Tommy Bryan

Special to The Chronicle

After 13 stellar seasons, Mark Purvis stepped down earlier this week as head baseball coach at Mt. Juliet High School. Purvis, a 1989 graduate of Mt. Juliet and a four-year starter at second base for Cumberland University, broke the news to his team in a meeting on Wednesday.

"I've been thinking about this for the past couple of years," Purvis said, "I've poured everything I have into the program for over 13 years and I'm tired -- mentally and physically.

"I spent some time talking to Mr. (Mel) Brown (MJHS principal) and he knows exactly what I'm going through. I still want to teach at Mt. Juliet, but I'll take some time -- go see Cumberland and Vanderbilt play in the spring, visit some other high school games and work on the farm."

Brown, who won three state baseball titles as head coach at Nashville's McGavock High School, understands what Purvis is going through.

"Mark has established a program at Mt. Juliet High School -- not just a team," Brown said, "it's an organization that has made a positive impact on the community as its grown. To succeed at this level, to have supporters who believe in what you're doing, to have the community behind you, it's outstanding.

“But in doing so, it can suck the life out of you. It becomes a 24-seven-365 thing.”

Purvis went 395-139 as head coach at Mt. Juliet, a winning percentage of .739, taking the District 9AAA championship in each of the last seven seasons.

His 2012 team went 38-6, setting a new school record for most victories in a season, and won the Region 5AAA tournament for a fourth year in a row.

Six times, including 2012, he guided the Golden Bears to the TSSAA State Tournament, including a runner-up finish in 2009 and a final four berth in 2010.

Some 70 of his former players signed college scholarships and two of his former players are currrently pitching in professional baseball.

Prior to taking the head coaching job at MJHS, he assisted former Golden Bear head coach Gary McFarlin for three years and for three years coached under NAIA Hall of Famer Woody Hunt at Cumberland.

Tommy Bryan writes for The Wilson Post