

Names & Faces, Compiled by John Dayberry



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Mike Johnson hands car keys to Melissa McKinnon. Joining them are McKinnon's sons and Della Marie McKinnon, Aaron Joplin and Walter Hart.

Hickory Public Schools honors teacher

Melissa Jenkins McKinnon didn't set out in life to become a teacher. She had other career interests, and teaching didn't fit into her plans.

But while attending Western Carolina University to earn a degree in social work, she volunteered to help behaviorally challenged students at a local group home for middle-school-age children.

That was as close as she would come to working with students. She was sure of it.

So McKinnon's next step involved a move into the business world with a successful sales and marketing venture in Greensboro.

However, over time, reflections of those middle school kids resurfaced and tugged at her heart. McKinnon threw on the brakes and made a U-turn. Her plans changed. McKinnon actively prepared to enter the world of education as a lateral-entry teacher.

And now for the past decade, McKinnon has been teaching language arts to eighth-graders at Grandview Middle School.

This past May, she completed her master's degree in education at Lenoir-Rhyne University.

About the same time, she was nominated as the Teacher of the Year for Grandview Middle School and selected as a runner-up at the district's 2015 Teacher of the Year luncheon celebration.

The winning teacher for Hickory Public Schools needed to take a position closer to family,

and as luck and good fortune can unexpectedly happen, McKinnon was announced as the HPS 2015-16 Teacher of the Year.

"I am thrilled to represent our district," said McKinnon. "I believe I am in one of the best schools and school systems in this great nation, so it is an honor to be chosen not only as Grandview's Teacher of the Year, but now to represent Hickory Public Schools."

One of the greatest benefits of serving as the HPS Teacher of the Year is the award from Mike Johnson's Hickory Toyota. For the next year, McKinnon will be driving a 2015 Toyota emblazoned with her new title on both sides of the car. "I am very proud to be driving this car, and I am also appreciative to Mike Johnson for this yearlong gift," said McKinnon.

McKinnon, who is married to her college sweetheart, Robert McKinnon, recently joined her mother-in-law, Della Marie McKinnon, and her two sons, Baxter and Walt, at Mike Johnson's Hickory Toyota where Johnson rewarded her with keys to the new car. HPS Superintendent Walter Hart and Grandview Principal Aaron Joplin also joined McKinnon for the celebration event at Mike Johnson's Hickory Toyota.

"I was so pleased when I learned that Melissa McKinnon would be named Teacher of the Year for Hickory Public Schools," Joplin said. "Having worked with Mrs. McKinnon for three

years, I can attest to her talent and professionalism as an educator. Whether she is moderating a traditional debate in class, or hosting a dress-up day focusing on Greek mythology, Mrs. McKinnon always engages students in the learning process. She will make an excellent representative for Hickory Public Schools in the regional competition."

The daughter of Joseph and Pamela Jenkins of Gastonia, McKinnon believes the key to teaching children is forming a relationship with them and genuinely caring about children as individuals. "When we love and care about others, we want the best for them. It is crucial that we know our students well enough that we know when something is amiss for them. We need to know who they are and how they learn," McKinnon said.

"We need to be aware of challenges they may be facing, in whatever facet of their lives, so we can help them to reach their full potential. "Not only knowing the curriculum, but having a passion for what we teach is vital to capturing a kid's heart and mind. Excitement is contagious, even excitement about our subjects or the lessons for the day. The students respond to that excitement. They must be encouraged to be curious and to explore with their minds. We need to hear every student's voice. We need to build relationships that last."

TELL US

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Rotary Club installs officers

At a recent meeting of the Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory, outgoing club President David Moore passed the gavel to incoming president Mark Seaman, who was installed by District 7670 Assistant Gov. Jack McCaskill. Also installed were President-elect Bob Conklin, Treasurer Mark Teague and Secretary Leslie Ferrell-Middleton.

The new officers will serve with the club's board of directors: Michael Blackburn, Bruce Bumbarger, Jennifer Clark, Dana Killian, Robert Locke, Linda Lutz, Cliff Moore, John Rambo and



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Shown (from left) are Mark Seaman, Leslie Ferrell-Middleton, Mark Teague, Linda Lutz, John Rambo, Cliff Moore, Bob Conklin, Jennifer Clark, Robert Locke, Bruce Bumbarger and John Ross.

