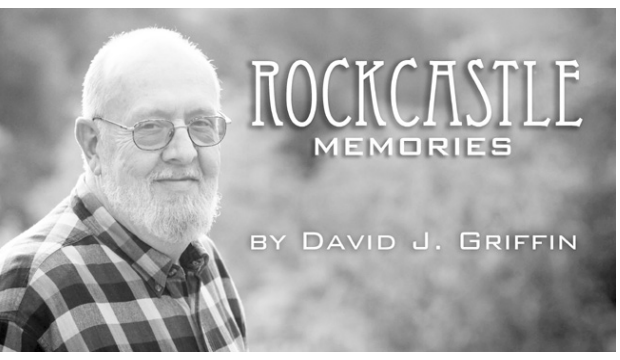

"I won, I won, I won!"

I often wonder how many times my mother (Bee) heard those words when I was a young boy playing basketball in our den.

When I was approximately seven years old, my grandfather (Pop) assisted me in making a small basketball goal out of a strong coat hanger to fit over the door frame in our den. The goal was approximately the size of a softball and was securely attached. Because of Pop, I was fully aware of the popularity of University of Kentucky basketball, and I had already become a fan of Adolph Rupp. Pop and I listened to the games on the radio, and the Cats were in the middle of the 1951 Championship season when he helped me install the make-shift goal.

Our den was the room where mostly adults – during the winter months – gathered to warm by the big coal-burning stove. Pop often sat in Bee's rocking chair, watching me as I played game after game. On special occasions, he even passed the ball to me when I was driving for the basket. I pretended to be UK players, and, of course, I won several NCAA games on last-second shots in that small room in our home.

I recall several of my friends who sometimes joined me in the basketball frenzy in my den. We played one-on-one games until we were completely spent and had to "sit on the bench" until we regained our composure. Because the room was so small, it was necessary to only have two players at a time. Probably the most frequent guest to play on my indoor goal was Kenneth Hansel. Kenneth lived just across the road from my house. We played together almost every day. When it was cold or rainy, we came inside for our entertainment. We took turns pretending to be UK, and the other one would have to be Tennessee or Alabama.

One afternoon, Kenneth and I were "hosting" the NCAA tournament when we noticed Bee sitting in her rocker and crocheting a small white object in her lap. When I asked what she was making, she replied, "You boys need a net for your basketball goal, and I am making you one."

It wasn't too long until she handed me the net and said, "Put this on your goal and see how it fits." To our astonishment, my coat-hanger goal looked just like a real goal. You could even hear the small ball we always used "swish" through the net. We were thrilled! I still have that ball to this day.

Other friends who I remember playing in that small room were Charles Shivel, Gary Coffee, and Earl Benton Cromer. If you were listening, you would have thought we were in Madison Square Garden. Sometimes we pretended to be on the same team and assisted each other in defeating other SEC teams. We would have needed an entire room to hold all of the trophies that we acquired with our talents.

When I became too old to play in the den, Pop helped me install a regular goal just outside our kitchen door on the concrete slab that led into the house. As soon as it was in place, the boys in the neighborhood gathered at my house to play basketball on a regular basis. Of course, we continued to pretend to be certain basketball stars from UK.

As long as I can remember, I have been a dedicated fan of the UK basketball team. I follow them in the Herald-Leader and on television faithfully. It has been years since I have missed a game that was televised. My wife and I even pay extra for our Dish Network programing so we will not have to miss a single game. You can imagine how the wind went out of our sails when the Cats did not make it into the NCAA Tournament this year.

Kathy and I decided to pick a team that we enjoy and follow their progress in the tourney. We picked UL. If UK is not available, we think it is more than appropriate to pull for Louisville – because they are in Kentucky. And, unlike many UK fans, we still admire Rick Pitino's coaching skills. (After all, he DID admit that he made a big mistake when he left UK for the pros.)

This year, we, like many others, have been awed at the team from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). This is a school that opened a mere sixteen years ago and now finds itself in the middle of March Madness – one of only sixteen men's basketball teams left from a field of 68 hoping to win the National Championship. To everyone's surprise, FGCU – seeded 15th in their region – knocked off No. 2 Georgetown and No. 7 San Diego State in Philadelphia over the weekend. They have been amazingly fun team to watch. Regardless of how they finish in the tournament, they have made a real name for themselves.

So, this is a brief rundown of just how the toy basketball goal in my den evolved into lifetime affection for basketball. As far as Kathy and I are concerned, March Madness is one of the absolute best times of the year. No matter who ends up going to the "big dance," we love to see fine basketball being played by college teams. It is an unpredictable and fascinating time of the year. And now, we are awaiting the Final Four. Louisville has knocked off our demon foe, Duke, much to our delight. And I do believe that they are going to take it all this year. If it can't be UK, then at least it is a team from Kentucky. We'll take it.

