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Dave Westfall retires after 42 years in Education

Known as “Westy” to students, players, parents, and just about everyone, it’s hard to find someone he hasn’t either coached or taught in the community.

Dave Westfall, 64, graduated from Greenville in 1976, and went on to graduate from Bluffton University in 1980. Since then, he’s taught third, fourth and fifth grade at Greenville City Schools for 39 years, and taught fifth and sixth grade for three years at Tri-Village Local School District.

Over the last 42 years, he’s coached thousands of athletes, on the following teams: Tri-Village varsity girls golf, assisted Greenville varsity boys golf, Greenville eighth grade football, Greenville junior high boys basketball, Greenville junior high girls basketball, Tri-Village junior high girls basketball, Greenville junior varsity girls basketball, Franklin-Monroe varsity girls basketball, Ansonia varsity girls basketball, Greenville varsity track, Greenville junior high boys and girls cross country, Greenville junior high boys and girls track and Ansonia junior high girls track.

As a track and cross-country coach, he’s won over 130 trophies, including 18 league championships. But if you ask him and his past players, the wins aren’t what’s important, only that they had a coach beside them telling them they could do it.

“They don’t mention trophies,” Westfall said. “No one cares about that. Here’s my favorite quote, ‘Sometimes you achieve more than you thought possible because someone else believed in you.’ That’s what I tell the kids.”

No one knows that better than **Natea Davidson** GHS 2019. Davidson, 19, had Westfall as a seventh and eighth grade basketball coach at Greenville, and said ever since then his belief in her has never wavered. “I was a very troubled and unruly child,” she said. “I had never played basketball before.”
During a 7th grade game in Dec., 21 >>>



“The first day I walked into tryouts Westfall immediately was drawn to me and he just went out of his way to make me feel so special,” says Davidson. “I could hardly walk and hold a basketball, let alone play basketball. Yet that man kept me through tryouts, he saw the world in me. He even let me coach with him through my high school years, pulled me out of trouble, has gotten me jobs, the whole nine-yards.”

Dave just completed his final year at Greenville K-8 teaching third grade math, science and social studies. Westfall said his teaching style is not centered around tests, but revolves around project-based learning. This includes math lessons where he teaches students how to deal with real life finances, or a geometry unit in which students build and design a water park.

Westfall said at the end of the year, students never remember all the homework and tests they took, only that their teachers cared for them and taught them to be thankful, kind and never give up.

In his retirement, Westfall said there will be a lot of golf and a lot of family time.

“I have 10 grandkids with one on the way,” he said. “I literally missed some of my grandkids’ basketball games because I had sports stuff, and that’s when I knew I would try to step back and I’m gonna go to their games. I bird watch and I play golf constantly. There’s gonna be a lot more golf, a lot more family time.”

Westfall made it a point to thank the community and the entire county, for all the support and love he’s received over the past 42 years.

“As you coach you get end-of-the-year “thank you’s” and cards, but as you get into your career, you don’t realize how everyone is thankful and supportive. I have received tons of letters and cards on retirement. Looking back it’s hard to imagine I’ve coached over 3,000 athletes, and how fast the time went.”

*Pictured here with a board
Displaying 30 team photos of teams
Dave has coached >>>>>>>>>>*



*This article was written by **Abigail “Abby” Miller**, GHS 2016, who is Editor of the new **Darke County Link**, your best source for local news. Online at: www.DarkeCountyNow.com
***Editor’s note: Dave’s parents, **Raymond “Lefty” Westfall** and **Barbara Keltner Westfall** were both GHS graduates, Class of 1947. Dave’s sister **Janet Westfall Wenning** GHS 1972, and children, **Amanda Westfall Flory** GHS 1999, **Rochelle Westfall Wright** GHS 2000, **Brian Westfall** GHS 2003, and **Justin Westfall** GHS 2012, are all GHS alumni.*



Pictured above: Dr. Chris Gilbert staff (L-R) Jenn Davis, Darcy Loshe, Dr. Chris Gilbert, Jenna Gilbert Briggs (daughter), Sherrie Stewart, Shelly Lavendar, Jenn Subler and Jen Knick.

