

Website: [www.cornstalkheights.org](http://www.cornstalkheights.org)

Like Us on Facebook!

@HarrimanCHCO



# Newsletter

February 2021

*Custodians of the Past. Stewards for the Future*



**Editor's Note:** February is undoubtedly a challenging month. It's short, and can be cold and dreary. This year all 3 apply. Add on that the COVID doldrums, it's hard to get energized. We strive to issue our Newsletter at the end of each month intending to include discussions and upcoming plans from the preceding CHCO Board Meeting held just over a week ago. With February being the shortest month of the year, we don't always deliver on time. We apologize we're running a few days behind, but trust us, we're still active and enthused. We continue this month with our featured Harriman History in the **decade of the 1980s** as written by life-long resident & CHCO Historian Tom Scandlyn.

## CHCO Annual Meeting Sunday, March 21 at 2:00

The Annual CHCO meeting has been set for **2:00 on Sunday, March 21 at The Walden, 503 N. Roane St. All are welcome.** Those who attended the last annual meeting, or who have actively participated in at least one organization activity within the last 12 months, are eligible to vote. Please plan to attend. Covid Guidelines applicable at that time will be practiced.

Items to be discussed 2021 CHCO Objectives, Priorities and Events, Renovation of Harriman Hall, and Improved Lighting of Killeffer Park.

Please come join us for this Annual event!

## Life is Short, but Opportunities Long

**"We are all strangers and exiles upon the earth. And we should only be expected to be treated as such. However, we must not allow that to divert us from our primary goal and destination. This of course is the Kingdom of God."**

The Rev. Howard V. Crowder,  
First Presbyterian Church in Harriman, October 1981

At the beginning of the 1980s we were getting mixed signals from every direction. Nationally we were stepping out of a period of demoralization into a time of growth and renewed national pride. Closer to home some of us had reached the age where we saw that this world is not permanent. Death on a local level began to take away patriarchs and matriarchs; those regarded as kings, queens, and princes. People that had always been part of our short lives and wielded much influence were supposed to be eternal like God. Now they were passing away. It did not seem right. The town around us also began to change. Landmark structures that had defined our space on our streets many decades fell into disuse and disrepair. Some were razed completely, reminding us even the town built as "the Utopia of Temperance" was not forever.

**Business, Demo leader Edward Browder dies**

By LEON STAFFORD  
Special Staff Writer

Edward Carmack Browder, longtime chairman of Harriman Oil Co. and the largest investor in the former Southern Industrial Banking Corp. in Knoxville, died Tuesday afternoon in Harriman.

Browder, 79, was a business and Democratic leader for more than 60 years. He had played a major role in the location of Roane State Community College in Harriman. He also was a member of the Roane State Community College Foundation.

Browder, a former SIBC director, was the man to whom the banking corporation owed the most money at the time of its collapse in 1983. Just 10 days before SIBC filed for bankruptcy protection, Browder had invested \$500,000 in the bank, from which he later resigned as a director after it began to have cash flow problems.

Browder served under three Tennessee governors as a 12-year member of the Tennessee Tomahawk Waterway Development Board and was a former president of the Tennessee Oilmen's Association. He was also a member of the Roane County Chamber of Commerce, the Harriman Lions Club and West Hills Presbyterian Church in Harriman.

A native of the West community in Roane County, Browder with the help of brothers, Joe and Rhea, started Harriman Oil in 1926.

In 1946, Browder founded Browder Motor Sales, a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership, and Browder Farm Store, an International Harvester farm machinery business.

Browder, along with family members, founded Browder Brothers, Inc., a real estate firm; Harriman Motors, a Ford dealership, and East Tennessee Trucks,



Ford dealership on Trucker's Lane in West Knoxville County. He also acquired Rockwood Motors and Peggy Ann Truck Stop in Rockwood, one of the most widely known truck stops in the state. Browder played a major role in the Democratic Party for 40 years.

He helped manage the gubernatorial race for the late Gov. Frank Clement and Buford Ellington, and was closely identified with Rep. Joe L. Evans. He was also active in the presidential campaigns of Democrats from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter, and senatorial candidates from Tom Stewart to former Sen. Albert Gore Sr.

Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Friday at Kyker Funeral Home Chapel in Harriman with burial at Highland Memorial Cemetery in Knoxville. The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday at Kyker Funeral Home.

Memorials may be made to West Hills Presbyterian Church in Harriman or the Edward Carmack Browder Endowment Fund at Roane State Community College.

*Knoxville  
Newspaper  
Article of the  
death of  
Harriman  
"Mover and  
Shaker" Ed  
Browder*

All was not lost to those young enough then to be optimistic. Some saw hope for rejuvenation of leadership structures, organizations, even new uses for our old physical structures that remained. The 1980s were the Reagan years. The oldest man ever to be elected President (at that time) with much energy was telling us there could be a new day. I think most of us believed him and that also began to show, even at the local level.



*Still a prominent building in downtown, the post office was the center of business and social life in Harriman until 1980*

In 1980 a new post office opened in Harriman following five years of community objection. This was a great loss for Harriman. The old post office at Roane and Queen was beautiful. Its classical style, iconic pillars, interior woodwork, and brass post office boxes all exuded permanence. It was constructed in 1917 near the end of World War I which had established American dominance in the world. Our old post office dominated downtown more than sixty years. When it was closed downtown died with it. The new post office in Emory Gap is an ugly, nondescript structure. It speaks to me today as a long-lasting sign of the demoralizing time in which it was built and represents failure on all fronts. I know many towns with modern post offices which are beautiful, particularly many in Kentucky. I voiced my general opinion years ago saying even if the post office had to be moved, why did the new post office building have to look so shoddy. A city official asked me if putting a nice looking building in Emory Gap would not be placing a “rose among thorns.” Well, even in Emory Gap you must start somewhere.



