

THE JOY IS IN THE JOURNEY

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Today I was blessed with the wonderful opportunity to go on a journey. As the Chaplain at Riverview HealthCARE and a basketball fan, I was asked to help escort an Elder, Mr. Jones, from Prestonsburg to RUPP Arena in Lexington, KY to attend the boys Sweet 16 High School Basketball Tournament. When March rolls around, for Mr. Jones, basketball is life. Before we left Prestonsburg that day, I thought I was going on an ordinary journey to Lexington, but as the day went on I soon realized that this was not the case at all. You see, this was bigger than a journey to Lexington and this was more than a journey that began at Prestonsburg that day...this was a journey that began 53 years ago. For the past 52 years of his life Mr. Jones had never missed a Sweet 16 at RUPP and this was a part of his life.

When we arrived at RUPP Arena it was clear that this was more than just a tradition to Mr. Jones. This was the way it was supposed to be. Before he even got off the bus, people began recognizing him. "There's Mr. Jones...," one man about his same age said as he approached him and began talking. As we made our way into the arena we were stop by two men much younger than Mr. Jones, two men who had obviously had their lives impacted greatly by this man. "Look, it's him! I'm so glad to see you here" one of the men said." He then looked at us and stated, "This man took care of us boys when we played ball. That's precious cargo you've got there." He then turned to his friend that was following behind," Look who it is, it's Mr. Jones!" Their excitement and gratitude toward seeing this precious Elder caused chills to run all over me...this was no ordinary journey. As we then made our way toward our seats we heard someone else yell out, "I knew you'd be here. If I didn't see you here I'd just go back home."

These types of encounters continued as the day went on and I realized more and more that this really wasn't about basketball as much as it was about a way of life. A life that was still growing and yearning for a simple pleasure and the opportunity to do something meaningful. I feel so overwhelmed with appreciation that I get to be a part of a community like Riverview. When people come here to LIVE, it's not about what they used to be, but what they are. Life doesn't stop when they become an Elder here, life continues because of opportunities like this. You see, it's not that Mr. Jones used to be a basketball fan and he used to always attend the Sweet 16... but, he IS and he DOES! Mr. Jones attended his 53rd straight Boys Sweet 16 Basketball Tournament and all was well at RUPP Arena...this was how it's supposed to be. By the

time we got back to Prestonsburg, I felt like I had been on journey unlike any other I had ever been on. Not just a journey to a basketball game, but a journey of a life...a life that continues. When March rolls around, for Mr. Jones, basketball is life. This day, that life continued and that journey continued...and oh what joy that journey was!