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ISAIAH 117 HOUSE IN BLOUNT WAITS FOR APPROVALS. 1B

## 'We've lost and we've gained'

### Blount LGBT community responds to court ruling

BY SHELBY HARRIS  
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Local LGBT activists responded with skepticism Monday to the Supreme Court's decision that deemed workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity unconstitutional.

"A lot of us were still dealing with the shock of what Trump did last week on the anniversary of the Pulse shooting," said Shannon Brown, president of Appalachian Outreach.

"Honestly I am shocked that it's 2020 and we're still having to prove that our LGBTQ community is worthy of having equal rights," she said.

Brown was referring to an Obama rule overturned by the Trump administration. The rule had stated that nondiscrimination protections applied to transgender people when it came to health care and health insurance.

"So there's protection for working, but there isn't protection for medical if you're transgender," Brown said. "My concern is that this just kind of opens the doorway for more discrimination for the entire LGBTQ+ community."

Brown has been an LGBT activist in Blount County for years — even winning awards such as the Irene Sogg Gross Humanitarian Award in 2007 and the Achieve-



BRIANNA BIVENS | THE DAILY TIMES

**FINN STRAQUADINE WAVES** A rainbow flag in support of the first Blount Pride Parade on Saturday, August 24, 2019, at The Bird and the Book in Maryville.

ment in Direct Practice award in 2018. A licensed social worker, Brown opened Foothills LGBT Center in 2015.

Later renamed Appalachian Outreach, the organization that Brown founded serves the LGBT community in Blount County through programming and social gatherings.

"Regardless of what happens, Appalachian Outreach will always continue to move forward," she said. "Our primary mission is to help empower the community, and that continues whether or not we are gaining rights or losing rights. We will just continue to move forward."

Gaining and losing is

how Brown views the past week for the U.S. LGBT community, she said.

"On one hand, we've got part of our government saying, 'There is protection for you,'" she said. "And on the other hand, we have the government, or the president more specifically, saying

SEE RESPOND, 5A

### Supreme Court rules 6-3 to protect gay, transgender workers

BY MARK SHERMAN  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled Monday that a landmark civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment, a resounding victory for LGBT rights from a conservative court.

The court decided by a 6-3 vote that a key provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 known as Title VII that bars job discrimination because of sex, among other reasons, encompasses bias against people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

"An employer who fires an individual for being homosexual or transgender fires that person for traits or actions it would not have questioned in members of a different sex," Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote for the court. "Sex plays a necessary and undisguisable role in the decision, exactly what

Title VII forbids."

The decision was a defeat not just for the employers, but also the Trump administration, which argued that the law's plain wording compelled a ruling for the employers. Gorsuch, a conservative appointee of President Donald Trump, concluded the opposite, and Trump said Monday he accepted the court's "very powerful decision."

Gorsuch was joined in the majority by Chief Justice John Roberts and the court's four liberal members. Justice Brett Kavanaugh, Trump's other Supreme Court pick, dissented, along with Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas.

"The Court tries to convince readers that it is merely enforcing the terms of the statute, but that is preposterous," Alito wrote in the dissent. "Even as understood today, the concept of discrimination because of 'sex' is

SEE COURT, 5A



MANUEL BALCE CENETA | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**SUPPORTERS OF LGBT RIGHTS** stage a protest on Oct. 8 on the street in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington.



COREY ROEPKEN | THE DAILY TIMES

**WILLIAM BLOUNT'S DANIEL ARP** signs a National Letter of Intent with the University of the Cumberlands.

### William Blount athletes celebrate college signings

BY COREY ROEPKEN  
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From the time he was 5 years old to the time he was in fourth grade, Daniel Arp never wanted to stop wrestling. Even though he was far away from the reality, he said he dreamed of one day competing for a college team.

His dream suffered a major setback when he was in fifth grade because his father's job took the family to a school district that did not have a wrestling program.

It was quite the jolt for a kid who didn't want to do anything but wrestle.

"It was terrible," Arp said. "For the longest time I would wake up and my mindset was just wrestling. (Then) for five years it was just nothing. I did track for one year and it didn't give me the same satisfaction wrestling always has."

