

CHAPTER – 1F

*Awards - Recognitions
for the Grandchildren of
Louis & Catherine (McCauley)
Kavanaugh Sr.*





The following are excerpts from an Article written for the Washington Times Herald by Louis Kavanaugh Jr. in the April of 2014.

Barr-Reeve Now Has Four Mental Attitude Awards Winners: *Barr-Reeve had some amazing success in Sports and Academics in the last few years and this spring another honor was bestowed on the school. This time it was the selection of Micah Bullock as the 2013 Class 1A Arthur L. Trester Award for Mental Attitude at the State Basketball Finals on March 29. Micah becomes the 4th Barr-Reeve Student to receive this special award. Earlier this school year in the fall of 2013 Micah's first cousin Jenna Knepp also won the Mental Attitude Award as Barr-Reeve Lady Vikings won the Class 1A Volleyball State Championship. In the Spring of 2010 Micah's 2nd Cousin Christian Duncheon also won the Tresler Award in the Class 1A State Championship Basketball Title Game when the Vikings played Bowman Academy. The other Mental Attitude Award winner goes back a few years as Kristi "Kavanaugh" Griffin won the Award. It was the first ever run to the state by a Barr-Reeve Volleyball team as the Lady Vikings played Clinton Prairie for the Class 1A State Volleyball Championship in the fall of 1998. There are not too many schools that can say they have four Mental Attitude Award Winners and it happens to have that right here in our community. On a recent weekend all four recipients were home for*

the weekend and we sat down with each one to talk about what they are doing now and what this award means to them.

Kristi “Kavanaugh” Griffin was the first athlete from Barr-Reeve to win the Mental Attitude Award and it happened in the fall of 1998 on Barr-Reeve’s first trip to the State Finals in Girls Volleyball. Barr-Reeve lost to Clinton Prairie in that Class 1A State Finals in one of the last events held in the old Market Square Arena. Kristi remembers when they called her name she was still emotionally drained from the match and it was hard to comprehend that she really had won the Mental Attitude Award. Kavanaugh recalls “I remember they were calling for my Parents to come down on the floor and Mom and Dad were way up in the stands and it took a while for them to get down to the floor. I think we were all surprised that I had won.” Kristi graduated from Barr-Reeve as a valedictorian in her class of 1999 and graduated from the University of Southern Indiana summa cum laude in 2004 after playing all four years as a starter on the Volleyball team and then coaching for a year before graduating from USI. “In our first year we were 12-13 but in our sophomore we were 27-4 and continued to improve each year and we were the first team in the history of USI to win the Conference Tournament and represented the School in post season. Many of the girls on that team are now coaching in the college ranks. After college, I started coaching at Jacksonville State in Jacksonville Alabama and there we won the school’s first ever conference title and advanced to the DI NCAA tournament.” After 4 years at JSU Kristi took some time off, married Justin Griffin and then got out of coaching to get closer to home. Then an opportunity arose at Western Kentucky University where she is currently the assistant volleyball coach at a top 25 Division I program. “It is within a few hours of both our parents and now that I have a son Jaxon David it is nice to be close to both of our families. I still have fond memories of that year when I won this award and I do keep in touch on how Barr-Reeve is doing.”

Over the years Barr-Reeve continues to have outstanding success in the classroom and on the Court. These young men and women continue to represent the school and the community in a very positive way. Even though the Barr-Reeve Teams may not come home from the State with the ultimate prize they have given it the best their best shot and that is all we can ask of these kids. They certainly have made the community proud of their efforts



Kristi Kavanaugh Received - Returns Scholarship Award - \$1000 Gift Has Now Been Doubled In B-RSF

Kristi Kavanaugh (center) flanked by her parents David and Cieta Kavanaugh are returning the \$1,000 Farm Bureau Scholarship Award to the Barr-Reeve Scholarship Foundation, represented by Charles Albert Kavanaugh (right). Kristi had been named the 1998 IHSA Mental Attitude Award Winner for Class 1A volleyball at the state volleyball finals in early November. This honor carried with it a \$1000 check from Farm Bureau Insurance presented to Barr-Reeve High School in her name. The letter that accompanied the check from Farm Bureau stated, "The purpose of the \$1000 check is to help an Indiana teenager from your high school attend college. How the money makes it into the hands of a deserving young person is based on the policy of each individual high school that is the home of an IHSA Mental Attitude Award winner. Over the past nine years, Farm Bureau Insurance has distributed over \$200,000 to Indiana high school students through this program, and the money has been allocated in many ways. Some schools have awarded the scholarship money directly back to the athlete who won the Mental Attitude Award. Some schools have awarded it to other athletes who were in financial need. A few schools have placed the money in a general scholarship fund." On receiving the \$1000 check, B-R Principal Mike Andrews forwarded it to the Barr-Reeve Scholarship Foundation. Officers of the B-R Scholarship Foundation including Annetta Graber, Dick Lemmon, Thomas Gallagher, Charles Albert Kavanaugh, along with Principal Mike Andrews, felt the check should be given to Kristi and her family. Accordingly, Andrews presented the check to Kristi at the volleyball awards banquet held on Sunday afternoon, November 22. No sooner had the presentation been made when Kristi approached the microphone and announced it was her desire to return the \$1,000 check to the Barr-Reeve Scholarship Foundation. Amid tears and emotions, Kristi stated as follows, "All season we have talked just how important the team was to us, to our winning and our dreams of success--This honor has been something very special to me but I could not have received it had it not been for the success of our volleyball team. I feel it is also a team honor as well--I wish to present this \$1000 check back to the Barr-Reeve Scholarship Foundation in the name of our 1998 State Runner-Up Volleyball Team." Charles Kavanaugh, B-RSF president, in accepting the check from Kristi stated, "this is an extremely generous and considerate act as you are giving a monetary gift from your first labors of life." After further consideration, the officers of the B-RSF decided to put the \$1000 check in the Barr-Reeve Scholarship Fund within the Daviess County Community Foundation where it has been matched dollar for dollar by the Lilly Endowment Phase III Program. In addition, Charles Kavanaugh has announced the establishment of a permanent Honor Scholarship to be awarded annually in the name of "Kristi Kavanaugh and the Lady Vikings Volleyball State Runner-Up Team of 1998."

