

By SAM HATCHER

We were sorry to read in *The Lebanon Democrat* this week that J.B. Leftwich is foregoing his regular column. His contributions to *The Democrat* have been invaluable over the past several decades as he has shared personal observations, insights and humorous recollections with readers.

It was Col. Leftwich, his title during a lengthy career in education at Castle Heights Military Academy, who first introduced me to journalism. To this day I and I am sure many other former Heights cadets cannot call him J.B. as do many of his peers and friends, but refer to him still as Colonel.

He is responsible for and has influenced the successful careers of a number of journalists. Some of these practiced their talents locally, others in nearby Nashville at either *The Tennessean* or the former *Nashville Banner* and many won distinguish awards for reporting and editing in cities far away from the local area.

Col. Leftwich's corps of students includes Pulitzer winners, nationally acclaimed editors, photographers, and even some who have made careers in journalism on the business side. One former student at Castle Heights, at least for a summer curriculum, went on to become a reporter for *The Tennessean* and eventually found his way into politics being elected first to Congress, then the U.S. Senate and finally serving as Vice President of the United States.

While many of us here see him as a columnist of significant measure, it is equally important to recognize the broad influence he has had on the field of journalism through his teachings and inspiration while still engaged at Castle Heights.

We're assured that Col. Leftwich's columns will continue but perhaps not at the frequency as they have in the past. He's going to be writing but just not on a regular basis.

The far-reaching impact of Col. Leftwich

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We have certainly been entertained and enlightened by his writing and look forward to reading his future columns.

But today we want to just say “thanks” for all you have done for the field of journalism beyond your personal column.