

WESTERN KENTUCKY Business Journal

TOP 100 CHRISTMAS Issue December '25



Toyota Boshoku America held the grand opening and ribbon cutting for its new \$225 million “smart plant” in Hopkinsville on Tuesday. The state-of-the-art facility, located on 50 acres in Christian County, will create 157 full-time jobs and use advanced, sustainable technology to produce seat-frame components. This plant adds to TBA’s lineup of interior systems and filters supplied to automakers like Toyota, BMW, and Subaru, bringing the company’s total Kentucky workforce to more than 1,100 across five locations.

photo courtesy of Tom Latek, Kentucky Today

Honoring Western Kentucky’s Finest

Celebrating Excellence Across the Bluegrass

By Greg LeNeave

Publisher, KPI Newspaper Group

In December, KPI Newspaper Group publishes the Christmas Business Journal. Each year, our staff wrestles with choosing the right theme for the Christmas issue—a task that somehow becomes even tougher during the holiday rush.

This year, I decided to chart a clear course. We set out to honor up to 100 outstanding individuals across Western Kentucky—people who excel in their professions and contribute meaningfully to their

communities.

Our newspaper group includes seven publications covering 18 Western Kentucky counties every week. Along the way, our staff meets remarkable people from Henderson County to Fulton County, many of whom deserve recognition for their leadership and dedication.

Inside this issue, readers will find profiles of an array of distinguished figures: a Kentucky Supreme Court justice, a United States congressman, state and local officials, judge-executives, mayors, and many other leaders who make the Bluegrass State proud.

Building a brighter future: *DRA Supports Growth in Western Kentucky”*

By Laurna Todd

Business Editor

KPI Newspaper Group

Western Kentucky communities are set to receive more than \$1.6 million in new investments through the Delta Regional Authority’s States’ Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP). In partnership with the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the funding will support four projects focused on infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and expanding access to essential services. SEDAP remains one of the Delta Regional Authority’s primary investment tools, designed to strengthen public infrastructure, transportation systems, business growth, and job training across its eight-state region. This year’s awards in Kentucky reflect a continued commitment to supporting economic stability and long-term community growth.

Regional and state leaders noted that SEDAP’s adaptability allows local communities to respond to a variety of needs—from utility upgrades to skill-building initiatives. The newly funded projects are expected to enhance daily services, increase opportunities for job preparation, and provide resources that help residents pursue stable, well-paying careers. Officials emphasized that this coordinated investment highlights the value of partnerships in advancing progress across Western Kentucky.

*The Kentucky SEDAP
award recipients include:*

Henderson Community College – approximately \$430,000 to purchase state-of-the-art equipment for its new electrical technology training program, preparing students for real-world electrical systems work and supporting workforce growth in Henderson and Union counties.

West Kentucky Workforce Board \$509,000 to expand high-demand workforce training through credentialing, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and work-based learning opportunities, connecting untapped talent to sustainable careers and helping local employers meet workforce needs.

Paducah McCracken County Joint Sewer Agency – \$509,000 for pump station enhancements, addressing critical infrastructure needs, improving wastewater services for vulnerable populations, and supporting economic competitiveness in McCracken County and the surrounding Purchase Area.

Hickman Electric System – approximately \$168,000 to build a fiber-to-the-home network in the City of Hickman, providing reliable broadband and cable access to underserved residents and supporting future growth.

These investments reflect a strong commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities in Western Kentucky, ensuring residents have access to quality infrastructure, workforce training, and essential services.



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TOP
100

Congratulations

2025 TOP
100 PEOPLE
OF WESTERN
KENTUCKY

Frank Bennett

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Frank Bennett, Executive Director of The Leadership Center. The Leadership Center offers training and professional development programs designed to turn today’s West Kentucky workforce into tomorrow’s leaders, helping build a more resilient and adaptable workforce in our region. As Executive Director, I split time between administering a variety of community leadership programs including Leadership Paducah and Leadership West Kentucky and leading workshops on a variety of leadership topics including supervisory skills, workplace communication, and strategic leadership.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

One of my very first jobs was freelance writing for the Livingston Ledger and the West Kentucky News. That was a great experience that helped me to get out of my comfort zone, talk to all different kinds of people, and really explore and learn all about Livingston County and Western Kentucky. After I graduated from Murray State University, I had every intent on teaching high school social studies and I spent several years working part time as a substitute teacher and part time as a legal assistant. Both of those jobs provided me with a front-row seat to how people learn, how they respond under stress, and how much clarity matters when the stakes feel high. Subbing taught me patience, structure, and the importance of explaining things in a way people can actually grasp. Working as a legal assistant taught me the nitty gritty of law that law school does not teach.

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business)

Not really relevant, I’m in the Chamber of Commerce office

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?


Spending time with my wife and kids. Last weekend we all went to the exhibit ICE at Opryland

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

Being kind is free.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

As a leader, you hold a remarkable platform to shape the lives of the people around you. The strongest leaders do more than drive revenue. They help their team members reach their goals and strengthen the communities they serve.



Teris Swanson

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am an attorney at Whitlow, Roberts, Houston & Straub. I handle a wide range of cases from criminal defense and personal injury to social security disability and estate planning. Our firm handles all types of business transactions and real estate matters, too. Day to day, that means a lot of different things. Some days I’m at a computer all day researching the law and drafting legal documents. Other days I may be in court all day arguing with other attorneys or defending someone’s constitutional rights. I spend a lot of time talking to people and walking them through tough decisions or explaining complicated rules in a way that makes sense.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

One of my very first jobs was freelance writing for the Livingston Ledger and the West Kentucky News. That was a great experience that helped me to get out of my comfort zone, talk to all different kinds of people, and really explore and learn all about Livingston County and Western Kentucky. After I graduated from Murray State University, I had every intent on teaching high school social studies and I spent several years working part time as a substitute teacher and part time as a legal assistant. Both of those jobs provided me with a front-row seat to how people learn, how they respond under stress, and how much clarity matters when the stakes feel high. Subbing taught me patience, structure, and the importance of explaining things in a way people can actually grasp. Working as a legal assistant taught me the nitty gritty of law that law school does not teach.

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

We serve clients across every county in western Kentucky and southern Illinois and beyond, with two office locations to make that possible. Our office in Murray is right downtown in the heart of old Murray and



was recently renovated. Our Paducah office sits in the historic Old National Bank building on Broadway in downtown Paducah, a landmark that has stood for more than a century and still carries its original architectural character.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not working, I spend most of my time with my daughter, Josie, or staying engaged in community life. I place a high value on community, and I try to encourage a spirit of collaboration and mutual support wherever I can. We can only do great things when we work together! I am an avid reader, and I also enjoy singing with my husband, Caleb, who is an accomplished musician. On the rare occasion I find a toddler-free moment, I enjoy painting as a creative outlet.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

Many years ago I came across a simple phrase that has stayed with me: “Do the hard thing.” Over time, it has become something of a personal maxim. The difficult tasks, the ones we instinctively avoid, are often the very places where the most meaningful growth occurs. As you lean into those challenges, what once felt daunting becomes manageable, and then you move on to the next challenge with greater capacity. Choosing to do the hard things is what elevates you from competence to excellence.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Do the hard thing is definitely a piece of advice that I would pass on to others. The second piece of advice I would offer is: just ask. You never truly know what doors might open or who might be willing to help. Every internship, job, and opportunity I have received came from taking the initiative to ask. The worst possible outcome is that someone tells you no. But the willingness to be vulnerable in that way is a real strength that most people don’t have the courage to embrace.

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adults & teens GC PL

junk journals

journals and decorations are provided, get a start on 2026 journaling!

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UPCOMING LIBRARY EVENTS

Wednesday, December 17

Wright Brothers Celebration

Large Community Room

4:30pm–5:30pm

Saturday, December 20

Kid’s Movie: Rise of the Guardians

Primary tabs

Large Community Room

3:00pm–4:30pm

Tuesday, December 30

Bingo Night

Large Community Room

5:00pm–6:00pm

Tuesday, December 16

JUNK JOURNALING

Large Community Room

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

5:30pm–6:30pm

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TOP 100

Congratulations
2025 TOP 100
PEOPLE OF WESTERN
KENTUCKY

Aaron Clayton

Aaron Clayton is an operator/franchisee of Culver’s Restaurant in Paducah, Kentucky. Him and his wife Julie (owner/franchisee/co-operator) manage the day-to-day operations of a quick-service/fast food restaurant. The duties in which they prefer include working on the floor during the week in either the kitchen or front-of-house. Aaron said, “We are open seven days a week from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, so there are always plenty of opportunities to help our team keep the flow of food moving, while still maintaining great customer service and building a personal relationship with our guests. Additionally, we have roughly 60 team members that we manage along with some fantastic leadership we could not do without. From hiring, scheduling, payroll, inventory and everyday logistics of keeping the lights on, it’s a 24/7/365 job that can sometimes feel overwhelming, but with the support of our team, we would not have it any other way!”

Aaron graduated from Calloway County High School in 2007 and then graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Political Science from Murray State University in 2011. Aaron stated, “My original occupation out of high school, and something I still thoroughly enjoy doing, is working for a locally owned group of radio stations out of Marshall County, WCBL and WCKK. I worked full-time in the radio business from April 2007 to October 2021. In that time period, I did everything from being an on-air personality, writing and recording news stories, producing commercials, programming the daily logs for the radio stations as well as doing play-by-play broadcasts for high school sports at both Marshall County High School and Lyon County High School.” He continued on saying, “After marrying my wife Julie in May of 2021, I decided to step away from the full-time business of radio (while still broadcasting the high school games) to help her run Culver’s. She and her father, Dr. David Cassity, purchased the land and the right to be franchisees of a Culver’s quick-service restaurant in 2016. In January 2017, Culver’s opened on the west side of Paducah where it

still stands today serving fresh, never-frozen ButterBurgers and delicious frozen custard”. “While this was a very new venture for myself, it was an easy transition thanks to Julie and the great teammates we have. I enjoy not only getting to work daily with my wife and best friend, but I get to work with people of all ages and help individuals progress through this business as they move into leadership and continue the cycle of helping others.”

Aaron said one thing that he also loves is his wife helping him with broadcasts, “I also love that my wife Julie has now joined in on helping me on my radio broadcasts for Marshall County soccer, football, baseball and softball, along with Lyon County basketball. She has become a part of those communities alongside me, while also getting to see the youth of those programs grow into great young men and women outside of the field and classroom.” He continued on saying, “Something we both put an emphasis on at Culver’s is hiring area high-schoolers that may be applying for their first job to help them get the experience and tools they need to succeed when they graduate and decide what they want to do in adulthood.”

Aaron and Julie have recently moved into their new home that they built in Benton right on her family’s farm. They also welcomed their first child into the world about four months ago. Aaron said, “A beautiful, healthy baby girl named Chesney Ann Clayton who is the light of our life who takes up all our time and we couldn’t be happier!”

Beggs Brothers

Jake Beggs Luke Beggs

Beggs brothers showcasing a new Sports Medicine Practice in Paducah

Paducah, KY – A new sports medicine and orthopedic practice has opened in Paducah, offering local residents advanced, non-surgical care for musculoskeletal injuries and conditions. Dr. Luke Beggs, MD, PhD, has joined Baptist Health Medical Group and is now seeing patients at 2603 Kentucky Avenue, Suite 401.

Dr. Beggs brings extensive training in family medicine and a fellowship in sports medicine, with a focus on non-operative treatments such as ultrasound-guided injections, platelet-rich plasma therapy, and personalized rehabilitation programs. He is joined by his brother, Jake Beggs, PA-C, as part of the new practice aimed at expanding access to orthopedic care in western Kentucky.

“Whether it’s a sports injury, arthritis, or joint pain, our goal is to provide modern, evidence-based care close to home,” said Dr. Beggs.

The practice is accepting new patients, including adults and teens, without requiring a referral. Appointments can be scheduled by calling (270) 415-4825.

With a commitment to the local community, the Beggs brothers hope to offer comprehensive, patient-focused orthopedic care that meets the growing needs of Paducah and surrounding areas.

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On behalf of our FNB employees, we want to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and joyous holiday season. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve you in 2025 and we look forward to serving you again in 2026.

HOLIDAYHOURS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24
CLOSING AT 12PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25
CLOSED

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1
CLOSED

TOP 100

Congratulations

Rick Hill

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I'm the President of Robertson Hill Inc. dba Kentucky Tobacco Outlet and B&G Liquors. I oversee daily operations for both businesses.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

First job was at 8 yrs old behind the electronics counter and stockroom of my family's retail business downtown (Hillmark). First job outside of family business was at 16 and I helped open the Gap clothing in the mall(1985). My first job after graduating college was being part of opening the first Cellular store in Paducah (Cellular One). My parents where a big influence on my knack for business. I was raised in retail and spent years of my life growing up around it with my parents' businesses throughout the years.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

3821 Hinkleville Road which was purchased in 1992 and remodeled from a former liquor store into a Drive thru Convenience Store, Tobacco Outlet, and separate Drive thru Liquor store. We own 7 acres and some old timers might remember a public RC racetrack that was on the back of the property back in the mid to late 80's.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

I'm very family oriented with a 9 year old girl and 10 year old boy. We spend our summers at the lake fishing, camping and boating. We also enjoy being involved in youth sports year round with our kids. I'm a lifelong UK fan so we love attending games and watching the Cats.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

The owner of a company I worked for in Louisville once told me about hiring employees "It's easier to take the tiger out of someone than put it in them". Find an entegetic spirit and reign them into your plan versus trying to motivate someone who doesn't have that fire.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Never underestimate the power of "Word of Mouth" and the profound effects both positive and negative it can have on any business. It can make or break a business.



Allen Wilson

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I was elected as the Livingston County Attorney in 2018 and am a member of Wilson Law Firm, PLLC. As the county Attorney, I am the legal counsel for the Livingston County Fiscal Court and advise all county elected officials and their staffs. I prosecute all criminal cases in Livingston District court and collect child support and delinquent property taxes. I also coordinate Livingston County's first-ever Teen Court program, which is an incredible opportunity to work with some of the most talented students at Livingston Central High School and teach them about the legal profession.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

Lifeguarding and reading electricity meters. Lifeguarding taught me a lot about teamwork and customer service. Reading electricity meters let me know the importance of not waking up dogs you can't outrun.

