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THE LEAF-CHRONICLE

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EDUCATION

She spoke up, got kicked out



Lilith Pipkin and her father, Chris Pipkin, are seen here July 1. As a freshman at Antioch High, Lilith found and turned in a threatening note about a potential school shooting. She says school administrators treated her like the author of the note, leading to her expulsion. ANDREW NELLES/THE TENNESSEAN

Antioch High shooting witness was expelled after reporting a threat

Rachel Wegner Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

She heard the gunshots first, then saw people running. In the chaos, she caught a glimpse of the shooter dead on the floor of the school cafeteria. ● In shock, Lilith Pipkin got onto the bus with the rest of her eighth-grade class that was wrapping up a visit to Antioch High School that day. It was Jan. 22, 2025, the day a 17-year-old student opened fire in the cafeteria, killing 16-year-old Josselin Corea Escalante and wounding 17-year-old Antonyous Henin. After firing 17 rounds, the gunman then fatally shot himself.

Lilith had grown close with Escalante through middle school soccer, and the news of her friend's death hit hard. But as her freshman year approached, Lilith remained undeterred in her plans to go to Antioch High.

"I had honor roll, AP classes, ROTC, volleyball," Lilith, now 15, said. "I had all these, like, good things ahead of me."

The week before the anniversary of the shooting, she overheard girls talking in the bathroom as she got ready for a Junior Reserved Officers' Training Corps, or JROTC, meeting. She said they talked about having a gun. After they left, Lilith said, she found a note in

the bathroom that said "I have a gun" and to "leave at 1:30." It also said not to tell anyone.

Lilith quickly alerted school officials, who then told the school resource officer.

That's when things began to escalate. Lilith said school officials began treating her like she was one who authored the note. She recalled the school principal yelling at her and telling her she was going to jail. But in the hours of questioning that followed, Lilith and her father, Chris Pipkin, said police detectives declined to charge her. Further disciplinary action

See ANTIOCH, Page 4A

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Family demands answers in death

Use of force, K-9 involved in arrest of 34-year-old

Andy Humbles

Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

The family of a Montgomery County inmate found unresponsive in his cell early July 3 and later pronounced dead sought help with deep concerns about the inmate's well-being in the days between his arrest and death.

Darius Jervon Chappell, 34, was wanted on a felony parole violation warrant, which led to his arrest on June 29. Video of the arrest later surfaced online, showing multiple officers holding Chappell down on the pavement while a police dog was deployed in a violent altercation.

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office maintains the use of force came after Chappell was trying to flee from deputies on foot and resisting arrest.

But serious questions, including how much force was necessary and whether Chappell got the medical attention he needed while in custody, are being raised by Clarksville-Montgomery County NAACP President Loretta Morris and Chappell's family members in the wake of his death.

How Chappell's arrest came to pass

Deputies found Chappell at a Burger King on Fort Campbell Boulevard and were preparing to make contact with him when he exited the restaurant, according to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

See INMATE DEATH, Page 2A

UT to set up fast 3-year degrees for workforce demand

Keenan Thomas

Knoxville News Sentinel | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee System will begin exploring and implementing three-year, 90-credit-hour degree programs across the system's five campuses, presenting an alternative route for students to earn a diploma in Tennessee.

The central idea is to provide every student attending a UT campus the option to earn a degree faster, finish college with 25% less debt and enter critical workforce areas quickly to meet state needs.

"These degrees will be focused, very aligned with high-demand fields," UT System President Randy Boyd told Knoxville News in an exclusive interview. "We're going to be focusing on those fields in which we have critical workforce shortages."

The degrees will be different from traditional 120-credit hour bachelor's degrees, including the name. UT's accrediting agency approved "reduced-hour bachelor's degrees" and "abridged bachelor's degrees" as potential names, and Boyd added "applied bachelor's degrees."

See DEGREES, Page 2A

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