

OPINION

Kentucky's rich history of veterans "I hope to have God on our side, but I must have Kentucky."

Submitted by:
State Representative
Nancy Tate

These words, spoken by President Abraham Lincoln—one of Kentucky's favorite sons—remind us of the enduring courage and steadfast spirit of our state's people. They speak not only to the loyalty and resolve of Kentuckians but also to the timeless commitment of men and women willing to fight for our nation. As Lincoln recognized, Kentucky has long been a cornerstone of service, producing individuals whose bravery and sacrifice have shaped our country's history. As John F. Kennedy once said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." Ken-

tucky's veterans have embodied that principle throughout generations. From the earliest days of our nation, Kentuckians have answered the call to serve. During the American Revolution, the land we now know as Kentucky was a rugged frontier, and its pioneers played a pivotal role in the fight for independence. Settlers stood bravely in battles such as the Siege of Boonesborough and the Battle of Blue Licks, defending the fledgling ideals of liberty and forging a legacy of courage that would define the state. The Civil War further highlighted Kentucky's complex yet committed role in military service. With loyalties divided, men from our state fought on both sides, each guided by conviction and cour-

age. Harlan County in eastern Kentucky became known as "The Unionist Stronghold," producing soldiers whose dedication to their cause had a lasting impact on the nation's path forward. Kentucky's legacy extends far beyond the Civil War. The Bluegrass State has produced military leaders whose names are etched into our nation's history. From General Simon Bolivar Buckner Sr., the highest-ranking U.S. officer killed during World War II, to Lieutenant General Hal Moore, commander at the Battle of Ia Drang in Vietnam and co-author of *We Were Soldiers Once...* And Young, Kentucky's service members have left an indelible mark on our armed forces. Our state's heroes include trailblazers such as

Carl Brashear, the first African American to achieve the rank of Master Diver in the U.S. Navy, and Anna Mac Clarke, the first African American woman to command an otherwise all-white regiment. Kentucky is also home to 70 Medal of Honor recipients whose valor exemplifies the highest ideals of service and sacrifice. Many of these extraordinary individuals are honored in the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame, which preserves and celebrates the contributions of our state's veterans for future generations. Kentucky has also consistently supported veterans through initiatives designed to meet their needs, from healthcare to education. The Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs en-

sures that those who have served are not forgotten and are provided with the resources to thrive after service. Our beautiful veterans' cemeteries stand as solemn reminders of the sacrifice and courage of those who came before us, hallowed grounds where their legacies are honored and preserved. Today, Kentucky continues to produce dedicated service men and women who serve with distinction in the U.S. Armed Forces. Their courage, commitment, and sacrifice reflect the enduring spirit of a state that has long been synonymous with service. As we observe Veterans Day, we celebrate not only the individuals who have worn the uniform but also the rich history and traditions that define Kentucky's contribution

to our nation. Let us honor their stories, their bravery, and their sacrifices—not merely in words, but in actions and gratitude. Kentucky's veterans have left a lasting mark on our history, and it is our responsibility to ensure that their legacy endures for generations to come. Thank you to all veterans for your service and sacrifice, and may we always stand beside you with unwavering support and appreciation. I can be reached any time through the toll-free message line in Frankfort on 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via e-mail at Nancy.Tate@kylegislature.gov. You can also keep track of committee meetings and potential legislation through the Kentucky legislature's home page at legislature.ky.gov.

Earlene Bohannon
Editor

"I heard..." Things have been rough in the gossip department around Meade County recently. Mostly on social media pages. "I heard about it on Facebook..." "My daughter is in this online group, and she told me she heard..." "That can't be true; I saw online where someone said..." Two weeks ago, I was down at the office putting in a late night when the phone rang. I answered. The caller on the other end began telling me about a situation that is believed to be happening in the east end of the county. As she spoke, she became agitated about the information that she assumed was correct. I asked her, "what makes you think that's the right information?" She replied that she had seen it on Facebook. I asked, "and you think that is the truth?" She said, "well... yes... I mean, it's on Facebook. Why would anyone put anything on there if it's not the truth?" I explained to her that The Meade County Messenger does not get its

