

# Features



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## Pixley Finishes Career With 'Breds

JUNE 11TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

Pixley Finishes Career With 'Breds

*By Andrew Cato,  
ShowMe Times Sports*

*"The Older I Get ... The Better I Was"*

~unknown

Small town athletes bring a lot of excitement and fun to their communities during their grade school and high school careers. As a community, we watch them achieve and accomplish great things, but much like the wind, they move on to college, careers and families.

At that point, the old adage begins to ring loudly *"The Older I Get ... The Better I Was"* !! But not for DHS graduate Drew Pixley. Drew has recently completed a stellar Division 1 baseball career at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky.

Pixley, the son of Aaron and Amy Pixley, has always been the "locker room kid". From an early age, he hung out on the field with his dad during his college days at Oakland City University. Many times, members of Aaron's college team would serve as a babysitter for Drew as an infant.

One would have anticipated him to choose the college athletic road just from the heritage of his family.

Pixley's size for the catcher position was always in question, but with sheer athleticism

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and a heart of gold, Pixley cast away all doubters making his place on every roster.

Pixley began playing baseball at a young age, and enjoyed success at every level. As "*A Pixley*", he has always drawn positive attention in Dexter as a good young man and an excellent athlete.

He recounts many great memories that lead to his success.

“When I was 11, my family moved to Dexter and I played on the Bootheel Buggies traveling team,” Pixley said. “We won the Show-Me Games that year. The next year we went to Cooperstown, New York, and played in the Dreams Park tournament. When I was 13, our Junior Babe Ruth team won districts and state and made it to the regional tournament in Iowa City.”

Pixley’s success on the field continued when he suited up in the red and black of Dexter High, where he had a unique opportunity: he got to play for his father. [images/Blog Images/show/uiun](#)

“In high school, I made my first varsity start my sophomore year,” Pixley recalled. “I was named first team All-Conference sophomore through senior year.”

“If I could play for my dad everywhere I went I would; I loved playing under my dad,” Pixley continued. “He always knew how to light a fire in me that sparked a big play or a big hit, and he taught me a lot about the game.”

Pixley was quick to cite DHS head baseball coach Brian Becker as another influence on his skill.

“Let's not forget Coach Becker - my dad taught me the game, but with Coach Becker as the head coach, we posted the best record he's had as a head coach my senior year.”

[images/Blog Images/show/uiuo](#) After his high school years, Pixley committed to play baseball for Mineral Area College. From the catcher position, Pixley's ability to nail base runners at second base with his quick pop time and *rocket* arm. His performance at MAC was again exceptional, and recruiters came looking again from the 4-year schools.

Murray State became his school of choice due to the close proximity to home, and he was able to play multiple positions, even using his speed as an outfielder.

Many times we overlook the great accomplishments of our college athletes from Dexter. So many community volunteers, parents and coaches pour their lives into these young men and women during summer leagues and civic programs. It truly becomes a great reflection on the quality of our high school and civic programs when we celebrate the success of these young men and women.

Make no doubts that Drew Pixley's college career should be celebrated as one of overcoming obstacles and achieving great things. As Pixley continues on, he plans to complete his undergraduate degree and follow his parents path by entering into secondary education - and with any luck, our community will have the pleasure of having him work with our children and grandchildren.

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## Tiger To Gator? Huffman Taking Florida Position

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JUNE 10TH 2011 BY NEWS

## Tiger To Gator? Huffman Taking Florida Position

*By Annabeth Miller,  
ShowMe Times Editor*

For eight years he's been the early-morning source of weather for Central Missouri - and Dexter's "own weatherman" who advised family and friends of local weather trends.

But now he's leaving CoMo ... and becoming a Gator?? Please, Jeff Huffman say it ain't so!!

Dexter native Jeff Huffman is movin' on up to become the Chief Meteorologist for the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications in Gainesville. The university's multimedia properties includes WUFT-TV, radio stations County 103.7 and Rock 104, as well as two public radio affiliates and an AM sports radio station. .

But Huffman promises he will not become a Gator.

"I won't cheer against the Gators, let's put it that way," he said.