(You can reach me at themtnman@att.net or you can drop me a line at P.O. Box 927 – Stanton, KY 40380. I appreciate your comments and suggestions. You can also ask for information about my new book, View from the Mountain.)

County and Tourney Champs

The Mt. Vernon 4th and 5th grade Junior Pro team, Heat, were county and tourney champs this year. Members of the team are, front row, from left: Logan Evans, Jacob Bussell, Jeffery Barnes, Jacob Loudermilk, Bailey Robinson. Second row: Jonas Cox, Caymen McClure, Bryce Smith, Charles Smith, Dalton Gross and back row, Coach Ryan Loudermilk.

For Sale

3 bedroom, 2 bath, brick ranch, attached garage, central heat and air, situated on approx. 2 acres with nice barn, shed and gazebo. Located just off U.S. 25, one minute from I-75 Exit 59.
$119,000.

606-386-1364

ABSOLUTE TRUCK AUCTION

FRIDAY • APRIL 12TH • 10 A.M.

At the Jackson Energy District Office, in Jackson Co. on Rt. 290 - 7 miles south of McKee.
Nine 44 Chevy and GMC pickups, three SUVs, one Ford 4x4 bucket truck and seven 2012 LWB new truck beds.

NOTE: See detailed vehicle listing on website. All vehicles run and drive. TERMS: Cash or approved check. Announcements day of sale take precedence over printed material. INSPECTION: Monday thru Friday (8am-4pm) at Jackson Energy Office.

TURNER - THOMPSON AUCTIONS

Tony Turner: Principal Broker-Auctioneer 606-593-6079
222.glenthompson.com
Glen Thompson: Broker-Auctioneer 696-668-6692

Dr. Larry R. Smith
Chiropractor

Now accepting new patients
Most insurance accepted
including Medicare, Medicaid

606-256-0242

"The doctor people recommend"

235 Richmond St. • Mt. Vernon, Ky.

See the Friendly Folks at Don Franklin--You'll Be Glad You Did! See the Friendly Folks at Don Franklin--You'll Be Glad You Did! See the Friendly Folks at Don Franklin--You'll Be Glad

HUGE Spring BLOWOUT

Don Franklin
Southern Kentucky's GM Headquarters

"WE WILL NOT BE UNDERSOLD!"

Crazy Prices on all New Cars & Trucks!

2007 Chevrolet Silverado
1500, Reg Cab, 4x4, Z-71, 20 in. Wheels Sharp
Only $17,896

2003 Dodge Dakota
Ext. cab, R/T (rare), 5.9 V8, Auto, Chrome Wheels, Ground Effects, Loaded
Only $7,950

2005 Chevrolet Trailblazer
Ext. LT Pkg., 4x4, Leather, Third Seat, Wheels, CD
Only $9,998

2012 Chevrolet Captiva
LT Sport Pkg., V6, Auto, CD, Chrome wheels
Only $20,877

2005 Toyota Tacoma
Reg Cab, 4x4, 4 cyl, wheels Sharp Truck
Only $12,979

2013 Ford Explorer
XLT Pkg., 4x4, Leather, CD, Wheels, Rear Camera, Third seat, Loaded
Only $30,797

2012 Chevrolet Traverse
LT Pkg., AWD, V6, Auto, CD, Wheels, Third seat
Only $24,899

2011 Toyota Tundra
Rock warrior Pkg. Crew Cab, 4x4, TRD, Off road, V8, Auto, CD, Wheels
Only $28,886

2011 Cherolet Cruze
Lt Pkg., 4 Cyl., Auto, Wheels, Cd, Spoiler
Only $15,992

2007 Mazda CX-7
Grand Touring AWD, V6, Auto, Sunroof, Leather, Bose Stereo, Wheels, Has it all
Only $15,876

2010 Nissan Cube
Krom Pkg., 4 Cyl, Auto, Chrome wheels, CD, Loaded
Only $14,977

2006 Pontiac G6
2 dr GT, V6, Auto, Leather, CD, Heated seats, Wheels
Only $9,944

2006 GMC 2500
HD, Crew cab, 4x4, SLE Pkg., V8, Auto, CD, Wheels, Spray in liner, Tow Pkg.
Only $14,891

2006 GMC Envoy
Danali, AWD, V8, Auto, Leather, Bose Stero, Sunroof, Chrome Wheels
Only $12,988

2012 Chevrolet Equinox
LT Pkg., 4 Cyl., Auto, CD, Wheels
Only $22,691

See Our Online Showroom at www.DonFranklinGM.com • Shop 24/7 Hassle Free!

All prices excluding tax, lic. and processing fee. Only one unit at the priced amount, first come, first served.

DON FRANKLIN
CHEVROLET BUICK GMC
345 S. Hwy. 27 - SOMERSET
Stoplight #5

Photos for illustration purposes only.

Phone: 606-678-4141 or 1-888-678-4141