Left: Kristi Kavanaugh Wins Mental Attitude Award at the State Volleyball Championship game in October of 1998

Behme gets citation for helping save girl's life

Washington native Kurt Behme, along with several firemen for the city of Evansville, were awarded citations for their acts of saving lives in the line of duty.

Behme's award was given along with other firemen's for their quick response in saving the life of a young girl who accidentally set herself on fire after gasoline exploded and engulfed her.

A large group of Evansville fireman and family members attended the awards ceremony as this is the first time in several years that an awards ceremony has been held in Evansville.

Former Washington natives Scott Olson and Shane Gray also received awards for their acts of heroism.

Behme is married to the former Sheri Kavanaugh of Montgomery and they



Photo Provided

Kurt Behme (right), a fireman for the city of Evansville, is being congratulated by Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel as Fire Chief Keith Jarboe looks on.

now reside in Evansville, along with their two children, Alex and Anne Behme.

Also present for the ceremonies was Megan Wathen and her children

Kylan and Katelyn, Lois Martin and Kurt's parents Bob and Colleen Behme of Washington, along with Sheri's parents, Louis Jr. and Liz Kavanaugh of Montgomery.

Above: Kurt Behme Receives Citation for Saving Life of Young Girl - Feb. 22, 2009

Megan's Story

On January 29, 1986 Sheri Kavanaugh gave birth to a little girl at the Daviess County Hospital when she was a Senior in High School. The Father of that Child was Kurt Behme of Washington. Sheri was a senior at Barr-Reeve High School at the time and Kurt has just graduated from Washington Catholic High School in 1984. Sheri and Kurt chose adoption for their little girl who was adopted by Bill and Lois Martin of Evansville. It was a closed adoption and Catholic Charities handled the adoption.

Sheri and her boyfriend Kurt Behme chose adoption and that was a tough decision for both the two kids to make. It was also hard on their parents as well. Sheri went on to college and later graduated with a degree in computer engineering from University of Evansville. After her junior year in college Sheri married Kurt Behme on May 6, 1989 who was a firefighter in Crawfordsville, Indiana, Kurt also worked as a firefighter in the cities of Vincennes and Washington but then settled in as a firefighter for the City of Evansville in 2003.

Sheri Kavanaugh married Kurt Behme and they had two other children, Alex and Anne. They lived like any other family until 2007 when Sheri filed with the Dept. of Health so that if the adoptive child wanted to find them, she would be given that opportunity to make that connection. There was no contact between the biological parents or the adopted child or the adoptive parents until March of 2007. In February of 2007 Sheri filed the necessary paper work with the Indiana Dept. of Health so that if the adoptive child wished to contact them, she would be given that opportunity. Megan also had to file with the Dept. of Health but both families had to wait until the child was age 21 years of age. The Adoptive child's name was Megan "Martin" Wathen who was now married and had one child of her own.

Well it happened in March of 2007 that Megan "Martin" Wathen received the letter she had been waiting for from the State of Indiana and it contained the contact information for her Birth Mother and her Birth Father.

On a Sunday afternoon in early March of 2007 the phone rang at Sheri and Kurt's house and it was Megan. During that first phone call Sheri and Megan talked for two and a half hours trying to catch up on the pass history. Megan not only found her biological mother but she also found her biological father as well. Megan also found out she had a blood bother (Alex) and a sister (Anne). Sheri "Kavanaugh" Behme had lost a baby in 2006 when Sheri was 4 months along. Within days Sheri and Kurt's Parents were called to Evansville and given the news that Megan had now been found. They were ecstatic as well after all the years of wondering.

The following weekend in March of 2007 Sheri and Kurt got to meet Megan and her husband. It was a day that both Sheri and Kurt and Megan have been waiting for many years. Megan choose that day to spring the news that she was expecting her second child!

Within the next few weeks Megan met her Birth Grand Parents and her birth Great Grand Mother. Many Pictures were taken during these meetings. Those meetings were followed up with a Megan introducing her adoptive parents to her Birth parents family and that took place in an Evansville Restaurant May 5, 2007. Within three months after that first meeting Megan's Great Grandmother Catherine Kavanaugh passed away on June 19, 2007.

As the saying goes the rest is history. Both families continue to meet for birthdays, First Communions and other special events as the families grow closer. Megan and Andy Wathen have added three

daughters Katelyn, Kinley and Khloe to their family. Please see the following articles that appeared in area newspapers nearly 6 years after the initial reunion.

Below: The Following Newspaper Articles were written several years after the **Reunion of the Adoptive Child Megan and her Birth Parents**. The first article is from the Catholic Newspaper in Evansville “The Message” and the second article is from the Evansville Courier. These stories were written in the summer of 2013 over six years after the Reunion.

