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Alleged Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout looks out from inside a detention center while waiting for a hearing on extradition to the United States at a criminal court May 19, 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand. Russia freed WNBA star Brittney Griner on Thursday in a dramatic high-level prisoner exchange, with the U.S. releasing Bout.

Moving ‘a’ Bout

Before a trade could be made for Brittney Griner, the ‘Merchant of Death’ had to leave Southern Illinois

MARILYN HALSTEAD
The Southern

MARION — When plans were being made to exchange Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout for WNBA star Brittney Griner, negotiations were taking place far from Southern Illinois. But to get the trade accomplished, Bout’s journey would begin in Marion.

Bout, also known as the ‘Merchant of Death’, was convicted in 2011 on terrorism charges. Prosecutors said he was ready to sell up to \$20 million in weapons, including surface-to-air missiles

to shoot down U.S. helicopters. When they made the claim at his 2012 sentencing, Bout infamously shouted: “It’s a lie!”

Bout steadfastly proclaimed his innocence, saying he was a legitimate businessman who didn’t sell weapons.

For the past 10 years, Bout was being held in the U.S. Penitentiary in Marion. He had been there since June of 2012. He was scheduled to be released in 2029.

“They simply woke me up and told me to gather my belongings,” Bout told the Associated Press,

referring to the U.S. prison officials in Marion. “They didn’t provide any special information but I understood the situation that was unfolding.”

Because Bout was being held in the Marion penitentiary, the first part of his journey to freedom began at the Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois.

“Bout did fly out on Wednesday,” Doug Kimmel, airport director, said.

Kimmel explained that Midwest Aviation takes care of private aircraft coming into the

airport. They are not required to provide advanced notice of their flight plans.

Historically speaking, federal prisoners come and go without notice to the airport.

Kimmel said it was his understanding that Bout left Marion about midday on Wednesday.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the official swap took place on Thursday in Abu Dhabi, and Russian TV showed video of Bout in a private

Please see **BOUT**, Page A7

Young farmers determined to succeed

Goal is to make farming a full-time career

ILLINOIS FARMER TODAY

The path young people take to arrive at a farming future can be paved with difficulty, delay and disappointment. But another “D” word helps many arrive — determination.

Even growing up as part of a farming family is no guarantee of success today. Obstacles abound. Land acquisition, financial backing and a plethora of other issues can be daunting.

Fortunately, many plow ahead with the goal of achieving that dream.

Here are three young people who have farming in their sights. All have higher education, familial ties to agriculture and a strong desire to make farming their life.

Fortunately, many plow ahead with the goal of achieving that dream.

‘Opportunity for growth’

Matt Herman didn’t grow up on a farm but hopes to work on one the rest of his life. The native of Mount Carmel, Illinois, has a good start.

“Ever since high school I knew I wanted to do something in farming,” said the 24-year-old.

Farming skipped a generation in the Herman family. His parents don’t farm but both sets of his grandparents do. He plans on returning the family name to the fields of Wabash County, in southeastern Illinois.

He dived head-first into agriculture while at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, where he obtained an opportunity to do some undergraduate research in crop management. The project was initially designed as a look at phosphorus efficacy, but a wet period forced a switch to another

Please see **FARMERS**, Page A7

EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY PEOPLE

Lynne Chambers is leaving a legacy

New center to expand arts in underserved communities

STEVE QUINN
For The Southern

Lynne Chamber’s resume reads like a recipe for success for those who want to make a significant impact on the world around

them. Anyone who aspires to keep up with her accomplishments better have a lot of energy and an unfailing determination to leave a legacy. Lynne would be the first to tell you, however, that there is still a lot of work to be done — work that she hopes will continue long after she has received her reward.

Lynne was born in Chicago’s South Side, the child of teenage

parents. She was taken in by her grandparents at a very young age and did not know her father until recent years. At age 3, Lynne’s grandparents moved away from the city with her and her mother, seeking a better life in rural Southern Illinois. Henry Abraham, Lynne’s grandfather, had a connection to the region through

Please see **LEGACY**, Page A7

PROVIDED

Grand Chain’s Lynne Chambers is working to leave a legacy, one forged by family lessons which taught her the value of education and hard work.

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