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SANTA LETTERS INSIDE!
B SECTION

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Abby Hooven

Jim Green speaks during the grand opening ceremony for the Jim Green Track and Field Center at the University of Kentucky on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

UK dedicates Jim Green Track and Field Center

BY ABBY HOOVEN

The University of Kentucky held its grand opening ceremony for the Jim Green Track and Field Center on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

The facility was dedicated in honor of Eminence native and standout track star Jim Green, who won numerous championships and was the first African-American student-athlete to graduate from UK.

"I am grateful today," said Green. "This is not all about me. This is about my family also, because without family, you don't get very far... I am so

excited that a little old kid from Eminence, Ky., has something named after him. I'm thankful and hopeful the new class of young student-athletes get to enjoy this new facility."

A crowd of about 300 people, including Green's family, friends, Omega Psi Psi Fraternity members, the UK track and field team and more, came together to celebrate and honor Green's achievements and impact on the university.

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Fire chief updates council about hazardous intersection

BY ROBB HOFF

Chief Steve Lucas of Eminence Fire and Rescue reported last week to Eminence City Council that the department responded to five accidents in November at two problem locations: the intersections of South Main Street and Mulberry Pike in the city and Kentucky Routes 22 (Ballardsville Road) and 322 (McCoun Road), which is outside city limits.

"They (state officials) said there's not enough wrecks in the area to be feasible to put a traffic light there," Lucas said of the Route 22 and Route 322 intersection near Smithfield.

Mayor Fred Downey had asked Chief Lucas to identify how many accidents have occurred at the intersection so that the city could "show more evidence that they need to do something with that area."

Chief Mike Wells of the Eminence Police Department said that Eminence police doesn't respond to accidents at the intersection "unless it's an injury accident."

"We go there because we're closer than the sheriff's department," said Wells.

Chief Lucas added that he and others previously lobbied state officials in Frankfort for safety improvements at the intersection.

"We just quit going because they kept saying no, no, no," he said.

Lucas also reported the remainder of Eminence Fire and Rescue responses for November, which included seven responses for fire-related calls (four in the city and three rural), four responses for assistance provided to Henry County EMS (two in the city and to rural), and

SEE CHIEF/PAGE A2

The men and women of Eminence Fire and Rescue held their annual year-end dinner this month at the firehouse in Eminence. The department is led by Chief Steve Lucas (on the right).

Robb Hoff



EPD conducts Shop-With-A-Cop event



Eminence Police Department held their 2023 Shop-With-A-Cop Christmas gift program for Eminence children earlier this month, providing gifts for 16 qualifying children with more than \$12,000 raised. The group, including volunteers, shopped at Shelbyville Walmart and had lunch at Eminence McDonald's. Eminence police continues to accept donations for the program for next year. To see more photos, turn to Page A2.

Bethlehem Living Nativity Preview



COME ALL YE FAITHFUL: Last year, construction of the manger for the annual Bethlehem Living Nativity went on as planned, but an arctic freeze prevented the homage to the birth of Jesus Christ. This year, the manger is up again for the event, which is scheduled to start Dec. 22 and last nightly through Christmas night from 6:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. The nativity site is located at 3946 Bethlehem Road (Highway 22).

Robb Hoff (2022)

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UK

FROM PAGE A1

“Today’s about a lot more than a building,” said UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart. “Today is about Jim Green and a lifetime of knocking down barriers, first for himself and ultimately for others.”

Green’s athletic career began in Eminence around the eighth grade. Throughout high school, he played football, basketball, baseball and ran track. Yet, it wasn’t until his freshman year that someone noticed he might have a gift for running.

While Eminence did not have a track, Green and his teammates trained along the railroad track bed in town.

During high school, Green was the state champion in the 100, 220 and 440-yard dashes and broke state records in the 70, 100, 220 and 440-yard dashes.

Green was heavily recruited, but ultimately chose to further his track career at UK.

