michel called an unparalleled legacy.

The theme for the \$150-a-ticket event was "Under Construction" because arriving guests were led through a

"living construction gallery" showing short videos of the various projects the university is undertaking.

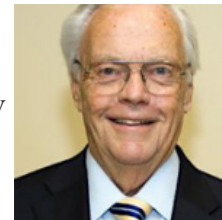
In a video about the projects, President John Marsden noted recent gains in enrollment and said, "We're building so students will stay, not so they will come."

Michel told Marsden, "You have transformed this campus, you have healed divisions between the community and the university," and made it a university. She also expressed thanks to the president's wife, Margaret Marsden.

As the owner of multiple Kentucky restaurant, recipient of local and national accolades, and an active member in several organizations, Michel is an easy fit for the Pinkerton Vision Award. Gregory said the school is honoring Michel for "all that she's done in her career, as a mentor to others, and as a strong female leader in our community."

Wolf, co-founder and former president of Lexington-based GRW

Engineers and 35-year trustee of the university, will receive the Midway University Legacy Award. This is an honor given to someone who has "given of time, money, service to the university over the years," Gregory said.



Lyle Wolf

As president of his company from 1967 to 1991, Wolf grew the firm to a multi-million-dollar business regularly listed in the Engineering News Record's Top 500 Design Firms.

He has served on the board of numerous organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America and the

Rotary Club. He joined the university's Board of Trustees in 1983 and is one of the longest-serving current trustees. Five other Midway University committees have had Wolf as a member, and he also served as vice chair of the campaign that helped raise funds for the construction of the Anne Hart Raymond Mathematics and Science Building.



Dessert bowls were miniature baseball helmets, alluding to the baseball field that is under construction.



This year, the music area was moved to the amphitheatre. Food booths lined the area next to the McManis Student Center.

Francisco's Farm Arts Fair gets no rain but some wind

The 16th annual Francisco's Farm Arts Fair went off well and windy Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19, at Midway University.

Midway Renaissance volunteers said the Saturday crowd was normal, but Sunday's was down a little due to threatening weather, which wound up being only some moderately high wind.

As a result, the fair closed at 4 p.m., an hour early to protect artwork, after 350 cars had entered. Saturday, 545 entered. The average was two to three per car, Renaissance President Debra Shockley said.

At right, John and Carolyn Malarkey of Lexington talked with weavers Petty Shepard and Mary Otieno of Kingsport, Tenn., about an hour before the fair ended. Mary is a native of Kenya.



Ouita Michel always has a lot on her plate, literally and figuratively

-- Continued from front page --

ed that if she was going to have her own restaurant, that it would only use fresh local ingredients. "It's part of our mission for our company to increase farm income in Kentucky," she told the Midway Messenger, "because without a strong farming community it's hard to be a great chef." Over the last 18 years, Michel says, her restaurants have purchased \$3 million in Kentucky meats, dairy products, fruits and vegetables.

After Holly Hill Inn's success, Michel gradually established what is now known as the Ouita Michel Family of Restaurants: The Midway Bakery and Cafe, Wallace Station Deli and Bakery in greater Midway, Windy Corner Market and Restaurant in Lexington, two Smithtown Seafood locations in Lexington, Glenn's Creek Café at the Woodford Reserve Distillery outside Versailles, Honeywood in Lexington, and Michel's newest restaurant, Zim's Cafe and The Thirsty Fox in Lexington.

The restaurants Michel purchased kept their pre-existing names. Of the latest two she established, Honeywood, in The Summit at Fritz Farm, was named after Honeywood Parrish Rouse, who grew up in the house that is now the Holly Hill Inn; Zim's, in the recently restored Fayette County Courthouse, is named for Michel's great-grandfather, Aaron Rufus Zimmerman.

Michel's first taste of the culinary business wasn't the sweetest, but it would give her the formative experience needed to begin her career. Michel was offered a chef position at John Clancy's, a New York seafood restaurant. Her first assignment was to fillet a fish, which she had never done before. With some help, she succeeded. "They stuck with me. Knowing what I know now I probably would've fired me," she said. Her time at John Clancy's was full of learning moments that would lead her to success.

Michel credits her time with the University of Kentucky's debate team during college as an experience that would later

prepare her for the challenges that she faces today. "It helped quite a bit. You have to do a lot of writing and research, which ended up helping me write my business plan. It helped me become an effective public speaker, it helped me with time management, and it gave me confidence too," she said. In 1986, Michel's senior year, the debate team won the National Debate Tournament, which she recalls as one of her proudest achievements. The win made Michel the second woman to win the title.

Now that Michel has eight restaurants, her biggest current challenge is maintaining the quality of their service and dining experiences. She has about 200 part-time and 50 full-time employees.

"There are times when I feel like I'm spread too thin," Michel said, "but we have an excellent group of people running each restaurant, and my real job is to support them and their work."

Michel said she has each day of the week planned out in advance, where she visits each one of her restaurants to hold

staff meetings and to go over any other issues with the chefs.

When she isn't checking up on her restaurants, Michel spends most of her time in Midway, where she's either coordinating the free community supper programs at Midway Church or cooking in the Holly Hill Inn kitchen.

Chris and Ouita Michel still live next to their first restaurant, where they have been for the last 19 years.

Looking back, Michel explains how her success came to be. "You have to be willing to work really hard. You have to use your hands, your head, and your heart all at one time." She said, "It's definitely not a desk job, but I never wanted that. You can't be afraid to fail."

The chef said she is done opening new restaurants for now, but hinted that a podcast and cookbook may be in the works. Her pace seems unlikely to lag.

"Running a restaurant, you have to learn fast," she said. "With hard work and persistence, one thing led to another, and I never looked back."



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