Community engagement is critical to me. I serve on the Livingston Hospital Foundation Board of Directors, the Lyon County Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors, and the University of Kentucky Alumni Association Leadership Advisory Council. I also serve on the faculty of the Kentucky Prosecutors Institute because I believe it is important to collaborate extensively with colleagues and peers to advance one's profession.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

The Livingston County Attorney's Office is located at 321 Court Street; Smithland, Kentucky 42081.

Wilson Law Firm, PLLC is located at 635 Trade Avenue; Eddyville, Kentucky 42038.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

Running gets me outside and away from my desk. Every October, the Grand Rivers Tourism Commission, the Grand Rivers Chamber of Commerce, and West Kentucky Runners host a race in memory of my late wife, Amelia. It's called Amelia's Run, and it promotes organ donation and benefits Donate Life Kentucky Trust. The outpouring of community support is incredible, and it is a beautiful race through Grand Rivers and LBL!

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

Treat everyone with respect and courtesy. -my dad

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Find balance. Happiness at work and away from work makes the other better.



Andrea Underwood

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I'm Director of Human Resources and Community Relations for Paducah Power System.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

My first jobs were in radio, all throughout college (WMOK) and my first couple of years after college (WKYX-WKYQ). I was a deejay and news reporter. I've always been grateful to WMOK owner Gary Kidd who took a chance on me as a kid who had just graduated from high school and walked into his station without an appointment and said I wanted a job. I knew nothing about radio at the time, but he gave me my start. I was also lucky to work at WPSD, first as a producer and then later as the News Director, with Tom Butler, Ron Beaton, and Fred Paxton, who all helped to shape my work ethics and practices as a journalist. Throughout the years, I've served on several boards of community organizations and graduated from Leadership Paducah, all of which enhanced my interest in serving my community and helping to make it a good place to live and thrive.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

Paducah Power System is at 1500 Broadway St., Paducah. Our building is the old Sears Department Store which Paducah Power purchased for a \$1 in the early 90's after it had sat vacant for more than a decade. (Sears moved to Kentucky Oaks Mall when the mall opened.) PPS renovated the building extensively and moved from what is not the police station to the Sears building in 1993.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

My hobbies are photography, travel, and creating little Halloween monsters out of gourds by carving and painting them.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

I've learned a lot of good things from many coworkers over the years, but the best lessons have come from the mistakes I've made, particularly in managing people, and my desire to not repeat those mistakes. Sometimes, the best lessons are the ones learned the hard way.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Try to always remember that people are your greatest asset and everyone performs best when they feel seen and heard. The things that happen in someone's personal life affect how well they're able to perform at work, so, as a supervisor, I try to stay actively interested in the lives of my teammates, help them whenever they're struggling, and treat them the way I want to be treated. Actively listening to what they have to say, giving their thoughts and opinions full consideration, and admitting to them when you're wrong about something builds trust and motivates people to work with you instead of against you.





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Congratulations, Winners!

PUBLIC NOTICE

“Pursuant to TC 96-159M and KRS 376.280, this is an advertisement of the motor vehicle sale. The vehicle in question is a 2023 Dodge Charger, VIN: 2C3CDXHG1PH697622, owner is Jordan Jackson and lienholders are Chrysler Capital. This sale will take place at Parkest Body Shop, 1885 Brown Badgett Loop, Madisonville, (270)871-2698 and this sale will conclude on 12/18/2025.”

(11-27-25_WKN_3x)



Wayne Remy

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish). Barber Ramey's Barber stylist. Cut hair and talk to people

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Finis Fuls, my grandfather owned a full service gas station when I was 10 years old. My first job.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Golf helped me meet people in all walks of life. Member First Baptist Church of Paducah


#3. Where is your business located? 2909 Jackson Street, Paducah Ky

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? Needed a place to work for me and my cousin. Remodeled in 1987, Been bargering 56 years (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge) Golf

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?) Dad and grandfather said treat people the way you want to be treated and do your very best.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? The same.



Chad Young

1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Chad Young, Doctor of Chiropractic, Young Health Chiropractic & Muscle Rehab. My role is a mix of Chiropractor, Therapist, Psychiatrist, Accountant, Advertising Designer, Custodian, Social Networker, Philanthropist, and Grounds Maintenance Engineer—basically, imagine all of those rolled into one.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those early experiences shape the way you work today?

My first job was as a Boy Scout camp counselor from 1988-1991. I had to calm the fears of first-year scouts who were away from home for the first time. Today, I calm the fears of people dealing with spinal pain who think surgery is their only option because pain medications haven't worked. I help them understand there's usually another path to relief.

3. Where is your business located? Is there anything unique about how you acquired or developed your space—building, remodeling, special history, etc.?

We're located at 1002 Cuba Road, Mayfield, KY 42003. The space previously housed Hills Bar-B-Que and West Kentucky Telephone. It's large, and we use the extra room for specialized spinal exercises, stretches, and rehab that wouldn't be possible in a smaller space.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?


I love getting out of town on weekends to enjoy concerts, skiing, hiking, and trying restaurants that aren't available locally.

5. What's the best business advice someone has ever given you?

"Stay out of debt and let your business grow organically."

6. What is the best piece of business advice you would offer to others?

Don't try to offer the cheapest service in town—focus on providing the best service you possibly can.



Cody McCain

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Cody McCain is the owner and operator of McCain's Towing LLC, where he handles every aspect of the business himself—from responding to calls and performing tows to managing client interactions and vehicle storage.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those early experiences shape the way you work today?

Cody's first experience in towing came in 2018-2019, transporting insurance vehicles to auto auctions while working for Bates Towing and Recovery in Wickliffe, KY. In January 2020, at age 24, he launched his own business, providing accident scene towing for the sheriff's department and Kentucky State Patrol, as well as repossession and recovery services for several local banks. Mentors like Mark Williams and David Vance have been instrumental in helping him gain in-depth knowledge of the towing industry.

3. Where is your business located? Is there anything unique about how you acquired or developed your space?

McCain's Towing is located in Bandana, KY. The business is fully owner-operated, so every customer interacts directly with Cody. Services include lockouts, key programming, roadside assistance, junk vehicle removal, and mechanical work.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Being on call 24/7 year-round doesn't leave much free time, but Cody enjoys hunting, fishing, and riding four-wheelers whenever he can.

5. What is the best piece of business advice you would offer to others?

The best advice for anyone starting a new business is to be honest and keep your word. In a competitive industry driven by price, building and maintaining loyal customers is key to long-term success.





STIFEL

CONGRATULATES



Pictured left to right:

Sally Teague, Client Service Associate

Elliot Treece, First Vice President/Investments

Lacey Metzger, Client Service Associate

Adam Chustz, CDFA®, Senior Vice President/Investments

Hanna Rhinehart, Client Service Associate

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TOP 100

Congratulations

Angela Mathis

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I serve as McCracken Market President for CFSB, where my primary focus is commercial lending and relationship banking. From start to finish, my role centers on building strong relationships with local businesses, understanding their financial needs, and helping them grow through customized lending solutions. I work closely with business owners, community leaders, and internal teams to support economic development while ensuring thoughtful, responsible banking practices that strengthen our local community.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences shape you?

My first jobs included answering phones and filing, while working as a cashier at a car dealership, and later as a sales associate at a clothing store in the mall. Those early roles taught me the value of strong work ethic, customer service, organization, and clear communication. They also instilled an appreciation for every role within an organization and the importance of treating people with respect.

I've been fortunate to learn from outstanding mentors in banking, including Randell Blackburn, Barry Griffith, Rustin Egner, Todd Myers, Rhonda Batts, Britne Parker, and many others, all influenced my leadership style and reinforced the importance of listening, mentoring others, and leading with integrity.

Community involvement has also shaped my career, including serving on the Paducah Cooperative Ministry Board, participating in BNI Impact Chapter networking group, Business and Professional Women, and Leadership Paducah, all of which have deepened my commitment to service and collaboration.

#3. Where is your business located?

CFSB proudly serves McCracken County through two locations on Park Avenue and Irvin Cobb Drive. Having multiple locations allows us to remain accessible and connected to the community we serve, while continuing our long-standing tradition of local decision-making and relationship-focused banking.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, boating, and attending sports events. These activities help me recharge and maintain balance while creating meaningful memories with the people I love.

#5. What's the best business advice you've ever received?

The best advice I've received is to be a good listener and invest in mentoring others. Several leaders throughout my career reinforced that listening builds trust, and that strong leaders take time to develop those around them.

#6. What is the best business advice you would give to others?

I believe anyone can be a leader. Treat people with respect, listen with intention, and focus on helping find solutions. Leadership isn't about titles — it's about how you show up, how you support others, and the positive impact you leave on your organization and community.



Blair Travis

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

As the Director of Marketing, Communications, and Business Development for the City of Calvert City, I work to promote our community's image, amenities, and opportunities to residents, visitors, and businesses. I manage the city's website and social media platforms to ensure clear, consistent communication, and I build strong relationships with community members, nonprofits, and local businesses. I also plan and coordinate city events that highlight what makes Calvert City a great place to live and visit. Through strategic marketing campaigns, community engagement, and collaboration with city and county leadership, I help attract new investment, support local tourism, and contribute to a vibrant and thriving Calvert City.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

One of my first jobs out of college was at Harrah's Metropolis, where I learned how to thrive in a fast-paced environment and the importance of paying attention to details. I oversaw a staff of 15, and together we organized outdoor concerts, weddings, bridge parties, and many other events. That experience taught me how to work with people from different backgrounds and work styles, how to build a strong team, and how a supportive leader can shape your career. My manager, Renea Jarrett, led by example, always thinking two steps ahead and understanding how to make events flow seamlessly, and I will always be grateful that she took a chance on me and helped me grow as a young professional. After Harrah's, I became the Public Relations Specialist at WKCTC, where I organized special events, managed social media, and oversaw the public relations budget. There, I learned long-term marketing strategy, planning, and targeting from some of the best, including Janett Blythe, who pushed me to think creatively and never settle for "good enough," and Dr. Barbara Veazey, whose high expectations taught me to take pride in my work and to lift others up when they've earned it. I've been fortunate to have incredible female mentors throughout my career, each of whom taught me something different, and together their influence shaped the leader and professional I am today.

#3. Where is your business located?

My "business" is Calvert City itself, and I'm fortunate to work right in the heart of the community I've called home for 16 years. When the opportunity arose seven years ago to serve the city I love, I didn't hesitate, I jumped at it and have never looked back. Calvert City may be a small community of about 2,500 people, but it is big on heart, hospitality, and connection. Spend just a few hours here, whether at one of our city events or inside a local business, and you'll quickly feel the friendliness and pride that make this one of the best places to live and work. Our community is golf-cart friendly and incredibly active, with roughly 20 miles of trails woven throughout the city and into Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park. I feel blessed every day to work where I live, to help share "our" story, and to spotlight a community known not only for its strong industrial foundation but also for its growing reputation for outstanding events, beautiful parks, and an unmatched quality of life.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

When I'm not working, I enjoy reading, exploring new places, spending time outdoors, watching Kentucky basketball and football with my husband and spending time fishing together.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

The best business advice I ever received came from my mother, who spent 30 years in healthcare administration. She always told me that consistency builds trust and that people will remember how you made them feel long after they forget what you said. She taught me to show up the same way every day with integrity and to always listen with intention. Her example showed me that strong relationships are built through listening and genuine empathy, and those lessons have guided me throughout my career.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best business advice... Keep your hours consistent. Be intentional. Show up with integrity every day and make space for others to feel heard and valued.



Brian Parr

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am the Dean of the Hutson School of Agriculture at Murray State University. This is an awesome job because I get to interact with so many great people from our region! I help lead a team that makes decisions and implements plans to educate the next generation of agricultural professionals. This includes working with industry partners, agricultural scientists, secondary school programs, and several 2 year college partners.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

My first jobs were in the machine tool industry. I worked for eight years in a precision machining company where I had the opportunity to carry out intricate processes that were within very close tolerances to create functional applications. I then went on to be a high school agriculture teacher largely because of the influence that my agriculture teacher had on my life! To a large extent, I am still doing the same job 27 years later, I am just called a dean! I have spent my career trying to help others get to where they want to go professionally through education and experiential opportunities. One of my greatest mentors is Dr. TOny Brannon who was the dean before I took the position.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business

Murray State is in Murray KY and it does have a unique history! The university started in 1922 and our first agriculture classes were taught in 1925 which makes this year our 100th year of agriculture at Murray State!

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When not working, I enjoy feeding and caring for cows. My youngest son and I have a small herd of beef cattle and a herd of Corriente cattle that he uses for roping practice. I also enjoy leather work and working on old trucks (we have a herd of those as well :-)) I also serve as the pastor of Brooks Chapel Community Church where I get the pleasure of serving my second family!

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

This applies to business, education, and most any other aspect of life! Meet people where they are and figure out how you can help them get where they want to go.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Sincere concern for others goes a long way!



Julie Cassity

My education is bachelor of science in nutrition from Murray state and master of science in human development and leadership both from Murray state. Biggest challenges of career would have been running a restaurant during COVID with only been open 3 yrs at the time. Dynamics of staffing has changed over the years so learning what best works for your team.

I worked at chick-fil-a as general manager before embarking on my own journey of owning a restaurant.

As owner you can say you do a bit of everything. If register needs attending or orders need to be ran I'll help in any way I can. I try my best to keep tabs with my managers on what needs to be done or improved on by the staff.



Bart Lewis

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My wife and I own Puckett's Fine Jewelry in Benton and Murray, Kentucky. We offer fine and fashion jewelry, engagement rings, custom jewelry, and full repair services, along with a curated gift shop featuring serveware, home goods, bags, and children's gifts.

From day to day, I'm involved in every aspect of the business—buying, marketing, e-commerce, financial planning, operations, customer support, and working directly with our team to ensure our stores deliver the experience our customers have loved for more than 50 years.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

My ever jobs throughout high school were a bus boy at the Pasta House Company, a carhop at Harned's Drive In, and in the shipping department at Hancock's of Paducah. All three of those jobs gave me a foundation of strong work ethic, customer service, and teamwork.