Dr. Chris Gilbert celebrates 40 years of Veterinary Practice with family and friends

A 40th anniversary party was held for **Dr. Chris Gilbert** GHS 1974, to celebrate the anniversary of the opening of his veterinarian practice in Greenville. Dr. Gilbert opened his practice June 26, 1982. The party was organized by his daughter **Jenna** GHS 2003 and wife **Judy**.

“He truly loves what he does,” said Jenna. “He is known as an expert in equine (horse) lameness, and his small animal business has grown exponentially.”

Dr. Gilbert stated, “I love the animals and I the love people. The greatest thing about this job is that every day is different.”

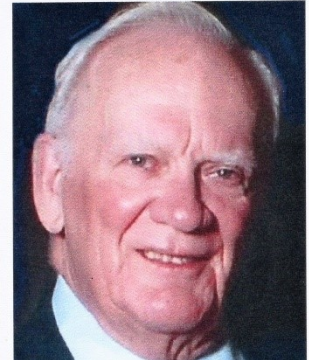
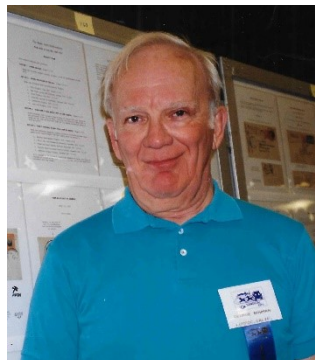
Chris and Judy met at The Ohio State University and have lived in Greenville ever since. His family members include daughter, **Jenna** and husband **Clayton Briggs**; daughter, **Janel** and husband **Garrett Kerr**; son, **Jordan Gilbert** and wife **Kaelyn**. The Gilberts have four grandchildren.

We have included some recent obituaries that may be of interest to our alumni readers.

George William Bowman, Junior

November 15, 1929 – August 12, 2021, **George Bowman, Junior**, age 91, GHS 1947, was born in Greenville to **George Bowman, Sr.**, GHS 1919 and **Merea Miley Bowman**, GHS 1919. In high school his primary focus was in math and science, and he enjoyed music mastering the accordion as well as theatrical arts. He attended the University of Cincinnati for one year and then enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy (West Point) until his graduation in 1952. He married **Mary Elaine Kirtland**, whom he met through a cross-country correspondence, in Seattle in 1953. He served his country proudly in Korea and at various Army bases before joining McDonnell-Douglas Corp. as an aerospace engineer and technical writer. He remained with McDonnell-Douglas (now Boeing) until his retirement, when he and Elaine moved to Lompoc, California in 1987. They had three children: **James, David, and Kathleen Gonzalez**. George was a hands-on father and was always an outstanding role model for his kids, serving as a Cub Scout troop leader and his daughter's Job's Daughters group. George exemplified unlimited patience and compassion toward James, who had Downs syndrome, and taught his children to be kind and accepting to all. He was always available to guide and support his family and to cheer them on with wisdom, enthusiasm, and a quiet yet witty disposition. George's wife died in 1998, and he was lucky to find another amazing woman in **Audrey Hudson**, a fellow docent at La Purisima Mission in Lompoc. They were married in 1999 and relocated to Laguna Woods, Cal. in 2016 to be near their blended families. George's passion was stamp collecting, and he won many top awards at international shows. His diverse interests also included world travel and running a successful tienda (Spanish for a store where goods are sold) at La Purisima. He was an usher and leader at St. Cross Episcopal Church in Hermosa Beach, and later, active at St. Mary's in Lompoc. He taught his kids to fish, ride a bike, throw a ball, drive a car, balance a checkbook, play Beatles songs on the piano, cheer on the local pro sports teams, love life, and live in integrity. He will be greatly missed, and he will continue to live forever in our hearts. George is survived by wife Audrey, son David and daughter Kathy. His sister was **Martha Bowman Ebeling**, GHS 1950. *Printed from the Los Angeles Times.*

Pictured below: George's 1947 Senior Year photo, 1954 in Korea photo, 2001 at a philatelist (stamp) convention photo, and his obituary photo in 2021:



Tanya Blocher Straker Yepsen, GHS 1968, asked if we could print this obituary about the fascinating life of her classmate and former brother-in-law, **Charles Richard “Rick” Straker**. Thank you, Tanya, and we are all sorry for the Straker’s family losses.

