

TOYOTA BLUEGRASS MIRACLE LEAGUE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS



The Toyota Bluegrass Miracle League celebrated its 20th anniversary on October 9 with a special evening at CommonSpirit Ballpark. The Rotary Club of Lexington was instrumental in founding the league in 2006, and that commitment continues today. Rotarian Tony Barrett currently serves as president of the league’s board. He is pictured here with fellow Rotarian Kevin Weaver and baseball legend Doug Flynn. Doug and Tony served as the evening’s masters of ceremony and Kevin provided insights about the founding of the league.

Beautiful weather provided the perfect backdrop for celebrating the league’s amazing athletes, their supportive families, and the dedicated volunteers who make it all possible.

– Photo by Brenda Barrett

BILL BYRD AND THE BIRTHDAY CLUB

Our apologies to Rotarian Bill Byrd, whose name we inadvertently omitted from the October birthday list in our last issue. Please join us in wishing Bill, who celebrated on October 14, a happy belated birthday!

Bill has already made his contribution to the October Birthday Club. Have you? It’s easy to do, and your gift benefits the Rotary Club of Lexington Charitable Fund, Inc.

The suggested minimum contribution is \$1 for each year of the birthday being celebrated. During your birthday month, you will receive a letter and a return envelope for your donation. Contributions may also be made online at <http://e.givesmart.com/events/OZA>

The ROTARY Club of Lexington
WHEEL HORSE

October 22, 2026
— TODAY’S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Lyle Hanna
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: David Jones
Introduction of Guests:
Introduction of Program: Jeff Piccoro

Speakers: Derrick Ramsey and Randy Brooks
Program: Remembering the University of Kentucky’s 1976 SEC and Peach Bowl Championship Team

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AROUND THE WORLD SOCIAL: A BIGGER VISION FOR 2027



With an exceptionally busy fall calendar, we’ve decided to cancel the October 29 Around the World social and focus on a bigger celebration in fall 2027!

Our vision is to celebrate Lexington’s vibrant international community by bringing together civic, business, and cultural partners for a signature event featuring international food, drinks, culture, and fellowship.

We’ll begin forming a committee and exploring partnerships this fall, with a creative planning kickoff in January.

Help shape something special for Lexington and Rotary! Contact Bret Anderson or Jenny Schnurr to get involved.

– Jenny Schnurr

MEET OUR SPEAKER



DERRICK RAMSEY

New England Patriots. His football accomplishments earned him induction into the UK Athletics Hall of Fame, the Kentucky Pro Football Hall of Fame, and the Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame.

After professional football, Ramsey became a small-business owner, managing real estate and personal investment portfolios. He also earned a master’s degree in sports administration from Eastern Kentucky University.

Returning to UK in 1994 as a community relations officer, Ramsey strengthened relationships between the university and Lexington’s African American community. In 1999, he became athletics director at Kentucky State University, where he improved facilities and established a program promoting academic excellence among student-athletes. His work included developing a 5,000-square-foot academic, fitness, and weight training center.

Ramsey entered state government in 2004 as deputy secretary of the Commerce Department under Gov. Ernie Fletcher. He oversaw a \$50 million budget and participated in the delegation that helped bring the 2010 World Equestrian Games to Kentucky.

In 2008, he became athletics director at Coppin State University in Baltimore. During his seven-year tenure, student-athletes achieved a collective 3.0 grade point average while graduation rates increased.

Ramsey returned to Kentucky in December 2015 as secretary of the Labor Cabinet under Gov. Matt Bevin. In 2018, he was appointed secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. He also served a six-year term on the UK Board of Trustees, beginning in 2017.

His memoir, *They Call Me Mr. Secretary*, traces his journey from Hastings, Florida, to college and professional football and public service. It also explores the friendships, mentors, and experiences that shaped his life, including his longtime friendship with teammate Art Still and relationships with coach Fran Curci, John Madden, and Al Davis.

Sharing the podium with Ramsey today is Randy Brooks, who played running back for the Wildcats from 1976 to 1980. Brooks shared the backfield with Ramsey during Kentucky’s 1976 season and its 10–1 campaign in 1977.

In his final season in 1980, Brooks led Kentucky in rushing with 578 yards on 166 carries and caught 17 passes for 180 yards.

Over four playing seasons, Brooks accumulated 1,314 rushing yards and 365 receiving yards, contributing both in the backfield and on special teams throughout his Kentucky career.

Derrick Ramsey’s amazing career spans championship football, athletics administration, business, and public service.

In 1975, Ramsey became the first African American starting quarterback in University of Kentucky history. The following year in 1976, he led the Wildcats to a share of the Southeastern Conference championship and a Peach Bowl victory in Kentucky’s first bowl appearance in 25 years. In 1977, Ramsey guided the Wildcats to a 10–1 record, including a 6–0 undefeated SEC season. For his efforts, he earned first-team All-SEC and third-team All-American honors.