John Ross. Dan Kirby will continue to serve in the assistant treasurer's role, and Jan Bohmuller will act as assistant secretary. Moore will continue serving the board in the past president's role.

Assistant principals complete leadership program

Anna Crooke of Gamewell Elementary School and Julie Hall of South Caldwell High School, both assistant principals, were recently recognized as Future Ready Leaders. Future-Ready Leadership is a leadership development program for practicing assistant principals. The program, provided by the North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association, is aligned to the performance evaluation standards adopted by the State Board of Education for North Carolina's school leaders. Through the cohort-driven model, assistant principals participated in face-to-face sessions and engaged in assignments, projects and readings designed to build the capacity of their schools and their own capacity as "Future-Ready" school leaders.

The North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association, in existence since 1976, is the pre-eminent organization and state voice for principals, assistant principals and aspiring



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Shown (from left) are Anna Crooke and Julie Hall.

school leaders. It represents more than 5,000 members from throughout the state and serves as the state's principal affiliate of the N.C. Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Community theater honors volunteers

The Green Room Community Theatre of Newton culminated its 2014-15 season June 25 with its Season Grand Finale honoring this year's volunteers.

The annual volunteer appreciation event saw many additions and changes this year including recognition of all volunteers, special entertainment from some of this year's cast members, and the introduction of The Green Room MVC Awards.

Receiving the fifth annual Dr. Allen H. Bandy Jr. Volunteer of the Year Award was Janet Matthews. Matthews has spent the past several summers working with summer interns from the Catawba County School System cleaning and organizing the costume storage areas in preparation for the upcoming season. She also serves as a box-office volunteer throughout the season. Matthews is a retired teacher who also volunteers at her church and Camp Linn Haven. She and her husband, Dale, live in Hickory.

This season, The Green Room implemented MVC Awards for each production. The awards are given to the most valuable cast member and the most valuable crew member as voted on by their peers. Criteria for voting includes preparation and readiness, a cooperative team spirit, and support, respect and encouragement for all members of the cast and crew.

Following are this year's recipients: » "Guys and Dolls" – David Townsend



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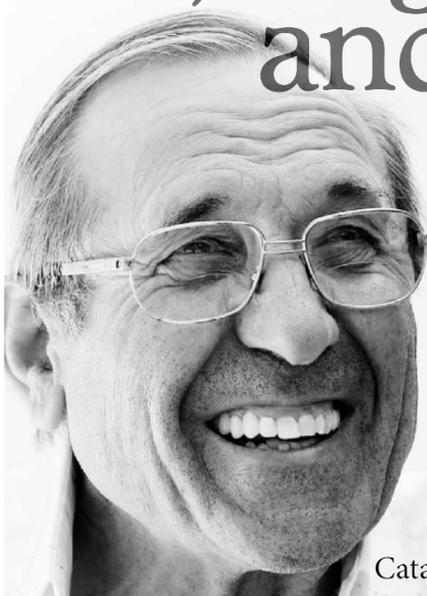
Janet Matthews (left) is shown with Sherry Butler, executive director of The Green Room.

- and Elise Yaussy
- » "Diary of Anne Frank" – Anissa Briggs and Joshua Cummings
- » "Miracle on 34th Street" – Dalton Isaac and John Gann
- » "Good Ol' Girls" – Laura Rhinehart
- » "The Adventures of Robin Hood" – Emma Hamlyn and Albert Pendell
- » "The Clockmaker's Child" – Lydia Humphries and Ann Kraft
- » "The Trip to Bountiful" – Norma Frank and Jason Sparks
- » "Little Shop of Horrors" – Caleb Warren and Pam Farnsworth
- » "Red, White and Tuna" – Bill Morgan, David Townsend and Morgan Lane

After the program, attendees were treated to a reception hosted by The Green Room board of directors.

The Green Room Community Theatre is a funded affiliate of the United Arts Council of Catawba County.

More days to talk, laugh, love and live...



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