

# Holmes...from Page 1A



Several of Holmes' family attended the Feb. 21 Commission Meeting to see Steve being honored by the county for his 28 years of service.

commissioner: "I just want you to know we love you and we thank you for everything you have done for Towns County."

Since March 13, 1989, Holmes has completed a variety of tasks for the county, working out of the Towns County Courthouse.

Over the years, he has done road signage, helped out with 911 Mapping, in building permits, worked as an Environmental Enforcement Officer, completed county mail processing and more, and he has always conducted himself in a manner befitting a true public servant.

"I've enjoyed every bit of it," said Holmes, speaking to the crowd at his retirement reception in the courthouse that Feb. 21 evening.

Holmes has been a lifelong devotee to the Lions Club, has served over 40 years on the Towns County Board of Health – longer than anyone else in Georgia history – and he has spent nearly 70 years as a deacon at Friendship Baptist Church.

A World War II Veteran, Holmes joined up with the U.S. Navy in 1943, climbing to the rank of Petty Officer Third Class. He spent much of his military career in the Aleutian Islands before his eventual discharge in 1946.

The same year of his discharge, Holmes married Joyce Kimsey, with whom he would go on to have daughters Cynthia, Sharon, Ramona and Stevie.

Before joining the military, Holmes had dropped



The commissioner held a retirement reception for Holmes following the meeting, complete with cake and beverages for all who wanted it.

out of high school his senior year to learn how to weld, and after he returned home from the Navy, he earned his diploma and ultimately graduated Young Harris College in 1953 as the first World War II Veteran to receive a degree from the college under the GI Bill.

Holmes became administrator of what was then known as Towns County Hospital in 1953, serving in that capacity for more than 30 years, before taking on his responsibilities with county government from which he formally retired on Feb. 21, 2017.

"I'm thrilled that this has been such a nice reception, and how everybody seems to appreciate what he's done," said Stevie McClure, one of

Holmes' four daughters.

Many of Holmes' relatives and fellow church members attended the reception, which took place after the county meeting, and when all was said and done, the cake had been completely eaten, good fellowship had been had, and a good man was honored for his decades of dedication and service to Towns County and her residents.

Holmes was born on March 31, 1923, to John Truman and Stella Brown Holmes, and is the grandson of John W. and Martha Burch Holmes, as well as Alex and Rutha Wilson Brown.

He attended Hiwassee Elementary School and Towns County High School in his youth.

# Henderson...from Page 1A

County line, in order to escort him across the county, through Blairsville, and into Towns County, where he resides.

As the procession pulled into the City of Blairsville and made its way down Cleveland Street, Sheriff Mack Mason and his deputies turned on their sirens and lights to let everyone know that a VIP was coming through town.

Stacy Raper, mother of Henderson's girlfriend Kaley Raper, organized a special "Welcome Home" banner for Henderson that Wednesday, placed near the exit from Bob Head Street on Georgia 515 for Henderson to see as he drove by on his way home.

Gathering along the SR 515 Overpass, Stacy and several members of First Baptist Church of Blairsville, where she works, joined friends of Henderson and Kaley's, including Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, in waving to Henderson as he headed home.

Along the way, officers from the Blairsville Police Department worked to clear traffic from the route, and the warm welcome continued as the procession moved into Henderson's home county of Towns.

Henderson lives in Young Harris, but he's currently staying in Hiwassee while his home undergoes a few renovations.

As the procession moved through Towns County, seemingly all first responders joined in to see him home.

The Young Harris College Police Department, the Towns County Fire Department, the Towns County Sheriff's Office and the Hiwassee Police Department all chipped in to assist with traffic lights along the route.

And just after Henderson arrived in Union County, the skies at first opened, and then let loose.

"That's a testament to everybody who helped with the red lights, they stood out in the pouring rain," said UCISO Lt. Daren Osborn, who led the procession. "Mitchell coming home is a big deal to us."

The Saturday following his return to Union and Towns, Henderson's family and friends threw a cookout in his honor, welcoming him home in a gathering of good food and fellowship.

Since the two communities of Towns and Union counties first learned of Deputy Henderson's



This photo, contributed by a member of the community, shows the crowd of friends and loved ones gathered to welcome home Deputy Henderson at the Georgia 515 Overpass in Blairsville on Wednesday, March 1.



UCISO Deputy Mitchell Henderson's "Welcome Home" escort, by fellow deputies at the Union County Sheriff's Office. Pictured here entering Blairsville by way of Cleveland Street.

accident last September, they have come together many times in order to raise money to help Henderson's family be able to stay near him during his initial recovery stages.

Everyone has seen the #239 Strong shirts in support of Deputy Henderson, and fundraisers have ranged from a 5K "Turkey Trot" at Meeks Park to a motorcycle ride out of Hiwassee.

Again, the North Georgia News and the Towns County Herald would like to welcome home UCISO Deputy Mitchell Henderson.

**DO YOU NEED COPY PAPER?**

20# Copy Paper • 104 Brightness

**\$380 per 500 Sheets**  
**\$36 per Case of 5000 Sheets**

*West*  
**Printing Company**

266 Cleveland St., Blairsville  
**706-745-6343**