Huffman is a graduate of 1999 graduate of Dexter High School and is the son of Jack and Betty Huffman. He graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in geography and minor in atmospheric science and received a second degree in broadcast meteorology from Mississippi State University. For the last eight years he has been meteorologist with KMIZ- ABC17 in Columbia.

Huffman will be working in Florida to build a high definition local weather channel (WRUF "Gator Weather") that will be seen on most cable systems and over-the-air in north-central Florida.

"On top of that, I will be overseeing the creation of a weather department that will someday soon service all of multimedia properties owned by the University of Florida System," he explained. .

For Huffman, Missouri has been "home" for most of his life - his roots and allegiances are in the ShowMe State. So moving south the Florida is going to be quite a change for the energetic Dexter native.

“Leaving Columbia and the state of Missouri is going to be difficult,” he said. “After moving away from Dexter to go to college, I really haven't ever moved anywhere else. I was able to find everything I was looking for in a city and career in Columbia. It's a great city with a lot of opportunity. I will also miss the convenience living close to home (Dexter) offered.”

But the opportunity in Florida is just too great for young Huffman to pass up - a great step up the career ladder. He said he is quite excited about the opportunities the new position affords.

“The people in Florida are great. The weather, of 'course, is great most of the time. The exposure to hurricanes and other tropical weather elements will be beneficial to my career.”

But despite living and working in Florida ‘Gator country, Huffman promises to remember his ShowMe State roots.

“I will always be a Bearcat and a Tiger.”

***Photo Above: Meteorologist Jeff Huffman was back in his hometown of Dexter during the Memorial Day Weekend to participate in the DHS Choirs Alumni Choir Reunion to honor MaryRuth Boone (right). Huffman was an active member of the DHS Choirs under Boone’s direction while at student at Dexter High School. (SMT file photo by Annabeth Miller)***

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## A SEAL's Journey: Never Give Up

JUNE 07TH 2011 BY NEWS

A SEAL's Journey: Never Give Up

*By Annabeth Miiler,  
ShowMe Times Editor*

He's a hero.

He has a depth of spirit, he has his grandfather's (Pops) "fire and spit" and an awful lot of his grandmother's grit and determination. He also carries a good dose of loyalty and a zest for life. And I think there was a reason why this young man was born on June 6 - the anniversary of one of the greatest battles the world has ever seen: he would fight his own battles.

Elliott John (his Pops' Barney's middle name was John) is a Navy SEAL. Well, officially he has now served his tour in the Navy. But the way I figure it, once a SEAL, always a SEAL. As he once explained it to me (the cleaned up this version) "we're the baddest of the bad." He served SEAL team 5 – and was a combat medic and a sniper. He was good – darn good.

In November 2006, Elliott and his team were in the Al-Anbar province of Iraq. He was serving as a sniper overwatch for a Marine patrol when he was fragged by a grenade. When his teammates evacuated him to a nearby quick reaction force vehicle, one of those darn IED's (improvised explosive device) exploded. He was wounded again. Twice in one day.

Among his injuries, his left leg had two massive fractures, his arm was broken, and he lost most of his blood. He suffered traumatic brain injury and was burned over 60 percent of his body from the phosphorus in the bomb.

He would remain in a coma for four weeks. He had no recollection of being taken to the local combat hospital. No memory of the flight to Landstuhl, Germany where he would be stabilized for transport back to the states. No memory of being airlifted to Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio. He woke up in Texas, surrounded by family.

What he woke up to was a reality filled with pain, healing, surgeries, more pain, and more healing. Never quit.

He would undergo more than 60 surgeries. He had skin grafts to his hands and legs. Reconstruction and repairs to his left leg and right arm. Never quit.

Surgeries. Infections. Then the decision no one wanted to think about. His leg was so badly damaged he helped make the decision to amputate. Still more surgeries, more setbacks. Never give up.

Along the way, he had a “SEAL team” of his own here in Dexter – praying for him. Men and women who only remember him as a young boy with a big grin – the apple of his grandparents’ hearts – they were his team. They prayed for him, they remembered him.

