

[https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wcps-announces-2023-hall-of-distinguished-alumni/article\\_34e678a2-962f-5420-95bf-d1742ffd8e1f.html](https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wcps-announces-2023-hall-of-distinguished-alumni/article_34e678a2-962f-5420-95bf-d1742ffd8e1f.html)

## WCPS announces 2023 Hall of Distinguished Alumni

By the Daily News  
Mar 25, 2023



John H. Bailey Jr.

Warren County Public Schools will induct seven alumni into its Hall of Distinguished Alumni on May 5.

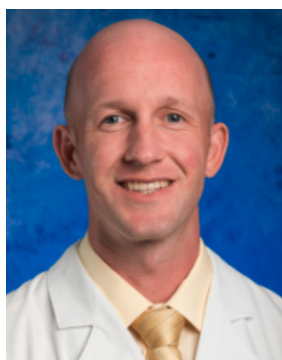
The ceremony will be at the Sloan Convention Center, 1021 Wilkinson Trace, with doors opening at 5 p.m. and dinner and the program beginning at 6 p.m.



Paula Barnes

Tickets are \$35 each and can be purchased at <https://bit.ly/2023HODA>.

Members of the 2023 WCPS Hall of Distinguished Alumni Class include John. H. Bailey Jr., Paula L. Barnes, J.D., C. Daniel Benson, M.D., Dr. Alfred Leland Crabb, Meliha Hrustanovic-Kadic, Ret. LCDR Jason Thomas, USN and Brig. Gen. Todd Wiles.



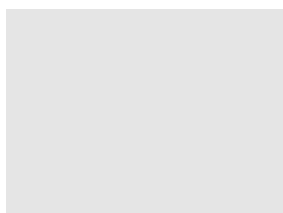
C. Daniel Benson,  
M.D.



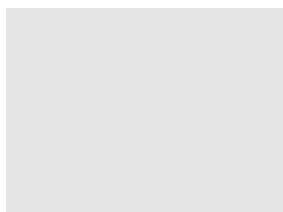
Dr. Alfred Leland  
Crabb



Meliha Hrustanovic-  
Kadic, M.D.



LCDR Jason  
Thomas, USN,  
Retired



Brig. Gen. Todd  
Wiles

**Bailey**, a 1991 Warren Central High School graduate, is a former captain with Western Kentucky University's Police Department and a current deputy with the Warren County Sheriff's Office. During his 16 years at WKU, Bailey oversaw departmental policy, training and officer development. He is also a flight instructor with Honaker Aviation. He is an FAA instrument-certified commercial flight instructor pilot and a drone pilot. In addition, Bailey is an accomplished artist and owns his own photography business. He is actively involved in activities serving others.

**Barnes**, a 1992 Greenwood High School graduate, is a University of Louisville (cum laude, 1996) and Howard University School of Law Honors graduate (cum laude, 1999). She began her career as an assistant district attorney in New York prosecuting felony child abuse cases. She is currently senior legal counsel at Gucci America Inc. and has also served as legal affairs counsel for MetLife Inc. and senior counsel at Macy's Inc. While practicing law, she

has participated in several organizations and has been a featured speaker at several notable events. She has also assisted with philanthropic endeavors such as feeding and clothing the homeless.



**Benson**, a 2001 graduate of Warren East High School, is a widely recognized orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Benson earned a full scholarship to Georgetown College, and in 2005, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in chemistry. He went on to earn his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in 2009 and complete his residency at the University of Kansas in Kansas City, Kan. He has been an orthopedic surgeon at OrthoTennessee Oak Ridge since 2014 and has written

numerous scientific publications and presented professionally across the United States and in Austria.

