

Home Articles

COMMENTS

SHARE

EMAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS

ENLARGE TEXT

Recommend 0

Tweet 1

Three months after shooting, high school student's death unsolved



Joyce Hankins, mother of South Brunswick High School student and football player Marcus Hankins II, who was killed in a shooting in April, has a memorial to her son on display in the family's Southport home.

Photo by Paul Stephen

Buy Photo

By Powell Latimer & Brian Freskos
 Powell.Latimer@StarNewsOnline.com;
 Brian.Freskos@StarNewsOnline.com

Published: Friday, July 22, 2011 at 9:46 p.m.
 Last Modified: Friday, July 22, 2011 at 9:46 p.m.

Editor's note: This is the first installment in a two-part series about the life and sudden death of high school student Marcus Hankins.

There are no last names in The Bottom.

A collection of sandy streets and small, one-story houses on Southport's west side, The Bottom is more of an extended family than a community. Most residents are known only by nicknames, so it was only natural that Marcus Hankins would get his own.

As a young child, Marcus liked to play superhero. He leapt from chairs and sofas in his grandparents' house in The Bottom. His grandfather started calling him Marcman.

The potential that name implies was on its way to reality.

Marcus grew into a star running back for South Brunswick High School. He rushed for more than 2,000 yards in his senior season and was headed to North Carolina A&T State University. But the 18-year-old struggled to overcome a troubled past.

On April 16, a party in Bolivia turned into a shoot-out that killed

LIGHT BULB & BALLAST HEADQUARTERS

WITH OUR LARGE INVENTORY WE EITHER HAVE IT INSTOCK OR CAN ORDER ALL OF YOUR LIGHT BULBS AND BALLAST NEEDS.

IF YOUR HOUSE, BUSINESS OR FACTORY NEEDS LIGHT BULBS OR BALLAST ONLY CALL THE B.E.S.T

B BUTLER'S
E ELECTRIC
S SUPPLY



CLICK HERE >>

MOST READ MOST EMAILED MOST RECENT

- Movie Review - 'Magic Mike' leaves audiences giggling in seats
- Movie review - 'Ted' is a bear of politically incorrectness
- Temperatures begin to rise
- New Hanover News & Notes - Goodmon Fellow; Merit scholarship; sabbatical
- Comic book store to celebrate The Walking Dead series

Related Video



Related Links

Hankins friend pleads guilty to riot charge

State offers \$5,000 reward in teen's shooting death

Killed teen athlete's mom asks for witnesses to speak up

South Brunswick football star memorialized at funeral

Third suspect pleads to inciting riot charge in Hankins killing

More Videos by Tiboola



Marcus Hankins



Motorcycle Gang Busted



High School Basketball

PHOTOS YOUR PHOTOS



Snakes at Halyburton



Banshee filming



Pender Crime Report 6.25.12



'Magic Mike' film premiere



Photos Of The Day 6.26.12



US Baseball National Team

bank happy.

Choose a mortgage partner you'll feel at home with

[HIGH SCHOOL MOODS](#)
Weekly Week 6 - ...



[Weighted Pupil Funding: Californi...](#)
(BlogTalkRadio)



[Hanging at Hanuman - Tomm...](#)
(BlogTalkRadio)



[Paralyzed Student Fulfills Amazing Dr...](#)
(CafeMom)

Marcus. His death left a family devastated and a community reeling as they try to understand the loss.

Marcus' life, as told through dozens of interviews with family, friends, coaches and teachers, reveals a complicated young man capable of both exceeding kindness and wrathful pride. But more than anything, it shows a kid struggling to deal with the hurt of losing his father.

"A kid full of pain"

Marcus Lyndon Hankins Sr. is buried in Southport's Northwood Cemetery, under a flat bronze headstone covered with coins.

Marcus visited his father's grave site often, each time leaving a piece of change for good luck. Now, he rests beside his father in a grave covered with flowers, shaded by a boxwood bush.

The death of his father in 1997 after a four-year battle with Leukemia had a profound effect on Marcus's life.

In the aftermath of losing her husband, Joyce Hankins turned to drugs. A brief stint on the street was followed by six months in rehab. In Joyce's absence, Marcus lived with his grandparents in Southport for more than a year.

Once clean, Joyce returned to Southport in 1999. Guilt-ridden for abandoning her son, she tried to both make up for the loss of his father and atone for her own transgressions.

She filled Marcus' room with presents ~~a~~Christmas, rented out a penthouse hotel room for his junior prom after party and saved up for a year to buy him his first car.

"I spoiled the hell out of him," she said from the couch of her home on Burrington Avenue, surrounded by photos of her son.

But losing his father had its effect on Marcus, who was only 3 when his father died and 5 when his mother returned. From an early age, he showed a hot temper, and his family put him into anger management therapy.