At Murray State, I stayed as involved as possible through Sigma Phi Epsilon, Alpha Kappa Psi, Student Government Association, the Student Ambassador Program, and other organizations. Those experiences gave me lifelong friendships and taught me leadership and professionalism.

After earning both my Bachelor's and Master's from Murray State, I moved to Nashville and began in customer service at Summit Professional Education. Within nine months I moved into the Product department and eventually became Vice President of Product, leading the team that developed continuing education courses for physical, occupational, and speech therapists. The CEO became a mentor and taught me invaluable lessons about building, leading, and scaling a successful business—wisdom I carry into Puckett's every day.

#3. Where is your business located?

Puckett's Fine Jewelry began in Benton, Kentucky, when Dave and Martha Puckett purchased Hawkins Jewelry in 1973. In the 2010s, my wife Hannah worked at Puckett's while attending Murray State. After we spent a decade building our careers in Nashville, the opportunity arose to move back to western Kentucky—and ultimately, to purchase Puckett's Fine Jewelry. In May 2023, we continued on the legacy of Puckett's with our own special touches, and in November 2025, expanded the business to open a second location in Murray, KY.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

I enjoy camping on Kentucky Lake, cooking, playing golf, and spending time with my family.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

A quote from John Maxwell has always stayed with me: "Consistency compounds." Success is rarely built overnight. It's shaped through years of steady growth, discipline, and showing up every day—both in business and in life.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

If you want to grow within a company, look beyond your job description and find ways to add meaningful value. My own career grew from an entry-level position to the leadership team because I focused on solving problems, improving processes, and contributing wherever I could—not just completing the tasks assigned to me.



James Comer

Rep. James Comer: Western Kentucky roots that shaped his path

James Comer's life and political career are firmly grounded in Western Kentucky. Born and raised in rural Monroe County, he grew up with the values and work ethic of small-town southern Kentucky. After graduating from Monroe County High School, he attended Western Kentucky University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture—a field that would anchor both his professional and political identity.

Returning home after college, Comer established James Comer, Jr. Farms, a successful beef-cattle and hay operation, and later co-owned Comer Land & Cattle Company. His leadership extended beyond agriculture, serving as president of the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce and remaining deeply engaged in local business development.

Comer's Western Kentucky background propelled him into public service. First elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives in 2000, he built a reputation as a conservative voice for rural communities. In 2011, he became Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture, further cementing his standing as an advocate for the state's farming industry. Since 2016, he has represented Kentucky's 1st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Today, Comer remains strongly connected to the region that shaped him—advocating for agriculture, rural development, and the priorities of the communities across Western Kentucky.



SIDEBAR:

Timeline of Rep. James Comer's Western Kentucky Journey

- 1972 – Born in Monroe County, Kentucky
- 1990 – Graduates from Monroe County High School
- 1993 – Earns B.S. in Agriculture from Western Kentucky University
- 1990s – Establishes James Comer, Jr. Farms and becomes active in local agribusiness
- 1999–2000 – Serves as President of the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce
- 2000 – Elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives
- 2011 – Elected Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture
- 2016 – Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives for Kentucky's 1st District
- Present – Serves as a leading congressional voice on agriculture, rural issues, and Western Kentucky priorities



Brooke Abner

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Brooke Bailey Abner-
Owner of Brooke Bailey Dance
Addiction LLC
Operating Member of Abstract
Investments LLC
Real Estate Agent Abstract
Enterprises



I run day-to-day business operations for Brooke Bailey Dance Addiction as well as choreograph and oversee the competitive dance company and staff. In Abstract Investments, I run day-to-day operations for all the investment properties.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was working at my mom's dance and gymnastics studio, teaching classes and setting choreography. I was born into the dance and gymnastics business. Although things have changed over time, the mission to provide a space for kids to learn new skills, learn to work hard, and teach valuable life lessons hasn't changed. My second job was NFL Cheerleader for the Tennessee Titans.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits: I watched both my parents and grandparents run businesses. I was born into a family of entrepreneurs. They all influenced me in positive ways. In my early adulthood, I cheered in the NFL for the Tennessee Titans. My NFL coach, Stacie Kinder, changed my life. She taught me how to push through adversity, never give up, and keep a thick skin.

As far as dance goes, I'm seeing shows in New York and Vegas a lot. I'm also a board member of the Pennyroyal Arts Council.

My husband and I are constantly looking at real estate all over the country. We talk about real estate every day.

#3. Where is your business located? Brooke Bailey Dance Addiction LLC is located at 2507 Fort Campbell Blvd, Hopkinsville, KY, and 1788 Canton Rd, Cadiz, KY.

The Hopkinsville location was originally Scott Oldsmobile. We renovated it and created 3 dance studios in the front where the showrooms and offices were. In the back, we turned the body shop into our gymnastics facility. Our Cadiz location was originally my mom's dance and gymnastics facility. It has so much history from her 25 years in business.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

I love to travel and experience new restaurants and cultures. My husband and I are big Nashville Predators fans! We go to as many games as we can. When I'm not traveling, I'm cooking and vlogging my recipes on my Instagram @recipesandrhinestones.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

Once the ball starts rolling, don't let it slow down! If you achieve one goal, set another!

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Being a business owner is never a 9-5. Be willing to do what others won't to achieve your goals and be successful.

Craig Gilland

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish). Owner of Liberty Fuels Inc, oversee daily activities of the convenience store and gas station, and home delivery of propane.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Welder, toolmaker and production manager. They all helped me with accuracy, timing and cost to a business.

#3. Where is your business located? 825 South Main St. Marion, Ky. My father and two other partners started the business in 1993.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

Watching motocross, boating, golfing and being with my close friends.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?) Don't let your business take all your time and enjoy life.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Believe in you people and always work alongside of them. If you can't do the job, don't expect someone else to be able to do it.

Dave Winder

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

25th season with Murray State athletics. After a radio TV career of 15 years with Zimmer radio group in Cape Girardeau, Missouri and WPSD television in Paducah. Graduated from Murray State in 1987.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

Associate AD for communications is my title. Have worked primarily with men's basketball handling all communication efforts for the team. Was able to work with outstanding head coaches and promote some great players including Isaiah Canaan, Cameron Payne and Ja Morant.

I have a hand in my areas, but two of the main areas included maintenance of GoRacers.com and managing 95-100 television productions each year on ESPN+ for Racer volleyball, soccer, football, men's and women's basketball, baseball and softball.

I lead the Murray State Hall of Fame effort. And many other areas in MSU athletics.

First jobs and experiences.

First job was in high school in Jackson, Mo, worked for KZIM radio in Cape Girardeau. I used to run St. Louis Cardinal baseball games, and that's where I first got a chance to do play-by-play.

But really the top two influences on my career in life is my father Jimmie Winder. Who was career Missouri State Highway Patrol and also a United States Marine. And Coach Johnny Reagan. I played for Johnny at Murray

State in baseball from 1983 to 87.

#3. Where is your business located?

Murray State University, Murray, Ky. - one of the greatest universities in the country.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Family is very important. My wife, Janice and I now have four grandkids from our daughter Meagan (husband Travis Palmer) and son Matthew (wife, Leah). Woods, Crew, Elsie Mae and Olivia. I like to play pickleball when I can and maybe some racquetball.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

I don't exactly recall who told me these two items, but they have stuck with me for a long, long time.

One is this your job or is this your career? Either one you choose, you will treat it as such.

The other one someone told me one time is if you're in a position of leadership, you need to ask yourself at times "is this wrong or is it just different?" When you look at the people you're working with and leading, you have to let them figure out how best to accomplish the things that are required of them.



TOP 100

Congratulations

Buzz Smith

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I'm the Community Liaison for General Matter. General Matter is an American owned uranium enrichment company that is building a state of the art enrichment plant at the Department of Energy site. I'm establishing our local office and presence here in Paducah.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

I spent all my summers as a kid mowing and trimming lawns. I also had a Paducah Sun paper route, the third largest in the City. I learned a lot from that job. You had to sell subscriptions, deliver promptly and accurately and go by monthly to each home to collect. Collecting really taught me about people's personalities. Some people were never happy and some people were always happy and seemed to have a better life. I took note of this and have tried to always be positive with myself and others. My first, punch a time clock, job was at G and O Drug Store. John Oehschlaeger hired me. John or Johnny was a character. He found humor in everything and I also learned that from him.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits:

My Dad instilled my ethic. He never sat still and expected us kids to do the same. I like to be busy and have always enjoyed working with other people. I've had many bosses and learned something from everyone of them.

Mention personal interests or community activities that's influenced your profession.

I have served on the Paducah City Commission for 15 years. I'm very interested in preparing Paducah to benefit from the influx of new businesses locating here. I want to get new housing into the city and neighborhoods, such as the Southside, revitalized. Bettering our community is, really, the thing I'm most interested in. I love doing this and it's the greatest interest I have.

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business)

As I mentioned, I work for General Matter. We are located at the Department of Energy site. We'll have an office in downtown Paducah in the near future. General Matter was created to produce nuclear fuel domestically, right here in Paducah. Right now our country relies on foreign owned companies for almost all of our nuclear fuel.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

That's a hard question because Paducah is my passion and I enjoy the time spent on the City Commission and related city business. I love doing this. I really don't have a lot of hobbies. I enjoy spending time with Janie, working on my home and yard and making our dog Petey, happy. We love seeing our grandkids when we are able.

(hobbies or passions that help you recharge)

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (and who was it)

I was in my early 20s and was hired for sales position. I had zero experience. A potential customer called and left the message they wanted to meet with a sales rep. I went to the owner, who was an engineer and not a sales person and asked "What do I do? I've never done this and don't really know our product that well yet." He gave me great advice in a calming tone, "Just go out to see them, be yourself, talk to them and be their friend. Find out what they need and come back here. We'll figure out how to help them." His name was Ken Regal. He was a great and kind person. The advice of being yourself, being a friend and trying to help is what stuck

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Build friendships with the everyone you deal with. Not just within your organization but also with your customers and constituents.

Vick Patel

1. Tell us about your work and what you do.

My name is Vick Patel, and I've spent the last 17 years in the hotel industry. Over the years, I've done just about every job there is--front desk, housekeeping, maintenance, sales, and management. For the past 15 years, I managed multiple hotels in Paducah and gained a deep understanding of every part of the business. Recently, I chose to step away from the hotel industry to focus full-time on real estate ventures. I've always had a passion for building, renovating, and improving properties, and now I'm able to devote all my time to that next chapter. I also own several rental properties that I've purchased, renovated, and continue to manage myself, which has given me hands-on experience in both real estate investment and property management. In addition, I run a side business called Paducah Drone, where I capture aerial photos and showcase the city from unique perspectives. Over time, I've grown a large following and made a name for myself locally--many people in Paducah know me simply as the "Drone guy."

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences shape the way you work today?

My first job was at a restaurant in Universal Studios when I was 16. I was hired as a cashier, but I quickly learned that titles don't mean much--you do whatever needs to be done. I made food, washed dishes, bussed tables, cleaned--you name it. That job taught me early on that if you want to succeed, you have to be willing to do every job, not just the one on your name tag.

My first manager, Mike, became an important mentor. I worked wherever he needed me, learned to adapt quickly, and because of that, I moved up fast. His influence shaped a lot of my work habits today.

I also serve on the Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau board and a few other local boards. Being involved in the community has helped me grow professionally and has been a big part of raising my family in this area.

3. Where is your business located?

I own several rental properties in Paducah and Metropolis, and I recently purchased a building at 409 Broadway in downtown Paducah--the historic Weille & Son Department Store building. It's my first large-scale project, and it has already been an incredible learning experience.

I decided to invest in downtown because this is where my family is settled, and I see tremendous potential in the area. The building itself has a unique history--Weille & Son was one of Paducah's early, long-standing department stores, serving the community for decades and contributing to the downtown district's commercial identity. Being able to preserve and re-imagine such a historic space is something I'm proud to take on.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

I'm really passionate about technology, so I'm always learning about new tools and gadgets. A recent hobby of mine is 3D printing, which lets me combine creativity with tech. I'm also a big car enthusiast and enjoy going to car shows whenever I can. Outside of that, my favorite moments are traveling with my family and spending quality time taking care of my daughters, Sriya and Vaani. They keep life fun and exciting, and those moments are what truly recharge me.

5. What's the best business advice someone has given you?

The best advice I ever received was: "Don't micromanage. Give people the tools they need--and then trust them."

That mindset changed the way I lead and helped me build stronger teams.

6. What business advice would you give others?

The best advice I can give is this: never stay in a place where you're not appreciated. If the people around you aren't invested in your growth, you're standing in the wrong room. Surround yourself with leaders and colleagues who value your work, challenge you, and give you space to evolve. Loyalty matters, but so does recognizing when it's time to move on so you can reach your full potential.

Clark Legate

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My name is Clark Legate and I am the President and COO of Legate's Furniture World.

I oversee day to day operations that include furniture deliveries and floorcovering installations. Directing placement of the furniture on our showroom floor and planning and scheduling all advertising.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

So I would have to say that he was my mentor and showed me everything that I have learned to run this business. I went to Madisonville Community College to get the basics IE

Accounting and business management, but the real training and learning was working in the store and learning the things that make our business run smoothly

#3. Where is your business located?

We are located at 744 South Main Street, in Madisonville, Ky

Our phone number is 270-821-2050. Our store used to be a car dealership, so we had to do a lot of remodeling and work on the building to turn it into a furniture and flooring showroom from a service department and parts department.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? The things that I enjoy most outside of work is playing with my 1 year old granddaughter, Miah, and riding my Harley Davidson Road King

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (and who was it)The best advice that my dad gave me about business is to see everything as money. If there is an odd chair that we need to get the matching sofa to that chair is basically dead dollars sitting there until we can get something to go with it so it will sell. Most people just see a chair. I now see dead inventory that something needs to be done so it can be sold.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?Always treat your customers the way you would expect to be treated when you go into a business. Strive to have the best customer service possible and treat everyone equally.

