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# Lt. Col. James "Ashley" Mills promoted to Colonel

Special to Pelahatchie News

Col. James "Ashley" Mills was born in Richton, Mississippi, in 1979. He enlisted on his seventeenth birthday in Det. 1/Co B/890th Engineer Battalion in 1996 and attended Basic Training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, during the summer that year.

As a Private, he returned from Basic Training and graduated from Richton High School in 1997 before returning to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, in order to complete Advanced Individual Training (AIT) as an Interior Electrician (51R). After AIT, he attended Mississippi State University (MSU), where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Management and a Commission as a Second Lieutenant through the MSU ROTC Department in December of 2000. 2LT Mills then completed Military Intelligence Officer's Basic Course at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.



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Col. James "Ashley" Mills (left) stands as Col. Mills' wife, Tammy Mills (center), and their daughter, Haley Mills (right), attach shoulder boards bearing his new rank of colonel during a promotion ceremony on May 14, 2022.

After MIOBC, 2LT Mills began his commissioned military career in the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) with the 31st ROC in Jackson. He also began his full-time technician career as the Program Analyst for the State Army Aviation Officer. 1LT Mills was deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom II in 2004 with the 185 Aviation Group. After the deployment, he attended Initial Entry Rotary Wing training at Ft. Rucker, Alabama, where he was awarded his Aviator Wings in January of 2006.

After flight school, Cpt. Mills assumed command of HHC/1-185 Avn. Regt. and later A/1-185 Avn. Regt. Cpt. Mills deployed A/1-185 Avn. Regt. to Kosovo in 2007-08. Upon return, he was transferred to the 184 Expeditionary Sustainment Command in Hattiesburg, where he picked up the rank of Major and deployed to Afghanistan in

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# New Pelahatchie High School principal a familiar face

Special to Pelahatchie News

As one principal exits Pelahatchie High School, a new principal must take their place. For many students, faculty and staff, the new principal is one that has a familiar face.

Voncille Anderson is a 27-year educator who has 21 collective years at Pelahatchie High School alone. She will be joining Pelahatchie once again as the incoming high school principal beginning this fall.

As an educational leader, Anderson has been a consultant for the Mississippi Writing/Thinking Institute at Mississippi State University, and she has been involved in training teachers across the state in best practice for instruction in English and other content areas. She has also served as an adjunct professor

for Hinds Community College at the Rankin Campus.

Throughout her career, Anderson has received several honors and awards.

**"I believe strongly in serving and mentoring children and helping develop teachers,"**  
—Voncille Anderson

In 2002 she achieved National Board Teacher Certification. She has also been named Pelahatchie High School's Teacher of the Year, Star Teacher, Metro Jackson Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Teacher, Hinds Community College Star Teacher and Rankin County School District's (RCSD) Secondary Administrator



Special to Pelahatchie News

Voncille Anderson, Pelahatchie High School Principal

of the Month. And this year, Anderson was selected as RCSD's Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year.

"I believe strongly in serving and mentoring children and helping develop teachers," said Anderson.

When Anderson left Pelahatchie High School, the upcoming seniors were transitioning from the seventh grade to the eighth grade. Anderson said the following regarding the seniors, "Being able to lead them into their senior year brings a true feeling of excitement and pride to the start of my journey as head principal of PHS. I feel a strong connection not only to the graduating class of 2023, but also Pelahatchie as a whole."

Anderson is married to Lt. Col. (retired) John Anderson. They currently reside in Brandon. They have two children, Mikaela and Wesley.



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