

"We're celebrating a lifetime of him serving several generations of children, not just serving a community, which could be argued, but serving several generations of children," Tracy Arflin said. "I like to think of my father like that."

That's why around 100 family members, friends, current and former NHYFL coaches, players and officials gathered Sunday at Mill Creek Baptist Church in Radcliff to honor Tom Arflin for more than three decades of service.

In May, Tom Arflin was diagnosed with brain cancer and has undergone radiation treatments.

They made sure the Jaguars coach felt right at home—with Jaguars items and colors everywhere. Each table was covered in a teal tablecloth with a Jaguar youth helmet, with a white pom-pom attached to each facemask, smack dab in the middle.

Tom Arflin has spent 32 years helping develop the NHYFL. He's coached in the league since 1980 and served as its president since 1991. Arflin's grandson, Matt, remembers playing football for him years ago, and the 26-year-old remains amazed at how much the league has grown with his grandfather at the helm.

"It's kind of like the Madden video game where you create your own league. He kind of did that," Matt Arflin said.

Two weeks ago, Tracy stopped by to talk to Tom after a NHYFL meeting. That's when he told his father about the reception.

"I had tears in my eyes. That surprised me," Tom Arflin said. "He announced it after the meeting. I thought he was going to say something about the reason why he was there. It came out different."

The celebration ended up being special.

Radcliff Mayor J.J. Duvall grew up playing youth sports in Radcliff. He knows how much of a fixture Tom Arflin, who still is referred to as just "Coach," has become in the community. And he knows his dedication is unmatched.

"We're here to honor Coach's attention to detail, sense of humor, the smiles he brings to others, and the overall caring he has for kids and our youth," Duvall said. "He set the bar very high."

Trying to come up with a gift to honor him with was just as tough.

Tom Arflin already has two fields—the NHYFL and Radcliff Senior League Field—named in his honor. He has football memorabilia galore. So Duvall picked out another unique item—an engraved Louisville Slugger baseball bat. Tom Arflin actually began working with Radcliff youth in 1979 when he took over the Rangers' team in the Radcliff Major League.

"The Louisville Slugger is an icon, and you're an icon of the community," Duvall said.

Arflin influenced coaches as much as he did the players.

Just ask Vine Grove resident Travis McNair.

McNair has been with the NHYFL since 2008. He originally only intended to have his son, Tavius, sign up to play. But Tom Arflin convinced him to coach.

"He said we always need coaches. Now I am and I'm addicted to it," McNair said. "He said, 'We need coaches and people out to help.'"

McNair has coached his son on the Rams each of the past three years. This year, Tavius will enter high school at North Hardin. But McNair will still lead the Rams because he's having so much fun.

So is Isaac Bankhead.

The Radcliff resident will coach his third team—the newly formed Chiefs—in nine seasons. He coached the Vikings for the first two years and the Titans, too.

Bankhead's children, 12-year-old Isaiah and 10-year-old Jeremiah, have each played for the past seven years. And Tom Arflin helped him get into coaching.

"He's good-hearted, tries to make sure every kid in the league has an opportunity to play. He tells us how to deal with parents and what to do to help the league run better," Bankhead said. "He's been an inspiration. He's been a good guy. You can't help but to like him."

Former players agreed.

One of those players Tom Arflin influenced is Jeremy Brown.

The 17-year-old North Hardin senior wide receiver shared his unique experience on how Arflin helped him develop foot coordination.

"I didn't want to do football. My parents kind of forced me into it. I remember the first day of practice and they got out the tires for a tire drill. I stepped up, and I was like, 'I really didn't want to do it,' and I went through and hit every single tire. As I went and got done, Coach was like, 'Dadgumit, Jeremy! Dadgumit!' It went on like that for about a week," Brown said. "That was in the back of my mind. I did it perfect a week later. Since then, any type of drill I have that involves my feet, I don't mess up."

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, unfortunately, I was absent for vote No. 98, a motion to instruct the Sergeant at Arms to request the attendance of absent Senators. Had I been present for the vote, I would have cast a vote in favor of the motion.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JOHN C. JOHNSON

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today we honor the life and heroic sacrifice of PFC John C. Johnson of Phoenix, AZ. He died on May 27, 2011, in Bayman Province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when his mounted patrol received small arms fire. He was 28 years old. Private Johnson and his wife Jennifer were expecting a baby daughter at the time of his death.

Private Johnson's parents remember him as a honest, affectionate son, and his wife remembers him as a dedicated husband and loving father. Growing up in Arizona's rugged landscape, he developed hunting and tracking skills that would later contribute to his resourcefulness as a soldier. Private Johnson enlisted in the Army in February 2010, commenting that he was committed to providing a better life for his family.

He served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as a member of C Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, based at Fort Drum, NY. His bravery and outstanding service quickly won the recognition of his commanders. Private Johnson earned, among other distinctions, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the NATO Medal.

Mark Twain once said, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die

at any time." Private Johnson's service was in keeping with this sentiment—by selflessly putting country first, he lived life to the fullest. He lived with a sense of the highest honorable purpose.

I stand with people in Colorado and nationwide in profound gratitude for Private Johnson's tremendous sacrifice. At substantial personal risk, he fought in Afghanistan with unwavering courage to protect America's citizens and the freedoms we hold dear. For his service and the lives he touched, Private Johnson will forever be remembered as one of our country's bravest.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Vicki, his mother, John, his father, Jennifer, his wife, and his entire family, who carry on Private Johnson's memory and will forever remind us of his sacrifice.

SERGEANT WILLIAM STEELE

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Freedom Fighter from Chicago, IL, an American Hero, SGT William Steele.

He is a man who proudly went off to war for his country. On June 25, 2009, William lost his leg and almost his life after an IED explosion in Maili, Afghanistan.

Sergeant Steele returned home an even stronger soldier, determined to continue to fulfill his dream with an Army career as a drill sergeant. And with the support of his mother, who at the age of 17 signed the papers so he could enlist in the Army, he will.

One of his favorite quotes from his mother that has inspired him is, "There is no sense of looking down, hold your head up!" Sergeant Steele has done just that, making us all proud of him.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this poem penned in honor of him by Albert Caswell, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

COLD STEELE

IN HONOR OF A REAL AMERICAN HERO, SGT WILLIAM STEELE UNITED STATES ARMY, HHC 1-17TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

Cold Steele!

What is right, what is real!

What is strong, all in what a most courageous heart reveals!

While, all upon battlefields of honor bright . . . all in these killing fields . . .

Dark days and nights . . .

As from down within, as how a heart so reaches deep down to begin . . .

To begin this fight, whether on battlefields of honor bright . . . or in a hospital to unite . . .

Because, only with a most courageous heart of Steele . . . will we so win that night!

As all in time revealed . . .

When, courage crests . . . as one of America's Finest, The Army's Best . . .

For only there, in these the darkest days of all nights . . .

As only there, all in life and death . . . all in this fight!

Will hearts of strength and Steele, so crest . . . to reveal to bring their light!

Your medal, of what you are made . . . so very real!