headlines from Facebook. Since that evening, I have not stopped thinking about that conversation and how so many intelligent, usually very reasonable, people have counted on social media to be the benchmark for their local news source. I have watched with dismay at the slandering misinformation that is being shared online here in Meade County. I have listened repeatedly as that information has been published online and discussed among one another as if it is the gospel truth. In my church setting, "I heard..." followed by, "that's not what I heard; what I actually heard was..." and "I heard that too!" Bits of conversations at the grocery store have solidified those sentiments. My neighbors "have heard," my friends "have heard," and my co-workers "have heard." I happened upon an "I heard" discussion whereas two couples were slandering one of our own, sitting one misinformed calculation after another, literally vomiting statements they had read online and heard in gossip around town. I listened for a while before asking, "do you know her?"

Have you ever met her? Spoken to her even once?" None of them had. But they had heard, and from what they heard, they had assumed. An assumption they were sharing as if they were positive it was the truth. They were practicing the age-old pastime of gossiping. Gossip destroys a person's happiness. Gossip kills reputations and acceptance as ravishingly as an out-of-control wildfire. Gossip is a bully. The couples that were discussing the person's reputation did not pause for a moment to give a nod of appreciation to the fact that the person they were digging into has children; has grandchildren; has a husband; attends a church; loves this county as much as they do. They were so intent on hashing out their versions of the "I heard" syndrome that they could not stop long enough to consider those facts. While gossip can be traced back to the beginning of time, and while it is never acceptable, it has, in recent years, moved into a far darker realm. Gossiping over the fence line between two neighbors' pales in comparison to the damage an online thread

can cause. Online bashing is far more dangerous than any other kind of gossip. Online social media platforms can be lovely tools. They can provide information on many subjects—with everything from gardening to cooking to auto maintenance to holiday decorating. They can provide friendships. They can create romance. There is much good to social media, but recently, those types of platforms have also caused great and grave harm to those who are harassed and victimized by them. In 2013, Pope Francis stated that "Gossip is a form of murder" and likened it to the story of Cain killing his brother Abel. Pope Francis said, "Gossip always has a criminal side to it. There is no such thing as innocent gossip." When you begin, or when you hear a sentence that begins with, "I heard..." you can almost guarantee that it is second-hand information you are about to receive. My husband and I do not participate in conflicts on social media. We do not entertain, engage, or comment on anything to do with a taunting tone that is meant to bait one

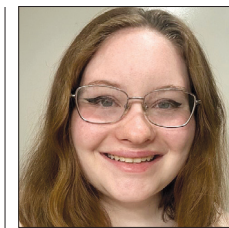
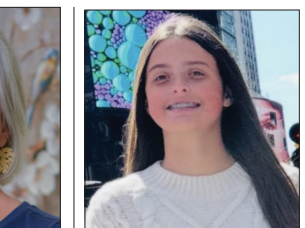
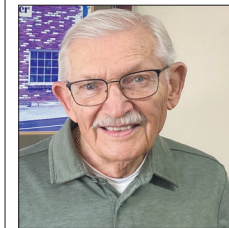
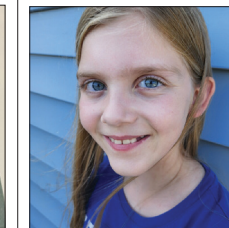


Photo submitted by Earlene Bohannon
Gossip destroys a person's happiness and serenity.

into a controversial discussion. We do not jump in on threads to add our two cents worth. We don't post cryptic posts that leave the audience to wonder what we are talking about. Instead, we reach out to the person directly, or we ask them to reach out to us. We will discuss pretty much anything in person or on the phone. Hardly ever is there a satisfactory discussion conducted via text, email, or online. If I cannot see the person's face or hear their tone, I cannot gauge what they are truly feeling. I might misinterpret what they mean or misunderstand what they are trying to convey. I need that bit of human interaction to keep things real.

There is rarely any situation that cannot be bettered when talked out between people. Thumper told us a long time ago, "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." If you do not want to heed the (excellent) advice of a cartoon bunny, there's always scripture one can follow. Proverbs 18:21 says, "death and life are in the power of the tongue (words—written or otherwise). Words matter whether spoken or written." Words can be used to build relationships and communities, or they can be used to tear them down. You get to choose how you will use yours.

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