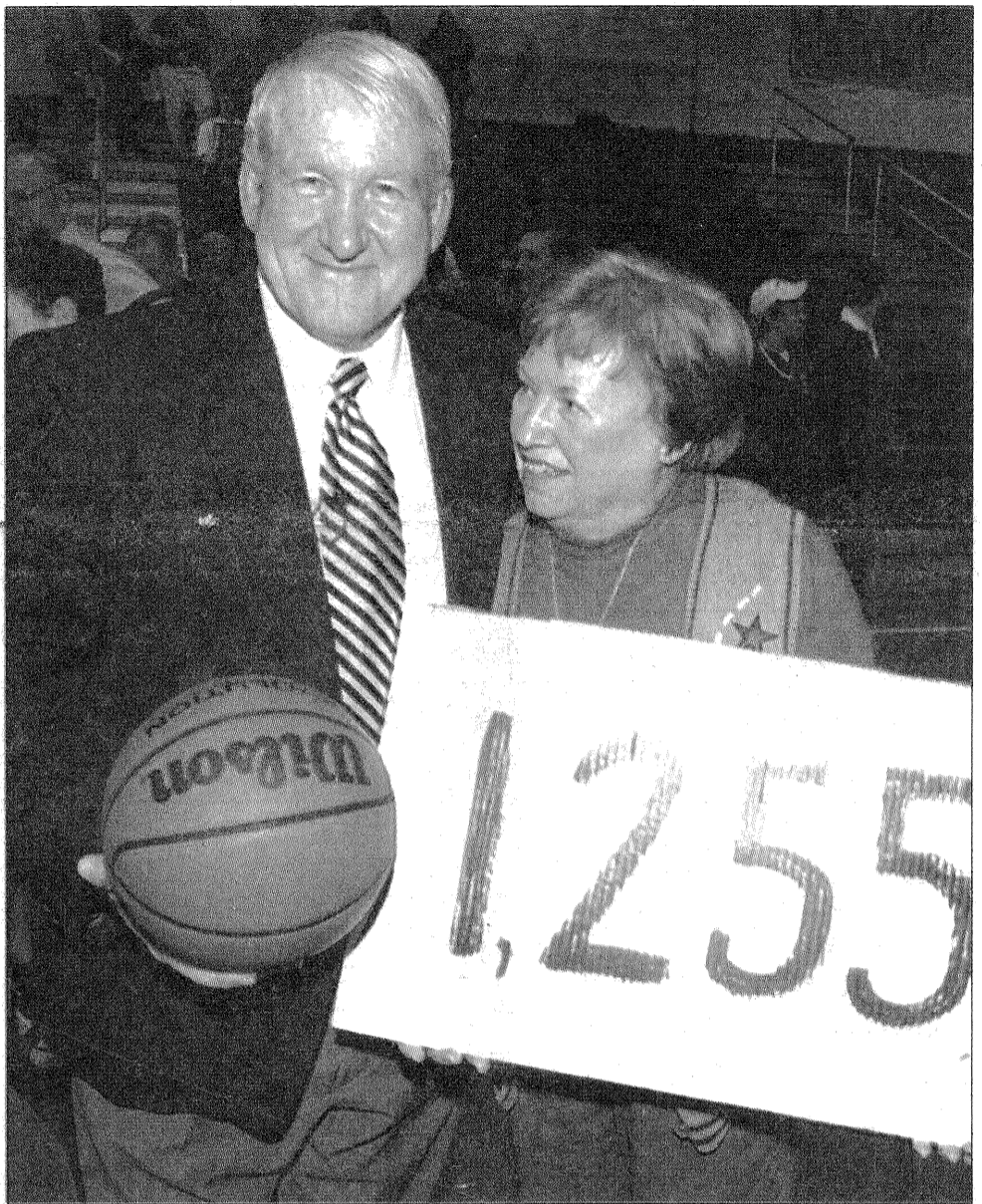


Bradley clinches record

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Newton head coach Ron Bradley celebrates his record-breaking 1,255th career victory with his wife, Jan. Bradley passed D.B. Carroll for the top spot on the state's all-time wins list with a 23-point victory at Eastside Friday night.

Ron Manson/The Covington News

Brian Knapp
Sports editor

Ron Bradley is alone at the top.

Bradley recorded his 1,255th victory Friday night as the sixth-ranked Newton boys' basketball team annihilated Eastside 66-43 at Eastside High School, the Newton coach passing the late D.B. Carroll as Georgia's all-

time career wins leader. A record that had lain in state for some 37 years is now buried forever in the vast graveyard that is history.

"I think it's special, but I wanted to get it out of the way for this team," Bradley said. "We're close to having a real good season."

The historic win improves the Rams to 17-6 (7-1 subregion)

and puts them in position to clinch the south subregion championship outright when they collide with Salem at 7:30 p.m. tonight at Newton High School.

Still, post-game talk surrounded the number 1,255. Even the Newton players, most of whom had never heard of their

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Bradley celebrates: Record breaking

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legendary coach before he was rehired in May 2001, realized they were a part of something with special significance.

This is the team that put his name above all others.

"It's a privilege to be apart of this," said junior point guard Justin Herring, who had five assists in the victory. "We follow him on and off the court. And for it to happen here at Eastside makes it 10 times sweeter."

Antwone Smith, who was whistled for three fouls inside

the first five minutes of the game but still struck for 11 points, also stepped aside to talk candidly about his coach.

"He's the best," Smith said flatly. "He cares about his players, and he's always inspiring us to do our best. This means a lot to us."

Said Legale Floyd, who sank five three-pointers and scored a game-high 18 points in the win, "It feels good to play for a coach who has won so many games and to know you were a part of what he's done."

Bradley won 130 of his first 146 games as a head coach after debuting with Newton in 1958. He has won games in six

separate decades, with three state championships and 16 region titles to his credit. He has posted a career record (combined boys and girls) of 1,255-333, an astounding 922 games above the .500 mark.

Interestingly, he won all eight of his head-to-head meetings with Carroll, the great Pickens County head coach whose record had stood since 1966. Carroll died on Dec. 2, 1966.

"He knew me well enough to know that we might have a chance at it," Bradley said. "He loved his game and worked hard at it. He was an outstanding coach; there's no question about that."