

■ CADIZ

Ex-Steubenville Teacher Pleads Guilty To Sexual Battery

By CARRI GRAHAM
 For The Intelligencer

CADIZ — A former Steubenville Catholic Central High School teacher received 2 years probation, community service and will have to register as a sex offender after pleading guilty to one count of sexual battery Tuesday.

Corissa A. McCalister, 22, of Steubenville accepted a plea agreement Tuesday where she changed her original plea of not guilty to guilty in Harrison County Common Pleas Court. In exchange for the guilty plea, a second count of sexual battery was dropped.

In April, McCalister was charged with two counts of sexual battery for having sex with a 15-year-old student in Harri-

son County. When employed at the school, she also served as the head cross country coach and assistant track coach.

According to prior reports, McCalister was driving the juvenile home from a track meet at Edison Local High School when she made a stop at the Harrison County Fairgrounds in Cadiz and engaged in sex with the child.

The police were contacted after the victim's mother notified the school of the allegations. McCalister was put on administrative leave and eventually fired from her position at the school.

During Tuesday's hearing, Judge T. Shawn Hervey said the victim's family was aware of the plea agreement and of

McCalister's possible sentence.

He added that he had received a victim impact statement which would factor into his decision. Hervey then opened the floor to comments before sentencing. McCalister's attorney Dennis W. McNamara spoke on behalf of his client.

"Ms. McCalister graduated from college and got her license as a teacher at 21, very young and obviously pretty advanced basis to do that; maybe not so much on a social behavior axis as far as maturity is concerned. She now is an ex-teacher and that is going to be permanent courtesy of the state department of education appropriately because of this conviction, which I consider to be a significant sanction that they have

imposed," he said.

McNamara noted that McCalister has been attending counseling and plans to continue doing so.

Hervey sentenced McCalister to two years of probation, 80 hours of community service and a reserved 2½-year prison sentence. She must also have no contact with the victim in the case. As a result of the conviction, McCalister must register as a Tier III sex offender the rest of her life.

Hervey then addressed McCalister.

"I'm not going to go through a long lecture. I've heard the facts of this case hashed out on both sides and I think all the factors of this case have led to this sentence that has been

proclaimed here in the court today," Hervey said.

"Punishment is necessary in this case because you held a position of trust and responsibility and you violated that and you're going to face severe consequences for that; however, it's my understanding that you still have the ability, you're 22 years old, you still have a long life ahead of you and some day you can put this behind you."

Although the victim was not present, Hervey said he wanted to speak to them on the record.

"That's the sad part about this. The decision made in haste, in lust, whatever you want to call it, can ruin multiple lives for a long time. Unfortunately, that's what happened here," he said.

■ WHEELING

Tom Burgoyne Honored With Tree at Samaritan House

Red maple symbolizes generosity, longevity and adaptability

By ALAN OLSON
 Staff Writer

WHEELING — A longtime supporter of the local community was honored with an enduring sign of his values and legacy at the Samaritan House -- a red maple tree, emblematic of the impact Tom Burgoyne has on his community.

Burgoyne was named in April as the Youth Services System's 2021 Good Samaritan, citing his laundry list of good deeds and efforts to support the community, ranging from numerous youth programs, heading the local drug task force, and serving as Ohio County Sheriff from 2000 to 2008.

Burgoyne said that, like the tree, he was fortunate to endure to see long-term change brought to the area, particularly with regards to YSS.

"When I first got involved with this organization over 30 years ago, they had a hard time meeting payroll. Now they have over 200 employees and do so many things, not only in Wheeling but in the northern five counties," he said. "They're out there trying to help those who can't, or won't, help themselves.

"It's without organizations like this that we stumble and fall, and we haven't stumbled or fell here. Our public service people here do a great job, and youth services in other places — like the Coalition for the Homeless — they're always out looking to help those who can't help themselves."

Ron Klug, who owns Klug's Greenhouse, slightly miscalculated the size of the tree, but felt it was fitting to Burgoyne's nature in numerous ways.

"I thought it would be about this high," Klug said, gesturing around shoulder-height.

"As you can see, it's about 16 feet high. It's very fitting for Tom. ... This tree is huge; Tom has had a huge impact on his community.

"The red maple symbolizes adaptability, and Tom has certainly adapted to this community and put his roots down, like this tree is going to. It also symbolizes generosity; Tom has been generous with his time. ... About 2005, Tom told me about the SWEAT program, an effort to unite law enforcement and teenagers who might be going the wrong way. They cut grass — Tom, deputies, and teen-



Tom Burgoyne gets a breath of fresh air from the red maple tree planted in his honor at the Samaritan House.

Photo by Alan Olson

agers — for the elderly people in the area. I think this symbolizes what Tom has tried to do."

Klug added that the maple also symbolizes longevity — "And look at Tom and I, we're still here!"

"They say it's also a sign of spirits," Burgoyne added, closing his remarks.

"Sometime in the future, I think I'm going to be hanging out in that tree. Nobody cut it down, because I think I'm going to be up there!"

Burgoyne, a transplant from Boston decades ago, said that he had also been invited back to his hometown later this month, to be honored by the Red Sox for his lifetime of service.