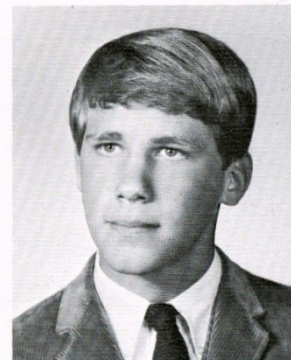
Charles Richard Straker

Charles Richard Straker, born May 8, 1950 in Greenville, passed away peacefully at his home in Honolulu, Hawaii, on November 22, 2021 at age 71. Rick was the youngest child of **Dr. Joseph Straker**, GHS 1924 (deceased 12-18-1982), and **Mildred Boggs Straker**, beloved by his sisters **Sue Straker Teaford**, GHS 1960 (deceased 1-31-2018), and **Ann Straker Timmons**, GHS 1962, and his brothers **Jim Straker**, GHS 1966, and **John Straker**, GHS 1966.

Rick graduated from GHS in 1968 where he lettered in wrestling. He attended The Ohio State University as a member of the swim team. Following his freshman year, he bought a surfboard, flew to Honolulu to visit his sister and found his home. In the 50 years since, friends and family in search of Rick found him in the lifeguard chair on Waikiki Beach, at the Port of Honolulu at sunset, and managing whatever needed to be done at Roy’s Restaurant where he enjoyed his work until the day he died.

Rick was a reader, a surfer, a hiker, and an unforgettable character, sailing to Tahiti on a catamaran, and feeding every hungry cat that wandered by his home on Walu Way. He was admired by his nephews and nieces, **Lisa, Matt, Jay, Sarah, Andy, and Jenny**, and treasured by his two devoted friends, **Rod and Stu**. Rick’s ashes were scattered on the Pacific Ocean among the islands that he loved.

1968 Chief Yearbook Senior photo >>>>



RICK STRAKER

James L. Straker

Sadly, Rick’s brother, **Jim Straker**, GHS 1966, passed away in Columbus, January 27, 2022, at age 73. He was born in Greenville, February 16, 1948. He grew up in a loving and lively household (previously mentioned). At GHS he excelled in academics and sports, especially football and swimming. Following the Straker tradition, he attended The Ohio State University. Jim had a life-long love of playing sports and following his favorite teams. He was very athletic and continued an active life hiking, biking, golfing, and playing tennis until his unexpected passing. Jim’s work ethic was unrivaled. He pursued multiple paths throughout his work career and was always admired for his competence and commitment. His great sense of humor and quick wit were much appreciated by his many friends and especially his partner of 32 years, **Janice Knasel**. He always looked at the bright side of life and brought his positive energy to any adventure. He was an avid reader and advocate for all creatures great and small. Jim loved being a father. His pride and joy was his son, **Jay Straker**, who grew up with a dad devoted to his happiness and always ready to play catch. They were teammates, best friends, and travel companions through the years. Jim was a beloved father, partner, brother, uncle and good friend.

Jim Straker in recent years >>>>>>

Both Rick and Jim had a lifelong love of animals. Thank you, Dr. Joe Straker!!