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Serving the Catholic Church

THE MESSAGE

Adoption



**Giving life . . .
not giving up**

By **TIM LILLEY**
Message editor

Megan made Bill and Lois Martin parents. She made them grandparents. She made them grateful for Kurt and Sheri Behme.

See **ADOPTION**, page 3

— Submitted photo

On May 5, 2007, the Behme and Martin families gathered for the first time. *Kneeling, from left*, are Bill and Lois Martin, Megan’s adoptive parents; Lois is holding Anne Behme, Megan’s biological sister; Matthew Martin is Megan’s adoptive brother, and Andy Behme is her biological brother. *Standing, from left*, are Louis Kavanaugh Jr. and his wife Liz, Megan’s biological, maternal grandparents; Colleen and Bob Behme, her biological paternal grandparents; Sheri and Kurt Behme are her biological parents. Megan is with her husband, Andy Wathen, and is holding their first child, Kylan.

Adoption

(continued from page 1)

Kurt and Sheri, you see, are Megan's biological parents. More than 20 years ago, they were young adults struggling to decide how best to handle Sheri's unexpected pregnancy. She was still in high school; Kurt was barely out.

"I always just knew I wasn't ready to be a full-time mom," Sheri said recently, in the same Catholic Charities offices where she decided to put her baby up for adoption. Kurt, while acknowledging he was the father, had no formal say in the decision. "I definitely supported it," he said. "We weren't married, but we knew that we were going to be together forever."

Theirs is one of hundreds of stories — more than 1,000 in all — that Catholic Charities has helped write over the past 76 years. "We are older than the Diocese of Evansville," said Director Sharon Burns, "and we are honored to have been part of 1,054 adoption placements through 2012."

Burns is reaching out to families across the diocese whose lives were changed through Catholic Charities' adoption program to be part of an "Adoption Family Reunion" on Saturday, Aug. 3, at Evansville's Bosse Field. The Frontier League Evansville Otters baseball team hosts the Florence (Ky.) Freedom in a doubleheader, and the reunion will include tickets to the game and a "Ballpark Buffet" before the first game, which starts at 4:35 p.m.

"Adoption involves multiple decisions to give life," Burns said. "We want this reunion to serve as recognition for the many hundreds of those decisions we have been blessed to be a part of at Catholic Charities."

Megan went to the Martins just a few weeks after Sheri delivered her first daughter — on her due date in a quick-and-uncomplicated birth. "God had a hand in it," Sheri said. "I had a little bit of a backache, but basically had no labor at all. I think if the labor and delivery had been more involved, the adoption would have been much tougher. As it was, she was whisked away as soon as she was born."



Lois Martin, left, Megan's adoptive mother, and Sheri Behme, her biological mother, have shared many good times and memories since Megan brought the families together in 2007.

Burns recalled that, back then, babies routinely went to foster homes for a minimum of 30 days before final adoption. Before Megan left the hospital for her temporary home, however, Kurt made his way to the nursery for a quick visit with his daughter. "She grabbed my finger with her toes, and I'll never forget how surprised I was by such a strong grip. Then, she grabbed it with her fingers."

"I knew . . . I had to get out of there," he said, barely holding back tears. "I kissed her hand and left."

Fast forward to March 10, 2007 . . . the next time Kurt got to kiss his first daughter's hand. Lives happened — literally — in the interim. Megan Martin made it through school, not without some grade-school teasing about being adopted. "I remember we all talked about it at school," she said, "and those who made fun of me actually apologized. It never came up again after that."

Megan got a younger brother, also adopted by the Martins. Matthew is 21 now. She's 27, married to Andy Wathen, and a mom herself — to Kylan (7), Katelyn (5), Kinley (2) and Khloe (10 months).

Kurt and Sheri, as they knew they would be before Megan was born, are married and have two more children: Alex (13) and Anne (9).

And they all have each other. Talk about one big, happy family . . .

Catholic Charities facilitated Megan's request for the names and addresses of her birth parents after she turned 21. "I wrote the letter when I was 18," she said, "and learned I'd have

to wait three more years." She'd been waiting quite some time already, her mind made up.

"As I grew older," Megan said, "I just didn't feel complete. I didn't know where I came from . . . just where I was supposed to grow." Lois and Bill supported the decision from the get-go. "Mom always told me I'd grown in her heart, just not in her belly," Megan said.

When the time came and she'd written the letters, the response from Catholic Charities was as unsettling in some ways as it was exciting in others. "I really wanted to meet them," Megan said of Kurt and Sheri, "and it turned out they only lived 10.1 miles away. I looked their address up on Google Maps.

"But there was no way I wanted to break up the four of us," she said of the Martin family — her adoptive parents and brother. "I asked all of them how they felt about me making contact. If any of them had been reluctant, I never would have done it."

They weren't, so she did — and that first meeting with "where she came from" occurred right away. Kurt remembers parking, getting out, and doing something he'd dreamed of for more than 20 years.

"I'll never forget Megan telling me about it," Lois said. "She said, 'When he came up, he said . . . the last time I saw you I kissed your hand, and I'm gonna do it again . . .'" He did, but remained mostly speechless.

"After he kissed my hand, he said 'I don't know what to do,'" Megan remembered. "I said, 'Well, you could let her out of the car!'" Kurt had left Sheri in



Message photos by Tim Lilley

Kurt Behme hugs his biological daughter Megan in the Catholic Charities office recently.



