

decided to return to school in 1999 to work on master's degrees to further our knowledge in business, again taking night classes. In the spring of 2001, all four members of our family graduated from schools in Kansas. Rachelle graduated with her high school diploma from Lawrence High School and entered the University of Kansas that fall. Vocal music a passion of hers, she was selected to sing the national anthem at university basketball games during her sophomore year, while also being a voice for morning broadcasts for the KJHK, the university's radio channel. Jerrell graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Kansas and was recruited as a biomedical researcher with Merck Pharmaceuticals in Rahway, New Jersey. Johnny and I graduated from Baker University each with Master's in Business Management. We moved to Lee's Summit, Missouri as Johnny was promoted to pharmacy specialist/supervisor for the Dillon's Pharmacies for Northeast Kansas and all of Missouri. I took a pharmacy manager position in a Kansas City retail pharmacy, and later a civilian supervisor position with the US Army on Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Johnny always dreamed of becoming a doctor, but it turned out not to be HIS path to follow. Our time in medicine and healthcare was not lost on our children. We are so very proud to have our son and daughter fulfill these medical dreams. After two years with Merck, Jerrell returned to school (as he had always planned), attending Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland. He graduated with his MD in 2007. After residency at Duke University for internal medicine, a fellowship at the University of Colorado Medical School in Aurora, Colorado for cardiology, and post-fellowship for nuclear cardiology at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, he is a member of a thriving cardiology practice in Denver. Rachelle completed her bachelor's degree in Hospitality Management from University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Missouri. Over the years, she held positions as a guest service agent for prominent hotel chains, director of sales for a Hilton hotel, and as a restaurant manager for a Kansas City company. Rachelle felt she needed to help people in a different way, so she redirected her energies, returning to school to pursue a nursing degree. She was accepted this fall into Johnson County Community College's Registered Nursing Program in Overland Park, Kansas, and is working part time as a certified nurse's aide (CNA) at an Overland Park medical center. Rachelle says this is definitely what she was meant to do in her life. She will complete her nursing degree in 2024. I guess we never saw how we influenced our children in medicine!

In March 2018, after 29 years with Dillon's Stores, Johnny retired from pharmacy. I followed by retiring from pharmacy in April 2018. We are Grammy and



**Johnny and Cynthia Herod with Rachelle Pualilia Herod Aiken and David Aiken.**

Grandpa to three beautiful grandchildren – eight-year-old Alexander, six-year-old Henry, four year-old Elizabeth, and a cute Pug pup, Kona-all, from Jerrell and his lovely wife, Natalie. Rachelle, is married to a great guy, David, and they are raising a beautiful, energetic pup, Amo, and live in Kansas. We now call the beautiful mountain state of Colorado home.

From a modest beginning as a young black boy in the segregated south of Mississippi, Johnny's "planned out life" took several unexpected twists and turns. He found ways to complete his goals. Even when presented with many challenges along the way, he became an educated and very successful black man with the help of a community of family and friends along the way. Many organizations receive the generosity of our hearts, fostered by the philanthropic examples set by the late Rachel and John Herod. I know his parents would approve of his life's outcome and take pride, as we do, in the way they helped mold him and pave the way for him to be such a fine outstanding, productive, and hardworking example of southern upbringing. Johnny never forgets from where he began in life. He is a proud Water Valley son.

**By Rachelle Pualilia Herod Aiken  
November 10, 2022**

My father worked hard all his life and he instilled that work ethic into my brother and me. He worked a lot, either in the pharmacy or on military duty, when we were young, so he was not around all the time. But he did his share to keep food on the table and a roof over our heads. Of the lessons I have learned from my dad, I think the most memorable are if you want something, you have to work for it; if you can, always give a hand up, not a handout; and always lead by example.

Because of his background in the military, he has a stiff upper lip and runs a tight ship, and you always know that whatever he is doing it is for the good of the whole group and to keep everybody safe. Growing up, we may not have always seen eye to eye on issues (in life or even how to cook in the kitchen), but I have never met anyone with more integrity in my life. I always beam when people tell me how they remember him as being calm and kind, intimidating, and yet still approachable. As my friend once described my dad on meeting him for the first time, "He is someone you knew would shake your hand, but you weren't sure just how hard." My father is a gentle giant who commands respect and gives back in kindness. He has so much love for his family. I am happy to say that he is finally retired. Dad and Mom are happy to spend time with their beautiful grandchildren. Dad can now rest a bit, live and enjoy a well-earned life with my mom.

**By Jerrell Waika Herod  
November 25, 2022**

As a person in the community, Johnny Herod was well-respected. Parents and coworkers noted he was a very nice person, and he regularly contributed to

the local Missionary Baptist churches he and the family attended. He got to know many in the community through his public-facing work as a pharmacist for Dillon's Pharmacy in our hometown for the years before being promoted into his regional supervisory role. At home, he was relatively reserved, spending much time ironing clothes in the basement while watching sports and movies during his time off. Working many late nights and weekends, he did not interact with us much, and the times he did he tended to be pretty gruff and rarely complimentary of our efforts in school or sports, frequently critical of our failures on the court, a hard-fought B-plus grade in a difficult class, or perceived inadequacy in our performance of chores. However, in retrospect, the traits we admire now that he did display are his dedication to working hard to provide for the family, his prioritizing of family over outside activities as he was rarely anywhere else but at work or home, and his efforts to always be present for every possible game or performance, frequently with a camcorder in hand to capture the memories. He was not one to express his positive emotions outwardly, as I suspect that was not a common in his upbringing. Yet he did display his love for the family in the ways he knew how, doing what he could to equip us with the resources and work ethic to help us survive and succeed. It was a stern love, but a well-meaning love nonetheless, and well-intentioned with the hopes that his efforts would allow us the opportunities not afforded to him in his youth.

**In Closing**

In my mind this is one of the most beautiful love stories I have read in a while. Such an excellent example of what family is all about and what is so much needed today. If you have read this article, I hope you will share it with a young person or family who might need some motivation. Or perhaps you could just tell them about it, using such key words as perseverance, patience, determination, discipline, hard work, planning – and yes, I could go on.

Or just tell them about Johnny Wayne Herod, an Outstanding Black Man of Yalobusha County.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

for those cold

# Winter Months

**Follow the below energy efficiency tips to reduce your energy bill during the winter's cold months.**

**Caulk cracks and leaks to keep cold air from creeping into your home.**

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**When you're not using your fireplace, keep the damper closed.**

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**Close your drapes to reduce heat loss at night. Open them up when it's sunny.**

**Door sweeps and seals keep the cold out of your home and storage areas.**

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**Insulate your attic entrance to keep your warm air from leaking into it.**

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## Shelia's Sassy Southern Savories

### All Occasions Cheese Ball

**Ingredients**

- Cream cheese - two bricks softened
- Dried beef - one jar chopped real fine
- Onion - About a one-half cup chopped real fine
- Accent Seasoning - one-half teaspoon
- Worcestershire sauce - one-half teaspoon
- Pecans - 3/4 cup, medium fine

**Directions**

Mix first five ingredients thoroughly with spoon and form into ball shape with flat bottom. Place on charcuterie/cheese board. Pat down all over with chopped pecans until all exposed cheese ball is covered

**Serving Suggestion**

Serve with crackers of choice or Melba toast or celery, broccoli or cauliflower or all of this. Chill about two hours before serving.

Happy New Year!