

A Leader in the Growth and Progress of Claxton and Evans County

# The Claxton Enterprise

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## Local woman receives Lincoln Award in D.C.

**By LeeAnna Tatum**  
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A small town girl from Mississippi and a current resident of Claxton was honored last week in D.C. as the recipient of a Lincoln Award. Britnee Kinard is in the national spotlight for her work and tireless determination on behalf of her own husband, other veterans, and their caregivers.

The Lincoln Awards, presented for the first time this year on January 7, serve as the Friars Foundation's recognition of those who aid veterans.

The premise for the Lincoln Awards rests in President Lincoln's second inaugural address to the nation (in the midst the Civil War) which concluded with the following statement: "With malice toward none, with charity for all ... to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

While opening the awards ceremony, Brian Williams of NBC Nightly News said, "We are here tonight to honor those who answered that call."

The evening began with an award dinner attended by the honorees, their guests, high ranking members of the military, members of Congress, and several celebrities who later participated in a concert event. All 10 Lincoln Award recipients were recognized and given the opportunity to speak.

Kinard did not arrive at the event with name-recognition. She is not the top executive of a nationally known company, a CEO, or a famous performer. When her

◆ see **KINARD** on page 2



Britnee Kinard, Lincoln Award winner, walks the red carpet with Service Dog Gunner. Kinard received the Caregiver Award for her advocacy work for veterans.

-- Photo credit LeeAnna Tatum

## Juvenile pleads guilty to assault charges in court

*Stafford appeared in court last week, will be sentenced on Jan. 22*

**From staff reports**

Fourteen-year-old, Devin Xavier Stafford, plead guilty on Thursday, January 8, to charges of aggravated assault with attempt to rape related to an attack on a young woman jogging through downtown Claxton on November 4, 2014. The case was heard in Evans County and held in open court.

Stafford, who has been out on bond and under house arrest since shortly after the Thanksgiving holiday, was immediately remanded into custody as ordered by Judge Ben Brinson. He will be detained until a disposition hearing for sentencing is held in Tattnall County on January 22.

Stafford was also indicted in December by a grand jury in Evans County Superior Court on two felony counts of aggravated sodomy and false imprisonment related to the alleged rape of a fellow student that occurred in September 2014. A trial date has not yet been set.

## Burglary suspect turns himself in

*Williams wanted in connection with home invasion on Bay Branch Rd.*

**From staff reports**

Khiry Shaldonte Williams, wanted for burglary and aggravated assault in connection with a home invasion on Bay Branch Church Rd. in April 2014, turned himself into the Evans County Sheriff's Office over the weekend.

Deputies responded to a 911 call late on Sunday evening, April 27, from a resident on Bay Branch Rd. who claimed someone wearing a mask was at the door trying to enter his home. Upon arrival, they heard the victim's cries for help from inside the home and gained entry via the back door where they encountered an unknown subject holding a gun on the victim.

The perpetrators fled the home and officers pursued. One suspect, Jalen Wilkerson, was apprehended that night and another person of interest, Jaired Devonte Wingfield, was arrested on July 14, 2014 and



Khiry Williams

charged with aggravated assault and burglary. ECSO has been searching for Williams since the incident.

In an attempt to safely diffuse the situation the night of the invasion, SWAT was called in to clear the residence. Sheriff Randall Tippins said these kinds of incidents have been rare in his law enforcement career. He's only made three SWAT calls over the years.

## Dan Reeves, Falcons coach, to speak at Chamber Banquet

**By Sarah Gove**  
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The annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet and Salute to Business and Industry will be held on Thursday, January 29, at the Evans County Wildlife Club. Retired Atlanta Falcons Coach Dan Reeves will be the keynote speaker. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. for a networking reception and coffee bar with the dinner, program and awards commencing at 7 p.m.

"We're excited to have Coach Reeves," said Tammi Hall, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director. "Come out and hear his message. I think he's going to have a really good one for us."

Dan Reeves spent 23 years coaching for the Denver Broncos, New York Giants and Atlanta Fal-



Dan Reeves

cons. His overall coaching record was 190-165-2. He played or coached in a record nine Super Bowls – five with the Dallas Cowboys, three with Denver and one with Atlanta. Prior to coaching, he also spent 16 years in the Cowboys organization – five as a player, three as a player/coach and eight as an assistant coach.

Reeves was born in Rome, Georgia in 1944. He attended the University of South Carolina, where he played quarterback from 1962-1964. He was inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1977. Dan currently resides in Atlanta.

Advance tickets for the banquet are \$25 or \$35 at the door (if space is available). Chamber membership is not required to attend.

New this year, the Chamber is offering a corporate table option for \$350 - seats eight. Corporate table sponsors will have the exclusive

◆ see **BANQUET** on page 2

## County Commissioners negotiating contract with new attorney, Jay Swindell

**By Sarah Gove**  
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Evans County Board of Commissioners held their first meeting of 2015 last week and approved county appointments for the new term with one change - Bill Callaway will no longer serve as county attorney. Rather, the county will enter negotiations with local attorney, Jay Swindell, for the position.

"I make a motion that we go into contract negotiations with Jay Swindell as our county attorney pending the mutual agreement of said contract," said Jill Griffin, commissioner for District Two. Commissioners Irene Burney, Shela Holland, Jill Griffin and Gary Bell voted in favor of Swindell. Commissioner Jack Pinckard voted no. Commissioner Del Beasley was serving as chairman and had no vote.

Beasley says Callaway was informed in December of the county's preference that he represent either Evans County or the City of Claxton. "I talked to Bill. We had discussed some time back in December that we would like for Bill to choose whether he would represent us or the City of Claxton ... he would still like to do both, but the majority of the group (of commissioners) said they would rather him not do both and just choose one or the other," Beasley said.


"They felt there was the possibility of a conflict and they wanted me to do one or the other. I

◆ see **COUNTY ATTORNEY** on page 3

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Trivia

Which president signed a bill creating a federal holiday to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.?

- Answer on Page 2

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