Our First Cousin: Captain William Wells

By **Kirk Warner**, GHS 1976

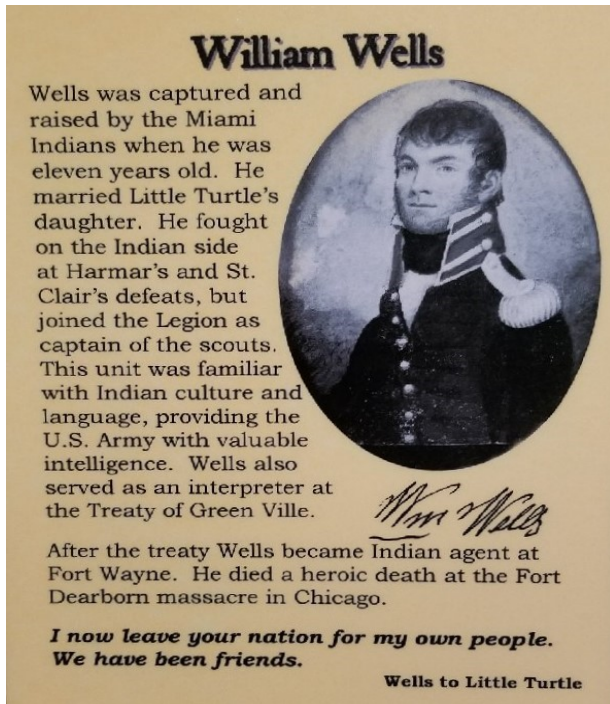


Howard Chandler Christy's *Treaty of Greenville, August 3, 1795*
Captain William Wells is in the center in blue buckskins as interpreter
between **Little Turtle** and **Major General Anthony Wayne**

Remarkably, our First Cousin (8x removed), **Captain William Wells**, was the son-in-law of **Little Turtle** and also the Chief of Spies for Major General Anthony Wayne. He was one of the first “residents” of Fort Greenville having marched with Wayne’s Legion of the United States in the 1794 campaign that resulted in the Treaty of Greenville the following August. More remarkable, is that he is our First Cousin via our mother’s, **Mildred Gibson Warner**’s, side. Millie was a Missouri native who just happened to marry our father **Paul Warner, Jr.**, GHS 1939, following their courtship at Ohio State. Our mother died without knowing there was a real reason why she felt so much at home for sixty years living in Greenville—she was an historical Greenville native. The wonderful murals depicting Wells and the Treaty of Greenville that we saw lining the cafeteria at the old Junior High (former High School) now festoon the GHS Main Stairwell. But we (**Alex Warner**, GHS 1967, **Mark Warner** GHS 1972, **Kirk Warner**, GHS 1976, **Alison Warner**, GHS 1997 and **Lauren Warner**, GHS 2001) did not know until recently as a result of genealogy research conducted for the Society of the Cincinnati that our First Cousin had watched over us.

The story of Captain William Wells is stranger than fiction. Wells had been kidnapped as a young teen near Louisville, Kentucky, and adopted into the Miami tribe, eventually marrying Little Turtle’s daughter. He became a chief warrior under Little Turtle during the Northwest Indian Wars, leading the Miami tribe at Harmar’s Defeat (near current Fort Wayne) in 1790 and at St. Clair’s Defeat (near current Fort Recovery) in 1791—one of the largest defeats of the American Army in its history. He wrote that “I tomahawked and scalped the wounded, dying and dead, until I was unable to raise my arm.” Oh great. Equally remarkable is that his brother Samuel Wells,

another of our First Cousins, barely escaped annihilation as part of the Kentucky militia under St. Clair at the massacre.