We have built our reputation and business on the principle of offering the best possible price to be profitable and the best customer service of any business, not just furniture and floor covering but all businesses.

Collett Serrato

Calvert City resident and Food Giant store manager Colette Serrato recently served as grand marshal of the 66th annual Calvert City Lions Club Christmas Parade, believed to be Kentucky's longest-running Christmas parade.

Serrato has worked in Calvert City since 2003, starting in the deli when the store was Piggly Wiggly, later managing the meat department for 14 years, and being promoted to store manager on Christmas Eve 2018.

A mother of three--Diego, 21; Lilyanna, 18; and Camden--Serrato enjoys outdoor activities with her family, including disc golf. She credits the city's welcoming residents, clean parks, and active community life for making Calvert City feel like home.

In naming her grand marshal, the Lions Club recognized her leadership and neighbor-first attitude. "Colette is a face in Calvert City that everyone knows," said Lions Club President Jeremy Powell. Serrato called the honor "meaningful and humbling" and expressed gratitude for being part of the community.

The Calvert City Lions Club has a long history of civic service, from purchasing the city's first fire truck to funding street signs. In 2025 alone, the club screened nearly 2,000 children through its KidSight program and donated over \$10,000 to those in need.

Congratulations, Winners!

Cody Noffsinger

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am the Controller at HES Energynet a public electric utility and ISP located in Hopkinsville, KY. A CPA by trade, I direct the finance department with a commitment to data-driven insight and strategic fiscal leadership helping shape initiatives that elevate our organization’s future and the communities we serve.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

Working as a Front Desk Attendant at the Hopkinsville YMCA gave me early experience in customer communication and helped instill the professionalism, empathy, and service mindset I still carry into my work today.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.

I don’t have a single mentor, but I’ve learned from many professionals over the years. Finding lessons in people and experience, both near and far, has been central to my development.

Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

I enjoy giving my time and talents to improve the lives of youth and to strengthen educational opportunities within our community. I currently serve as the Board Vice-Chair and Workforce Development Chair for the Christian County Chamber of Commerce and as Chair of the local Boys and Girls Club. Previously, I served as Rotary President, President of the Pennyroyal Arts Council, and President of HYPE

#3. Where is your business located? Hopkinsville, KY.

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

Our business has provided electric service in Hopkinsville since 1942 and now through a recent partnership with PRECC, we now serve high-speed fiber to rural communities in seven counties in Western, KY.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

I enjoy spending time with family, cooking, and listening to live music.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

“Show up to work everyday ready to compete. If you don’t, someone else will, and you never know when you are in a job interview” – Gary Harris, Former Director of Government & Community Relations, TVA

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

“Say yes and be present! You cannot be a member in the board room, learn a new skill, reach an organizational goal, or find ways to serve that speak to you unless you first say yes!”



Whitney Walker

Whitney Walker serving a vital role as Marketing and Communications at WKCTC

PADUCAH, Ky. — Whitney Walker has joined West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC) as the new Director of Marketing and Communications, bringing a wealth of experience in marketing and public relations to the regional institution.

Walker officially began her role on January 2, 2024, succeeding longtime communications veteran Janett Blythe, who retired after 30 years at the college. In her new position, Walker oversees WKCTC’s marketing, public relations, and communications efforts, including publications, advertising, television services, student recruitment, and news releases.

A graduate of Rhodes College in Memphis, Walker brings a diverse professional background. Before joining WKCTC, she served as Sales and Marketing Director at the Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center and spent more than seven years in Cincinnati with The Jurgensen Companies, coordinating marketing for 25 affiliate companies.

Walker’s own educational journey has been marked by perseverance. She describes herself as a “non-traditional student,” pausing her studies for nearly a decade due to personal and work obligations. Returning to complete her degree, she overcame challenges and now emphasizes the transformative power of education — a perspective she hopes to bring to WKCTC students, including those returning to school after time away.

Since assuming her role, Walker has led initiatives such as WKCTC’s “Discover Your Path” event, which provides prospective and returning students with enrollment guidance, academic advising, and financial aid assistance. Her work reflects a commitment to increasing awareness of the college’s programs and supporting students of all backgrounds.

With her extensive experience and personal insight into non-traditional education, Walker’s leadership is expected to help WKCTC grow its regional presence and further its mission to prepare students for workforce and academic success.

Fast Facts: Whitney Walker
Position: Director of Marketing and Communications, WKCTC
Started: January 2, 2024
Education: Rhodes College, Memphis
Previous Roles:
• Sales & Marketing Director, Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center
• Marketing Coordinator/Executive Assistant, The Jurgensen Companies (Cincinnati)
Notable Achievements:
• Oversaw marketing for 25 affiliate companies
• Led WKCTC’s “Discover Your Path” student outreach event
Personal Insight: Returned to complete college after nearly a decade away, emphasizing the value of non-traditional student success



Dr. Carolyn Watson

Carolyn Sue Watson, M.D., has practiced medicine for thirty-eight years as a board-certified pathologist. An honors graduate of Livingston Central High School, she completed undergraduate studies at Murray State University before graduating from the University of Louisville School of Medicine in 1987. She then completed a five-year double residency in anatomic and clinical pathology at the medical school and its affiliated hospitals, and a year later completed a subspecialty fellowship in cytopathology.

In 1993, Dr. Watson returned to western Kentucky, joining the medical staff of Pathology Associates of Paducah, PSC, a leading independent medical group providing laboratory services to various area hospitals and physicians. Early mentors included the late Drs. Wally Montgomery, Gary McMillan, and William Christopherson, all of whom conveyed to her the importance of a medical doctor’s commitment of time, attention to detail, and placement of patient needs above all else. Recognizing her devotion to these professional principles, her colleagues selected her to serve as the medical group’s president in 2018.

In addition to administrative responsibilities related to the medical group, Dr. Watson also serves as laboratory medical director for Baptist Health Paducah and Livingston Hospital. Along with her partners, Drs. Todd Stiles and Austin McCuiston, she also provides laboratory services benefitting Marshall County Hospital and Massac Hospital.

As a pathologist, Dr. Watson conducts and interprets laboratory testing and diagnoses diseases by analyzing bodily fluids, tissues, and cells. Duties involve collaborating with other physicians and medical specialists to confirm diagnoses, guide treatment, monitor disease progression, and ensuring maintenance of lab standards. In the past, she has also performed medical autopsies.

As a former trustee of the Kentucky Medical Association and a member of its Executive Committee, Dr. Watson has played an influential role in improving and maintaining the quality of health care across the Commonwealth. To this end, she continues to serve as a laboratory inspector for the College of American Pathologists.

Dr. Watson has also served for many years as a trustee of the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation headquartered in Louisville, which champions preventive and diagnostic efforts while providing medical care and rehabilitative services for Kentucky’s low-vision and blind population. In particular, she has served on the agency’s eye banking and surgical care committees. A member of the Paducah Lions Club, she chaired the WPSD Local 6-Area Lions Clubs “Telethon of Stars” in 2023, an annual event which supports regional developmental and rehabilitative centers across a four-state area.

When not practicing medicine, Dr. Watson enjoys pursuing her lifelong passion for music. In addition to serving as music director and organist at Highland Baptist Church, located on Paducah’s southside, she also serves as a director on the governing board for the Paducah Symphony Orchestra.

Anticipating a fast-approaching and well-deserved retirement from a long and rewarding medical career, Dr. Watson observed that the practice of medicine is among the highest of life’s callings and stated she is very grateful for the many blessings of having had the opportunity of being a part of such a noble and worthwhile profession, focused on providing greater health and hope for others.



The top 100 People in Western Kentucky



Best of the Best

David Nelson

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My name is David Nelson. I am a REALTOR and a full-time real estate agent for Purchase Realty Group in Paducah, KY. My work never stops. I work all day, weekends and evenings, too. Being a full-time real estate agent can be very demanding. It is hard to plan “after work” activities because you never know when someone may call and want to tour a home that just came on the market. I have to adjust frequently to my client’s schedule and put my plans on hold. But, it’s okay with me! I receive calls all the time from people wanting to list their house for sale. In that case, I have to research what houses have sold for in their area with similar size, age and condition. It is important that we don’t list the home without knowing what similar homes are selling for in the same area. We don’t want to price it too high or too low. My first task of the day is to look to see what properties have come on the market. I have several clients looking to buy and want to share these new listings with them quickly. If I see one that might work for them, I try to e-mail them the details immediately! After all, they are not the only people looking to buy. Real Estate is a time sensitive business. You have to stay on top of things and know what the market is doing at all times!

I also try to follow up with my clients as much as possible. Some clients have very specific in features they are looking for in their next home. I have to convince them that it may take time finding the “right one”. Communicating with my clients on a regular basis reminds them that I am trying to help. Needless to say, I am on the phone or e-mailing my customers all day long!

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was being a middle school teacher. Later, I started the business Wood Whittlers here in Paducah. I worked as a repairer, refinisher and did custom mill work for 32 years. I met a lot of people in both of these positions. Mr. Emmitt Bowman, one of the older wood workers, was a great mentor to me. He had a cabinet shop in Paducah. He had one arm and could do anything I could do with two arms.

#3. Where is your business located?

Purchase Realty Group is conveniently located at 2650 Holt Road in Paducah, KY. I have 25 years real estate experience.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)



I do have several hobbies that keep me active. When I want to get away and relax. I go sailing. Three days a week I play racquetball. I have met many good people while enjoying these hobbies.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

My father, John Nelson, gave me the best advice. He said, “Tell the Truth”. It’s that simple.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Jesus Christ taught us to find no fault, look for the good and go about doing good, never criticize nor condemn, enslave no one, speak not of yourself, be truthful, have compassion, eliminate the negative, mediate, and work. I try my best to live everyday by these principals.

TOP 100

Congratulations

Tyler Coleman

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

1. My name is Tyler Coleman. I am the Office Manager and loan officer at Farmers Bank & Trust Company in Salem, Kentucky. I have been with the bank for almost 9 years. I am responsible for managing our team as well as the day to day operations within our office to ensure that everything runs smoothly. I am able to serve our customers in many ways on both the deposit and loan side of our institution. I also serve our business customers and enjoy being involved in community relations. I love working in our community and serving our friends and neighbors on a daily basis. One minute I may be opening a new checking account or certificate of deposit for someone, the next minute I may be working on helping someone purchase their first home, the next minute I may be loaning someone the funds to buy a new tractor. I love the fact that my job can be something different with every customer. I serve on multiple community boards and with several organizations that act as a humble reminder that our community is the heart of our entire operation here at Farmers Bank.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

For my first job, I was hired help to a farmer who had been a family friend for years. I steepled his fences all summer and when that was completed I helped him with his hay. This job taught me the value of hard work as well as the importance of supporting our local farmers who put food on our table. For someone who was raised in town and did not have any connections to farming as a child, getting crapped on by a cow did a lot more for me than I expected. I learned that our farmers do not have it easy,

they do literally get crapped on at times, and even though I chose a career in business and not on a farm, I know what it takes to be a farmer and I have a life long appreciation for farmers and the work that they do. Who knew I would later work for Farmers Bank? Growing up, I knew I wanted to do a job someday where I could constantly be helping others. When I think of a career of helping people, I instantly think of the healthcare industry, our military, police, firemen, EMS, etc. God had a plan for my life. My career at Farmers Bank was part of his plan for me. Though I am not saving people's lives, I enjoy the feeling of knowing that I help people in some way every single day. I live and work with the intent of making a positive impact on others however I can.

#3. Where is your business located? Hopkinsville, KY.

Our office is located in Salem, Kentucky, in Livingston County. Our office was built new and opened in 2003. Our main office is headquartered our of Marion , Kentucky and has been on the same corner of main street since it was founded in 1899. We currently have 10 locations in 7 different market areas (counties).

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not working I enjoy spending time with my wife Emma and our little boy Crew. I also enjoy golfing in the summer with friends.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

One of the best pieces of advice I have been given was that I am able to determine my own success. Here at Farmers Bank, we do not have a standard employee growth model. When I was given the opportunity to work

here, our management team shared this advice with me and I now share this with our Salem team all of the time. Hearing this and understanding it are two different things. With this being said, there are no limits to what someone can accomplish and I am reminded of this each day that I come to work. We have to make a decision as leaders in our community to do more than our jobs require and go above and beyond for each other. I am so thankful for this piece of advice I was given as a new/young banker as it helped me land in the position I am in today doing what I love.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Some of the best advice I would give is to do more than your job requires at all times. By doing this, you add value to yourself and your organization. I would also stress the importance of integrity. Never allow a lapse in your integrity. I believe that we should always do the right thing when people aren't watching and we should also do the right thing when people are watching. If you truly value your integrity and take it seriously, no one will ever be able to question your integrity. Last but not least, represent your company in a professional way. When serving the public you have your company name written all over you at all times, even when you are not at work. The way you conduct yourself when you aren't at the office can affect the trust your community has in you in a negative way or a positive way. Always remember to represent your company with an owners mentality.



Cory Carter

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

As the Human Resources and Purchasing Manager for Arkema, I oversee two critical functions that support organizational success: workforce management and procurement operations. My responsibilities include developing and implementing HR strategies, managing recruitment and onboarding processes, administering employee benefits, and ensuring compliance with company policies and labor regulations. I also lead initiatives to foster employee engagement and maintain a positive workplace culture.

On the purchasing side, I manage vendor relationships and oversee procurement activities to ensure timely delivery of materials and services while optimizing cost efficiency and quality standards. By aligning HR and purchasing strategies with business objectives, I help drive operational excellence and support sustainable growth.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first professional experiences were in the fast-food industry and the banking industry, and both played a significant role in shaping my approach to leadership and operations today.

Working in the fast-food industry taught me the importance of efficiency,

adaptability, and teamwork in high-pressure environments. I learned how to prioritize tasks, maintain composure under tight deadlines, and deliver consistent customer service—skills that translate directly into managing HR processes and procurement challenges effectively.

My time in the banking industry reinforced the value of accuracy, compliance, and professionalism. Handling financial transactions and sensitive customer information required precision and integrity, which continue to guide my approach to policy adherence, vendor management, and employee relations.

These early experiences provided a strong foundation in service excellence, operational discipline, and accountability, all of which influence how I lead and support organizational success today.

