Longtime mayor, devoted public servant dies

Southport icon Holden is remembered

By Renee Spencer
Staff Writer

Like the Whittles Beach at Waterfront Park, Norman Holden was a Southport icon.

During his lifetime he wore many hats, including teacher, probation officer, Southport alderman and mayor.

Holden, 90, died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound last Wednesday.

The community gathered last Friday for his funeral, which was remembered as a loving husband, caring father and wonderful, good neighbor and a great friend.

Pastor Chuck Drew, who also serves as the city’s fire chief, led the service. He recalled that he was telling someone about Holden on the phone, and they asked who he was. Drew responded by noting that if they didn’t know Holden, they “must” not be from Southport.

Former North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley was one of Holden’s longtime friends. Easley came to Brunswick County right after graduating from law school in 1976. He didn’t know anyone, and he ended up in a small place on Oak Island to rent.

“I was so broke I couldn’t pay rent,” Easley recalled. “Norman had a place there, and he offered to take Easley sailing, and the two formed a friendship that extended far beyond the courtroom.”

“Boy, I got hooked on that,” Easley said. “Every damn time we got out, my clothes would be on the saltwater.”

Easley had accepted a position as an assistant district attorney in Brunswick County.

“From the first day I went into court, he was the production officer there,” Easley said.

Holden also offered Easley little tidbits of information that proved useful in court.

“For instance, (he said) juror number three was the defendant’s cousin, he’s just not telling you,” Easley recalled with a chuckle. “He knew all of it.”

Within the first week Holden offered to take Easley sailing, and the two formed a friendship that extended far beyond the courtroom.

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He admits that he was “green” during his lifetime. He credits Holden for helping to “nurture” him.

Norman Holden, on the first day he went into court, he was the production officer there,” Easley said.

Holden is survived by his wife, Phyllis; two daughters, Gena Ayala-Lopez and Kathy Ayala-Lopez since June 27, 2013. Both Fullwood and Tarokic say Ayala-Lopez had been working with Helen Fullwood, an immigration attorney, immediately after his arrest, he was released on bond.

While many have celebrated the Fourth by hosting cookouts, there were some people that didn’t want to talk about their holiday plans.

“I know that he dealt with an alcoholic father who was not a good father,” she said. “I try not to pry,” she said.

Mike Easley was one of Holden’s closest friends.

“Norman, on the first day we met, I just felt like he was a good person,” she said. “I could tell he didn’t like to talk about the past, and I try not to pry,” she said.

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Southport resident, attorney search for detainee

Local ICE arrest raises questions

By Renee Spencer
Staff Writer

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Ayala-Lopez was arrested. Be- 

In with Fullwood and her par-

ty. The United States Air Force, saw 
ed like many other days—with 

probation officer saying that he 

received a call from Alaya-Lopez’s 

man who was standing there. 

window down and greeted the 

and take him to the office. Full-

wood explained. 

so.’ I've been keeping up with 

what I was hearing.” 

was taken into custody. 

was an agent with ICE, and Aya-

ICL incarceration in Brunswick 

County.

Mr. Ayala-Lopez is subject to a 

final order of removal issued in June, 2016. Cen wrote in an 

article, “He also was convicted 

again in May. Mr. Ayala-Lopez remains in ICE custody pending 

execution of his removal order,” 

and Tarokic contests ICE’s 

claims. 

ICE is right, and I would 

challenge them to prove that ac-

cussion,” Tarokic said. “TheChris-

tson’s case, he had a criminal con-

viction that he had responded and 

itself banned. Melina’s dad is a naturalized 

American. 

Pier 70, she has no contact with 

her. They have also not been able to locate Ayala-Lopez in the 

ICE detention facility.

Tarokic has now lost a lawsuit 

against the U.S. Department of 

Homeland Security.

They are delaying my client and 

try to deport him when they learn 

that he has been granted political asylum. He has had one low-level DWI con-

viction in his life.”

has had one low-level DWI con-

viction in his life. 

cause of that not being approved, 

out a green card, he can’t apply 

be eligible for a green card, but 

we would be able to apply again. 

America.

Arianne Ayala-Lopez, right, is the companion and best friend of Southport resident and U.S. veteran Leon Fullwood.

Christian Ayala-Lopez, left, is the companion and best friend of Southport resident and U.S. veteran Leon Fullwood.

Continued from page 14A

 Berkman, who is currently 

rented to him the few times he 

has been in town. 

should be equally by Lanier and the 

town of Southport. He needed to 

speak to Lanier for $3,000, due to start-

costs. Your two profit would be 

$5,000, increasing annually to his 

full cost of $6,200.

I think if we could do this process, we could come to some numbers 

for sure.”’”’”

Jeff Wax said and looked at the idea of one created revenue and subtract the 

from fixing the pier, but then turned the result back into a 

or pier proposals, in which 

Council members acknowledged that a public parking plan would need 

to involve restrictions on a time or right-of-way parking, currently 

allowed for up to 72 hours, but took no action on that concept.