"Whenever we really tried to get to the bottom of it, it always came back to his dad being gone," Joyce said.

Marcus was never shy about fighting, and discipline problems made school a rocky road.

In both his freshman and sophomore years of high school, those problems landed Marcus at Brunswick County Academy, the county's alternative school.

"He said he couldn't talk about it to anyone, because it hurt so bad," said Eva Holmes, Marcus' grandmother. "He was a kid that was full of pain. He was a kid trying to find out how he would deal with life."

On the field

Marcus played Pop Warner as a young child, then football at South Brunswick middle and high schools.

A cornerback for South Brunswick his junior season, Hankins won



[EVENTS CALENDAR](#) [MORE EVENTS](#) [SUBMIT EVENT](#)

28 THU 29 FRI 30 SAT 1 SUN 2 MON

Enter event type or date

FIND LOCAL BUSINESSES

Keyword(s):
Location:

POPULAR SEARCHES

Powered by LOCAL.COM

the running back job for his senior year. He hit the local football scene like a hurricane, racking up 2,582 yards from scrimmage and 32 touchdowns. South Brunswick won 12 games and advanced to the third round of the state 3A playoffs.

Each fall when he had football, Marcus' anger faded. In its place stood the likeable and charismatic young man most of his friends and teachers describe.

"You could get frustrated with him, but it was hard not to like the kid," said John Walls, Marcus' English teacher for three years at South Brunswick. "I think that helped him out in the long run."

He also made a positive impression throughout the Brunswick County School system. Board of Education members knew his name. BCA principal Sandra Robinson spoke at his funeral.

"He had a whole lot of educators in his corner," said Brunswick County Schools community engagement director Jessica Swencki. "From the administration at South to the administration at BCA, coaches and his family."

He had the same effect on his peers. Children asked for his autograph, and there were always friends of Marcus on the front lawn of the Hankins' home. He knew he was an awful dancer, but loved to get parties started by jumping onto the dance floor. He often joked around, and was always late to class, lingering in the hallways trying to get a pretty girl to smile.

And while his dance moves were lacking, Marcus made his way across a football field with natural grace. He would cut at improbable angles, spin out of tackles and sprint to the end zone.

South Brunswick's 2010 team was built on hard hits and loyalty. The practices only lasted 90 minutes because the players hit each other too hard. And when a fight broke out on the field during a playoff game against Havelock, the entire team rushed the field – Marcus included.

Marcus embraced the brotherhood of the South Brunswick football team, and became a central part of it.

During one game at West Brunswick last fall, Marcus and wide receiver Cam Scott were the last two players in the locker room.

Marcus and Scott both grew up in The Bottom, living across the street from one another on Burrington Avenue and spending their childhood playing together.

While the two friends laced up their cleats, Marcus looked up.

"If I don't make it, you gotta make it," he said.

So close

Each fall, Marcus could see a future: maybe college, maybe the Air Force, maybe an eventual return to South Brunswick to coach and teach.

But when the Friday night lights dimmed, Marcus would find trouble again.

Even during his senior year, when many say they saw his turnaround, Marcus had his fair share of slip-ups.

According to Brunswick County Schools, Marcus stopped attending South Brunswick for a brief period at the start of the second semester.

He also became embroiled in a long-running dispute with a group from Shallotte, and fought at least two of them on separate occasions, according to multiple friends and classmates.

But Marcus was able to move past or work around his problems. He returned to school in time to secure graduation.

On the weekend of April 8, the Hankins family drove to Greensboro for a campus visit to A&T. Marcus left excited and optimistic about his future. Seeing the college he planned to attend made him confident, and he told his mother "I'm gonna run this school."

But April 16, Marcus saw an adversary from Shallotte at a friend's birthday party and threw punches. The fight mushroomed outside, multiple partygoers drew guns and started shooting. One of those bullets hit Marcus in the chest, according to his death certificate.

A week later, on Easter Sunday, mourners packed South Brunswick's gym for Marcus' memorial service.

Quiet

Three months after Marcus' death, The Bottom is quiet.

"The streets are like tumbleweeds blowing by, just dry," Scott said. "It never used to be like this."

Reminders of Marcus are everywhere. His football jersey number is painstakingly painted on each of his mother's big toenails. A program from his funeral remains taped to the whiteboard in the South Brunswick High School weight room. Everybody in The Bottom seems to own at least one T-shirt reading "RIP Marcman."

It is unclear whether Marcus could have left his temper behind in Southport when he left for college, or whether he could have made it in college. What is certain is that he was denied the chance to try – and in a community short on success stories, seeing even that small glimmer extinguished is painful.

"I think that's the question everybody had is 'Why?'" Walls said. "Why did this happen? And why did this happen right now?"

