

Inside the Times

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Teacher of the Year



Mustang Public Schools announced candidates for Teacher of the Year Award. -See Page 8A

Sports

Lady Broncos beat NN



Mustang High School's girls basketball team beat Norman North last week. -See Page 1B



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Crime

Life imprisonment for man who killed Mustang graduate

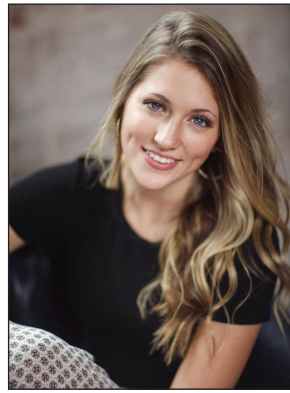
By Traci Chapman
 Staff Writer

An Oklahoma City man convicted of killing a 19-year-old Mustang High School graduate has been sentenced to life in prison.

Canadian County District Judge Paul Hesse last week pronounced sentence on Malcolm Douglas Penney, who in November 2021 pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of Marissa Murrow, who died after he drove the wrong way



Malcolm Penney



Marissa Murrow

while intoxicated on the Kilpatrick Turnpike.

Murrow, a 2019 graduate of Mustang

Oklahoma at the time of her death.

A valedictorian for her class, Marissa was a manager for the wrestling team for three years and loved singing. She was a member of Sigma Kappa sorority at UCO – a sorority that last year established a scholarship in her name.

Judge Hesse sentenced Penney to life in prison on the second-degree murder charge, as well as another 10 years in Oklahoma Department of Corrections custody for

a second count of leaving the scene of a fatality accident. The sentences would run consecutively, the judge ruled.

“This is exactly what I wanted so that he will not have another opportunity to drink and drive again,” Marissa’s mother Kristy Murrow posted on social media after the Feb. 1 sentencing hearing. “This was so important to us – that he never be allowed to hurt anyone else.”

That was a major

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Mustang

Wellness fair draws crowd to Town Center

By Traci Chapman
 Staff Writer

Health and wellbeing resources were a big draw Tuesday, as Mustang Parks and Recreation held its annual wellness fair at Town Center.

This year’s event, centered in the municipal recreation center, featured a host of vendors and providers, healthy food samples, facility tours and the OU Breast Health Network mobile mammogram. While many of those attending were seniors, organizers said the strong turnout reflected a good sampling of the community at large.

“We were so happy with the turnout and response to this event – it’s one of those we all believe in and are proud to offer this to our citizens,” Mustang adult activities coordinator Ashley Patten said.

The fair – which historically was held in the entry halls of Town Center – was moved to the recreation center last year due to health and safety concerns surrounding the novel coronavirus pandemic. While those issues



Mustang Parks and Recreation on Tuesday held its annual wellness fair in the Town Center recreation center. The event drew crowds interested in medical and aging resources, as well as a host of other offerings. PHOTO BY TRACI CHAPMAN

remained in 2022, the move proved fortuitous in other ways, as it provided much more space for the event, which allowed expansion of those resources offered and more room for those participating in and visiting the fair.

Anyone with questions or seeking more information about city wellness programs

or adult activity resources may refer to the Mustang Parks and Recreation Special Events page on Facebook or the city website’s Parks and Recreation or active adult center pages, located at <https://www.cityofmustang.org/parksrec> and <https://www.cityofmustang.org/seniorcenter>, respectively.



Tragedy

COVID-19 claims life of Union City police chief

By Traci Chapman
 Staff Writer

Union City Police Chief Richard Stephens on Feb. 4 lost a months-long battle with the novel coronavirus.

It was a blow to the department he’s led for seven years, as well as the community at large, officials said; the chief had been in the hospital since late December, when he was admitted to the intensive care

unit due to COVID-19 complications. Despite reports his condition appeared to be improving in recent weeks, Stephens continued to battle COVID-19 and related pneumonia.

According to Oklahoma Law Enforcement Memorial, his death was the third in the line-of-duty attributed to COVID-19 this year.

Stephens took the reins of Union City Police Department in February



Richard Stephens

2015 and quickly became a staple not only within its ranks but also across

the community, officials said. Highly regarded by his staff and city officials, he also inspired others from across the state and beyond for his dedication and innovation in expanding departmental programs and outreach.

“It is with great pain that we must announce the passing of the greatest police chief we ever had the opportunity to work for,” UCPD employees posted on social media in announcing his death.

“Chief Stephens was the epitome of a great leader: he put his people first, he inspired everyone around him and he truly cared for people – today, we lost a brother, a friend and true hero.”

Under Stephens, Union City Police Department began several new programs, including Law Enforcement Explorers, in which youth interested in the field could receive

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Financial Focus

Watch for changes in RMDs

If you're a certain age, you'll need to withdraw money from some of your retirement accounts each year. But in 2022, the amount you must take out may be changing more than in other years — and that could affect your retirement income strategy.