Wells Exhibit, Garst Museum



Sketch of Portrait of Wells that burned with the White House during War of 1812

During the course of that war, Wells' wife and daughter were captured in a raid led by **Brig. Gen. James Wilkinson** [later Wayne's second-in-command, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Spanish Agent No. 6]. Under that leverage, as well as command and family enticement, Wells became a United States Army officer. He served as a spy and Captain under Maj. Gen. Anthony Wayne at the **Battle of Fallen Timbers** and served as the interpreter at the Treaty of Greene Ville. Captain Wells led the First Sub-Legion to the battleground of St. Clair's Defeat (which he had fought in), and located several abandoned U.S. cannons, which the Indians had buried. General Wayne ordered the Legion to bury the bones found, and then build Fort Recovery on the battle site. Wells's scouts led the way when Wayne's legion marched toward the Maumee in the summer of 1794, where their numerous adventures were legendary. Wells was wounded a few days before the Battle of Fallen Timbers, but he still was able to give Wayne crucial advice about when to attack that helped secure the victory. In the famous **Howard Chandler Christy** painting *Signing of the Treaty of Greene Ville* – which hangs in the Ohio Statehouse; a smaller version hangs at Garst Museum – Wells is depicted front and center in blue buckskins as the Interpreter standing between Wayne, his commander, and Little Turtle, his father-in-law.

During the **War of 1812**, Wells led a group of Miami Indians from Fort Wayne, Indiana, to aid the evacuation of Fort Dearborn, the tiny beleaguered settlement that eventually became Chicago. Hundreds of Potawatomi warriors surrounded the fort and demanded its surrender. On

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August 12, 1812, Wells rode in advance of the surrendering Americans, including scores of women and children, to keep an eye on the Indian warriors. Wells knew the Indians would attack and had painted his face black: a sign of bravery, a sign to the Indians that he knew their intentions, and as a sign that he knew he was going to die. Wells was one of the first to go down when they attacked and was killed instantly. The Potowatomis decapitated him and, seeking to gain some of his courage, ate his heart. Because of his heroic martyr's death, Wells Street, which runs through downtown Chicago, was named for him, as is Wells Avenue and Spy Run in Fort Wayne, and Wells County in Indiana.



The *Treaty of Greene Ville* murals by **E. Paul Wilhelm** now are displayed in the GHS Main Stairwell.



Mural Painting of the famous Treaty of Greenville participants. (Wells is second from left)

Treaty Mural by E. Paul Wilhelm
(Wells on far right) >>>>>>>>





New Greenville varsity boys basketball coach, **Matt Hamilton**. (Gaylen Blosser photo/story)

Greenville Graduate Matt Hamilton Named to Head up Green Wave Boys Basketball Program

Greenville 1998 alumnus and former standout basketball player, **Matt Hamilton** has been named to head up the Green Wave boys basketball program following a stint as the program's JV boys basketball coach. "I am very excited," said Hamilton. "It has been a good process to go through and I am excited to say the least.

"Matt brings a well-rounded program," said Greenville Athletic Director, **Aaron Shaffer**, GHS 1995. "He is going to be involved in the summer, he is going to be involved with our youth – he's been in our program." Hamilton, one of the Green Wave all-time point scorers, is looking forward to building a solid Greenville boys basketball program well into the future.

"I took this job because I felt like it was an opportunity to obviously coach basketball but as I have come up through the coaching ranks at Greenville it's become more than basketball," said Coach Hamilton. "Being part of the community and helping to raise young men and build them in the workforce as husbands and fathers – it's more than just basketball.

"Matt's experience level may not be high in terms of year-to-year coaching at the high school level but he has been able to lead people," Shaffer said. "We're excited for him to get started. He is going to do a great job for us and continue to build a program from the bottom up from third grade through 12th grade. It's a big task and we're excited to see what he can do for us." A small school by today's standards playing in the competitive Miami Valley League, Greenville takes the court as one of just two Division II schools competing against larger Div-I programs.

"I don't see any reason why we can't compete in the MVL," Hamilton stated. "Numbers are numbers but if you put the work in and develop the fundamentals as they come through the youth program and instill the work ethic they need – hard work beats lazy talent every time."

"Last year we started part of an MVL youth league so our plan is to continue that and have those coaches start instilling the fundamentals that we run here with the high school programs," he said. "We will continue to build on it every year."

"We want them to be multi-sport athletes," Hamilton said of getting kids out to play. "They are conflicted for time. I want them to know that is ok. We still want them to be involved with the program in the off season but we want to make the program fun but still a challenge to get

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better. Make it about comradery and being part of a team to where kids want to be part of that team.”