Ramsey went on to a nine-year NFL career that included a Super Bowl championship with the Oakland Raiders and another Super Bowl appearance with the

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS		UPCOMING EVENTS	
Oct 29	5th Thursday, NO Lunch Meeting, See Upcoming Events	Oct 22	Rotary Blood Drive, Mane on Main, 10 - 3:00 pm
Nov 5	Wilfred Reilly, Associate Professor of Political Science, Kentucky State University	Oct 22	Spin to Win the Fight Against Polio, CycleYOU Fitness & Sauna, 165 Midland Ave., 6:30-7:15 pm
Nov 12	Foundation Day with Everett McCorvey, University of Kentucky Opera	Oct 23	Early Bird Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8 – 9:30 am
Nov 19	3rd Thursday, Doing Rotary Differently	Oct 26	God’s Pantry Food Bank, Backpack Pack-Up, CHANGE, 2201 Innovation Drive, 1:00-2:30 pm
Nov 26	Happy Thanksgiving	Nov 19	Volunteer at Voices of Hope Recovery Community Center, 644 North Broadway, Lexington, 1–3 p.m
Dec 3	Larry Krauter, Cincinnati airport and Eric J Frankle, Bluegrass Airport	Dec 3	Rotary Holiday Social, CommonSpirit Ballpark/Lexington Legends, 6-9pm

The Rotary Club of Lexington
401 W. Main, Ste. 305
Lexington, KY 40507
Phone: 389-8100

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Susie Basham - President-Elect
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Bill Wilson 3Q, Dean Hammond 4Q
Jarred Paull - Secretary
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Jenny Schnurr - Treasurer
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**WHEEL HORSE / 5TH PAGE
CONTRIBUTORS**

Paul Chewning Louis Hatcher Jaron Johns
Augusta Julian John Meyers Jim Richardson
Bill Straus Peggy Trafton John Wharton
Chris Aldridge, Editor
Dan Koett, Assistant Editor
Set up & printing by Lynn Imaging

**SUNSHINE, FELLOWSHIP, AND WINNING
TICKETS AT KEENELAND**



Rotarians enjoyed a great day at Keeneland last Thursday! By mid-afternoon, the sun was shining brightly on our old Kentucky home, and Rotarians were cashing in on winning tickets.

The outing offered

time to catch up with familiar faces and get to know newer members, spouses, the Woodford Rotary Club's president, and other guests. Keeneland's wonderful food and attentive service added to the enjoyment.

Pictured from the left, front row: Jimmy Leon, Franklin Thompson, Tracy Hudson, Susan Adams. Kim Johnson, Lyle Hanna, and Ryan Ray, President of the Rotary Club of Woodford County. Second row: Linda Weaver, Marianna Taulbee, DG Linton-Gridley, Michael Stutland, and Michael Hudson. Augusta Julian also attended but is not pictured.

Make plans to join us next year!

— Susan Adams

SAVE THE DATE: ROTARY HOLIDAY PARTY

Celebrate the season with fellow Rotarians on Thursday, December 3, from 6–9 p.m. at the Lexington Legends' Legendary Lights at CommonSpirit Ballpark!

We'll gather in the Lexington Lounge overlooking a field filled with holiday lights. Tickets are only \$40 per person and include a buffet dinner and admission to stroll through the holiday lights. A cash bar will be available.

Dress is casual and festive. Wear your most beautiful, funniest, or ugliest holiday sweater for a chance to win a prize!

Bring your significant other and invite prospective members to join us for a fun evening of holiday cheer!

— Susan Adams

COACH POPE TALKS TALENT, TRADITION, AND TEAMWORK



Mark Pope and Jim Host share a light moment together.

Continuing a tradition started in 1971 when he introduced Adolph Rupp to the Rotary Club of Lexington, Rotarian Jim Host welcomed University of Kentucky men's basketball coach Mark Pope to a sold-out meeting on October 8. Host, who has known Pope since his UK playing days, described him as a man of integrity and a devoted family man whose only fault is caring too much about Kentucky basketball. Host turned the meeting over to Tom Leach, the Voice of the Wildcats, who led the question-and-answer session.

Pope, captain of Kentucky's 1996 NCAA championship team, played for Rick Pitino, who often said, "You are never as good as you think you are, and you are never as bad as you think you are." Pope quipped that he and his teammates never heard the second half of that saying. He credited Pitino with resurrecting UK basketball with "The Unforgettables," who passed the winning tradition on to the 1996 team.

When asked about his most memorable moment at this year's Big Blue Madness, Pope didn't mention the smoke, fireworks, player introductions, three-point shooting, or dunk contests. Instead,

he recalled standing on a two-foot-by-two-foot disc and being raised 20 feet into the air. He joked that UK's new athletic director was trying to kill him!

Pope noted that virtually every NBA team was represented at this year's Pro Day. He described this season's roster as heavy on guards who can create scoring opportunities, adding that "length is our strength." He said this year's team will be hard to defend with elite shooters like Milan Momcilovic on the roster. He praised Zoom Diallo, Alex Wilkins, and Justin McBride for their play at Pro Day.

Pope highlighted several other players to watch. He described Senegalese native Ousmane N'Diaye as both a sweet and gentle individual and

a ferocious rebounder but warned the audience against saying anything critical to him about soccer. He singled out Lexington native Jerone Morton, who previously played at Washington State University and earned his way to UK without NIL money. Despite an injury, Pope said, Morton will be a force to contend with. Pope also praised Kentuckian Trent Noah and teammates Mason Williams, Malachi Moreno, and Frank Kepnang as special players.

Asked about artificial intelligence, Pope said the program uses analytics extensively, although using them in greater depth yields diminishing returns. He closed the Q&A session with a tease: A rematch with Pitino's St. John's team is in the works at a spectacular venue he cannot yet announce. And finally, he also reminded Rotarians and guests to bet on the horse named Coach Pope in the Breeders' Cup at the end of October.

Our money is on Coach Mark Pope, the man, for a successful 2026-27 season!

— Paul B. Chewning

— Photo by Bill Straus



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859-309-8915
cheyennemcbride@kw.com
cheyennemcbride.kw.com

Jenny Schnurr
Bookkeeping & Accounting
859.806.9540
jenny@accountbythebook.com
accountbythebook.com

Morgan Stanley
Jim Richardson CFP®, CLTC, CPM®
Senior Vice President
Financial Advisor
444 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507
+1 859 231-9527
James.A.Richardson@ms.com
NMLS #1255648
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PRINCIPAL BROKER
McCALLIE REAL ESTATE
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