Luckily for Arp, his story has a happy ending.

His father took another job ahead of Arp's junior year of high school, and the family

SEE SIGNINGS, 5A



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# SIGNINGS: Arp one of eight recent WB graduates to sign National Letters of Intent

**FROM 1A**

moved to the William Blount school zone. The Governors, of course, do have a wrestling team.

The recent graduate made up for lost time in his only two seasons of high school wrestling and landed a spot on the team at the University of the Cumberlands in Kentucky. He celebrated his signing Monday afternoon with friends and family in the William Blount gym.

Arp was one of eight recent graduates to sign their National Letters of Intent, including football players Ben Kenny, Noah Durman and Seth Cooper; basketball player Sara Kagley; soccer player Connor Dodson; volleyball player Rachel Kessler; and softball player Emilee Braden.

Nobody would have blinked an eye had Arp taken a while to get going after not wrestling for five years, but he hit the ground running once he arrived at William Blount.

He would try wrestling at the house with his dad or with his older brother's friends, but nothing made up for what he got out of walking into a high school wrestling room with other kids his age who all were striving for the same goal.

Arp won early and often during his junior season and eventually qualified for the state tournament. He qualified for state as a senior, too.

"It shows his work ethic was second to none because he had to pick up where he left off when people he was going to wrestle had been wrestling that entire time," William Blount coach Garrick Henderson said. "Not only did he come to practice and work his butt off, he stayed afterwards, and then when he went home he worked there with his dad and with other teammates.

"He knew the challenge that was ahead of him. I'm very proud of him for accomplishing that feat today. It's something every



**WILLIAM BLOUNT'S SARA KAGLEY** signs a National Letter of Intent with Milligan College's basketball team.

wrestler dreams of."

Kagley also had a harsh setback when she was a young basketball player.

She was just starting to fall in love with the sport in the fifth grade when she was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. She said her internal organs were struggling and that fluids rushed into her joints.

At one point she was told she might never run again.

"It was awful," said Kagley, who signed with Milligan University on Monday. "I didn't really know what super sadness was in fifth grade, but it's hard when you grow up playing sports and you get told you cannot do anything. You can't run. You can't jump, nothing. I had to just sit there and watch."

After missing her fifth grade season, she was given a clean bill of health and got back into rhythm on the court. When she reached the high school level, though, she was far behind her varsity teammates; contributing at a high level seemed farfetched.

That changed over the next few seasons, and by the time she took the court as a senior, she was one of the Lady Gov-

ernors' top rebounders. When coach Todd Wright introduced the rebounding belt midway through the pandemic-shortened season, she received it as the leading rebounder in more than half of the games.

That was the icing on the cake after she reached a level at which she thought she had a chance to play in college. She reached out to Milligan coach Kylie Russell and the process went smoothly.

Russell and Kagley already had known each other for more than five years, so when Russell, an Alcoa High School graduate who recently took over as Milligan's head coach, saw how much Kagley had improved, she jumped at the chance to sign her.

Russell was there on Monday to speak and watch Kagley sign her NLI.

"The process was super easy, which I am thankful for," Kagley said. "My parents didn't go to college, so this was new to all of us. None of us really knew what was going on. (Russell) made it so much easier because we already knew her. We understood everything."

Unlike Kagley and Arp, Dod-



**WILLIAM BLOUNT'S CONNOR DODSON** signs a National Letter of Intent to play soccer for Tennessee Wesleyan.



**WILLIAM BLOUNT'S RACHEL KESSLER** signs a National Letter of Intent with the Truett McConnell volleyball team.

son didn't start playing his sport because of dreams of playing in college. He just wanted to be around his friends.

He joined the team his sophomore year, but his interest level grew after playing on a club team for one season and meeting William Blount coach Jordan Hill, whose first season was Dodson's junior year.

Dodson, who signed with Tennessee Wesleyan on Monday, played all around the pitch throughout his two high school seasons and was set to make his mark at central midfield as a senior before the COVID-19 pandemic canceled the season.

