

TENNESSEE AMERICAN LEGION

BOYS STATE

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BOYS STATE OPENS WITH ORIENTATION AND MEMORIAL SERVICE

In his fifth year overseeing the program, Judge Gary McKenzie opened the orientation and memorial service on Sunday evening by telling the audience that the week of sacrificing time, energy and attention would be worth the experience. McKenzie follows in the footsteps of Judge John Maddux, who served 35 years as Boys State Board of Directors chairman. Tennessee American Legion Adjutant and Finance Officer Dean A. Tuttle placed the POW-MIA flag on stage, and Vice Chairman Maddux positioned the wreath at the foot of the American flag to honor those who have given their lives for our freedom.

Commander Stephen Weismann, an Air Force veteran, encouraged delegates to ask themselves what they are willing to sacrifice to ensure liberty. He told delegates that service requires courage, honor and sacrifice.

Weismann encouraged delegates to learn about the responsibilities of citizenship by learning the Tennessee Constitution. "Freedoms don't come from our government; they come from the laws of nature and Nature's God. We legislatively create laws to keep order.

"Learn to serve your fellow man. The military is not the only place you can serve. Get involved."

Director Steve Law offered the welcome from the host university, Tennessee Tech.

Cookeville/Putnam County Chamber of Commerce president George Halford encouraged delegates. "Tennessee is a broad state, and this is a rare opportunity to make these relationships. Sen. Lamar Alexander says the seed to be governor was planted at Boys State, and this can be your moment too. Have fun, learn and network."

Judge Maddux led this year's delegates in taking the Boys State pledge.

Judge McKenzie challenged delegates. "Somebody, somewhere someone believes in you. We need leaders. Judges, governors, and senators have been where you sit now. Get out of your comfort zone. This is your opportunity."

REMEMBER ME?

Judge John Maddux offered a well-received presentation on "Remembering Names and Faces." Boys Staters learned the importance of remembering names in order to influence, communicate, impress, sell and create and maintain friendships. He challenged delegates to learn every person's name in their cities by noon on Wednesday. Judge Maddux gave five steps and an acronym (INRAW) for remembering a person's name:

1. Be Interested
2. Get the Name (listen, ask about spelling and origin)
3. Repeat the Name (aloud, silently several times)
4. Associate Mental Image with Name (recall features, be silly)
5. Write it down (carry a notepad)

Tennessee Tech produces Bold, Fearless and Confident students. Join us.

Williams and Bailey speak on Major Political Issues in Tennessee

State Rep. Ryan Williams and Sen. Paul Bailey led a Q&A session on hot topics being discussed in the state legislature. They received questions on top issues, including the opioid crisis, abortion law, social media use, legalizing marijuana, gun legislation, party politics, and schools.

Do you support medical marijuana?

Bailey: I can absolutely support medical marijuana if we can do that and close the door to recreational use. I want to be careful because what we pass starts to creep into other unintended areas. I don't want a bill that comes in one way and goes out in another way. Williams: I too support narrowly drafted legislation for terminal illness; we could create oils and patches.

What is the legislature doing about Tennessee's opioid crisis?

Williams: We have an extreme problem that's existed 8-9 years. We've made great strides, but we already have so many people hooked. You'll see spend more money in drug treatment facilities in the next 4-5 years. We can't cut addicts off without a pathway to recovery. Bailey: We closed a loophole to prevent pain clinics from operating in an uncontrolled manner.

What is the hardest decision you've had to make?

Williams: This year, Sen. Bailey and I were on opposite sides on the vote on education savings accounts. The education committee led its passing on the House floor. I don't want to change the trajectory of improvement, but we have kids all over the state not getting the education they deserve. Bailey: I opposed the bill because there were so many different versions. I'm for increased public education funding, school choice and parental choice. But what was passed was limited and will face some legal challenges.

What is the impact of social media in politics?

Williams: It plays a huge role in getting messages out. But we've created an incessant need for people to climb the political ladder with how many retweets they get. We lose the whole purpose of servant leadership. The one-up mentality is not good for the process. Bailey: Your social media is a reflection of you. Coaches and employers look there first when considering you. Before you take a photo and send it, remember it will follow you all the days of your life. Don't do it. We've seen colleagues with careers ruined for what they posted years ago.

Do you see the political arena as trying to stand as a house divided? Bailey: I think social media and media in general have played a role in the divide. The reality is we represent our areas and across the state and nation, those people have very different views and beliefs. We don't sit down and try to work it out any more like people used to. The immigration solution, for instance, could be settled if both sides looked for answers, not blame. Williams: Nothing forces the federal government to work together; in Tennessee, we have a constitutional requirement to balance the budget and that helps bring people together.

What are you doing about school safety?

Bailey and Williams: I took a bill up this year to allow school teachers to carry guns. On college campuses, full-time faculty can now carry guns, and we have about 700 out there now. Campus crime has dropped 27 percent at the same time. The governor's budget gave \$10 million in recurring funds to schools to use for facility upgrades and SROs. This year there's another \$10 million, plus \$15 million in non-recurring funds.

What is your advice for someone who wants to run for office?

Williams: Volunteer for someone else's local race before you run. Whet your appetite and learn what you believe. Bailey: Work on a congressional or gubernatorial race and meet friends. The people that you meet will be friends for life.