“First I want to thank God,” Hamilton said. “I believe He has put me in this place and then the entire administration: Superintendent and Matt’s high school basketball coach **Doug Fries**, GHS Principal **Stan Hughes**, Athletic Director **Aaron Shaffer**, and Girls Basketball Head Coach **Rachel Kerns**, GHS 2005, who was part of the selection. They are all part of the process and they did their diligence of the hiring process and I am excited to be a part of it.”

Matt’s Senior Photo (1998 Chief)-below

Matt running along the baseline against Vandalia- right
(1997-98 season)



Matt is a member of a family of GHS graduates: his parents are **Monty Hamilton**, GHS 1969, and **Nancy Holzapfel Hamilton**, GHS 1968, and his grandfather **Lowell Hamilton**, GHS 1935.

Merry Christmas from your Alumni Association
Last year’s Drone view of Dick Brown’s Christmas lights
Has been still available on You Tube,
Search “2021 Dick Brown Christmas Lights”

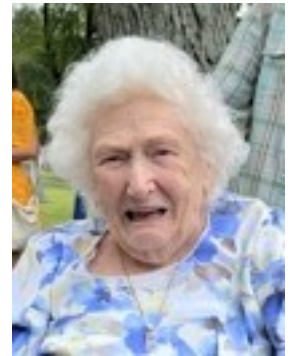


Views of the Christmas lights from the 2021 season at 5480 Requarth Road

More memories from **June McGowan Young**, GHS 1942

Not many had a telephone or electric refrigerators among some of today's every day appliances. If you had a telephone in your home, you usually had just one. Not like we have today. It was an upright-standing-alone phone with the receiver you picked up to put to your ear to hear. We had not only one, but two. One sat on a small stand at the bottom of our stairs to the second floor. The other was in my mother's bedroom on another stand by my mother, **Helen McGowan's**, bed. Being a doctor, she received many night calls when she had retired for bed. The second phone was necessary. It was also something that two persons could use and listen to at the same time. And we did! (Meaning my friends and I.) It was a great afternoon project. No phone books. so you picked up the phone, jiggled the receiver for the central phone # office operator downtown, to ring the number of a certain shop you wanted –She always knew the number if you didn't. Here is where the fun began for us (not the receiver of the call). We asked "Do you have 'Prince Albert (smoking tobacco)' in a can?" When the "yes" answer came as we expected, we answered--"LET HIM OUT" hanging up laughing. This was the forerunner of our now troublesome, unwanted telephone calls! But they were short and sweet. Today? You don't want to hear my answer.

June in 2021, age 97 >>>



Been thinking of various subjects that might be interesting since they are all outdated now. I had Miss **Esther Brand** for both 4th and 5th grades (she taught at East School from 1933 to 1946). Both were half grades taught in over-flow of grades at the East School. I didn't mind at all--loved her as a teacher. **Dick Wessel** (Rev. Wessel-- later was the Lutheran minister at the church on East Fourth Street). He and I started second grade sitting in seats next to one another. It so happened that for the next 10 years we were in the same class room and always were next to one another. His father wanted Mother to send me to the same college after we left GHS--he went to the Lutheran college in Springfield (Wittenberg) and I went to Ohio State. We were friends the first day in second grade and we always found one another, keeping in touch wherever we were, until he died. He kept Greenville alive in all my stories I related about growing up in Annie Oakley's home territory. Now I'm asked, "WHO is that? Annie?" Guess I'm really getting old!

It is always good to hear from one of Greenville's best historians. This year was her 80th anniversary of her Graduation from GHS in 1942. Thank you so much for all your memories.



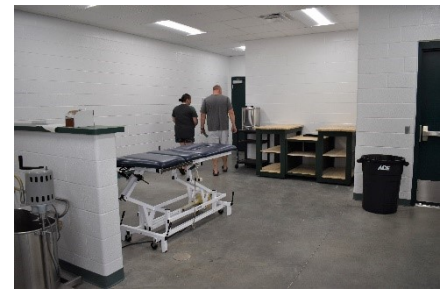
The Greenville Schools Wayne Healthsports/Orthopedic Associates Greenville Field House:
Here are some more pictures of the new Fieldhouse that serves the football and track stadiums,
that was dedicated this past August 14, 2022.