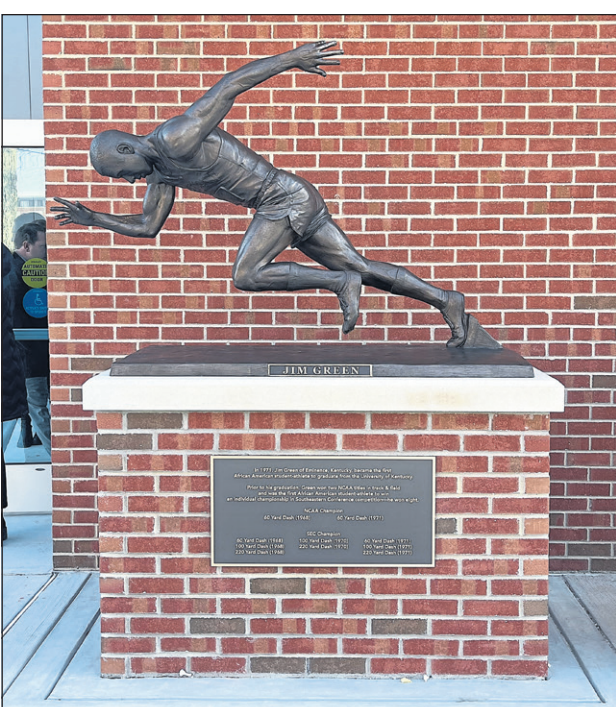
“I knew track was my favorite sport and I knew that I could probably excel in track more than I could any other sport,” said Green during an interview with the Local in May. “I think I could have excelled in football if I decided to play football, but I wanted track to be my main sport.”

One of the main catalysts for Green’s decision was his relationship with UK track coach Press Whelan.

Green became emotional during the ceremony as he spoke about Whelan, whom he had a personal relationship with for 54 years.

“He sat down and told my mom, ‘I will never let anything happen to him, anything.’ And in all the time that I ran, his words were true, and I trusted him,” said Green.

During his time at UK, Green earned All-America honors six times and won two NCAA titles in



A statue of Jim Green sits outside the Jim Green Track and Field Center.

Photos by Abby Hooven



Jim Green’s photo is displayed on the wall of the Jim Green Track and Field Center, along with other NCAA champions from UK.

the indoor 60-yard dash in 1968 and 1971. Additionally, Green won eight Southeastern Conference individual events: the indoor 60-yard dash in 1968 and 1971, the outdoor 100-yard dash in 1968, 1970 and 1971, and the outdoor 220-yard dash in 1968, 1970 and 1971.

In 1971, Green further made history as he became the first African-American student-athlete to graduate from UK. That year, he was

also named the world’s fastest man.

Breaking barriers and making history came with hostility, though. As he attended meets in the Deep South from 1968-71, Green was not welcomed with open arms and faced ridicule and hateful comments.

“(Whelan) told me, he said, ‘Jim, there’s gonna be some tough days, some rough days.’ And let me tell you there were. I got called



Jim Green joins ambassador Kelly Craft, Joe Craft and UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart for a celebratory “victory lap” on the new indoor track named in Green’s honor.

everything but Jesus, and that was okay,” said Green.

Green countered the hate as he knew best; he let his running speak for itself.

“I always said my philosophy was, I called it the finish line,” said Green during an interview with the Local in May. “When I got to the finish line, all I have to do is turn around and look at you and you know you were defeated. I don’t have to say anything to you.”

UK President Dr. Eli Capilouto said Green helped put UK track on the map, but more importantly, made the university change to become more inclusive and accepting of all people, regardless of race or color.

“Today we celebrate a man who made a difference, a man who has transformed the landscape and the trajectory of so many communities,” Capilouto said.

For his accomplishments throughout his track career, Green has been inducted into eight halls of fame, including the University of Kentucky Athletics Hall of Fame and Eminence High School Hall of Fame.

Locally, Eminence created the Jim Green Walking Trail in 2020 to honor the hometown star. His fraternity has a golf scramble named in his honor as well.

In 2019, UK first recognized Green by renaming its annual indoor meet the “Jim Green Invitational.” Now, the university has taken the next step by

heart,” said Lonnie Green, UK track and field and cross country head coach. “He was concerned not just about the African American student-athlete, he was concerned about students in general and we thank Jim for being that person who stepped up.”

In addition to the building, a statue was unveiled that showcases Green sprinting and lists his numerous accomplishments as a UK athlete.

During the ceremony, Green took time to thank his wife, his family, fraternity and many other influential people in his life and athletic career.

He also became emotional talking about his late parents, Dennis and Evelyn Green.

“I was in my office yesterday and I was sitting there crying like a baby because I thought about my mom and my dad, how great it would be for them to be here today,” Green said through tears. “This is theirs, not mine. They got me here. I just finished the race.”

Prior to the opening of the facility, Green said his accomplishments, and building namesake honor, wouldn’t have been possible without his upbringing and support in Eminence.

“My name may be on the building but Eminence, Ky. helped me put it there and if it wasn’t for the support I got from the people in my hometown, maybe I wouldn’t have all these accomplishments,” said Green. “I am a living witness that you can come from a small town and your dreams can come true.”

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