#3. Where is your business located? Hopkinsville, KY.

Our business is in Calvert City, Kentucky, within the Calvert City Industrial Complex. The site has been in operation for over 75 years and holds a unique distinction as the first company to establish operations in the complex. This pioneering presence helped lay the foundation for the area's growth into a major industrial hub. Today, we continue that legacy by focusing on safety, sustainability, and operational excellence, contributing to both the local economy and the broader industry.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not

working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

Outside of work, I am passionate about golf, which I enjoy both as a sport and to relax and challenge myself. I also value spending quality time with my wife and our two children, whether it's at home or engaging in family activities. These moments allow me to recharge and maintain a healthy balance between my professional and personal life.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

The best advice I ever received was from a mentor in the banking industry who said "Always focus on building strong relationships - because trust and collaboration are the foundation of long-term success."

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best piece of business advice I would give to others is "Invest in People". Your team is your greatest asset. Hire well, develop talent, and create an environment where people feel valued and empowered.





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Kent Cadwell

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
I am a franchise owner and travel advisor with Cruise Planners-Kent Cadwell. I've travel planned for friends and family for 20+ years but am only in year three of being a small business owner in the travel industry. My family instilled a love of travel in me when I was still in diapers. As far as what I do, I see it as my job to book exactly what a client wants when they know, and help them through the process, leaning into the 40 years of excellence and experience of the Cruise Planners brand, when they don't know where or when. Of course we book cruises (ocean/river/expedition, mass market tier, premium and luxury tier), but we book so much more. Multi island Hawaii vacations. Honeymoons in Greece, Barbados, Cancun, Punta Cana, St Vincent, and so many more. Family vacations in the Disney family of parks. Adventure travel to national parks, well known and obscure countries, and plenty of all-inclusive stays all through the Caribbean. We work with clients from planning to travel completion.


#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?
One of my very first jobs was installing swimming pools for a local company. We worked long hot hours, but I loved working outside and making good money as a 16-year-old. We began the day school ended for the summer and worked 6 days a week until just a few weeks before school started again. I usually made enough that I could enjoy playing sports during the school year and not have to flip burgers to cover my expenses. Year three I was put in charge of an installation crew after some mentoring the year before. Being 18 years old, meeting up with backhoe operators in the wee hours of the morning and leading them to a job site was good for me, it instilled responsibility and a sense of customer focus at a young age.

#3. Where is your business located? Hopkinsville, KY.
My franchise is a home-based business, but I can work from anywhere that I have access to the internet. I've worked for clients from cruise ships, multiple beach locations, Glacier National Park in Montana, and a host of spots in the Caribbean. The home office for the Cruise Planners brand is in Coral Springs Florida.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)
My hobbies include travel with my wife/family, I'm a hopeless pickleball addict (to the extent that I'm now a certified coach), spending time with our granddaughter Lydia, and I'm a brand-new sourdough bread baker.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)
The best business advice I've received has come in a few different pieces. "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right". "You are your only competition". "Find a way to add value in any scenario".

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?
Don't wait until you think you are ready, the opportunity may pass you by. As one that does not believe in luck or coincidence, I believe luck is preparation meeting opportunity. Do the prep the other guys won't.



Josh Abner

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
Principal Auctioneer/Broker of ATLAS Real Estate & Auction Services. Operating Member of Abstract Investments: A holding company. Firm and Brokerage management. Actively selling real estate and personal property at auction and practicing traditional list-and-sell real estate in KY TN FL IN. 10 traditional agents & 3 auctioneers on staff. Represent the Department of Justice as the broker for US Marshals Service seizures in KY. Abstract Investments manages a portfolio including farm, commercial, and both single and multi family rental assets. There is no such thing as a regular day in my world. Every day is different.


#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?
Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits: Mention personal interests or community activities that's influenced your profession. As a kid I worked on tobacco, hog and produce farms. This instilled work ethic I didn't realize I was getting at the time. I focused the rest of my attention on football and track. Playing 2 years in college lead to my coaching career. As an athlete and coach I learned to get the most out of myself and how to help those around me achieve their goals. All of this carried over into the development of the Firm and Brokerage. My wife Brooke is my inspiration. My mentor and friend, Justin Ochs brought me into the real estate and auction business more than a decade ago and we're still at it to this day working with the US Marshals and at a weekly car auction together. I owe Justin a lot for my development and for where I am today. When it was time for a career change from teaching and coaching I knew I had to find a path to continue to help people. Through the grace of God and my good friend Ray Hubner the auction and real estate business somehow found me. In many ways I've become a professional problem solver. I'm now firmly in a position to help families navigate the most complex situations of their lives and I find it very rewarding.

#3. Where is your business located?
Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business)

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions that help you recharge)
Traveling with Brooke both domestic and abroad and spending as much time at the beach or on the water as possible.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (and who was it)
1. The best deal you'll ever do is the deal you don't do.
2. Everyone has the same 24 hours.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?
Do not sit and wait. Go create what you want. And, if you can figure out how to do it with someone you love you'll find happiness.



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Deana Gschwind

1. Tell us about your work as Director of the Graves County Public Library and what you do from start to finish.

Director, Graves County Public Library

Being the Director of the Graves County Public Library means wearing many hats! It's a job that requires flexibility and a love of problem-solving. I often hear other directors describe it as a role where you "put out fires," and I think that's any manager's role. On any given day, I might be addressing a building concern or emergency, handling a technical issue, or planning a new service for the community.

I'm fortunate to lead a wonderful team that keeps our library running smoothly and serves our community in so many ways. My responsibilities include administrative tasks such as developing and implementing library policies, managing library insurance and employee benefits, filing annual reports and state-required documents, maintaining statistical data, and reporting to the Library Board of Trustees. As a Kentucky public library, we operate under the oversight of the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, to which I also report. I promote our services and build partnerships with local government, schools, and organizations.

On a regular basis, I handle everything from hiring and onboard new employees to troubleshooting technical issues, overseeing projects and staff matters, marketing our library materials and programs, addressing building concerns, and answering endless emails. One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is selecting new books, movies, and digital materials for our collection.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those

experiences shape the way you approach your job today?

My love for libraries began early. I was greatly influenced by my great aunt and uncle, who often took me to the local library when I was a child. My great uncle, a retired teacher, read to me regularly and sparked my lifelong love of reading. In high school, I had a wonderful English teacher who deepened my appreciation for literature, and in college, I worked in the Interlibrary Loan Department as part of a work-study job. That was my first real experience working in a library.

Before that, my early jobs were in retail. I started working part-time when I turned 16, and those experiences taught me how to interact with the public and provide good customer service—skills that are essential when working in a library.

My parents also played a big role in shaping my work ethic. They worked hard all their lives and taught me that no matter what job you do, you should always do it well. Those lessons have stayed with me and continue to guide me in my work today.

3. Where is your business located?

The Graves County Public Library is located at 601 N 17th Street, Mayfield, Kentucky 42066. The current building was completed in 1993 under the direction of then-Director Marion Crislip.

Before that, the library was housed in the historic Edana Locus home, which the city generously provided. However, as the library grew, the old house began to suffer structural damage, so it was time for a new space—and that's how the library came to be in its current location.

I started working at the library in 2002 and became Director in 2014. Since

then, we've renovated the interior, added a larger community room, and created beautiful outdoor spaces including gardens, a literacy trail, and a fountain. Our community room is now used by local businesses and organizations for meetings, training sessions, and events, in addition to the library's own programs. It's wonderful to see how much the library continues to grow as a gathering place for the community.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

My husband and I love to travel and explore new cities whenever we can. Some of our favorite destinations include Atlanta, Chicago, and Miami—places full of cultural attractions like museums, botanical gardens, live performances, and festivals.

Getting away for a bit helps me recharge and often gives me fresh ideas to bring back to the library.

6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Hire people who complement your strengths and fill the gaps in your skill set. Trust them to do their jobs well.

Also, maintaining a friendly but respectful distance with employees allows you to have honest and productive conversations when difficult issues need to be addressed.



Jim McPeake

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

State farm agent . we help people protect their assets and income.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

After graduating from Murray state and playing football I coached high school football for 12 yrs my high school my high school football coach had the most influence on my life , he also want to work with state farm .

#3. Where is your business located?

Office is at 1401 Broadway Paducah

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? TPlay golf sometimes and watching college football

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (and who was it) ire people to do things you don't like to do, a fellow agent gave me that advice early in my career

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Find something you enjoy , hire good people to help you and pay them well



Jimmy Allen

Allen Auto Sales: A Paducah Family Legacy Still Going Strong

PADUCAH, Ky. — For nearly eight decades, Allen Auto Sales has been a familiar name in Paducah. The business began in 1945, when James Allen Sr. started selling used cars in the post-war era with just three vehicles and a simple idea: provide honest, quality cars at a fair price.

From those humble beginnings, the dealership gradually grew and changed locations several times — first on Kentucky Avenue, later on Broadway, and eventually settling at 1225 Jefferson Street, where it has operated for more than 50 years.

In 1968, James E. "Jimmy" Allen Jr. joined his father in the family business. He learned the car trade from the ground up, spending years buying, selling, evaluating, and preparing used vehicles for customers across western Kentucky. Eventually, Jimmy purchased the dealership and continued the family tradition with the same principles his father instilled:

hard work, fair dealing, and treating customers with respect.

Today, Allen Auto Sales is considered the longest-running used-car dealership in Paducah. The business was formally incorporated in 1962 and continues to operate as a trusted source for used vehicles ranging from affordable transportation to well-maintained late-model cars, trucks, and SUVs.

Through decades of change in the automobile market and fluctuations in the local economy, Jimmy Allen has remained firmly in the car business his father started — and he and the dealership are still going strong.

With a commitment to customer service, reliable vehicle selection, and deep roots in the Paducah community, Allen Auto Sales stands as a local example of business longevity and multi-generation success.



Eddie Jones

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am a partner in the litigation law firm known as Boehl Stopher & Graves. I handle most of the firm's litigation services in western, Kentucky. I also serve as a County Commission on the McCracken County Fiscal Court.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.

Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

My first actual job was delivering furniture for Todd's Furniture in Madisonville, Kentucky. That was followed with a summer jobs at Big Rivers Electric Corporation during my college and law school years. My first legal job was for Ronald G. Sheffer who was one of the best trial attorneys in western, Kentucky.

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

Our law firm is located in real estate located at 410 and 412 Broadway Street in Paducah, Kentucky. Rick Walter (also a lawyer with Boehl Stopher & Graves) remodeled 410 Broadway in 2002. In 2010, he and I purchased the adjacent property (412 Broadway) and expanded our building's footprint.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not practicing law, I am generally involved in some form of local government project.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

"Answer the phone when a client calls." – Ron Sheffer

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

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Troy Cartwright

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish). I am the owner and President of a Managed IT Services Company, Diversified-Concepts, Inc. I provide a wide array of Information Technology services including but not limited to computer sales and support, VoIP and telecommunications sales and support, helpdesk management, network configuration and troubleshooting, email service and support, print management services, wireless network configuration, network camera sales and support, cloud services, infrastructure cabling, software sales and support, Microsoft and Apple end user support.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? I had the pleasure of working as a Defense Contractor several years ago, teaching a new Aviation Management Program to US Military Servicemembers. This role was highly technical and gave me a pathway to becoming an IT professional.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.

During my time as an Army Servicemember and Defense Contractor, Chief Warrant Officers often mentored me. Mr. Henry Song, retired Chief Warrant Officer, and Mr. Charles Schneider, retired Chief Warrant Officer, were early mentors to me. They gave me the confidence to accept complex challenges and allowed me to be innovative with my approach to solving work difficulties.

I am a former member of the American Legion, and a current member of the VFW, or Veterans of Foreign Wars. These professional military veteran organizations do a lot for our local communities. Being a part of such highly respected organizations has afforded me the opportunity to work with a diverse group of veterans and civilians.

#3. Where is your business located? My business is currently located in Todd County, Kentucky and I am looking to expand to the Grand Rivers and Paducah, Kentucky area.


Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? As an entrepreneur, I do not have a huge office. I work onsite at my client's businesses and I work remotely.

During the early days of Diversified-Concepts, I was awarded my first government contract to troubleshoot and repair computer workstations for an Army Inspection Team at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. This opportunity was unique because I was a fairly new business at the time, and this contract offered me a lot of support for my small business.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge) I love listening to smooth jazz and cooking; my specialty is Buffalo Wings!

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?) My father is a huge supporter of my business. His advice to me was never to become complacent and to follow my course. He advised me that taking risks are part of my success plan.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? I would advise others who are business-minded to start with a good business plan as well as a marketing strategy. Technology offers several tools for businesses to showcase their products or services. Social media has become a game changer for advertising.




Suzy Gilland

My name is Suzy Gilland. I have been a Real Estate Agent in the Paducah/Western Kentucky market for almost twenty years. I recently joined the Fern Leaf Group, an affiliate of Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate. I have always enjoyed assisting people through the process of what is likely the largest financial transaction they will ever incur.

In my first job as a high school student, I worked at the candy counter inside the downtown Arcade and Columbia movie theaters. I enjoyed interacting with so many who were out for an evening of fun! In fact, this is where my husband claims to have first noticed me....

When I'm not working, Andy (my husband) and I enjoy traveling and spending as much time as possible with our six grandchildren! Both of our adult children and their families actually live in the same neighborhood as us, making our family get togethers very convenient.

I was fortunate to have worked in the beginning of my real estate career with several hard working, successful agents who were willing to help me learn more about the business. I found that hard work combined with integrity will almost always win.



Mike Heneisen

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish). Business Manager, Tri-Rivers Healthcare, PLLC
1997 - Current
Manage finances, operations, credentialing and certifications.
Composed of 3 Rural Health Clinics and multi-specialty group

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? First jobs as a teen mowing lawns, putting up square bales and a life guard.
First management jobs with top 10 retail chains and then transitioned to health care.

Have worked in health care management for 40 years.

#3. Where is your business located? Business located in Marion, Salem and Smithland Kentucky.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge) Was involved as a Boy Scout leader approximately 15 years which included hiking and camping.
Enjoy outdoors, cattle ranching and Bible study.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?) Best advice, Don't try to create an elaborate excuse, just admit you messed up!