**Crabb**, (Jan. 22, 1884 – Oct. 1, 1979), a graduate of Plum Springs School, was an accomplished educator and writer. Crabb's formal education began and continued for several years at Plum Springs School in the community of his birth. Crabb continued his education at Southern Kentucky Normal School, Western Kentucky Normal School (now Western Kentucky University), Peabody College and Columbia University. His career as an educator included assignments as a teacher and a principal. He also worked in higher education as a professor of history and education and held leadership positions as dean at both WKU and Peabody College. Crabb also bestowed written contributions to the educational field and to literature. During a long and productive career, Crabb collaborated on a series of publications and textbooks, but is best known for his 11 historical novels that appeared between 1942 and 1957. He authored

two very well-known trilogies for historians – the Nashville grouping and those on the Civil War.

**Hrustanovic-Kadic, M.D.**, a 2008 graduate of Warren Central High School, is an accomplished physician who immigrated to the United States from Bosnia as a child. Hrstanovic-Kadic continued her academic career at Western Kentucky University, graduating summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. She then completed medical school at the University of Louisville and continued her medical training there as an internal medicine resident. She is currently a pulmonary and critical care medicine fellow for the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System. Throughout her years in the WCPS system, she was always willing to help and encourage other English Language Learner students. As an adult, she has returned to Moss Middle School as a guest motivational speaker. Hrstanovic-Kadic cherishes her educational opportunities and is grateful for the community in which she was able to

plant her roots. She has been involved in various community service activities in Kentucky including volunteering at local hospitals and free clinics, assisting with refugee resettlement efforts through Kentucky Refugee Ministries and completing the rural health scholar program through WKU.

**Thomas**, a 1999 graduate of Warren Central High School, is a retired Navy officer and nuclear engineer. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Navy Nuclear Power Program. In 2003, LCDR Thomas graduated from Thomas Edison State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nuclear engineering technology. He then was selected for Officer Candidate School, earning his commission in 2005 as a surface warfare officer. In 2022, he earned his Master of Business Administration degree from Western Kentucky University. While in the Navy, LCDR Thomas was deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, completed a UNITAS to South America, was surged in support of

Operation Enduring Freedom – Caribbean Surge, and supported the annual military exercises Key Resolve and Ulchi Freedom Guardian in Korea. His personal decorations include Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy & Marine Corps Achievement Medal (awarded six times), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and various campaign/personal medals and unit awards. Thomas currently works as a senior innovation and design engineer for World Wide Design and Engineering at Amazon. During his time at Amazon, he oversaw the launch of 44 sortation centers capable of sorting over 6 million packages per day.

**Wiles**, a 1991 Warren East High School graduate, has served our country for the past 26 years. He is an Air Force command pilot and United Airlines pilot with more than 5,100 flying hours in the F-16, MQ-9, Airbus A320, Boeing 757, 767 and 787. He

previously served in numerous Air Force and Air National Guard roles including having served as an F-16 instructor/evaluation pilot, squadron and group commander, and until November 2022, the wing commander of the 118th Wing at Berry Field, Air National Guard Base in Nashville. He is currently the Tennessee Air National Guard chief of staff, Joint Force Headquarters and flies the 787 as a first officer for United Airlines based in Chicago. As wing commander of the 118th Wing, his wing provided the United States with lethal armed overwatch, actional reachback intelligence and expeditionary combat support that projects American power across the globe. He is now responsible for over \$750 million in property of three Air Wings in the state of Tennessee. His staff oversees the administrative operations of these three wings which have a combined budget of over \$400 million to include the training and management of over 3,000 military personnel. His duties as chief of staff include military and state national guard operations overseeing daily federal missions, as



well as state missions including COVID-19 pandemic operations, multiple disaster relief efforts and civil unrest response. In his career, Wiles moved his family to 14 different assignments and served two combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. First, as a forward air controller providing air support to the U.S Army during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and again in 2009 flying the F-16 and later the MQ-9, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and multiple other operations in the Global War on Terror. Wiles entered the Air Force in 1995 as a Distinguished Graduate of Western Kentucky University's Air Force ROTC program. He has received numerous awards including U.S. Army Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal 3 Devices, Air Medal and the Aerial Achievement Medal.

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**Ann Marie Dotson**

Editorial Assistant

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