09/30/2025 By Ron Barry

DR. KEITH CARVER MAKING CROCKETT COUNTIANS PROUD IN HIS UNIVERSITY ROLE



Above: Dr. Keith Carver (black shirt) with Crockett Board of Education member Will Spence (left) and Director of Schools P. A. Pratt, along with their four student tour guides (from left): Carrington Smith, Jensyn Rogers, Brayden Boyd, and Emma Paige. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Spend a few minutes with Dr. Keith Carver and he'll make you feel like he's known you all your life.

That may be the easiest explanation for the success Carver has had over the years, and it's a natural fit for his most recent role as the Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture. The former Crockett Countian – who grew up in Frog Jump and went to Crockett County schools – was back in Alamo yesterday to help launch the STEMOVATE program at the Middle School, but then spent the next hour or so getting a tour of the High School's most recent additions to his alma mater.

Director of Schools P. A. Pratt and Board of Education member Will Spence accompanied Carver on his trek through the newer buildings on campus, but it was obvious from the start that Carver's main interest – as it had been over at the Middle School STEMOVATE launch – was in the students he would encounter.

Four CCHS students – Brayden Boyd, Carrington Smith, Jensyn Rogers, and Emma Paige – were his "official" tour guides, and Carver spent as much time joking and taking selfies with them (and other students) as he did learning about the new course offerings at the school. It's obvious he relishes his interaction with young people, all the while being a tremendous ambassador for his institution.

While at the High School, the tour guides took him to classes that featured medical emphases, floral design, marketing, FCCLA highlights (everything from cooking to making award-winning presentations on sex trafficking prevention), fabrication work, dog grooming, auto repair, landscaping, and woodworking, and then topped it off with visits to the still evolving hydroponic greenhouse and soon-to-open general store.

Carver took the time to speak with HOSA advisors Candy Stallings and Gayla Mayfield and ag instructors Ashley Moore and Haley Williams, yet still found time to stick his head in the door (and take a selfie) in the office of assistant principal Mary Kate Gourley, whose daughter Kate is one of his favorite people currently at UT-Knoxville. He also chatted briefly with algebra teacher and cheer team assistant coach Ellary Brewster, whom he praised as "one of my favorite students ever at UT-Martin," where he was Chancellor for more than six years before accepting his current post.

Along the way he mentioned how he'd gone to school with both Jared Foust, Crockett's Assistant Director of Schools, and Brad Garrett, husband of FCCLA advisor Misty Garrett. And as he passed the classroom of history teacher Deborah Puckett, she simply called out to him, "I remember you when you were much smaller."

"I can't believe how many things have been added to this place in the last few years," he said. "What Crockett County is offering its students is incredible. There aren't a lot of places that offer this much variety in the curriculum, especially in rural counties. It's amazing."

He told his tour guide students to "never take for granted" the learning opportunities they have here, all the while also touting the University of Tennessee as a great place to "continue that learning."

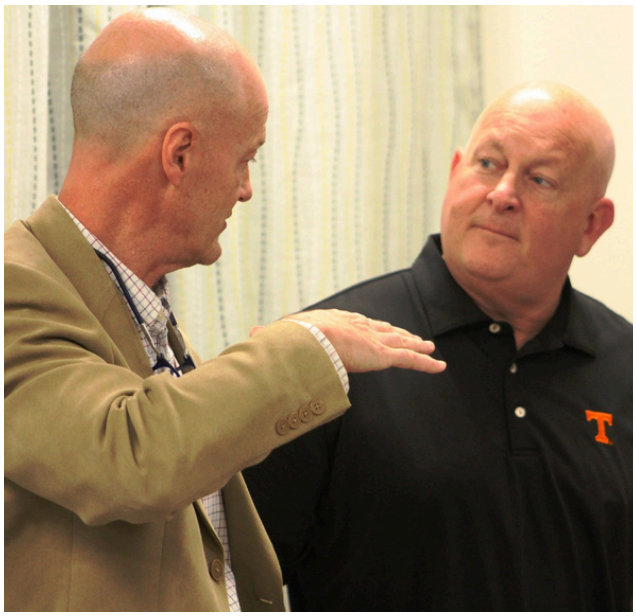
It all flowed so naturally it's hard to imagine Carver would be happy doing anything other than what he's doing now. Then again, it's also obvious he'd find a way.



Left: Carver saw the auto repair shop as students explained how they can benefit the community through the work there. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Keith Carver is introduced to HOSA's new futuristic medical mannequin by advisor Candy Stallings. The mannequin can simulate human tendencies and illnesses that help future nurses train for their profession. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: P. A. Pratt and Keith Carver talk about some of the new course offerings Crockett County has for its students. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The Floral Design Class was busy making new arrangements as Dr. Carver passed through. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Dr. Carver stopped by the Marketing class of Sarah Kennedy, where he offered his advice of the ABC's of marketing: "Always Be Closing!" (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Agriculture instructor Ashley Moore described the floral design plans and other things going on in the department. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Dr. Carver concluded his visit in the new general store, visiting with ag instructor Haley Williams, who also showed him the hydroponic greenhouse. The store's inside is actually being finished out by Crockett students. (Photo by Ron Barry)