Anne Behme, left, her big sister Megan and their brother ALEX in the Catholic Charities office in downtown Evansville.

their vehicle with a huge floral arrangement for their first-born. "I never would have gotten out of there without his help," she said with a laugh.

Today, two families that found each other through decisions to give life have bonded into one amazing group that includes biological and adoptive parents; biological and adoptive grandparents; multiple generations of brothers and sisters; even an aunt and uncle (Anne and Alex) who enjoy the same video games and TV shows as their nieces and nephews (sister Megan's children).

"I always felt like one day this would happen," Lois Martin said of the meeting that led to creation of an amazing extended family. "Deep down, I always wanted to thank (Kurt and Sheri) for giving us these happy years . . . and grandkids."

"So many people in this world think of adoption as the decision to give something up," Burns said. "Megan and her families are proof that adoption involves giving . . . but not giving up."

"I hope any adoptive family reading this will come to Bosse Field Aug. 3 for the Adopter Family Reunion," she added. "We celebrate your lives and your families, and we invite you to come and celebrate with us."

Tickets to Catholic Charities' Aug. 3 Adoption Family Reunion are \$750 each and include a Ballpark Buffet and ticket to the Otters' doubleheader against Florence. Reserve tickets online at www.charitiesevv.org/adoption-reunion, or call (812) 423-5456. Any person — and family members — who was adopted, or who has adopted, through Catholic Charities is welcome to attend.

Below: The following Article appeared in the Evansville Courier on *the Story of Megan's Adoption* in July 11 of 2013



PHOTO BY AMELIA CHONG, © 2013 EVANSVILLE COURIER & PRESS

AMELIA CHONG / SPECIAL TO COURIER & PRESS Megan Wathen, 27, right, smiles as her adoptive mother, Lois Martin, left, tells a story while her biological mother, Sheri Behme, laughs during a meeting on Wednesday, at the Catholic Charities, Diocese of Evansville. Wathen was adopted by Lois and Bill Martin when she was 6 weeks old. Growing up, Wathen was always aware that she had been adopted. "My mother always told me I was born in her heart, not born in her belly," Wathen said about Lois Martin, adding that, as a child, she used to tease her peers for not being adopted like her. Wathen met her birthparents for the first time when she was 21, and both families have stayed close ever since. Kurt Behme, Wathen's biological father said, "All of a sudden, we just doubled our family!"

Adoptive Child, Adoptive Mother and Birth Parents Share their Story

EVANSVILLE — Like other teenagers, Megan Martin had a countdown to the day she turned 21 — ticking the days off one by one until her birthday. But unlike her peers, Megan couldn't wait for the day she was old enough to file a small stack of paperwork — legal documents that could help her someday find her birthparents. "I had a countdown for my 21st birthday and not for the reasons of most 21-year-olds. That never even crossed my mind. I wanted to know, I just wanted that piece of paper that said, 'this is who they are.'" That young woman, who is now the 27-year-old Megan Wathen, wife and mother of four children, said she knew as a child she wanted to know the people who gave her up for adoption in 1986.

At first, I always knew I was adopted, but I really had no idea what that meant. Mom always told me that I grew in her heart, not in her belly," she said. "Once I got older, I would always say I didn't feel complete because I didn't know where I had actually come from. I knew where I was supposed to grow, like where I was supposed to be. But I didn't know where I came from."

It was early March in 2007 when Wathen received a letter with her birthparents' information, and was able to first make contact. "I don't even remember what I said," Wathen said, remembering the first phone call. Her birthparents, Sheri and Kurt Behme, and her adoptive mother Lois Martin, met with Catholic Charities of Evansville Director Sharon Burns Wednesday afternoon to tell their story.

Sheri Behme, 44, had been 16 when she found out she was pregnant with Wathen, and was 17 when she gave birth. "I guess I always just knew that I wasn't ready to be a full-time mother," Sheri Behme said. "I just had this feeling. I just knew. I just had this feeling that she would be better somewhere else."

Lois Martin, Wathen's adoptive mother, said she and her husband, Bill Martin, had been on the waiting list for a child for six years before they adopted Wathen. But even from the onset of the adoption, Martin said she had always wanted to meet her daughter's birthparents. "These two mean so much to us, I can't tell you how much, they really do. We wanted to meet them, we wanted to meet their family. I can't thank God enough for what they've done for us."

Wathen's birthfather said after she was born, he just remembers her being a beautiful baby. He was scared to hold her, he said, "I'm just sitting there playing with her foot and her hand. And then she stuck her hand out and I got to hold that. I knew I had to get away. I just kissed her hand, and I just prayed that I'd be able to do that again someday," he said. "And that was one of the first things I did when I met her." Wathen's adopted family including her adopted brother and her birthparents and siblings, as well as her extended family, have become close since meeting in 2007.