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Be strait forward with the facts and be honest.



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Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Shea Nickell

Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Shea Nickell has represented the twenty-three county First Appellate Judicial District on the Commonwealth's highest tribunal since his initial election in November 2019.

The Supreme Court of Kentucky is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law, deciding all manner of controversies, including criminal cases involving the death penalty. In addition, the Supreme Court oversees operations of the statewide judicial system and establishes rules of practice and procedure for all Kentucky judges and attorneys while addressing professional discipline. Though working from judicial chambers located within their respective districts, the seven justices also convene in Frankfort during most months to address administrative matters, consider motions, render decisions, and hear oral arguments.

Justice Nickell chairs the Supreme Court's Appellate Rules Committee and its Continuing Judicial Education Commission and is a member of the judicial branch Audit Committee. His influence was previously felt as a Judge on the fourteen-member Kentucky Court of Appeals, where he served for thirteen years, beginning with his election in November 2006. While there, he chaired the Personnel Committee and was a member of state's Judicial Compensation Commission. Ultimately, his colleagues recognized his legal wisdom and leadership skills by selecting him as their Chief Judge Pro Tempore.

Before becoming an appellate judge, Justice Nickell practiced law 22 years. Licensed in all Kentucky state and federal trial and appellate courts and the United States Supreme Court, he served as a plaintiff and defense civil trial attorney, an Assistant Commonwealth Attorney (21st Judicial Circuit), an Assistant McCracken County Attorney, and a Public Advocate.

He also taught insurance and risk management at Murray State University and jurisprudence at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. In 1995, the Kentucky Bar Association named him the "Outstanding Kentucky Young Attorney."

A native of McCracken County, Justice Nickell graduated from Paducah Tilghman High School in 1977. He earned a bachelor's degree from DePauw University in 1981, with a double major in communications and political science. At DePauw, he served as Student Body President, Editor of a campus newspaper, and received the "Walker Cup Award," presented annually by the faculty to the graduating senior who has contributed most to the campus community. A former member of the University's Board of Trustees, he currently serves on the Advisory Board for the institutions College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In 1984, he earned his juris doctor degree from the University of Kentucky College of Law, where he was elected to serve as President of the Student Bar Association.

Over the years, Justice Nickell has been affiliated with numerous professional, historical, and civic organizations, and is a Life Fellow of the Kentucky Bar Foundation. He was inducted into the Kentucky Lions Hall of Fame in 2015, served as an international director on the 39-member Board of Lions Clubs International from 2019-22, and was named an International Ambassador of Good Will, the Association's highest honor, in 2022. A 1972 Eagle Scout and former Board member of the Shawnee Trails Boy Scout Council, he received the Outstanding Eagle Scout Award from the National Eagle Scout Association in 2020. A member of the Sons of the American Revolution, he formerly served on the Board of Paducah's Market House

Museum. In addition, he is a Silver Life Member of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a Life Sponsor of Ducks Unlimited, a 32nd Degree Mason, a Gideon, and a deacon at Paducah's Highland Baptist Church. A popular regional singer and recording artist, he formerly served as music director at Paducah's Concord United Methodist Church and First Baptist Church.

Whenever swearing in new attorneys or hiring staff, Justice Nickell always offers the following advice, gleaned from his lifelong personal and professional experiences: "Perfection is not required, nor is it achievable. However, good enough is never good enough, and only one's best efforts in any relationship and every situation is acceptable."

As a young person, Justice Nickell was confronted with deciding between a career in the ministry or the law. He ultimately realized he was called to minister through the law, in accordance with the Greatest Commandment announced in Matthew 22:37-40, which is simply to "Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind" and to "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The First Supreme Court District is comprised of the Commonwealth's westernmost counties, including Ballard, Calloway, Caldwell, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Davies, Fulton, Graves, Henderson, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Logan, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, McLean.



Tori Rogers

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish.)

Hi! I'm Tori Rodgers, the owner of Tortitude Cat Café. We are a foster home for rescue cats and kittens looking for forever families. We provide a home-like atmosphere that allows you to visit with our fur babies and learn their personalities. If you make a bond, you can fill out an adoption application. If not, you still played a very important role in the lives of our rescues by helping us socialize them. Plus, it's a wonderful stress-reducing experience for people of all ages. We also offer prepackaged snacks and drinks, including specialty cat cookies from Kirchhoff's Bakery and we have party packages for a unique get together experience for any occasion.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

I've wanted to own a cat café for several years. I visited one called The Naughty Cat Café in Chattanooga Tennessee and fell in love with the whole idea. Doing research, I learned that there were less than 200 cat cafes across the United States in 2023. None were within a 3-hour driving distance from Paducah. We officially opened our doors on September 20, 2024. As of late 2025, the number has grown to over 300 making the US a leading country for cat-themed coffee shops. Café

owners typically partner with animal shelters and rescues to facilitate adoptions and to educate on the importance of spay and neuter programs. Our rescue partner, All About the Cats is a 501c3 not for profit that helps spay and neuter every cat that is adopted out of the café. We also partner with other local not-for-profits, Jackson Purchase Forgotten Felines and Huntingdon TNR & Kitten Rescue who spay/neuter every feline they bring to the café for adoption. In our first year of operation, we have found homes for more than 500 cats and kittens!

#3. Where is your business located?

You can visit us at 2420 New Holt Road, Paducah, KY Tortitude gets it's unique name based on the personality trait of the owner's tortoiseshell cat, Nala. It's a word used to describe this color of cat's famously feisty, sassy, and strong willed personality. They are often described as divas who know what they want. They are vocal and energetic and affectionate but demanding.

What great traits to establish a business on!



Tony Copeland

#1. Tell us about your work (Stores Supervisor/Maintenance Supervisor) and what you do at work (Manage Arkema Storeroom).

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

As a Purchasing Agent, I understood that you build relationships with the customer and the supplier. When there is trust and honesty within the group, everyone looks out for the

interest of the team as a whole. Relationships with community groups allow you to network and obtain valuable information in achieving ones' goals.

#3. Where is your business located?

Calvert City, KY

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

I would golf everyday if time permitted.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

No matter the situation, be



totally honest with all parties involved.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Know the people you deal with and get to know them on a personal level.

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Todd Cooper

1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My name is Todd Cooper. I am the Ballard County Judge Executive. The job of a Judge Executive is complex and the judge wears many hats. Management of County government and county finances is the top priority. The Judge works with other county elected officials and department heads to reach the goals and mission of each department, which to provide the best county services to the residents. The Judge serves on numerous boards as well in the county and the region. For instance the Judge serves on the County Health Board, the Purchase Health board. The judge serves on the Purchase Area development District Board and several committees or boards at the PADD. The judge serves on the Sr Citizen Board of each county and some serve on the public library boards. The judge serves on the UK Extension District Board, West Ky Allied Board and the Economic Development Board or Boards. In the Purchase area of West Ky, the Judges created WAVE(West Ky Alliance for a Vibrant Economy) in 2016. The judges meet monthly to work with each other on projects, support one another at the state and federal level and work across county lines to make our region better and stronger. The second most important job of the Judge Executive is to advocate for your county and people at the state and federal level.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way youMy first job was

to work with my father—Dick Cooper—in his home remodeling and new residence construction business. It was great to see something come out of the ground and in a few months be turned into a place for people to live. During my work with my father, the work and business taught me how to work, along with the discipline to stick with the project until its completion. My second job was in County government—law enforcement- to be exact. The job showed me how to work with people, treat people with dignity and respect and build relationships with others. Three mentors in that arena were Sheriff Herby Vance, Sheriff Jack Stevens and LaCenter police chief Roy Batts.

My wife and I have worked with the youth of our church—Wickliffe First Baptist Church—since 1990. The experiences of working with young people and their parents was paramount in learning how to serve others and placing others needs ahead of your own.

#3. Where is your business located? Our business is cohabitated with 2 other businesses. We are located in a building shared by Zito Media and the Ballard Co. Sheriff at 1718 Barlow Road, Wickliffe, Ky 42087. We were looking for a property to house county government offices if an emergency arose. We contacted Zito about their property. It was large enough to house 4 county offices. It was built in 1992. At first Zito declined to sell to the County but after some time agreed to sell the property to the County for very little. We gave them a 99 year lease on their office space in the building and a drop yard on the

rear of the property for their operations. We spent four years remodeling the office into a space we can use for 50 or more years. It is an amazing property.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

My passions are my grand kids and family and our church family. All hours not spent at work, is spent with my family or my church family. We also help with maintenance on family owned properties and at church.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (and who was it)A) My uncle, who was a part owner at Graves Brothers Plumbing in LaCenter for 30 or so years... advice was “Never hire any relatives. Relationships can be ruined and you don’t want to lose family over work!” B) My father said to “Treat others

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?People notice your work ethic. Go above and beyond for the people you are working for (customers/clients) and they will be gracious to you and stick with you. Be honest and open with your customers!



Tom Moodie

1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Mayor City of Grand Rivers KY – manage all city operations

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits:

Mention personal interests or community activities that’s influenced your profession.

United Iron Workers Local 601 also worked at Carbide Graphite Group, Celenace Chemical Companyand was VP at Green Turtle Bay Resort

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business

City of Grand Rivers KY

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions that help you recharge)

Outdoor Activities

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (and who was it)

Concentrate, communicate and apply yourself and be creative

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Always look for reasons to do the things that need to be done, “NEVER” look for reasons not to do things.



Tom Curtsinger

#1. Tell us about your work—your job title, your business name, and what your role looks like from start to finish.

I work in the wine industry as a grape grower and wine maker. I am the owner/ operator of Fancy Farm Vineyard and Winery in Fancy Farm KY. My personal role started as a grape grower, which I planted in 2008. Currently I am growing five different varieties of grapes. Most years, the crop begins in late January/ early February with pruning back last years vines and making room for new vine buds. Throughout the spring and early summer, most of the work consist of spraying the vines and training them to grow straight up. A good year for grapes is a summers that all other farmers hate, drought and dry. With deep roots and loose soil, grapes thrive in dry weather. In the fall, each variety matures causing the grapes sugar level to increase, the acid level to decrease. After picking, the grapes are de=stemmed and crushed and put into tanks to ferment. At the right time, the finished wine is filtered and bottled. Sales and events for this wine at the winery I leave to Robbie Felker who is my better half, takes control and markets the wine and winery.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those early experiences shape the way you work today?

My first jobs were working in a tobacco patch, hauling hay, and mowing yards. L;earned about hard work and developed a strong work ethic. Tobacco give you a sense of pride as well when you can grow and market high grade tobacco.

My father was my strongest influence, yeaching me how to set and attain personal goal, adapt and try new things, and focus on the important tihings each day and the rest will work themselves out. My uncle also was a huge influence and help as he had the farm which I started working on and am still working today. My experience with tobacco did instill pride to do hand work and nuture the crop. In some places, there could be some ribbing about growing ssome new crop but my community was 100% behind me. Sight seerers and volunteers were pretty common when we first started.

#3. Where is your business located? Is there anything unique about how you acquired or developed your space—building, remodeling, special history, etc.?

The winery is located at 115 Hayden St, Fancy Farm, KY, built on the property formerly owned by my great uncle. The name of the winery was a result of a thought that on a regular farm you grow corn and soybeans but

wine grapes you grow on a fancy farm. The label icon comes from a question of “what do you see on a fancy farm?” The answer was “instead of a scarecrow in straw hat and bib overalls, you would see a scarecrow in tophat and tails. The watermark on the side of the label is the symbol I first drew on the bottle of the scarecrows head. That icon has 4 stitches in his smile for my 4 sons, and the bow tie has a “C” in it for Curtsinger.

Fancy Farm Vineyard and Winery is the first “licensed alcohol producer in the county(Back in the 1800’s there was a distillery but they didn’t need a licenses back then)

The building is styled after a barn and has a chandelier in the front loft window which is something you would see in a fancy barn.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? Share any hobbies or passions that help you recharge.

When I am not working at the winery, I do have a full time job as an industrial trainer, which I really enjoy. My hobbies include hunting and fishing and traveling with Robbie. She doesn’t hunt but she does out-fish me most of the time. We enjoy family gatherings and being with our friends on adventure trips.

#5. What’s the best business advice someone has ever given you? (And who shared it with you?)

My father gave me some very simple advice about work, and goals: Don’t be afraid to try something new because you may not succeed, because falling short means you gave it your best and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. Not trying never works.”

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would offer to others?

I am very lucky to have good group of fellow wine makers beside me, always there if I need anything. My advice is to get to know people who can be a resource and support, learn from them and be thankful for your relationship.



