

## Central Fauquier Sports Complex dedicated Sept. 12



Retired parks and recreation Director Larry Miller.



Morgan Rodgers Photo/Duke Athletics

Her family dedicated the artificial turf field to the memory of Morgan D. Rodgers, who played lacrosse at Duke University.

It's wonderful to be here today to see all our friends and neighbors. And this (complex) is a dream come true. I'm really, really thankful for what we got here.

— Carl B. Bailey

By **Don Del Rosso**

*Staff Journalist*

Under a rainy Saturday morning sky, about 160 people gathered to help dedicate the Central Fauquier Sports Complex just southeast of Warrenton.

The 40-minute ceremony specifically honored a long-time local baseball advocate, a former Fauquier County Parks and Recreation Department director and an accomplished local student-athlete who died last year.

Opened last month, the **74-acre county complex** at Meetze and Old Auburn roads features:

- Five diamonds for baseball, youth baseball and softball named after Carl A. Bailey, a staunch baseball supporter and 30-year member the county parks and recreation board.
- An asphalt trail named for Larry Miller, who retired in 2019 after almost 35 years as director of the county parks and recreation department. The complex also includes a horse trail.
- Six rectangular multipurpose fields, including an artificial turf one. Fauquier's first "public" turf field carries the name of **Morgan D. Rodgers**, a lacrosse player at Kettle Run High School and Duke University who died last year at age 22.

Mr. Bailey in 1968 recognized the need bring organized youth baseball to Fauquier.

A coach for 30 years, he headed Fauquier Youth Baseball from 1975 to 1988 and obtained a land donation from Alice Jane Childs for the construction of a baseball field named after the former Fauquier County Commissioner of

Revenue.

Mr. Bailey helped construct the first baseball field at H.M. Pearson Elementary School near Catlett.

He also helped create the Catlett-Calverton-Casanova youth baseball league, which supported eight baseball and two softball teams.

Representing Cedar Run District, Mr. Bailey has served on the parks and recreation board since 1990.

“It’s wonderful to be here today to see all our friends and neighbors,” he told the audience. “And this (complex) is a dream come true. I’m really, really thankful for what we got here.”

He added: “I’m proud of our parks and recreation department and Larry Miller. God love him. He worked for years and years to get this done.”

Discussions about a central sports complex started more than two decades ago.

During Mr. Miller’s three decade-plus career as parks department director, the agency created 21 trails, including more than nine miles of paved trails, four miles of nature trails and two miles of “sharrows,” or shared highway lane markings for cyclists.

“It’s been an honor and pleasure to work with all of these individuals that are here today,” said Mr. Miller, who in 2013 received the American Trails Advocacy Award. “I’ve become even more appreciative of trails over the past year and their value to a community.”

Trails make and keep people healthy, protect the environment and stimulate local economies, he added.

Trails also “bring people together and communities together, which is sorely needed at this current moment in time,” Mr. Miller said. “And I’m sure this

trail is going to yield those benefits to our community.”

The supervisors last year awarded the complex’s construction contract to **S.W. Rodgers Co.** of Gainesville.

President and CEO Kurt Rodgers, whose family lives in Fauquier, dedicated the turf field in memory of his daughter, Morgan, whom he called “one of the greatest athletes to come from this county.”

Her death — “a life-changing event” — fueled the family’s “desire to help facilitate the dreams and aspirations for future athletes for years to come,” Mr. Rodgers said.

“As a **Division I athlete** (at Duke), she epitomized tenacity, hard work and strength,” he said of Morgan. “One of her many dreams was to enhance the level of all sports within Fauquier County.”

Born and raised in Fauquier, Morgan excelled at lacrosse, field hockey and soccer at Highland and Kettle Run High schools.

Twice named a high school All-American in lacrosse, she played the sport for Duke University’s nationally ranked women’s team.

When completed, the complex will cost about \$17.6 million, according to Fauquier County Parks and Recreation Department Director Gary Rzepecki.

So far, the complex has cost \$13.2 million, according to county government officials. But it will take about \$4.4 million more to complete the project as designed, the parks department director said.

Improvements to finish the complex include the installation of additional water and sewer lines, a septic and drainfield system, two permanent restroom structures, a water tower to serve the restrooms, an irrigation well and field irrigation system, lighting for three fields and parking areas.

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