Catholic Charities was founded in 1937, and has made more than 1,000 adoptions through 2012. Burns said the organization is trying to reach out to adopted children and families who have adopted through the Catholic Charities Diocese of Evansville to meet for a reunion at an Otters baseball game. Tickets are \$7.50, and the gates open at 4 p.m., Aug. 3 at Evansville's Bosse Field



Photo by Amelia Chong

Megan Wathen, 27, third from left, laughs with her adoptive mother, Lois Martin, left, and her biological family — Sheri, Anne, Alex and Kurt Behme on Wednesday at the Catholic Charities, Diocese of Evansville. Wathen, who had been adopted by the Martins when she was 6 weeks old, met her biological parents for the first time six years ago. Wathen and the Behmes describe the first meeting as awkward because neither side knew how to act out of nervousness. "I was afraid that if I hugged her I'd never let go," said Wathen's birth father, Kurt Behme, who kissed her on the hand when they



Submitted photograph

The entire Martin-Behme family — including Megan Wathen's adoptive parents and brother, biological parents and siblings, biological grandparents and Wathen's four children and husband. Megan Wathen is third from left in the back row



Above: Five Generations in This Picture. This picture was taken in March of 2007 just a few months before Mom passed away. It was the first time that we met Megan and her family. Pictured here is Mom (Catherine "McCauley" Kavanaugh sitting in the chair, in back (L-R) is her son Louis Jr. , his daughter Sheri "Kavanaugh" Behme, Sheri's Daughter, Megan "Martin" Wathen and Megan is holding her son Kylan. It was the only time that five Generation were present together in our family.



Submitted photograph

Megan Wathen, background left, is seen with her four children, her adoptive brother Matthew Martin, with her two biological siblings and biological grandparents posed for pictures at her grandparents 50th wedding anniversary.

Montgomery native awarded for helping save husband's life

Sheri Behme and her 37-year-old husband Kurt, a former Washington firefighter and now a firefighter with the city of Evansville, were shopping at an Evansville mall last Halloween. Suddenly, Kurt dropped a package he was holding and told his wife that he had to leave. Sheri knew something was wrong when Kurt looked very confused.

As she led him to the parking lot, he was slurring his words and his arm seemed to be bent abnormally, but she knew he was asking to go to the hospital. Sheri was eight months pregnant but managed to get her husband into their car and started for the hospital. She noticed that Kurt was attempting to use the cell phone but then asked her to stop the car so that he could lie down. She pulled into another parking lot. Kurt slumped to the ground. Sheri noticed that he had dialed 911 but had not pressed "Send." She completed the call and asked for an ambulance. Meanwhile, others had stopped to help, but Kurt kept asking the bystanders to take care of his pregnant wife, who was remarkably calm under the circumstances. Kurt was rushed to the hospital.

After a battery of tests, it was determined that Kurt had suffered a minor stroke that was the result of a hole in his heart which apparently was there from birth. The doctors were amazed that his condition had not been discovered earlier, considering that Kurt had undergone many comprehensive medical exams and physical endurance tests prior to being selected to his firefighter positions.

Fortunately, the stroke left no lingering effects. However the hole, left unrepaired, would most certainly lead to a more devastating stroke later in life. On Nov. 4, Kurt was transferred to St. Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis. The

following day, the hole in the septum wall dividing the chambers of the heart was repaired with a fiberglass patch placed through a catheter. He was released on Nov. 6, and on Nov. 8 Sheri delivered a healthy baby girl named Anne Marie.

Kurt said of the incident, "I think it made our family closer. I realize that I'm not the invincible man that I thought

"I think it made our family closer. I realize that I'm not the invincible man that I thought I was."

Kurt Behme

I was." The Behmes also have a 4-year-old son named Alex — and being able to help deliver him was something Kurt will never forget. "Without my medical background and the working relationship I had with our family doctor, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do so," he said.

Sheri said, "I think it has made us realize how precious life really is. You just never know when it can be snatched away from you. I agree with Kurt that it made us closer and we realize that family is the most important thing in our lives."

Last week, Sheri and six others were honored with the American Heart Association's Heart Saver Award in a ceremony at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville. The award is meant to recognize survivors and those lay people who do the right things to save them — early access to 911, CPR, and using such devices as automatic external defibrillators. As part of the ceremony, Deaconess Hospital President Linda White presented eight AEDs to various civic and charitable agencies.

A group of Washington firefighters, including Fire Chief Dave Chapman, honored their former co-worker by attending the ceremony, as did Battalion Chief Cliff Weaver of the Evansville Fire Department.

Kurt is the son of Robert and Colleen Behme of Wash-

ington.

Kurt started as a volunteer firefighter and licensed emergency medical technician in Washington when he was just 18. He was a firefighter for the city of Washington from 1998 to 2003, at which time he accepted his current position in Evansville. He was the first Sparky the Fire Dog teaching fire prevention to area elementary students, which he has continued to teach for four years. He also initiated the Kids Fire Safety Challenge now held annually at Eastside Park.

Kurt is a licensed and certified First Aid and CPR instructor and returns to Washington periodically to train daycare workers and other organizations in these skills.

He is the Indiana District Secretary for the 4th degree Knights of Columbus, Fr. Edward F. Sarin Province. Both Kurt and Sheri help on initiation weekends.

Sheri is the daughter of Louis and Elizabeth Kavanaugh of Montgomery.

She is a University of Evansville graduate in computer engineering and has been with Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane since 1990. At Crane she works on the Battle Force Tactical Training System (BFTT), which allows the fleet to perform integrated ship and/or fleeting training on the same consoles they fight with.

Sheri said since the incident with Kurt she now appreciates his role in helping others through his work. "I always knew that Kurt aided the community by being a firefighter, but I now appreciate that by teaching CPR and First Aid classes, he is providing the students with the tools to help save others. He's not just important to our family, but to others," his wife said.