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\$155,000

2020 JD 6155R TRACTOR, IVT TRANS, C/H/A, MFWD, 540/1000 PTO, 3 SCV, 3PT WITH TOP LINK, 683 HOURS, 420/80R46 REAR DUALS, 380/85R30 FRONT TIRES, SN 1L06155RHLP960224



2013 JOHN DEERE 8310R

\$146,500

5251 HRS, ILS, 480/70R34 FRONT DUALS, 480/80R50 REAR DUALS, 4 SCV, 1000 PTO, QUICK HITCH, IVT TRANSMISSION, 60 GPM HYD PUMP, S/N 1RW8310RJCD067670



2024 JOHN DEERE 6110M

\$139,500

12 HRS, 420/70R28 FRONT TIRES, 520/70R38 REAR TIRES, JD 620R LOADER W/ BUCKET, 3RD FUNCTION, TRIPLE LINK SUSPENSION, 2 SCV, 540/1000 PTO, 24 SPEED COMMAND QUAD, S/N 1L06110MPRX418771



2012 JOHN DEERE 9460R

\$139,500

2012 JOHN DEERE 9460R TRACTOR, 4WD, 4216 HRS, 800/70R38 DUALS, 5 SCV, 18 SPEED POWERSHIFT, S/N 1RW9460RKCP004029



2021 JOHN DEERE 6155M

\$115,000

1465 HRS, 420/85R28 FRONT TIRES, 460/85R42 REAR TIRES, 3 SCV, 540/1000 PTO, QUICK HITCH, 20 SPEED COMMANDQUAD, LHR, S/N 1L06155MKMX115032



2011 JOHN DEERE 8270R

\$105,900

6503 HRS, 380/80R38 FRONT TIRES, 480/80R50 REAR DUALS, 5 SCV, 1000 PTO, 16 SPEED POWERSHIFT, 60 GPM HYD PUMP, S/N 1RW8270RKAP011731



2018 JOHN DEERE 6155R

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MFWD, C/H/A, 2748 HRS, 380/85R28 FRONT TIRES, 460/85R38 REAR TIRES, 110" AXLES, RACK & PINION REAR AXLES, 3 SCV, 540/1000 PTO, 20 SPEED POWER QUAD, LHR, 4100 PROCESSOR, ATR, S/N 1RW6155RCJA033329



2009 JOHN DEERE 8330

\$86,000

2009 JOHN DEERE 8330 TRACTOR, 7010 HRS, 480/46 REAR DUALS, 3 SCV, 1000 PTO, 18 SPEED POWERSHIFT, ATR, S/N RW8330P047376



2005 JOHN DEERE 8120

\$75,500

6542 HRS, 420/90R30 FRONT TIRES, 480/80R46 REAR DUALS, 4 SCV, 540/1000 PTO, POWERSHIFT TRANSMISSION, S/N RW8120P031064



2004 JOHN DEERE 8120

\$65,500

MFWD, 8351 HRS, 420/85R30 FRONT TIRES, 520/85R42 REAR DUALS, 4 SCV, 1000 PTO, QUICK HITCH, POWERSHIFT TRANSMISSION, S/N RW8120P027273



1994 CASE IH 7220

\$54,500

2WD, C/H/A, 5467 HRS, 14L-16.1 FRONT TIRES, 460/85R42 REAR DUALS, 3 SCV, 540/1000 PTO, 19 SPEED TRANSMISSION, S/N JJA0055595

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2025 TOP 100 PEOPLE OF WESTERN KENTUCKY

Tashena Hill

Introduction

My name is Tashena Hill, and I am an independent pharmacy owner and pharmacist dedicated to serving my community at Glenn’s Prescription Center in Salem, KY, as well as Glenn’s Apothecary in Marion, KY. My career in pharmacy began as a junior in high school, where I worked as a cooperative education student at Glenn’s Apothecary. My early responsibilities included stocking vials, making local deliveries, working as a cashier, and maintaining a clean environment. After graduating from high school, I accepted a full-time position at Glenn’s Prescription Center as a pharmacy technician and pursued my certification while simultaneously attending college. My commitment to the field led me to pharmacy school, and after working full time through my undergraduate studies, I was accepted into the PharmD program at Samford University, where I graduated in 2011. In 2014, after a challenging period working for a chain drug store, I purchased the pharmacies I grew up in from Norris Glenn, the founder of these businesses, which have been serving their communities since 1954.

Primary Responsibilities as a Pharmacist

As a pharmacist, my primary duty is to ensure the safe and effective dispensing of medications to patients. Patient care is central to our mission, and we support it through medication management and adherence programs designed to optimize therapeutic outcomes. I work collaboratively with other healthcare providers to deliver coordinated care, administer immunizations, and strive to provide outstanding customer service to every individual who comes through our doors.

Business Ownership Duties

In addition to my clinical responsibilities, I am the owner of both pharmacies, which means it is my responsibility to ensure that all professional and legal standards are consistently met. I oversee the financial management of the businesses, order supplies and manage stock, and am directly involved in hiring, training, and supervising pharmacy staff. By maintaining these high standards, I help ensure that our pharmacies continue to thrive and serve our communities effectively.

Mentorship and Influence

Norris Glenn, pharmacist and previous owner, played a significant role in inspiring my interest in pharmacy. He was an exceptional mentor who instilled in me a passion for patient care, independent pharmacy, and business ownership. Mark Wurth, pharmacist at Glenn’s Apothecary, also provided constant encouragement to pursue higher education and the pharmacy profession, further shaping my career path.

Community Roots and Personal Reflections

Glenn’s Prescription Center is located at 119 East Main Street in Salem, KY, and Glenn’s Apothecary can be found at 520 West Gum Street in Marion, KY. Few businesses can claim the heritage of serving their communities continuously since 1954, and I take great pride in the legacy of these small, local independent pharmacies. In my free time, I enjoy outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, kayaking, and gardening, which provide relaxation and fulfillment. Spending quality time with family and friends is also important to me, as these relationships keep me grounded and joyful.

Guiding Philosophy

Throughout my career, I have learned many valuable lessons from mentors like Mark and Norris. One piece of advice that has stayed with me is, “you cannot win them all.” As a business owner, it is easy to take things personally, whether it’s a dissatisfied customer or an unforeseen challenge. However, it is important to always consider the perspective of others, strive to give one’s best, and not lose sight of the positive impact made. I believe that as a small-town girl turned pharmacist and pharmacy owner, every prescription represents a neighbor who trusts me. The values I grew up with—kindness, honesty, and genuine connection—continue to guide my care. In our small community, the relationships we build are just as meaningful as the medicine we provide.



Susan Sullivan

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My name is Susan Sullivan. I have been Ballard County Property Valuation (PVA) Administer for two terms and will be running for a third term in 2026. My job is assessing all real and personal property within Ballard County at 100% fair cash value for tax purposes.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

After graduating from Ballard Memorial High School, I got my first job at Snower & Company, a garment factory in Cario, Illinois, where my job was to sew uniforms. My parents encouraged me to go back to school so I enrolled at Draughon’s Business College in Paducah. While at Draughon’s, I worked part-time at Furniture City where I was an office assistant.

After graduating from college, I was hired as a loan teller at a bank in Cairo where I worked for twelve years. When I retired from banking, I had worked my way up to Loan Officer. I believe, the factory job, the office job, and my banking career helped me, early in life, to learn how to work with the public. I have used those skills throughout my career as an elected official.

During my last year in banking, I began my own cleaning business and had several employees on payroll. Today, I continue to run my cleaning business but on a much smaller scale. I get satisfaction from cleaning, and after all these years, I still enjoy it.

In 2000, I was hired, part-time, by Deloris Hatler, former Ballard County PVA to work as a deputy in the PVA Office. After 11 years I became a full-time employee and was moved up to Chief Deputy. I am honored to have worked for two Ballard County Property Valuation Administrators, Deloris Hatler and Anita Campbell, both of whom are to this day

an inspiration to me. Both ladies were true mentors and had a dedication to the PVA office that they passed on to me. The great job they both did as elected PVA administrators continues to influence me to do my very best, every day.

#3. Where is your business located?

The Ballard County PVA office is located in the basement in the Ballard County Courthouse.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

My personal interests include playing a weekly card game with several wonderful women, many of whom I have known since I was very young. I have been married 30 years to Sonny and one of our favorite past times is motorcycle riding on our Harley Davidson. Always, at the top of my fun things to do is going to the beach and spending time with my grandchildren.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

The person whom I’d like to think has given me the best advice, and influenced me the most in life, is my dad. My dad owned & operated Freeman’s TV in Kevil, KY. He taught me to be honest, to work hard, to treat people fairly and to be the best person I could be.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best advice I could pass along to anyone – young or old – comes from my dad: be honest, work hard, treat people fairly and be the best person you can be. Look to God for guidance. He is always giving us instructions if we ask and listen to him.



Dipel Patel

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

As a restaurant owner, my work begins with planning, review reservations and staffing, check inventory levels, and coordinate supply orders. Before opening, I ensure the dining area, kitchen, and bar are clean, stocked, and fully prepared. I meet with my team to review the menu, specials, and any customer notes.

During service, I manage both front and back of house operations. I monitor food quality, timing, and customer satisfaction, step in when the team needs help, and resolve any issues that arise. At the same time, I handle administrative duties—such as bookkeeping, budgeting, marketing, scheduling, and compliance with health and safety regulations.

At closing, I review sales reports, confirm deposits, oversee cleanup, check remaining inventory, and prepare notes for the next day. From opening to closing, my role is to coordinate all parts of the restaurant to keep it running smoothly and successfully.

IN SHORT My job is a mix of management, teamwork, customer service, and a lot of problem-solving.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

During my carrier as a Software Programmer , I have done a couple of side small roles in the food industry—like retail clerk and helping with basic prep work in the kitchen. I also worked as a server for a while. These jobs taught me how every position in a restaurant is important. Because of those experiences, I treat my staff with respect, stay patient, and understand exactly what it takes to run a smooth and efficient restaurant today.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.
Two of my life mentors “My Father” & “My Husband” taught me attention to detail and the importance of keeping a clean, efficient workspace. Later I met “Mr.Roy Trimble & Ms.Kathy Trimble” showed me how to connect with customers and handle busy shifts with grace and confidence.

I’ve always enjoyed cooking at home, trying new recipes, and exploring local food markets. I’m also active in community events like food fairs and charity meals. These interests helped spark my passion for fresh ingredients and local flavors, which directly influence how I run my restaurant today.

#3. Where is your business located? Lone Oak Little Castle- 3460 Lone Oak Road Paducah KY 42003

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?
(i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

Since 1999 Lone Oak Little Castle is a popular, family-friendly diner known for its traditional, scratch-made, homestyle Southern and American cooking.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I’m not working, I focus on hobbies that help me recharge. I enjoy cooking at home, trying new restaurants for inspiration, spending time with family, and getting outdoors for walks or bike rides. I also like reading and exploring new food trends. These activities help me unwind and return to work refreshed and motivated.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

The best business advice I ever received was to “take care of your people, and they’ll take care of your business.” Treating staff with respect, giving them support, and creating a positive work environment has helped my restaurant succeed.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best advice I would give is to stay consistent and take care of your team. Good food or good ideas matter, but consistency and strong teamwork are what keep a business running and customers coming back.



Johnathan Hoover

Local Auctioneer Jonathan Hoover builds reputation across Kentucky

Hopkinsville, KY — Jonathan Hoover, owner and principal auctioneer of Hoover’s Auctions & Real Estate, LLC, has become a recognized name in the auction industry throughout Christian County and beyond. Based in Hopkinsville, Hoover runs a diverse range of auctions, including estates, real estate, livestock, and farm equipment.

Licensed under Kentucky Auctioneer License #256416, Hoover has earned accolades from the Kentucky Auctioneers Association, being named among the Top Ten Auctioneers in both 2020 and 2021. In 2018, he was also a finalist in the national auctioneering competition hosted by the National Auctioneers Association, highlighting his expertise in bid calling.

Hoover’s auctions cover a broad spectrum: estate sales of homes, vehicles, and personal property; farmland and commercial property sales; and livestock events including horses, mules, and farm equipment. Many of his auctions are conducted both in-person and online, allowing remote participation via simulcast bidding. Popular events such as the Spring Roundup and Mule & Horse Sales are often held at local venues like the Christian County Agriculture Expo Center.

Clients consistently praise Hoover’s professionalism and attention to detail. One testimonial notes:

“I met Jonathan when he was doing an estate auction for the family ... He always was in contact with us keeping the family well informed. ... I would highly recommend Jonathan Hoover to anyone wanting to have an auction.”

Another added,
“Very professional ... first class horse and mule sale.”

Hoover’s Auctions at a Glance
Contact Info:
(270) 305-2807
jhoover741@gmail.com

Services Provided:

Estate Auctions: houses, vehicles, household goods, personal property
Real Estate Auctions: farmland, houses, commercial properties, land tracts

Livestock & Farm Equipment: horses, mules, farm machinery
Online & In-Person Auctions with remote bidding options

Notable Recognition:
Kentucky Auctioneers Association: Top Ten Auctioneer (2020, 2021)
National Auctioneers Association: Finalist in Bid Calling Competition (2018)

Popular Venues: Christian County Agriculture Expo Center, 2850 Pembroke Rd., Hopkinsville, KY



Jules Harrison

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My name is Jules Harrison. I am the agent/owner at Harrison Agency-Shelter

Insurance in Henderson, KY. My days are spent answering emails, writing insurance policies, and the best part is meeting new people like you!

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was as a waitress in a small-town country restaurant. This job taught me how to talk to anyone and to learn how to relate with not so happy customers. I love to help others and have always served in that type of role. I was an EMT after college, then a pharmacy technician, and then on to the mental health field for 12 years. I decided to give insurance sales a try in 2019. I have found a great way to help others and serve my community. I enjoy supporting the community and always look forward to finding new ways to help serve.

#3. Where is your business located?

You can find me at Shelter Insurance located at 417 S Main St Ste 5, Henderson, KY 42420. I look forward to meeting you!

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

When I am not working, I enjoy outdoor adventures like hiking, kayaking, and camping. I am a regular at the local gym and utilize my time there to unwind and release stress. My favorite thing to do is spend time with my adorable grandbabies!

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

The best advice about business that I’ve been given was a quote from Jim Kwik. “The two most powerful words in the English language are the shortest: ‘I am.’ Whatever you put after those two words determines your destiny”.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best piece of business advice that I can give is to do your least favorite thing about your job first, that way the worst part is out of the way and the rest of the day will be easy!



Western Kentucky's 2025 Top 100

Congratulations, Winners!

Gini Grace

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am an attorney, and have a solo practice. Gini G. Grace, Attorney At Law. It would be considered a general practice firm with a strong concentration in public service law, My practice varies from business law to family law to civil practice. I am the firm, because I do all of my administrative work, research, documentation preparation and electronic filing, meeting and advising clients along with appearing in court for hearings and trials.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

My first jobs were in retail and service industries. Before attending law school, I was employed at USEC, Paducah Kentucky, where I was a control room operator in the central control room. Additionally, I worked at Roadway Express as an operational supervisor. My mentors were teachers who influenced and guided me to continue my education and gave me the importance of continuing to learn and develop. That would include Gerald Collie, an early teacher, and Doctor Winfield Rose, a professor in the Public Administration Department at Murray State University. I am a member of the Kentucky Bar Association.

#3. Where is your business located?