His other SEAL team was <images/Blog Images/Local News/6.06.2011 ejm cover.jpg> there, too. These tall, athletic young men stood by Elliott no matter what. They were there for him. They encouraged, they prodded, they teased, they fought for him. I have seen them – in their dress blues – pick him up in his wheel chair and carry him lovingly up a hill to his sister’s grave site. They would do anything for him. That’s what family does. They, too are my heroes.

Never give up.

In November 2009, he showed the world he still had the grit and determination – as if anyone doubted. He flew to Chicago, and thanks to some help from U.S.Congressman Jo Ann Emerson (who cut the red tape), he climbed all 103 flights of stairs to the top of the Willis Tower (formerly named Sears Tower). He had a team of SEAL brothers there then, too, as well as his dad, brother, older sister and three nephews.

And he had a team of prayer SEALS in Dexter, too. The women in Verna Godwin’s

Sunday School Class at the First United Methodist Church prayed for him every step of that incredible journey.

Never give up.

Never, ever give up.

Now, this weekend before his birthday he marked another milestone. On Sunday morning he completed a marathon on an adaptive bike. Along with 32,000 runners and 65,000 spectators, Elliott completed the Rock 'n Roll Marathon in San Diego. His dad was there. His sister was there and running her first race. His wife was there, and those SEAL brothers, too.

Never give up.

He said it himself for a Navy magazine a few years ago: “Don’t ever, ever, ever give up hope because there is a light at the end of the tunnel. No matter how far, dark, and dismal it may appear at times, it is there. You just have to have a little bit (no, maybe a WHOLE LOT) of patience and faith in yourself. You alone will have to get up and take it for yourself.

He’s my hero. Happy birthday, big boy!

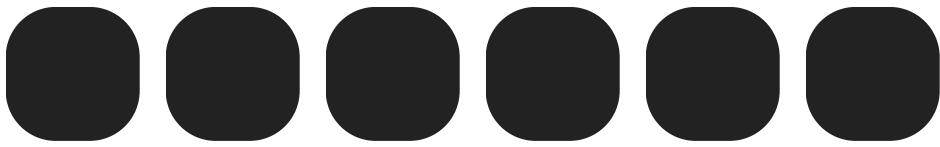
*Elliott John Miller is the son of former Dexter resident Joe Miller, the nephew of SMT editor Annabeth Miller, and the grandson of the late Barney and Marie Miller of Dexter. Elliott and his wife April are expecting their first child in September, giving the writer her fourth great nephew.*

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## D-Day: 'The Beginning Of The End'

JUNE 06TH 2011 BY NEWS

D-Day: 'The Beginning Of The End'

*By Annabeth Müller,  
ShowMe Times Editor*

June 6, 1944.

It's a pivotal day in history. It's the day when the largest armada the world had ever seen was poised to land on the European continent - with 156,000 Allied troops from the U.S., the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway and Free France all ready to land on a 50-mile stretch of Normandy coast with the support of 5,000 landing craft, 50,000 vehicles, and 11,000 planes.

And in command of one of those planes was a young Army Air Corps officer from Dexter.

Clifford Manlove was a captain on D-Day, in charge of a B-24 bomber based in Wormingford, England. A photo hangs on the wall at Manlove's home of ten young, smiling men alongside a bomber they had christened "The Missouri Mule." Three of the men were from Missouri; three had the first name Clifford. Now, some 67 years after that fateful June in 1944, only two of that crew are still alive to talk about the experience.

Manlove said the 490th Bomb Group hadn't been in England all that long before June 1944.

"The crew had just a few missions under its belt," Manlove recalled. But more importantly in some ways was that the crew had no idea that the call to wake up on the morning of June 6 would be the dawning of a turning point in the war.

"I hadn't heard a word about D-Day or an invasion before that morning," Manlove said. Maybe it was the group's newness to the scene; maybe because it was out the craziness of London and the hub-bub along the eastern coast along the English Channel. Manlove doesn't know.

"We really didn't have any idea."

But once they were awakened that morning and had breakfast, and then went to the various briefings, it was clear this would be a different sort of day.

"When I walked in that briefing room and saw that big map – then I knew," Manlove recalled. He said the briefing map was a large map of Europe - and red lines showing the route of their mission.

As a bomber group, he and his crew went on bombing raids – train depots, factories, and large strategic targets. But the target this morning was different.