And Kurt was overwhelmed at the support offered to the family in its time of need. "I was amazed at how many offers for help I got from friends and family. My classmates from the fire academy took care of Alex and Sheri while I was in Indy. Their wives got baby supplies for Anne since Sheri couldn't get out. I kept hearing about prayer groups in Washington, Montgomery and Evansville praying for us and I really appreciated the visits from my 'brothers' at the Washington Fire Department who came down to see me. I was truly overwhelmed."



Photo Provided

At the presentation of the Heart Saver award were (from left): Battalion Chief Cliff Weaver of the Evansville Fire Department, Sheri Behme, Kurt Behme, and Washington Fire Chief Dave Chapman.

Left: The article on the Award given to Sheri "Kavanaugh" Behme for her quick response when her husband Kurt had a stroke in October of 2003 that saved his life. The Award was presented in February of 2004.



SENATOR RICHARD LUGAR OF INDIANA PRESENTED DEBBIE KAVANAUGH WITH "THE NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE AND MATH TEACHING". THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED IN WASHINGTON D.C. DURING THE LAST WEEK OF APRIL 1995.

Left: shown here is Debbie “Kavanaugh” Anderson as she receives this special award from Senator Richard Lugar. Debbie is the daughter of Albert Kavanaugh of Montgomery and Joan Kavanaugh of Phoenix Az. Debbie graduated from Barr-Reeve High School in 1983 and then graduated from Indiana University with her BS in 1987 and her MS in 1995. Debbie says that she visited with Senator Lugar after the luncheon since they could not go to the White House to visit with Bill and Hillary Clinton.

The ceremony started on April 25, 1995 (7 days after the Oklahoma City bombing). President Clinton had to deal with that instead of meeting us. The awardees and their significant other or guest were wined and dined to the max for 5 days in D.C. One other memorable event was meeting with Bill Nye, the Science Guy, the keynote for the dinner at the plush State Department Ballroom.



Above: Pictured here is Debbie “Kavanaugh” Anderson (Center) as she receives the Adjunct Faculty Award for Excellence in Instruction. Debbie was the Recipient for the Bloomington Region and the award was presented in April, 2016. Shown here is (L-R) Thomas Snyder, Ivy Tech Community College President Emeritus - Retired July 2017, and on Debbie’s right is Jennie Vaughan - Current Ivy Tech CC - Bloomington Chancellor

Left: Introducing the Adjunct Faculty Award for Excellence in Instruction Recipient for the Bloomington Region, Deborah Anderson

The following is Debbie “Kavanaugh” Anderson’s philosophy for her work in the classroom. IN HER OWN WORDS...My philosophy of teaching has developed from my belief that learning is a life-long process. Playing the role of “teacher” as I played “school” with my younger brother and cousins was my initial experience modeling the role of a teacher.

“I mimicked the role I observed my parents perform with students in their classrooms at the primary and high school levels. I saw the patience they displayed as they worked with students after school. In the summer, they completed graduate degrees to increase their knowledge and improve their skills. I was inspired by their example to follow a similar path. I believe that my role as an educator is to inspire learners (both children and adults) to pursue knowledge through a variety of methods, learn strategies for success, and develop a love of learning.”

*Below: This article appeared in the Indianapolis Star Newspaper on Sunday Oct. 9, 2016, By Kyle Neddenriep. This article is about **Caroline Kavanaugh, Daughter of Kevin & Barb Kavanaugh and Caroline's brave fight against a brain tumor** and how she has been an inspiration to anyone who has come in contact with her. The article was also featured in USA Today along with a video and in newspapers across the country. Caroline's Dad is Kevin Kavanaugh who is the son of Tim & Sue Kavanaugh and the Grandson of Louis & Catherine Kavanaugh Sr.*



"I've never coached a kid like her in 30 years. She has every reason to quit, cut back a workout or sit out. She blatantly refuses to do that."

MIKE ARMSTRONG, Perry Meridian cross-country coach



MYKAL MCELDOWNEY/INDYSTAR

Perry Meridian's Caroline Kavanaugh runs at cross-country practice. She returned to workouts months after surgery that removed part of a brain tumor.

Toughest teen you'll meet

Perry Meridian's Caroline Kavanaugh soldiers on through cross-country practice, orchestra practice and other high school activities, all while enduring the pain of a brain tumor she's had for years

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Caroline Kavanaugh turned 16 in April. Since then she's earned her driver's license, competed on the cross-country team and attended Perry Meridian's homecoming with her boyfriend.

Normal teenage stuff. These are milestones that her mother, Barb, celebrates silently. The normal drone of day-to-day life is like a warm blanket on a winter night. "The simple things," she said, "are what you appreciate the most."

Caroline is the middle daughter to Kevin

and Barb Kavanaugh. She's a free spirit – "our hippie child," Barb jokes – but also a high achiever in the classroom with a number of outside interests. She plays the violin in the school orchestra, earned a spot in the school's show choir this year and is vice president of her chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She's also a member of the National Honor Society.

Those honors and achievements don't tell the half of it.

"I've never coached a kid like her in 30 years," said Perry Meridian cross-country coach Mike Armstrong. "She has every reason

to quit, cut back a workout or sit out. She blatantly refuses to do that."

Caroline lives every day with searing headaches, caused by a brain tumor that doctors found seven years ago but can't fully remove. They tried, in April. After surgery, Caroline temporarily lost use of the left side of her body. She had to relearn how to play the violin and – even now – has to remind herself to lift her left foot each stride she takes in a cross-country race.

