



Media Release

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Determined Cave City man regains eyesight, earns achievement award

Larry Stroud of Cave City has been named as an area Consumer of the Year (COY) by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). Stroud is the Associate Editor and a columnist for the Batesville Daily Guard newspaper.

Because of his determination to overcome adversity, serve others, and succeed at work, DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Darline Tucker nominated him for the achievement award.

Stroud is one of only 13 people in Arkansas who will receive an area award and was selected from the area including Independence, Izard, Stone, Cleburne, Fulton, White, and Sharp counties.

Stroud said he lost his vision due to cataracts in both eyes and several other eye conditions complicated by diabetes. After several surgeries and medical treatments, Stroud's vision has been restored, but he said, "It was a lengthy journey."

His employer, the Batesville Daily Guard newspaper, has been named as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

Stroud and his employer will be recognized at the noon meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Batesville on August 8, at the First Baptist Church Annex.

"Mr. Stroud has worked for this employer for the past 32 years, which is exemplary in my opinion," said Tucker.

"In June of 2013, Mr. Stroud authored an impressive newspaper article for the Batesville Daily Guard," said Tucker. The article told his personal story about his vision problems and provided in-depth information about DSB services. Essentially, his vision struggle reached its height when he was taking notes for a news article and couldn't see well enough to realize his pen had run out of ink.

“His visual impairments were hindering him from performing his job. His blurred vision made it very difficult to read the large amount of small print information that was required of him on a daily basis for his job” Tucker said. “He was having such extreme difficulty that DSB loaned him a portable CCTV and a magnifier to use until we could order him some adaptive equipment.”

Stroud said he was very appreciative of DSB services, which helped him stay employed and paid for his eye surgeries and medical treatments.

Apart from medical issues, he said the most challenging thing was not being able to drive and having to walk everywhere, including to work and the grocery store. It gave him an appreciation of the fact that transportation is a major problem for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Stroud graduated from Arkansas Tech University with degrees in both English and Journalism. However, his first job after graduation was bricklaying. His employer was building new subdivisions in Russellville and Stroud said he was quickly making more money than he could at entry level in his degree field – and he and his wife didn’t have to relocate.

After 10 years in masonry, he decided to earn his journeyman’s union card with Bricklayers Local #1 out of Batesville. He remembered helping rebuild the city of Cabot after a large tornado. “People in a big bank downtown ran and got into the vault just before shards of glass started hitting them. We reconstructed that whole bank.” He also recalled rebuilding a large church that was damaged. Stroud still finds satisfaction working as a bricklayer and laying foundations, although he admits, “It’s a very odd combination (with his journalism career).” Stroud also researches and writes about early Norse (Viking) exploration.

Stroud is a charter member of the Foothills Cowboy Church. He and his wife Wanda have a 34-year-old son Luke, better known locally as the musician Rockin’ Luke for his piano-playing style. Stroud is proud of his son and enjoys going to his performances.

This is the seventh year that DSB has given the COY awards to recognize successful individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired and have served their communities and become role models for others. The DSB Board will select an overall state winner at the end of the year.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB’s programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.

(Photos available upon request)