By then he had attended a camp at Tennessee Wesleyan, and the coaches offered him a spot on the team that day. It didn't take long for Dodson to accept, and now he said he's excited to take his relatively new love to another level.

"Junior year changed everything for me," Dodson said. "It made me want to do better and be a better person. I wanted to go to the next level because I didn't want to do anything but soccer. It changed my whole life."

**FOLLOW @RIPSORTS** on Twitter to get more from sports editor Corey Roepken.

# RESPOND: Cuevas urges LGBT to embrace ruling

**FROM 1A**

"There isn't protection for you."

She said Monday's Supreme Court decision is one that has to be met with criticism because of when it happened.

"For me personally, I feel like my head was pulled in two different directions. Almost like a whiplash," she said. "We've lost and we've gained but I think that that's something that unfortunately our community is very used to — making strides and then having

them ripped away."

But even with suspicion about the timing of the Supreme Court ruling, the local LGBT community does consider the 6-3 Supreme Court ruling a victory.

Appalachian Outreach Vice President Gibran Cuevas worked in the military and as a police officer for 30 years before undergoing gender transition.

Cuevas said he constantly feared being "found out" during his professional years. He feared retaliation in the workplace and that

his children could be taken away from him because of his sexual orientation and gender identity.

Now Cuevas said he wants members of the LGBT community to embrace the Supreme Court decision and demand proper treatment by their employers, so they never have to experience the fear he did.

"By all means," he said. "Use the system."

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# COURT: Decision not likely to be last word

**FROM 1A**

different from discrimination because of 'sexual orientation' or 'gender identity.'"

Kavanaugh wrote in a separate dissent that the court was rewriting the law to include gender identity and sexual orientation, a job that belongs to Congress. Still, Kavanaugh said the decision represents an "important victory achieved today by gay and lesbian Americans."

Trump had a restrained reaction, telling reporters that he'd read the decision and that "some people were surprised."

He added: "But they've ruled and we live with their decision. That's what it's all about. We live with the decision of the Supreme Court. Very powerful. A very powerful decision actually. But they have so ruled."

The outcome is expected to have a big impact for the estimated 8.1 million LGBT workers across the country because most states don't protect them from workplace discrimination. An estimated 11.3 million LGBT people live in the U.S., according to the Williams Institute at the UCLA law school.

Gerald Bostock, a gay county government worker from Georgia whose lawsuit was one of three the Supreme Court decid-

ed Monday, said no one should have to be "fearful of losing their job because of who they are, who they love or how they identify. And the justices have now made sure that we won't have to worry about that."

John Bursch, who argued the appeal from a Michigan funeral home owner against a fired transgender employee, said, "Americans must be able to rely on what the law says, and it is disappointing that a majority of the justices were unwilling to affirm that commonsense principle. Redefining 'sex' to mean 'gender identity' will create chaos and enormous unfairness for women and girls in athletics, women's shelters, and many other contexts."

But Monday's decision is not likely to be the court's last word on a host of issues revolving around LGBT rights, Gorsuch noted.

Rights groups have said they will challenge the administration's effort to roll back anti-discrimination protections for transgender people in health care. Lawsuits are pending over transgender athletes' participation in school sporting events, and courts also are dealing with cases about sex-segregated bathrooms and locker rooms, a subject that the justices seemed concerned about

during arguments in October. Employers that have religious objections to employing LGBT people also might be able to raise those claims in a different case, Gorsuch said.

"But none of these other laws are before us; we have not had the benefit of adversarial testing about the meaning of their terms, and we do not prejudice any such question today," he wrote.

The cases were the court's first on LGBT rights since Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement and replacement by Kavanaugh. Kennedy was a voice for gay rights and the author of the landmark ruling in 2015 that made same-sex marriage legal throughout the United States. Kavanaugh generally is regarded as more conservative.

The Trump administration had changed course from the Obama administration, which supported LGBT workers in their discrimination claims under Title VII.

During the Obama years, the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had changed its longstanding interpretation of civil rights law to include discrimination against LGBT people. The law prohibits discrimination because of sex, but has no specific protection for sexual orientation or gender identity.

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