Concession area (above and interior below)



Front entrance area.



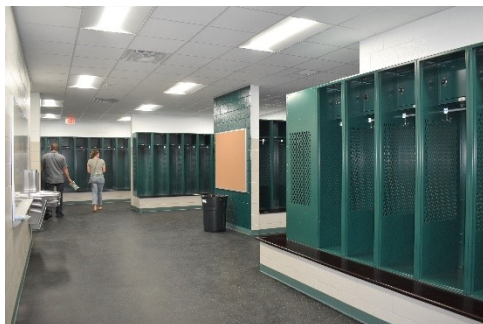
Jim Buchy, GHS 1958, and Dick Hole, GHS 1955 at the dedication. Training Room and taping



Superintendent Doug Fries' welcome.

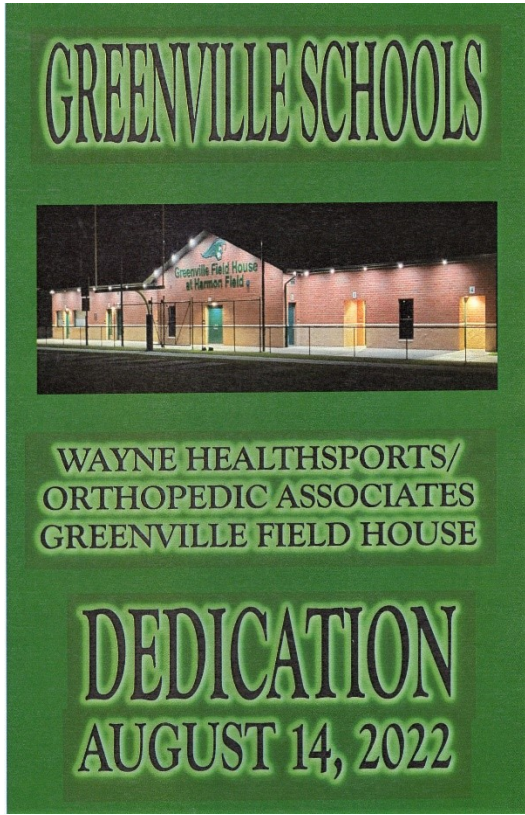


Mens restroom and Womens restroom.



Locker room, and Dedication plaque >>>.