"Because of my work with Youth Services, I have the privilege of being honored at the Boston Red Sox/Yankees game on July 24 in a cou-

ple weeks, as the 'hometown hero.' I guess it's because of part of the work that I did in Boston on the Columbian drug squad ... and some of the work that I did here in Wheeling."

Burgoyne said he had recently received a phone call from an anonymous donor who pledged to donate \$100,000 in his name to Youth Services System, thanks to the tireless work of the workers there, including CEO John Moses.

"He said, guess how much money it was going to be," Burgoyne said of the donor's phone call.

"I figured it would be more than a thousand, otherwise he wouldn't be calling me. So I said, ten thousand? He said, 'How about a hundred thousand?' I said, with a tear coming down my eye, that would be just amazing."

■ BRIDGEPORT

NAACP To Host WLU President

By SHELLEY HANSON
 For The Intelligencer

BRIDGEPORT — The Belmont County NAACP is set to host West Liberty University President W. Franklin Evans as a special speaker during its general meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday.

Jerry Moore Jr., president of the Belmont County chapter of the NAACP, said the event will take place at the Bridgeport Rotary Shelter, located next to the Bridgeport Schools complex.



EVANS

Moore said there will be a short general meeting and then Evans will speak afterward.

Moore is encouraging the public to attend as Evans is a dynamic speaker, he said.

"He is one excellent speaker. He spoke at our MLK Day celebration and he's brilliant," Moore said.

Moore believes it is important for Belmont County residents to hear, learn from and get to know local leaders such as university presidents.

He hopes such events eventually lead to youth in the community deciding to stay and live in the Ohio Valley.

"Hopefully some prospective students will come hear him. He's an awesome speaker. ... We want to give Belmont County citizens (a chance) to hear him and see how brilliant the man is. Hopefully we will have a big crowd for him to speak to," Moore said. "I think this is positive for Belmont County."

Moore noted the county chapter of the NAACP is all about keeping things moving forward in a positive direction.

"I believe if we put things in place to keep our children here, such as jobs and things to do, our kids will stay in our area and develop our area versus going to Columbus or Georgia," he said.

Evans was named WLU's new president in November and began his duties Jan. 1. He previously served as vice president of academic affairs at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia. Prior to that he also worked at Elizabeth City State, J.F. Drake State Technical College, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, and Tennessee State University.

Evans received a doctoral degree in higher education administration from Georgia State University in 1994.

He earned advanced degrees in science curriculum and instruction from Georgia State University.

Evans also has bachelor's degrees in both journalism and biology/entomology from Georgia State and the University of Georgia, according to information from WLU.

■ WEIRTON

Weirton City Manager Resigns, Accuses Council Of Several Violations

By CRAIG HOWELL
 For The Intelligencer

WEIRTON — Joe DiBartolomeo's second stint as Weirton's city manager came to an end Monday night, but not before he announced he had requested an investigation into members of city council for what he said are violations of the city charter and state law.

During the citizen's comments portion of Monday's Weirton Council meeting, it was announced 13 residents had signed up to speak and yielded their time to DiBartolomeo, providing him with more than 40 minutes with which to address council.

"Tonight is my last night as city manager," DiBartolomeo announced in the middle of his comments.

Among his accusations against council, DiBartolomeo raised a Nov. 12, 2020, special council meeting, during which an executive session was called with representatives of the Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The executive session had not been a part of the agenda, and it was called without input from the presiding officer, who, at the time was the city clerk as Mayor Harold Miller was not in attendance at the November meeting,

DiBartolomeo said. "There were three, possibly four violations," he said, claiming other issues also were discussed during the executive session.

DiBartolomeo singled out Ward 2 Councilman Mike Adams, noting Adams had been appointed as an assistant Hancock County prosecutor earlier this year, saying, under city charter, a member of council cannot hold another appointed or elected position.

"Since then, you've been in violation of the charter," he said, telling Adams he needs to decide whether he will remain on council. DiBartolomeo

said the city could be legally challenged on every decision made with Adams voting.

City Attorney Vince Gurrera also was appointed as an assistant prosecutor, which DiBartolomeo said resulted in his requested investigation being transferred to Ohio County.

While DiBartolomeo brought up the focus on his requested investigation, members of council began to stand up and leave, beginning with Councilmembers George Ash, Terry Weigel, Fred Marsh and Flora Perrone. It was at that time, Gurrera advised council could take no action on the

scheduled agenda. "We had a quorum to start the meeting. We no longer have a quorum to conduct business," Gurrera said.

Shortly after, Councilmembers Tim Connell and Enzo Fracasso also left, leaving Adams as the lone member in council chambers.

While he didn't indicate they were part of the investigation, DiBartolomeo also pointed to decisions concerning whether to have city police serve as prevention resource officers, the renewal of workers' compensation insurance and decisions over year-end bonus pay as showing

a lack of leadership by council.

Miller took time to thank DiBartolomeo for his service, but also said the projects started in recent years will move forward.

"The city of Weirton will continue to survive. Trust me," Miller said. "There are a few of us who still believe in the future of Weirton."

Gurrera advised a special council meeting would have to be scheduled to address the action items of Monday's meeting, which included several purchase requests and labor contracts and other pay issues for city employees.