Scott is headed to junior college in California. With his friend gone, he feels an obligation to not only excel next fall, but into a four-year school.

"I feel like it's a must, or a responsibility for me to make it," Scott said. "Because he didn't get to."

Marcus' family just wants closure.

The three months since his death have seen no arrests in the case. Joyce Hankins is resigned that there might not ever be an arrest.

She has made repeated appeals for information and been involved with several Stop the Violence rallies across Brunswick County.

There is a \$5,000 reward for information leading to an arrest, but few have come forward.


"I really do feel like it's going to be one of those unsolved things," Joyce said. "So now the only thing I can do now is try to stay on the Stop the Violence thing and make sure this doesn't happen nowhere else."

Powell Latimer: 343-2261


Brian Freskos: 343-2327

All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be re-published without permission. Links are encouraged.

 Recommend  Send  14 recommendations. Sign Up to see what your friends re


 Add a comment...



Kitty Gentile · Co-Owner/Designer at The Design Studio and Workshop
somebody knows something about this. Please help bring peace to his grieving
Reply ·  1 · Like · July 23, 2011 at 2:46pm



Mike Forte · Works at City Commissioner of Boiling Spring Lakes, N.C.
There will be a "Stop the Violence Rally" in Shallotte on Saturday, July 30th in t
Reply · Like · July 23, 2011 at 3:17pm

 Facebook social plugin

You Might Be Interested In

Man identified in MLK fatal Sunday night | Behind the Yellow Tape (*Behind the Yellow Tape*)

A fries shop, and more, open on the Boardwalk | Port City Foodies (*Port City Foodies*)

Call to police ends in drug arrests | Behind the Yellow Tape (*Behind the Yellow Tape*)

Five facing charges after allegedly killing delivery driver, then taking food home to eat (*StarNews Online*)

Hankins friend pleads guilty to riot charge (*StarNews Online*)

Two with Wilmington ties inducted in Legal Hall of Fame | Legal Briefs (*Legal Briefs*)

From Around The Web

8 Celebs Who Are Aging Badly (Michelle Williams, Lindsay, The Jenner Sisters & More!) (*Styleblazer*)

The Best Tackler on Every NFL Team (*BleacherReport*)

ATH camped twice, awaiting offer (*CaneInsider*)

8 Weirdest Cheating Scandals in Olympic History (*ThePostGame*)

Billionaires Dump Stocks – 100% Chance of Global Recession (*Moneynews*)

Teen Punished for Stopping Bullies From Harassing a Special Needs Girl (*TakePart*)

[what's this]

From the Web

by Taboola



Stew Webb tonight on Late Night In The Midlands...
BlogTalkRadio



Paralyzed Student Fulfills Amazing Dre...
CafeMom



Weighted Pupil Funding: Californians For Justice ...
BlogTalkRadio



Soros: We Have 3 Days to Avoid 'Fiasco'
Bloomberg

[▲ RETURN TO TOP](#)

AdChoices

Bad Credit, Bankruptcy?

No Problem, We Finance Used Cars, Only \$250 Down, Apply OnLine 24/7
CarLottaCredit.com

Best Business Credit Card

Find the credit card for your business with the best rewards!
PersonalFinancesAdvi

A Fruit That Burns Fat?

Celebrity Doctor Reveals 1 Secret To Getting a Flat Belly
ConsumerLifeStyle

Ads by Yahoo!

Advance Tickets for Cardmembers

EXPLORE EVENTS

AMERICAN BUSINESS EXPRESS

Terms and Conditions Apply

NEWS

- Local
- Business
- Traffic
- Weather
- State
- Nation
- Crime
- Strange
- Home Delivery
- News Archive
- StarNews Wire

MULTIMEDIA

- Photos
- Video
- Blogs
- My Photos

SPORTS

- High School
- Sports
- UNCW
- NCAA Football
- NCAA Hoops
- NFL
- NBA
- MLB
- Golf
- Racing

ENTERTAINMENT

- Music
- Movies/Film
- Dining
- Bars/Nightlife
- Theater
- Art
- Shopping &
- Fashion
- TV
- Games

LIVING

- Health
- Home & Garden
- Food
- Books
- Faith
- Celebrations
- Pets
- Travel
- Coupons
- Beach Scene
- Magazine

REAL ESTATE

- For Sale
- Rentals
- Top Homes
- Find an Agent
- Commercial

CLASSIFIEDS

- For Sale/Wanted
- Special Sections
- Services
- Legal
- Rentals
- Autos
- Print Ads
- Place an Ad
- Enhance Your Ad
- Local Businesses

Contact Us About Us Advertising Subscribe Work for Us Help Privacy Policy About Our Ads Corrections RSS Terms of Service Photo Reprints Site Map

Copyright © 2012 StarNewsOnline.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.