"Our target that morning was a bridge," he recalled. "It was a tactical target, and we didn't normally have tactical targets. You never knew what the target was going to be until the briefing. So you can imagine the surprise when we had a bridge. It must have been some bridge!"

Weather – which had plagued General Dwight Eisenhower and the Allied commanders in executing the invasion plan - was perfect when Manlove and his crew left the base. Manlove was the lead crew for the mission, with nine other men aboard the B-24. The plan was to drop the six 1,000 bombs on a bridge near the French city of Nantes and return to base.

Contrary to most other missions, Manlove said there was not a secondary target and if the bombs were not dropped on the bridge, the bombs were to be returned with the crew.

"When we took off it was clear – it was a beautiful day," Manlove said. "Then, when we

got over the English Channel I saw one of the most impressive sights I have ever seen. There in the channel – stretched out as far as the eye could see – were all the ships and landing craft in the invasion force. It was impressive.”

But as soon as the crew hit the French shoreline, clouds began to mess with plans. The cloud cover prevented the crew from seeing the target.

“We were told that if we couldn’t see the target – if we didn’t have visual sight of the bridge – we were to return to base without dropping our bombs. That’s what we did.”

The Missouri Mule and its crew returned safe and secure to its base in Wormingford, ready to fly again another day.

“You couldn’t help but feel that this was the real thing,” the active 94-year old Manlove said. “We felt like this was the beginning of the end, really. There was a very good feeling.”

Manlove went on to complete his tour with the 490th Bomb Group, and then volunteered for a second tour before returning to Missouri in 1945. He went on to take his experience and training as an officer in the Air Force, making a career in the service.

But on that morning of June 6, 1944, he and his crew took off on a fateful day – a day some have dubbed “The Longest Day” when the Allies began to the long road to victory in World War II.

**Photo Above: Cliff Manlove keeps a photo of the B-24 crew who flew with him on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Manlove is standing, second from the right.**

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## UP's Steam Engine Is Pulling Into Dexter

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JUNE 05TH 2011 BY NEWS

UP's Steam Engine Is Pulling Into Dexter

*By Annabeth Müller,  
ShowMe Times Editor*

The day we have all been waiting for has finally arrived.

Back in the spring folks voiced their opinion through an online voting process and encouraged family and friends to vote. And the route was set. And now the ig steam engine is coming to Dexter.

The community that was founded in 1873 by the railroad and can credit its early history to the importance of railroads is going to host - for a short time - the last steam engine built for Union Pacific Railroad.

Union Pacific's Engine 844 will arrive in Dexter at 10:10 a.m. Monday at the intersection of County Road 517A and County Road 527. The train will be stopped for one hour, before leaving headed west to Poplar Bluff.

The 844 will leave Cape Girardeau at 8 a.m. for Dexter. The train is spending the night in Cape Girardeau before continuing its southward trek.

The Little Rock Express route won in voting conducted via a special contest website. In addition, individuals who garnered the most "points" via Facebook and Twitter earned two tickets each for a special leg of the tour.

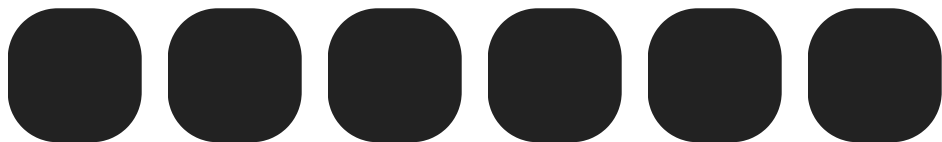
"The contest connected this legendary piece of railroad history to people of all ages through today's technology. It is our privilege to bring No. 844 to help the Little Rock Express voters celebrate their social media networking success," said Robert Turner, Union Pacific senior vice president - Corporate Relations.

A Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) transmitter was installed on one of the rail cars that will travel with No. 844. The GPS system has been integrated with a map at [www.upsteam.com](http://www.upsteam.com). Website visitors will be able to access a detailed schedule, route maps and other information. The GPS system will update the map every five minutes showing No. 844's location. GPS updates are also available at [http://twitter.com/UP\\_Steam](http://twitter.com/UP_Steam).

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