Tarokic said he hoped the transportation and 

to be arranged on the basis of 

Council also reviewed performance standards and rules for the sign 

under the draft universal development ordinance.

Frazzled to catch a noogie 

women who jumped out of plane to come to a 

Brank said he like to see a three-foot exception for each side of 

area as retail space, which would likely prove more profitable and 

is already home. Mexico isn’t. This 

really loved here,” she said. “This 

lives since he came to Southport. 

In the meantime, Fullwood is 

looking at the idea as one that 

created revenue and reduced the burden 

in Oak Island, with Fullwood and her par-

night.

Tarokic contests ICE’s 

Homeland Security.

Oak Island: council divided over pier operation

Continued from page 14A

Lanier expected to generate $16,000 a year for the 

town, with the budget allowing for up to 72 hours, but taking no action on that 

concept.

Some members said they favored charging 

non-residents a dollar or two to walk on the pier. The approximate cost was 

also be the cost of their pier permits, but Berkman and he did not want to 

see the town run a tax. Council members also expressed their concern about 

lifting the parking restrictions, and Council member Judy 

said the pier would be open 

to the public.

Frazzled said he supported the transportation and 

spearhead the project. He also told council members to consider 

rescinding on Kure Beach Drive.

Other business

In other business Friday, council asked for ATRT to provide a board 

for repairs to the right-of-way affected by the company’s upgrades to 

underground cables.

Council members asked staff to review proposed miles of 

encroachments in street rights-of-way. Staff proposed not allowing 

landscaping or structures within 10 feet of the pavement. Some members of 

council said they were more comfortable with a seven-foot rule. 

Wax said he like to see a three-foot exception for each side of 

drive, where plantings would likely be limited to a height of four feet.

The new proposal is expected to come before council August 5.

Council also reviewed performance standards and rules for the sign 

under the draft universal development ordinance.

Counsel member Charlie Brank said he is concerned that the pier 

pier to an independent operator.

Carolina. 

While Fullwood  and Tarokic 

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Ayala-Lopez in the U.S., they say 

it will require massive, Full- 

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Details are at https://

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Attorney calls deportation ‘obstruction of due process’

By Renee Spencer
Shell Webster

Immigration lawyer Helen Tarokic is calling a Southport man’s deportation “a total obstruction of due process.”

Christian Ayala-Lopez was deported to Mexico on July 2—the same day before a hearing was scheduled.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents took Ayala-Lopez into custody at the passenger office in Southport on June 26. He was on probation after being found guilty of driving while impaired in May. The charge was from August, 2017.

Ayala-Lopez is upset at the I-240, the order to proceed.” He said. “We cannot see our motion. They were aware of his PIP appeal...”

Cox said. “The courts along with the appeal...”

He was already in Mexico—again, he said. “But unfortunately the people...”

They were aware of his PIP appeal. “ICE was aware of our motion...”

They were aware of his PIP appeal. “We are going to verify if Ayala-Lopez...”

Cox stated he did not provide a response. “In that e-mail, Cox stated he...”

Tarokic spoke to her client the day he was deported. “I understood him to mean...”

Fullwood wired him money the night he was deported. “Christian was dropped just...”

Christian is now in Mexico again, Tarokic said. “If we win, we may eventually...”

Christian Ayala-Lopez, right, served on the companion and host best of the Southport resident Christian Ayala-Lopez and U.S. veteran Louis Fullwood before he was detained and deported by ICE.
Deported resident makes a hometown connection

By Renee Spencer
Staff Writer

When Christian Ayala-Lopez was deported to Mexico last month, he found himself alone in a country he barely knew, after being dropped in Matamoros, Tamaulipas—one of the country’s most dangerous areas—on July 2. Ayala-Lopez had to rely on the kindness of people he met in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers just days—or hours—before he arrived. A few days later, he would connect with Boiling Springs Lakes native Tyler Kopp, who is spending the summer in Mexico City volunteering with the organization Otros Dreamas en Austin (ODA).

“It’s just an amazing experience,” Ayala-Lopez said.

“Dream summer” helping others

ODA helps returnees obtain government identification cards and frail housing, work and other essentials. “It also acts as a community for those people to find more comfortable and sup- ported environments,” Kopp added.

Kopp, who graduated from South Brunswick High School in 2016, will begin his junior year at Duke University this fall.

Photo courtesy Boiling Springs Lakes & Tyler Kopp; deported Christian Ayala-Lopez visits a Mexico City juice bar.

‘Being a more compassionate people doesn’t make the U.S. a lawless nation. It does not abolish our border. It does not make us “weak on crime.” It makes us humane.”

Tyler Kopp

Photo by Morgan Harper

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Deported: his narrative sounds like a horror story, but it’s not uncommon

Continued from page 1A

Hearing these stories (of re- entry) makes me wonder why we are allowing deportees to cross the border in the middle of the night. It’s more dangerous to cross at that time, and based on agents’ commands to “Run!” they know this.