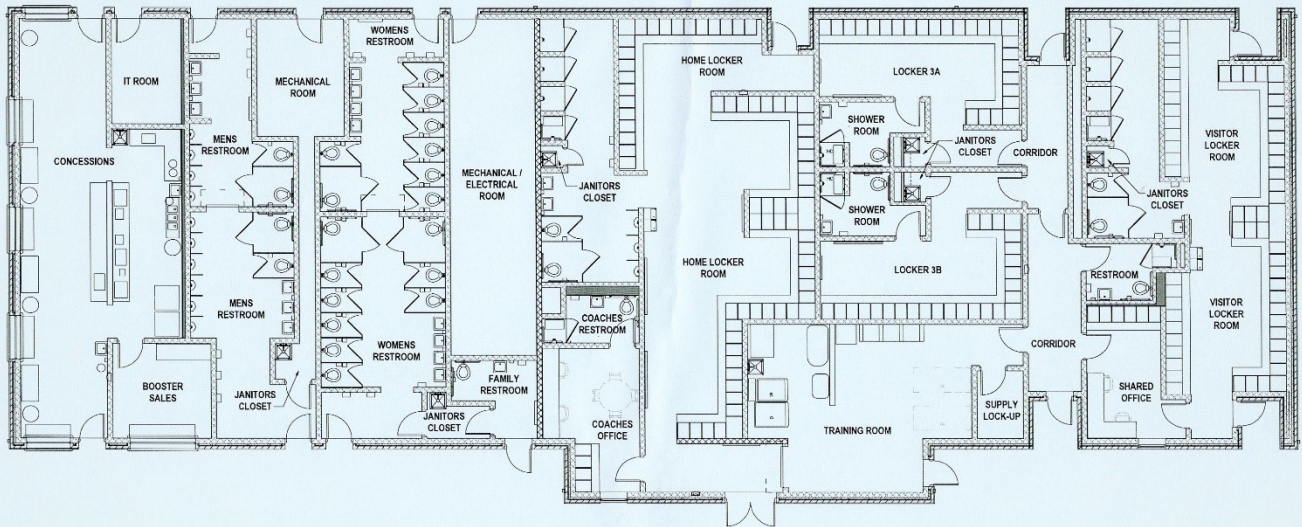




Facts & Items of Interest

- ◇ The Field House is approximately 8,724 square foot building foot print
- ◇ Approximately 10,000 square feet plus of metal roofed area. This includes 3-foot overhangs, 25 feet tall at the peak of the roof
- ◇ Approximately 250 cubic yards of building foundation and concrete slab poured and placed, with an additional 260 cubic yards of new exterior concrete pavement abutting to the Field House Athletic Facility
- ◇ Masonry Units:
 - 18,386—Structural Concrete Masonry Block (CMU) used at all interior and exterior walls
 - 1,764—4-inch Split-Face Block exterior wainscot veneer
 - 13,065—exterior Brick Veneer units
- ◇ 201 Football and Double-Tier Metal Athletic Lockers with a custom maple wood bench seat installed in front of the lockers distributed in (4) Locker Rooms, and the Coaches and Shared Office
- ◇ Training Room
- ◇ Heating and cooling of the facility is serviced by (6) Furnaces, (6) AC units with (4) Energy Recovery units for “year-round” comfort and use of the facility
- ◇ Public ADA Restroom Facilities include a Family Restroom with (1) lavatory sink, and (1) water closet and
 - A Men’s Restroom with (6) lavatory sinks, (10) urinals, and (4) water closets
 - A Women’s Restroom with (8) lavatory sinks, and (17) water closets
 - ADA Toilet accessories, with high-density Toilet Partitions included in all Restrooms including automatic “touchless” hand dryers. A baby changing station is included in all Public Restrooms
- ◇ The Locker Rooms, Coaches and Shared Office include a total of (11) showers, (9) Lavatory sinks, (8) water closets, (2) water fountains with touchless water bottle fillers for the athletes
- ◇ The large Concession area on the west side of the Field House includes (5) aluminum roll up doors with plenty of access, and a Booster Sales Office located on the south-west corner of the Field House

Floor plan:



Earlier in this issue on Page 5, we included the obituaries of two of the Straker brothers, Rick and Jim. **Tanya Yepsen** has provided us with this photo of **Rick Straker** sailing the Pacific Ocean around Hawaii. Not many pictures have been found with Rick as the subject, and this may best reflect the life Rick enjoyed living.



The City of Greenville, under the leadership of **Mayor Steve Willman**, GHS 1971, has beautifully decorated the downtown area this Holiday season. Many locals say this is the best display that they can ever remember for Christmas in our city. Starting last year, a large tree placed in the Annie Oakley Park at the south end of Broadway at Martin Street and Washington Avenue. This year's tree was donated by **Randall Bowman**, the long-time head of the Green Wave Athletic Boosters. Local businessman **Eric Fee** started the tradition a year ago of dedicating the tree to a dedicated supporter of the City with an announcement proclamation at the end of the Hometown Holiday Horse Parade the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Last year's tree was dedicated to **Barbara Fee** and this year's tree is dedicated to **Dianne Brown**.

Here are a few pictures of the decorated downtown. The City Building:



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The
Traffic
Circle >>>

December
5, 2022



Annie
Oakley
Park >>>