*The Victorian-style Presbyterian Church at Trenton & Crescent was replaced in 1956 by the current facility on Clinton Street, and eventually torn down in 1983.*

In 1983 the old First Presbyterian Church building at 601 Trenton Street was demolished. It had stood at the top of Norris Creamery Hill for 90 years. In its final years the once beautiful Victorian structure was sad. Its beautiful slag glass windows had been broken out a young boy who lived in the nearby 500 block of Trenton Street. They were then boarded up. The Presbyterians had sold the church in 1956 when they moved to their new church. It was used by other church groups until 1967. After that time, it was a furniture warehouse. Garville Edwards had bought the building so his landlords, the Bowers brothers, would store furniture for their store there. This was the alternative to them storing furniture upstairs over his shoe/clothing store on Roane Street which was causing him to have difficulty insuring his inventory. After the Bowers brothers retired, he donated the old Presbyterian Church to Trenton Street Baptist Church as a charitable donation. In 1983 the Baptists demolished the building. Dr. A. Julian Ahler salvaged the front door and Bruce & Diana Knobloch installed them as the center doors to the second floor of the Farnham Building on Roane Street.

Fire also took its toll. The historic Funk and Wagnalls building on Walden Street and the Presbyterian Mossop School building on Margrave Street were both lost this way. The Harriman Furniture Store (previously T. L. Cates) on Walden Street was demolished by the Bank of Roane County.



*The Mossop School Building Fire in the 1980s*

As difficult as this time was on the historic infrastructure of Harriman, the loss of its leadership was greater. A number of individuals with weighty names left us in death. A small listing of some would include E. C. Browder (see news article featured on Page 1), Judge Frank Qualls, James L. Tarwater, Maurice K. Williams, Millard W. Walker, Mrs. S. H. Scandlyn, James W. Scandlyn, Arthur B. Stowers, Sr., and Mrs. Howard Luedking (Sr).



*Faces of Harriman's more recent leaders include (L:R) Millard Walker, James Scandlyn, and Mrs. Howard Rankin Luedking (Sr)*

At the same time city leadership was in turmoil. Our city judge, Glenn Langley, died suddenly from a heart attack during this upheaval. There was at the same time investigation of some city officials by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI).

Spiritually, most churches in the 1980s were stagnant. One exception was First Presbyterian Church. A new and young pastor, Rev. Robert Mitchell, came from California's Fuller Seminary to infuse a new enthusiasm into the sleepy small town church. It led to much new growth of young members with many small children. Other pastors I remember of that day would

include Episcopal Rector John Barrow, and Dennis Humphreys of Harriman United Methodist Church.

On the academic front, Harriman grieved as former football coach Rex Dockery lost his life in a plane crash. He was 41 years old and then the head coach of the Memphis State University.

On the positive side of the 1980s, we saw new professionals and visionaries come to Harriman. As a young man, Jerry Davis was elected to City Council and would also become Mayor. Doctors McMillian, Dickson, and Mathis were new to the medical community. Jaqueline Greene Gunter and husband Tom Gunter returned to Harriman to join her mother, Dr. Martha Wade Greene, in Optometry practice. And our current CHHCO President, Bruce Knobloch, and his wife Diana came to Harriman, purchasing the old James Waterhouse home at the corner of Cumberland and Virginia Streets.

These were interesting years. Green new growth from old stalks, a cautious optimism took hold by the end of the decade.

### **Historic Harriman Hall Renovation**

Our renovation donor base includes more than current residents in the Historic Harriman community. While this Newsletter recognizes some of Harriman's leaders who passed away in the 1980s, there are former civic leaders from our community still living that may not be as active now but are as enthusiastic about the progress in our City as ever. Here are a couple letters received with renovation donations, that we believe express the thoughts of many others who are watching our progress:

*I am so excited about the restoration of the church, the former Christian, then Trinity Baptist. I was a member (my family) the entire time it was occupied by Trinity Baptist. It is sentimental to me.*

*I had a letter from my cousin [name withheld], and she felt good about what is happening in town and want you are doing with the church.*

It is difficult to ask for donations while we wait for better weather and more progress; however, they are always appreciated. The completion of the renovations is truly dependent on the generosity of those who support Harriman Historic Preservation.

2020 Progress on the Historic Harriman Hall will be reported at the Annual Meeting, and then made available on the website and Facebook page. Target activities for 2021 will also be presented that will be based on volunteer support, level of difficulty, and available funds.

All donors contributing towards the cost of renovation and equipment will be recognized according to their cumulative level of giving noted below, on a permanent plaque to be placed at the completion of the facility renovations.

Donation Levels	Cumulative Level of Donations
Preservation Leader	\$25,000 or Greater
Preservation Guardian	\$10,000 - \$24,999
Preservation Steward	\$5,000 - \$9,999
Sustaining Donor	\$1,000 - \$4,999
Supporting Donor	\$500 - \$999
Contributing Donor	\$100 - \$499

In addition, designated gifts can be given in honor/memory of individuals of your choice. Specific project needs can be discussed, however it is suggested at this time to support the continuing window restoration at a donation level of \$1,500 per Sanctuary window.

All donations go directly to the renovation of Harriman Hall, and are not used for any of the organization’s operating expenses.

Cornstalk Heights Historical Community Organization is a 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are therefore eligible as a tax-deductible charitable contribution to the full extent of the law.

Donations can be sent to:  
 CHCO  
 PO Box 611  
 Harriman, TN 37748

