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 'Hellboy II' director Guillermo del Toro continues to explore his fascination with monsters/**GO!**



KINGS FOR A DAY
 Twins Randy and Ryan King lead after the first round of the Men's City Golf Tournament/**B1**



FROM RAGS TO RICH'S?
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Degree of Effort

By Keith Lawrence

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Mildred Atherton has little patience with people who say they're too old to go back to school.

"It's never too late to do something you want to do," Atherton said Wednesday, as she prepared to graduate from Daymar College at 7 p.m. today.

When she walks across the front of the sanctuary at Good Shepherd Church tonight to pick up her associate's degree in business, Atherton will be fulfilling a dream she had to put on hold 63 years ago.

At 80, Atherton is not only the oldest graduate in the school's history, but she graduated from high school before most of her 79 classmates' parents were born.

"She has so much energy," Daymar spokeswoman LaTasha Shemwell said.

"She seems more like she's 50."

Daymar was created in 1995, when brothers Mark and Damien Gabis bought Owensboro Junior College of Business, which was founded in 1963.

Atherton dreamed of going to college when she graduated from Calhoun High School in 1945.

But there were no colleges in Owensboro then, she said. "The closest college was in Bowling Green, and we still had gas rationing from World War II. It just didn't work out."

Atherton said: "My husband made a career of the Air Force, and when you're in the Air Force, you move every two or three years. We lived in France and all

over the United States. And with my children, there was just no time to go to college."

But she found time to take college classes off and on — studying French, Russian and Greek among other things.

"We're tremendously impressed with her," said Michele Heil of Bowling Green, one of Atherton's nine grandchildren. "She continues to amaze and inspire us. I'm so proud

of her. She worked very, very hard for her degree. It's a testament to her values."

While a student at Daymar, Atherton

Atherton graduated from high school before most of her 79 Daymar classmates' parents were born.

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Degree: Family gathering

From the **Front Page**

had an internship at the RiverPark Center.

"Millie worked in our volunteer program as well as being an intern," said Roxi Witt, the performing arts center's general manager. "She has a lot of energy and enthusiasm. She probably understood the reason and needs for some of the more menial tasks better than most students."

Atherton was also "very dependable," Witt said.

"I only missed one day of classes in two years," Atherton said.

The road back to college began two years ago when she decided to buy a computer.

"I debated about buying a computer for a long time," Atherton said. "But I didn't want to be left out of the computer age. When I bought the computer, I wanted to take some computer classes to learn how to do more things with it."

So, she called Heil, who was working in registration at

Daymar.

Heil suggested that Atherton enroll full time and begin working toward her degree.

"I didn't find it as hard as you might think to go back to college," Atherton said. "But you have to want to do it. It's very intense."

Daymar, she said, "has been a very good experience. The instructors really care about all the students. I couldn't have asked for a better group."

Heil said Atherton's family is coming in from at least three states.

"We have family driving in from Indianapolis, Florida and South Carolina," she said. "I'd say 30 people would be a low estimate. She has four daughters, nine grandchildren and their families. Everyone who is able will be there."

Now that she has her degree, what's next for the Livia native?

"I'm debating whether to try to get a job," Atherton said.

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Never too late to learn, 80-year-old graduate says



Mildred Atherton, 80, wears her graduation gown Thursday afternoon at her home in Livia while sitting next to a painting she created that was inspired by a 14-day boat trip across the Atlan-

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tic with her daughters. Atherton is scheduled to graduate from Daymar College tonight.