



Calipari’s first impressions on Arkansas basketball freshmen

SPORTS, 1B

TIMES RECORD

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MILL CREEK MOUNTAIN CONFLICT

Prison threatens tribe’s heritage



Dr. David Jurney (left) coaches Justin Flanagan and Linda Flanagan on lichenometry to help determine the age of a stone at a cemetery in northern Franklin County. The Flanagans are investigating several sites in Franklin County and nearby to catalog evidence of the Chickamauga tribe’s presence in the area. GEORGE “CLAY” MITCHELL/FORT SMITH SOUTHWEST TIMES RECORD

George “Clay” Mitchell
Fort Smith Southwest Times Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

In the state of Arkansas, a stretch of land in northern Franklin County is the site of a proposed 3,000-bed prison. To Justin Flanagan, it’s sacred ground — land tied to the history, ceremonies and burials of the Chickamauga people.

To help document those ties, Flanagan joined forces with Dr. David Jurney, a veter-

an archaeologist with a 44-year career that includes specialties in paleoenvironmental reconstruction, geoarchaeology and landscape archaeology. Along with Linda Flanagan, Jimmie Kersh, and Wayne Irelan, the group surveyed the area around Mill Creek Mountain. Jurney concluded there would likely be evidence of the Chickamauga on or near the proposed prison site, and that parts of it may have been sacred ground.

As Flanagan puts it, “The state would

have you believe that there would be no evidence that we were ever in that specific part of Franklin County.”

“Our concerns are first to honor the first seven generations of our ancestors,” he said. “This prison shows complete and utter disregard for the possibility of our burials being there and our ceremonial sites. We need to know for certain. They could go in there and potentially disrupt

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Fort Smith board to weigh cemetery takeover

George “Clay” Mitchell
Fort Smith Southwest Times Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Fort Smith Board of Directors has a few items up for discussion during the July 15 study session and special meeting at the Blue Lion.

Among the items for discussion will be a request from Fort Smith Cemeteries, as well as discussions on the policing of community events and other city services, and a waiver of parking meter fees.

The directors also will conduct interviews with two additional candidates for the position of director of internal audit during an executive session.

Nonprofit struggles to maintain Fort Smith Cemeteries

Marty Clark, president of Fort Smith Cemeteries, will present a proposal for the city to assume stewardship for Roselawn/Holy Cross, Forest Park and Washington Cemeteries.

Fort Smith Cemeteries Inc., a nonprofit formed in 2021 to rescue three failing cemeteries, is facing ongoing financial challenges despite recent efforts to stabilize operations.

The organization, led by founder Bill Wilson, initially borrowed \$800,000 to fund improvements, primarily at Roselawn/Holy Cross. While some projects — like drainage and paving — were completed there, Forest Park received little investment.

After Wilson stepped down in 2022 due to health reasons, the nonprofit spiraled into disarray. Equipment was misappropriated, and board members resigned. A new board, now including Ed Ralston and Andy Brown, was appointed and has since negotiated \$200,000 in debt forgiveness and halted interest

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Unit defending President Trump policies loses staff

Andrew Goudswaard
REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Justice Department unit charged with defending against legal challenges to signature Trump administration policies — such as restricting birthright citizenship and slashing funding to Harvard University — has lost nearly two-thirds of its staff, according to a list seen by Reuters.

Sixty-nine of the roughly 110 lawyers in the Federal Programs Branch have voluntarily left the unit since President Donald Trump’s election in November 2024 or have announced plans to leave, according to the list compiled by former Justice Department lawyers and reviewed by Reuters. The tally has not been previously reported. Using court

records and LinkedIn accounts, Reuters was able to verify the departure of all but four names on the list.

Reuters spoke to four former lawyers in the unit and three other people familiar with the departures who said some staffers had grown demoralized and exhausted defending an onslaught of lawsuits against Trump’s administration.

“Many of these people came to work at Federal Programs to defend aspects of our constitutional system,” said one lawyer who left the unit during Trump’s second term. “How could they participate in the project of tearing it down?”

Critics have accused the Trump

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Attorney General Pam Bondi in February threatened disciplinary action against government lawyers who did not vigorously advocate for President Donald Trump’s agenda. KEN CEDENO/REUTERS FILE

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