It was only then, after she missed 23 days of

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Toughest

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school, that those outside of Caroline's close circle of family and friends realized she had a brain tumor. Those persistent headaches – she rates them a “6 or 7” every day on a scale of 10 – go unmentioned. Behind those blue eyes, sweet smile and live-and-let-live personality is one of the toughest 16-year-old kids you'll ever meet.

True toughness. That's Caroline Kavanaugh.

“She never complains,” her father, Kevin, said. “Her head hurts every day and she fights through it. I'm so proud of her for that.”

It was 2009. Caroline was a fourth-grader at Glenns Valley Elementary School, just a couple of miles south of the family's home in the quiet, tree-lined Meridian Woods neighborhood in Perry Township.

Caroline and her younger sister, Anna, then a 5-year-old, developed respiratory infections. Anna quickly recovered. Caroline was unable to shake her headaches, holding her head with both of her hands when she coughed. The Kavanaughs' family doctor, Stephen Dewey, recommended Caroline come to the office for a sinus X-ray.

“We're thinking sinus infection, not brain tumor,” Barb Kavanaugh said.

A CT scan and MRI confirmed the worst: There was a slow-growing tumor in the right thalamus of her brain. Medically, it's called a thalamic astrocytoma. The neurosurgeon, Ronald Young, told the family the tumor was too deep and embedded in Caroline's brain to perform surgery.

“(The initial reaction) was devastation,” Barb said. “Shock. Dr. Dewey has known our family forever. I could tell he was devastated, too, that he had to sit down and tell a 9-year-old girl that she had a brain tumor.”

Kevin smiles now about a conversation he had with his father, Tim, shortly after finding out about Caroline's condition. Tim Kavanaugh, who would die later that year after a long battle with thyroid cancer, coached the 1984 Southport team to a third-place finish at the Little League World Series. Kevin, now the strength and conditioning coach at Decatur Central, was one of the stars of that team.

Tim coached with tough love, which is what he gave to Kevin that day when he called about Caroline and asked what he should do.

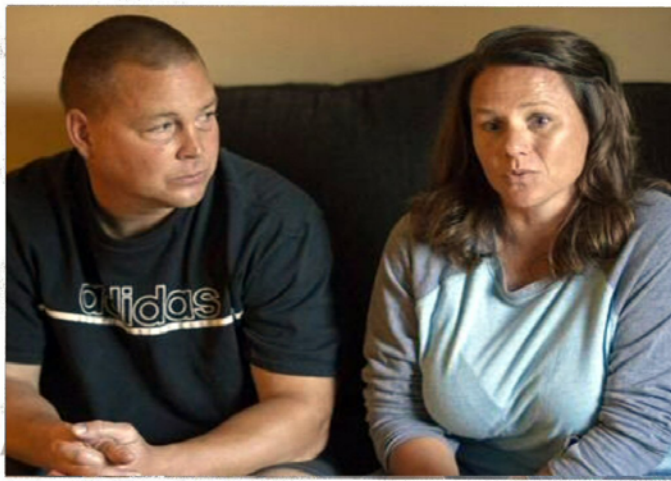
“I'd suggest being a man,” Kevin remembers his dad telling him. “My dad was old school. Hardened. But I needed to hear that.”

Caroline, even at 9, was a rock. If any of the Kavanaughs' three daughters had the mentality to handle such a devastating prognosis, it was probably their middle girl. Shortly after the tumor was discovered, Caroline began a year of chemotherapy treatments to stabilize its growth. She'd leave school on Friday, go through treatment over the weekend and return to school on Monday.

At the hospital one day, a 7-year-old boy was throwing a fit. He didn't want to go through his chemo treatments. Caroline wrapped her arm around him and said, “We've got to get this done today.”

“She was always a trouper about it,” Kevin said. “Chemo was hard. She would become really ill. But even that young, she was so tough.”

Caroline's teachers and friends at Glenns Valley kept tabs on her. Rebecca Vernon, the music teacher at Glenns Valley, taught all three of the Kavanaugh sisters – Olivia, 18 and a senior at Perry Meridian. Caroline and Anna, 12. Ver-



Kevin and Barb Kavanaugh, reflect on their family's experience of overcoming challenges and getting back to “normal” in dealing with Caroline's brain tumor.

“She never complains. Her head hurts every day and she fights through it. I'm so proud of her for that.”

KEVIN KAVANAUGH, Caroline's father

non's son, Embry, a year younger than Caroline, had leukemia at a young age and had gone through chemotherapy. Embry talked to her about his experiences.

“Caroline was – and is – very self-motivated,” Rebecca Vernon said. “In elementary school, she just kept going and working. She didn't ask for any special favors. She just kept working like she'd done in the past. I knew even then she was one of the most outstanding young people I'd ever met.”

Caroline transitioned from elementary to middle school, then high school. She had an MRI every three months to check on the size of the tumor. Some days were better than others. The headaches continued. But for the better part of five years, life continued as normal as the Kavanaughs could hope for.

Caroline rarely discussed her brain tumor outside of her core group of friends. When she did tell somebody new, she dreaded the reaction.

“People are like, ‘Oh my gosh, oh my gosh,’” she said. “They overreact and it gets a little annoying.”

Even Armstrong, her cross-country coach, didn't know about Caroline's brain tumor until she'd been with the team an entire year. Barb had included it on Caroline's physical form, but it wasn't until the end of Caroline's freshman season, when she had to miss a practice for a doctor's appointment, that Barb told him.

