PRIVETTE DONATION TO CCHS HOSA GROUP SPARKS INTEREST IN LOCAL TIES



Crockett County High School HOSA advisor Gayla Mayfield has lived in this area all of her life.

So, naturally, she has received inquiries as to the local ties that compelled a man named Franklin Privette – a man she did not personally know – to donate more than $355,000 to the school in appreciation of the HOSA department. (HOSA stands for Health Occupation Students of America, a membership organization for those planning to enter the medical field in some capacity.)

In the original announcement story of the donation, the primary focus was on the life of Privette himself, related mostly through the lens of Terri Kozlowitz, one of his nieces who was named as executor of his estate's trust. Privette, while born and raised in Crockett County until he departed for military service, eventually fell in love with living in California, earning a graduate degree from Stanford University and then forging a productive life on the West Coast.

But, as Kozlowitz said, Privette never lost his interest in Crockett, visiting a few times each year and following news reports from the area.

And since that August 27 posting of his story, Mayfield and her HOSA teaching colleagues Candy Stallings and Shay Galvan have fielded questions of interest as to why a long-time Californian still cared enough about Crockett County and its students to fund a donation that would help equip the HOSA lab and also provide money for future scholarships.

"Since many might not remember him, because he's been 'gone' for more than 70 years, people have been curious as to whom he was related to," Mayfield said. "And it turns out that several relatives are still around here."

Some of those relatives attended the ceremony in the HOSA lab in which the donation was officially announced, including Kozlowitz and her husband Steve, who now reside in Jackson. Terri and Steve were particularly close to Privette, frequently keeping in touch and visiting each other.

Also attending that event were Angela Coleman (a Friendship resident), another niece to Privette; Janet Powell (a registered nurse who lives in Jackson), Angela's daughter and great-niece to Privette; and Patricia Henson Coleman, another great-niece. She married Angela's son Chris Coleman and both of their children – Eric Coleman in 2003 and Danielle Justine Coleman Rogers in 2007 – graduated from CCHS. Chris and Patricia live in Friendship.

Privette had two sisters who preceded him in death, Geraldine Privett Avery in 1949 (killed in an automobile accident outside of Memphis) and Ruth Evelyn Pierce (Terri's mother) in 2016. Privette (who added the "e" to his last name after moving to California) was the son of William Alfred Privett and Carmen E. Riddick Privett. Terri has a brother, Sid Pierce, and a deceased sister, Cynthia Jo Pierce Simmons (who lived in Raleigh, North Carolina).

The donation to HOSA will provide scholarships for years to come, with $250,000 of the money invested in an interest-bearing account for that purpose. The remainder is being used to provide equipment that can be used for hands-on instruction and practice in the HOSA lab.

Pictured Above: HOSA Advisors -- all Crockett County High School graduates themselves -- and members of the Franklin Privette family gathered at the ceremony in August announcing his generous donation to the school. From left: Gayla Mayfield and Candace Stallings, HOSA Advisors; Patricia Coleman, great-niece to Privette; Steve Kozlowitz, husband of Terri Kozlowitz; Terri Kozlowitz, a niece and also the executor of the Privette estate trust; Angela Coleman, another niece; Janet Powell, Angela's daughter and a great-niece to Privette; and Shay Galvan, HOSA Advisor. (Photo by Ron Barry)