



American Legion's 82<sup>nd</sup> Alabama Boys State  
**THE CITIZEN BUILDER**  
May 30th, 2019



## A Delegate's Dedication

By Ethan Ivy

Judge O.L. "Pete" Johnson, has been Director of the American Legion's Alabama Boys State for over 30 years, and has been unwavering in his dedication to the molding of young minds, educating the rising seniors on aspects of government, and leadership for decades. Johnson was a Jefferson County Criminal District Court Judge for years, and established one of the first drug courts in Alabama. He understands first hand how mercy can change a person for the better.

When interviewing Judge Johnson, he often used humor to engage the group into his responses. For example, when asked, "What do you believe you are to Boys State?" he immediately responded with, "Just an old guy that keeps coming back, I guess." But then he altered the tone of the answer to be more serious in saying that his goal for Boys State every year is to educate the young minds of Alabama about the government in their state and to create future productive citizens of Alabama.

Judge Johnson truly wants what is best for Alabama and plans to expand Boys State to have more members to educate more people on the importance of government and leadership. Johnson's true goal is complete and total engagement of future Alabama citizens

in their local, state, and national government. Voter participation in Alabama is one of the lowest in the world and if all citizens that are eligible to vote were to participate then true democracy would have been reached. This goal is accomplished at Boys State by the delegates participating in a mock government where they elect mayors, senators, and even a governor and many other offices. The participants learn the importance of government and are educated on how it actually works in Alabama.

Through Judge Johnson's experiences at Boys State, he became actively engaged in government, and in understanding its power to help people. Judge Johnson was elected Lieutenant Governor at his Boys State and represented Alabama at Boys Nation, where he learned more about how segregated and racist Alabama was as a state while he was a teenager.

Johnson tried to bring antiracism to his generation, and has worked to make Alabama the better for it. His experience at Boys State and Boys Nation changed his perception of his state entirely - and motivated him to be actively involved in improving it. That is what he hopes for each and every student that attends Boys State.

## Saban Scores a Standing Ovation

By Wesley Lowman

Excitement filled the room as Nick Saban walked across the Morgan Auditorium stage Thursday morning. Arguably one of the greatest coaches to ever grace a football field, Saban's accomplishments during his time at the helm of the Alabama Crimson Tide's football team are going to be remembered for years to come.

Saban immediately motivated the Boys State delegates with his message. He emphasized the importance of being a leader instead of a follower, and why leaders make a positive difference. He also spoke on the dangers of complacency and how it can ruin someone's ability to succeed. In talking about success, Saban noted, "Success is monumental. You will never truly reach the top of the mountain. Instead, you will eventually become the mountain that people will face." He noted that if you are successful, everyone will try to perform their best against you, so you must prepare; if you lack preparation, you will fail." Later on, Saban said that one should not be afraid of failure, but instead, grow from it. His message connected with the audience, as immediately at the conclusion of his speech, thundering applause spread throughout the auditorium and the legendary coach received a standing ovation.

Before his time as Alabama's head coach, Saban spent his college years at Kent State University, earning a bachelor's degree in business and his master's degree in sports



*Photo by Staff*

administration. He also played football there as a defensive back under coach Don James. He later became a graduate assistant coach at Kent State, and later was an assistant coach on both the collegiate and professional levels. The teams where he was an assistant are Syracuse, West Virginia, Ohio State, Navy, Michigan State, Houston Oilers, Toledo, Cleveland Browns, Michigan State, LSU (where he won a national championship), and the Miami Dolphins. In 2007, he announced that he had accepted an offer to become Alabama's twenty-seventh head coach.

Saban's tenure at Alabama has cemented his legacy as a college great due to the sheer impact he has had on the world of college football. Under his leadership, the Crimson Tide has seen two Heisman Trophy winners, eight SEC championships, five NCAA national championships, and numerous other awards. Adding to this success is the

fact that the Crimson Tide is a perennial College Football National Championship contender, usually ranked at or near the top of the college football polls. Saban has also received two Walter Camp Coach of the Year awards.