Armstrong wasn't offended or upset. He was amazed.

“You'd never know what she was dealing with,” Armstrong said.

No one necessarily needed to know. Life was cruising along just fine. Until, all of a sudden, it wasn't.

An MRI on the day before school of Caroline's sophomore year (August 2015) showed a growth in the tumor. She underwent six weeks of radiation at St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital and still didn't miss a beat. She ran cross-country throughout the treatments and competed in every meet, improving throughout the season.

Radiation didn't slow the growth. Dr. Young, though, had developed a new technique to get to the tumor that wasn't available in 2009. So on Feb. 17, 2016, Caroline went in for a 4½-hour surgery. She was awake the entire time, though she

doesn't remember any of it. For the entire surgery, Caroline's favorite singer, Taylor Swift, belted out song after song through the speakers.

Young was able to remove about half of the tumor before he was forced to stop due to excessive bleeding. Still, the surgery seemed like a success in the immediate aftermath.

“Surgery was on Wednesday and we figured she'd be back home on Monday,” Barb said.

Caroline lost movement in the left side of her body. For two weeks, she was in intensive care. The worst part, in her estimation, was that she had to wear yellow socks that designated her as a risk to fall down when walking.

“I couldn't lift off the bed for a while,” she said. “I did a lot of physical therapy in the hospital, though. I was just like, ‘OK, it's practice. I have to practice.’”

Caroline was in the hospital for more than three weeks and missed 23 days of school. During that time in the hospital, her headaches increased in pain. She would hardly eat, forced to use a feeding tube to help her body recuperate.

“It was scary,” Barb said. “She was a mess for two weeks.”

It was the first time her sisters, Olivia and Anna, saw first-hand the gravity of Caroline's situation. Olivia, ranked in the top 10 in the senior class at Perry Meridian, is a similarly high achiever in and out of the classroom. She plays the cello in the orchestra.

“To see her have to lay there for three weeks, that was really hard,” Olivia said. “She loves to run and play the violin. I know she was frustrated. She couldn't even do the basic stuff. Things weren't coming easy for her. But she just kept working through it.”

There were some dark days. When Caroline was able to return home, her parents weren't sure if she'd make it back to school for the rest of her sophomore year. She could barely walk to the end of the block, let alone run on the cross-country team. But sure enough, she returned to school. She taught the fingers on her left hand to play the violin again. And when it came time to start her junior year of cross-county with summer running, there was Caroline.

“I'm slower,” she said. “My times aren't nearly as fast. To me, that's not important. The important thing is I'm still here and I can do it.”

Occasionally, Armstrong will ask Car-

oline if she wants to scale back a workout. He already knows the answer is “no.” She just does it, day after day.

“It's really nothing short of amazing,” Armstrong said. “She doesn't demand attention. The mentality she has, quite honestly, is something you just don't see that often. That type of toughness is just really rare.”

Where does it come from? Caroline doesn't know. She's not out to prove anything to anyone, necessarily, other than to one person – herself.

“It's just like, if I can get through that (complications from the tumor),” she said, “then I can get through anything.”

There's no precise road map to follow when dealing with something as serious as a brain tumor. Jessica Goodman, Caroline's pediatric oncologist, has been thrilled with Caroline's progress since the surgery. The latest MRI last month showed no more growth in the tumor.

The headaches continue, but Barb leaves it to Caroline to tell her when they go beyond the “normal” pain.

“It's horrible that (the headaches) are her normal,” Barb said. “But she's achieving and living so fully. Hopefully she'll continue to do that.”

Caroline's FCA group meets every Thursday morning. At a recent meeting, the lesson was about struggle. Lucas Klipsch, the FCA sponsor and a dean at Perry Meridian, asked Caroline to speak on the subject. It was one of the rare times she'd told her story in a formal setting to an audience.

“Some of those kids knew her story because when she was in the hospital I'd given a lesson about what she was going through,” said Olivia, the president of the FCA chapter. “But it was cool to see her stand up there and give it herself. I hadn't seen her do that. It was really good.”

She might keep her situation low-key, but there are fingerprints of Caroline's leadership all over the school. Steve Dawson, the orchestra director at Perry Meridian, named her the concertmaster prior to her surgery. In that role, Caroline essentially served as the liaison between the director and the orchestra.

“That student has to be a very skilled musician. Part of it is leadership and part of it is work ethic,” Dawson said. “It's a position that I appoint. Caroline fits all of those areas. You'll never meet a sweeter kid. She's worked so hard to get back.”

Even in her own home, Caroline is viewed in a different light in the months since her recovery. When Anna's friends complain about headaches, she sometimes reminds them what he sister is going through. Olivia marvels at her sister's quiet mental toughness.

“She's just never needed the attention, so she hasn't put it out there,” Olivia said. “That's what's kind of awesome about it. People don't know what she's been through.”

It's not only about what she's been through, but where Caroline is going. After high school, she plans to go to college and potentially become a physical therapist to help kids in similar situations. Or maybe even music therapy. One of the turning points in her comeback came when a music therapist would play Taylor Swift songs on the guitar.

“She has so much to offer people after what she went through,” Barb said. “She'd be able to relate to them. We'll see. I think she'd be awesome at something like that.”

For now, Caroline has a musical to prepare for. Homework to get done. College applications to fill out. Normal stuff. The best stuff.

“I just try to fit in,” Caroline said with a smile.

★ Call IndyStar reporter Kyle Neddenriep at (317) 444-6649.