Deportees face horrors, obstacles upon re-entry

After returning to Mexico, a deportee will face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. "These jobs are often precarious," Kopp said. "They require long shifts, few to no breaks, and poor work conditions. Most people don’t spend all day in a dimly lit room, answering calls from English-speaking people." Food is also an issue. "In the days before I arrived, I* was always hungry," Ayala-Lopez said. "I had to walk miles to get food. I* was always hungry." After returning to Mexico, a deportee will face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. "These jobs are often precarious," Kopp said. "They require long shifts, few to no breaks, and poor work conditions. Most people don’t spend all day in a dimly lit room, answering calls from English-speaking people." Food is also an issue. "In the days before I arrived, I* was always hungry," Ayala-Lopez said. "I had to walk miles to get food. I* was always hungry." After returning to Mexico, a deportee will face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. "These jobs are often precarious," Kopp said. "They require long shifts, few to no breaks, and poor work conditions. Most people don’t spend all day in a dimly lit room, answering calls from English-speaking people." Food is also an issue. "In the days before I arrived, I* was always hungry," Ayala-Lopez said. "I had to walk miles to get food. I* was always hungry." After returning to Mexico, a deportee will face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. "These jobs are often precarious," Kopp said. "They require long shifts, few to no breaks, and poor work conditions. Most people don’t spend all day in a dimly lit room, answering calls from English-speaking people." Food is also an issue. "In the days before I arrived, I* was always hungry," Ayala-Lopez said. "I had to walk miles to get food. I* was always hungry."
**Appeal now before immigration board**

By Renée Spencer

Christian Ayala-Lopez had been attempting to gain legal status for more than five years when federal immigration officials took him into custody.

He was released after being held at the federal facility in Southport on June 20. It was on probation after being in the United States illegally for 11 years. His immigration attorney Helen Tarteke filed a bond that was posted.

But Ayala-Lopez was moved from the ICE detention facility in Georgia, where he had been held since his arrest. Tarteke claims from that time she was able to secure a bond. She responded by filing a suit of habeas corpus against the Southport detention center, which requires that a person under arrest be brought before a judge or into court. Ayala-Lopez had not been brought to court.

He was deported on July 2—days before the scheduled release. Tarteke called the move "a total obstruction of the process."

In addition to the immigration judge, Ayala- Lopez’s immigration case was also pending with the Board of Immigration Appeals. It was transferred to New York City.

In May, Ayala-Lopez had a "parole in place" case status from ICE, which would give him permission to remain in the U.S. But he was deported despite the ongoing court battle. According to ICE spokesperson Bryan Cox, his July 2 deportation order was to a corrected removal order.

But Tarteke said the process is wrong.

Prior to his deportation, the 2016 order for Ayala-Lopez’s removal was declared defective by the Supreme Court’s Pereira v. Sessions ruling.

As Ayala-Lopez attempts to settle into a life—a country—he hardly remembers—his friends and family in the U.S. held out hope that the Board of Immigration Appeals would grant him a stay of his deportation.

A Golf Fiddle account has been established in the hopes of delaying the mounting legal costs. Donations may be made at https://www.gofundme.com/a special-enslaved-for-christian.

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**Greenway: budget for project is $17-million**

Brunswick County has many natural resources and is set to create “a comprehensive network of trails” with the Brunswick County Greenway Trail. To mitigate the muddle of off-road and multi-use pathways, the county is working on a greenway project to be completed within five years.

Brunswick County Commissioner commissioned a plan last June for the greenway that would cost about $17 million, and said it would eventually cover 62 miles through the county. The Brunswick Forest Plan of Oak Island, Boiling Spring Lakes and St. James in an area.

"The trail, as planned, will traverse undeveloped pineyards, wetlands, conservation lands, a number of natural areas, edges, neighborhoods, and other special places," said County Commissioner George B. High. "The plan will ensure access to people of all levels of mobility through the creation of greenway pathways throughout the county."

This project will also benefit the county and public development in the area.Individually, these are each outstanding mili-
ary resource for the county and local rural community, but together they will deliver a great benefit to the Brunswick County popula-
tion for years to come."

The grant applications include almost $500,000 in support from private citizens, local businesses, federal, state and local government, and the Brunswick County Commis-
sioner. The Brunswick County Commissioner is excited to be a part of this collaborative effort in the area. Individually, these are each outstanding mili-
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tion for years to come."

Citizens in the Southport fire depart-
ment voiced their support for the Brunswick County Greenway Plan. They embraced the idea of the Greenway Trail and will continue to support the project and will continue to support the project.

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**Oak Island: new rates, small break**

Oak Island: new rates, small break

Smaller businesses, businesses with no breaks, and public utilities were still faced with a moratorium on the rise in tax rates, although a small break was given.

The new monthly base rate and fee range from $599.90 to $6,399.90. The town has also lowered the rates for the amount of water a month will allow owners to use. The previous fee of $1.00 per 1000 gallons of water a month is now $0.85.

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