After, a few lucky delegates got to ask, and Saban addressed various topics. These included what he looks for when recruiting a player, as well as different experiences he had in the past that led to where he is now.

## Leaders of City 6

By Jaylin Davidson  
*(This is an opinion piece.)*

Here at City 6, Jeffery, we are a family. We eat together, pray together, and we all live on the same dorm floor. We have all experienced the long days of Boys State and we have learned about one another – and about ourselves. We have discovered the importance of discipline, courage, and responsibility. Our mother is not here to wake us or to tell us what to do and when to do it. We came here as boys just finishing our junior year of high school. We will leave here as better educated men.

The City of Jeffery elected their leader earlier in the week. Mayor Dominic Fanella attends Pelham High School. He said, "As mayor it is my duty to coordinate the efforts of the city council and see to it that our city is where it needs to be. Along with my associates, I am in charge of the drafting of 50 ordinances, a city budget, and a city project by week's end. The bonds within our city were immediately evident

The session concluded with Judge Pete Johnson, the Director of Alabama Boys State, presenting the coach with a donation of \$2,267.98 (from contributions by Boys State delegates and staff) to his Nick's Kids Foundation. The Nick's Kids Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that is dedicated to raising awareness and resources for deserving organizations throughout the state of Alabama and Southeast, and is the official charity of the Nick Saban family.

and continue to solidify as the week goes on. I look forward to our projects still ahead!"



Photo by Jaylin Davidson

Clerk Gavin Bailey is from Union Grove, Alabama. "In the past couple of days, I have learned how to better connect with people, and have discovered the importance of a well-organized group. "As Clerk of our beloved city, my position entails recording information during Council meetings and assisting the Mayor," Bailey said. "Thank you for joining me on this journey, and I hope everyone enjoys Boy's State!"

The four city councilmen are Jack Lyons, Lucas Nolan, Samuel Melton, and Jaylin Davidson. Lyons is from Decatur. He said, "During my time here, I have learned the value of government and the effect I can make on my community. As a member of the Council, I assist the mayor in the creation of city-wide ordinances. This has been an amazing experience for me."

Lucas Nolan is from Bayou La Batre. "In the time I have been at Boys State, I have learned the importance of the bonds between my peers. I am honored to have been chosen to come spend my week with all of the great people in our city and in Boys State."

Samuel Melton, from Gulf Shores, stated, "As a city council member my job is to help create local rules or laws that can assist our city members in their day-to-day lives. I have enjoyed my time at Boys State, but what has really made this event memorable is the people and the times we have had."

*(Editor's note: The fourth member of the Council is the author of this piece, Jaylin Davidson. Davidson is from Lanett and attends Lanett High School. He agreed with the others that his job is to assist "the mayor fulfill his obligations. This city has come a long way." He hopes to help lead Jeffery to victory as the American Legion's 82<sup>nd</sup> Alabama Boys State's best city.)*



By Jaylin Davidson

### Sport Results for Thursday

Cities	Softball	Basketball	Ultimate Frisbee	Soccer	Volleyball	Academic Bowl
1-4	4-1	44-35	0-9	4-3	0-2	60-20
10-6	3-13	48-36	9-4	1-3	2-0	50-150
9-2	2-3	43-24	3-2	3-1	2-1	200-20
3-5	16-10	41-52	9-3	0-1	1-2	100-150
7-8	Bye	Bye	Bye	Bye	Bye	Bye



# Today's Weather

**FRIDAY**  
MAY 31



91° / 65°

RealFeel® 98° / 66°

Partly sunny

[MORE](#)

**SATURDAY**  
JUN 1



91° / 65°

RealFeel® 98° / 68°

Mostly sunny; warm

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**SUNDAY**  
JUN 2



96° / 70°

RealFeel® 103° / 72°

Partial sunshine; warm

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