Here's some background: Once you turn 72, you generally must start taking withdrawals, called required minimum distributions, or RMDs, from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. Each year, your RMDs are determined by your age and account balances. This year, the life expectancy tables used by the IRS are being updated to reflect longer lifespans. This may result in lower annual RMDs than you'd have to take if this adjustment hadn't been made.

If you've started taking RMDs, what does this change mean to you? It can be a positive development, for a few reasons:

- **Potentially lower taxes** — Your RMDs are generally taxable at your personal income tax rate, so the lower your RMDs, the lower your tax bill might be.

- **Possibly longer "lifespan" for retirement accounts** — Because your RMDs will be lower, the accounts from which they're issued — including your traditional IRA and 401(k) — may be able to last longer without becoming depleted. The longer these accounts can stay intact and remain an asset, the better for you.

- **More flexibility in planning for retirement income** — The word "required" in the phrase "required minimum distributions" means exactly what it sounds like — you must take at least that amount. If you withdraw less than your RMD, the amount not

withdrawn will be taxed at 50%. So, in one sense, your RMDs take away some of your freedom in managing your retirement income. But now, with the lower RMDs in place, you may regain some of this flexibility. (And keep in mind that you're always free to withdraw more than the RMDs.)

Of course, if you don't really need all the money from RMDs, even the lower amount may be an issue for you — as mentioned above, RMDs are generally taxable. However, if you're 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year from a traditional IRA directly to a qualified charitable organization, and some, or perhaps all, of this money may come from your RMDs. By making this move, you can exclude the RMDs from your taxable income. Before taking this action, though, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor.

Here are a couple of final points to keep in mind. First, not all your retirement accounts are subject to RMDs — you can generally keep your Roth IRA intact for as long as you want. However, your Roth 401(k) is generally subject to RMDs. If you're still working past 72, though, you may be able to avoid taking RMDs from your current employer's 401(k) or similar plan, though you'll still have to take them from your traditional IRA.

Changes to the RMD rules don't happen too often. By being aware of how these new, lower RMDs can benefit you, and becoming familiar with all aspects of RMDs, you may be able to strengthen your overall retirement income situation.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Union City Police Chief Richard Stephens speaks during a Mustang Masons Lodge 407 fundraiser breakfast to benefit the family of one of his officers. Stephens died Feb. 4 after a months-long battle with the novel coronavirus.

PHOTO BY TRACI CHAPMAN

Stephens:

From Page 1A

early training and information about police work, began a community luncheon for seniors and more. The department also raised funds for its Shop With A Cop program through new means — like exhibition Granny Basketball games and the like.

"We like to have a lot of fun, to pull in the community while we make

a difference," Stephens said in 2020. "We have such an excellent group of employees and the best community we could ever ask for, so it's really an easy thing to do, to implement new programs and come up with new ideas."

Before Union City, Stephens served as chief deputy at Logan County Sheriff's office for six years; he also served as a criminal investigator for the Oklahoma Attorney

General's office from 2005 to 2007. The future Union City chief began his law enforcement career at Warr Acres Police Department.

In addition, Stephens served as a paramedic, sometimes on a part-time basis, for several entities for several years, even for an extended time while working as a police officer. "Rest easy, chief," Stephens's Union City staff posted Feb. 4. "We have the Watch."

Crime:

From Page 1A

concern for prosecutors, who from the start of the case pointed to Penney's record of drinking and driving, as well as the events that led to the fatal crash that took Marissa's life.

The incident occurred Oct. 3, 2020. According to the probable cause affidavit filed with the court by Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Shayne Ballard, Murrow was killed at about 12:13 a.m., near SW 15th Street. After leaving a wedding reception during which he "drank for hours," Penney drove a 2018 Mitsubishi Outlander northbound in the southbound lanes of the turnpike, striking Murrow's Ford Focus head-on.

Court documents showed Penney's blood alcohol content was more

than twice the legal limit at the time of the crash. Although Penney refused to comply with troopers' request for a blood alcohol test, one was administered after they obtained a warrant, Ballard said.

A witness observed Penney in the driver's seat of the Mitsubishi immediately after the crash; the Oklahoma City man attempted to flee the scene on foot but was located nearby and brought back by law enforcement, investigators said.

Prior records filed in jurisdictions in Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas showed Penney had a long string of criminal convictions involving alcohol, including driving under the influence. Those included a fourth offense driving while intoxicated conviction in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana, entered

in October 2018; a 2017 conviction in McPherson, Kansas, for criminal damage to property, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass charges; an October 2013 DUI second offense conviction in McPherson, Kansas; a January 2013 public intoxication misdemeanor conviction in Carter County; an August 2011 Denton County, Texas, driving while intoxicated conviction; and a 2011 Oklahoma County case, in which Penney was convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol in 2012.

Penney, his wife and others also face a civil action filed by Murrow's parents in November 2020, in which they seek punitive and other damages. That action remained pending as of press time with a trial currently set in September.

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