For the majority of my legal profession, my business has been located in a rural setting. I have a home office. It is calming and serene and a nice

contrast to the intensity and demands of the courtroom.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

When I am not working, I enjoy dancing, exercise classes, traveling, photography, writing, and pets.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

I do not think there was one specific person that gave me business advice. My work background allowed me to work with many knowledgeable and inspirational people, which I took and applied what I learned from each of them.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

This may be simplistic, but do the best you can every day at whatever type of work or profession you are engaged in. If you are entrepreneurial make a plan to guide you but be flexible enough to respond to changes in your business environment. Just when you think a profession or business will not change, it does - At the moment, AI, artificial intelligence, is making ways into all types of work, including the legal profession.



Hank Garner

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I'm the Executive Pastor at Lone Oak First Baptist Church. The scope of my job is hard to explain, but I serve the church by ensuring that we are good stewards of all of the resources that the Lord has provided to us – financial, human, facility, and educational.



#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was washing golf carts at Twin City Country Club in Sandersville, Georgia, my hometown. I've also worked in a men's clothing store and as a radio DJ and eventually an operations manager for a radio network in Atlanta. I went into full-time ministry at a church in Atlanta as I was finishing my degree at the University of Georgia (GO DAWGS!), and I have been privileged to serve churches in Atlanta; Fort Myers, Florida; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Columbia, Tennessee. We moved to West Kentucky seven years ago, and we have enjoyed making this area "home."

#3. Where is your business located?

Lone Oak First Baptist Church has been around for a long time (since 1881), and our campus at 3601 Lone Oak Rd has been in use since 1967. We're in the process of updating the entire facility through our "TO EVERY GENERATION" building project. When the current phase is completed, we will have a brand new facility for preschoolers and children, as well as a welcoming lobby space. It has been my job (and joy!) to shepherd this project along, and we're very excited about it.

Harold Monroe

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am the CEO for Pennyrile Allied Community Services. We are a community actin agency whose mission to "Empowering low-income individuals to become self-reliant through community service, assistance, education, and partnerships".



#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

The first job I had was running my own hay crew with my twin brother Darrell. Since we were only 15 I had to have someone on the crew that was 16 or older to drive the hay truck on the highway. My first job off our farm was picking tomatoes in Colonel Moore's Farm in Possum Trot for the summer. Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits: There was no one I looked up to more or respected more than my own father, J.C. Monroe or Pewee to those who knew him. He was the hardest working and most honest man I ever knew and like many of his generation he could fix or make anything. Dad was part of the Lola gang and I also thought the world of his cousin from Lola, Bobby Williams who we hauled many a hay bale over the years I came to PACS after having held a few positions over the years. I had worked in the economic/investment area n and have held the Certified Financial Planner (CFP). After several years of working with Caterpillar in Peoria where I was fortunate to travel the world I as well as Nashville where I was oversaw the investments for the Southern Baptist Foundation my family longed to return to west Kentucky. I saw a posting for the position I currently hold at PACS and I have been leading this wonderful group of people since March 2015.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? We have been in our central offices for over 25 years. We did acquire the Peek Law Building a few years ago in Smithland. There is very limited space in Livingston County so we decided t purchase this for our current needs and possible expansion if ever needed. We are building a maintenance office building in Hopkinsville to better maintain our current fleet of 130 plus vehicles (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business)

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions that help you recharge) I really do not have many hobbies other than being active at church. I sing in church and hope to start playing golf. Otherwise I pretty much follow our only granddaughter who will graduate from high school and is on the swim team.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? One of my early managers, George Smith who was the district manager for Northwestern Mutual Life. This was my first job out of college in the early 1980's when you could to get any job except 100% commission. He always told me to never apologize for any decision you make that is in the best interest of your family. If you always focus on family everything will usually work out for the best.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? First, to always do more than expected and whenever you are asked to try something new or a new position to be willing to learn and try. Secondly, do not do any job you dread or despise. I never understood folks who work year after year hating what the do but stay "because the benefits or retirement is god". Life is too short to be miserable every day.

James Peck

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).James Peck. Owner of Peck's Customs. Peck's Customs is a community minded Mechanic Shop that offers a one stop shop, from oil changes to engine swaps and everything in between. James spends countless hours researching new issues to stay up to date on customers vehicles, finding the best way to fix things to save them the most money and keep them safely on the road.

Due to a motorcycle accident many years ago, James has had to limit the physical aspect of being a mechanic, but he spends his days teaching and guiding the next generation of mechanics, passing on his decades of knowledge, hoping to leave a legacy of quality workmanship, and working with is daughter in the office, keeping everything on schedule to get vehicles back to their owners as quickly as possible.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

James has been working on cars with his father since he was big enough to hold a wrench. He has always loved anything with wheels, he raced bicycles as a child and moved onto cars as a teenager. If it's got tires, there's a good chance James has driven it, and he turned that lifelong passion into a business. He's worked other jobs through his life, but he always comes back to cars.

#3. Where is your business located? Peck's Customs is located in the old family dollar building in Wickliffe. James had been interested in buying the building since the dollar store closed and missed out on it for years. When the opportunity presented itself at the end of 2023 he jumped on it. The whole family pitched in to remodel it into a dream space. We have loved being in a bigger space and being able to better serve our customers. We've done our best to create a welcoming and comfortable waiting area for stop and go oil changes, which has been a long time goal for James. We are currently remodeling to make our children's area even better for our little visitors.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? James' love of vehicles extends to smaller pursuits. In his off time he loves to build and drive remote control cars. You can often find him helping his grandchildren rock climbing or racing tiny versions of the vehicles that go through the shop every day.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?Be honest and work hard, James' Grandfather told him that as a young man. Dishonest business people don't have to work as hard, but it'll eventually catch up with them.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? Be careful who you hire, your employees directly reflect on your business, and hiring the wrong person can be costly.



Steve Everly

Steve Everly, Store Supervisor at Food Giant Supermarkests, Inc.



Food Giant Leader and Former Earlington Mayor

The long path from Carry-Out Boy to Store Supervisor

Steve Everly began his career in the grocery business in a humble role – working as a carry-out boy.

Over the years, through hard work and commitment, he rose through the ranks. From 2005 to 2015 he served as Store Manager for Food Giant Supermarkets, Inc.

Since May 2015 he has held the position of Store Supervisor at Food Giant.

Steve is recognized as someone who understands the grocery business from the ground up.

Steve Everly also served two full terms as mayor of Earlington, Kentucky.

Why His Story Matters

Earlington is a small town – one of the many communities in rural Kentucky with deep roots in coal mining and small-town life. Having someone like Steve Everly – who bridges both the commercial world (via Food Giant) and civic life (as former mayor) – helps maintain a connection between local business, community governance, and everyday citizens.

His path from grocery-store beginnings to management and public office is emblematic of local leadership grounded in everyday work and community service.

Jasmine Pickard

#1 Tell us about your work—your job title, your business name, and what your role looks like from start to finish.

I am a small business owner. I opened "Renewed Coffee & Tea" a local coffee shop located in Jackson Purchase Medical Center. My role consists of working in the shop daily, as well as maintaining the inventory and running the shop day to day as smoothly as possible, and overseeing all aspects of the business.



#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those early experiences shape the way you work today? Feel free to mention mentors, influences, personal interests, or community activities that helped guide your professional path.

I am an older sister and have helped take care of my siblings all my life. I was a server in a restaurant for a time in high school and I was a nanny for 4 years out of high school for a family with two kids while going to college. I loved working for them and it really taught me what it looks like to be there and take care of others needs. I then became a barista in a coffee shop and loved learning the process of running a coffee shop. I come from a big family, so I have always been ready to jump in and lend a hand and that has definitely played a role in my work ethic today. Seeing a need and doing my best to fill it. My parents and grandparents are business owners so I have been blessed with the opportunity to learn from them and see the hard work and dedication it takes to run your own business.

#3. Where is your business located? Is there anything unique about how you acquired or developed your space—building, remodeling, special history, etc.?

We are located in the hospital at Jackson Purchase Medical Center in Mayfield, Ky. It is such a unique space because they have never had a coffee shop in the hospital. I am so blessed and grateful to have been able to be the first to open one up! It has been such a great experience with the staff, patients, and now outside customers who I have built relationships with. It is very important to me to create those relationships and meet new people and provide a service for them that they need and enjoy.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? Share any hobbies or passions that help you recharge.

I serve in my youth ministry at Heartland Church in Paducah, Ky. I have a passion for the younger generation and serving others. I also am very active and love to go to the gym. I am passionate about serving others through mission work and have volunteered on many domestic and international trips overseas. I also love traveling and learning new places and cultures. With any down time I have, I love spending it with family and friends.

#5. What's the best business advice someone has ever given you? (And who shared it with you?)

To seek the Lord in everything I do. No matter where life takes you or how things work out, He is consistent and will lead you where you are meant to be. My mom has played a significant role in who I am today and has always taught me to put the Lord first in all things and the rest will fall into place.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would offer to others?

No one will run your business the way that you will. Always have a close eye on things and stay informed with what is going on. Accept feedback from your customers and create relationships with them. They are the ones who support you and keep you going so appreciate them. They could be supporting any other business but choosing yours so be super thankful for them! They are a blessing!

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Jason Wilson

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Assistant Superintendent of Operations for Christian County Public Schools. I oversee all of the operational departments for the school system such as facilities and maintenance, transportation, food services, health/nurses, and technology. Our district is currently in the final stages of construction of a new consolidated high school and I oversee the day-to-day operations of that project for the district.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

As a teenager, I mowed lawns and did a little landscaping. However, my first real job with an employer was a student worker in the technology department of Christian County Public Schools during the summer between my junior and senior year of high school. I did this for several summers and later transitioned over to the maintenance department.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.

Early on, my father, Ted Wilson, pushed me. My dad was a professor at Hopkinsville Community College but outside of work, he is a jack-of-all-trades and always pulled me along on the many projects saying, "You're going to need to know how to do this one day." In high school, I was pushed and shaped by coaches such as David Joiner, Kevin Crider, and Josh Hunt. These gentlemen help to form a work ethic and persistence that carried from the ball field into real life. They had a genuine interest in me becoming a better young man in the end no matter what happened on the field.

Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

As an educator, coach, and administrator for the past 20 years community involvement with the youth has been important to me. I am active in my church volunteering and serving. I have done work with a local mentoring group called Men to Be and I am active in the Leadership Christian County program. I currently am serving on the board for Leadership Christian County but have been a participant as well as the Program Coordinator. I also serve on other boards throughout the community.

#3. Where is your business located? Hopkinsville, KY

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

I work for the public schools. We are currently building a new consolidated high school will open in August of 2026. I am the district lead on this project.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not working I enjoy spending time with my wife and 2 daughters. We enjoy the lakes and traveling together, mainly to the beach. I also like to play golf and will occasionally get out and do a little hunting.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

When I decided to leave the classroom and coaching and get into school administration, Mr. Tim McGinnis gave me the advice of always making decisions based on what is right for kids, this is not what is always easy for adults but in the end your decision will work out if it's what is best for kids.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

I would encourage anyone in any field to find your values and your core beliefs and make decisions based on those. You are going to be squeezed as a leader but it best to fall back on your core values and beliefs and making decisions that are aligned with those when you are pressed.



Jennifer Palmer

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

All my days are different; some days I'm showing a family 10 homes in 3 different counties. Or, going to a closing of a property at a title company or Attorneys office. Sometimes I spend a day calling Buyers and Sellers to find out how they are doing and addressing their concerns. Some days I'm listing a property, having Seller's sign paperwork, taking pictures, and getting everything uploaded on several websites. Some days I'm putting out fires between a Buyer and Seller.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was teaching riding lessons at my Dads barn when I was a senior in high school. I was very fortunate that I had parents that went above and beyond to make sure I started showing horses and pony's when I was 6 years old. My Dad would take me to every county fair horse show in Western Ky every summer. If I fell off my pony my Dad would put me right back on. I learned when I got knocked off from a pony or any tough experience in life to get back up and start over and never give up! Horses taught me how to work hard, sportsmanship in the show ring, persistence, patience, plus this gave me a lot of self-esteem when I was young. I taught lessons off and on for many years. I also worked as a Dental Assistant. This absolutely taught me to be at work on time.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.

My parents, my older brother, my uncle retired Supreme Court Judge Bill Cunningham, and a few teachers.

Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

I'm a member of the Paducah Lions Club because I wanted to be a part of something that My Dad did. I love helping out on different projects that we try to accomplish. I started a Silent Auction for the Telethon back in 2017. I work to gather Baskets and Gift cards from area businesses to sell in the auction. Its very challenging and rewarding. We raise money for children and adults with special needs. This has allowed me to meet more business people. About 15 years ago I started making a donation to my Buyers and Sellers favorite charity, school or church in their honor. This has turned out to be very rewarding, inspiring and remarkable in many different ways that is hard to put into words.

#3. Where is your business located?

It's at my home and in my car.

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?

Fortunately, I met and married a great man, moved to his 7-acre farm in Farmington, Ky. One of Gods greatest blessings.

(i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

I love taking care of my horses every day, flowers, plants, going to church, visiting my children and 10 grandchildren.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

Work hard, always finish a job, go above and beyond of what is expected of you and always keep your word. Probably my dad.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Work hard, always finish a job, go above and beyond of what is expected of you and always keep your word.



Jessica Newman

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Jessica Newman is the President and CEO of Advantage Insurance, an independent agency serving western Kentucky. With more than 21 years of industry experience, she leads with a blend of strategic clarity, integrity, and a genuine commitment to serving families and businesses. Jessica oversees the agency's vision, growth, and operations while cultivating a strong, service-driven culture within her team. Known for making complex coverage understandable, she advocates for clients through life's unexpected moments and ensures they're protected with solutions that truly fit their needs. Her leadership reflects her core values of faith, purpose, and entrepreneurship, guiding the agency forward with excellence and heart.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

Jessica's work ethic and leadership roots trace back to her very first job as a cashier at Gore's Grocery Store. There, she learned the value of genuine customer service, showing up with consistency, and treating every person with respect. Managing long lines, handling money, and keeping the check out lines running smoothly taught her confidence, responsibility, and grace under pressure. Those early experiences shaped her people-first mindset and sparked the desire to serve her community — qualities that continue to define her leadership as a business owner and CEO today.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.

Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

Jessica chose to build her agency in Lone Oak, Kentucky, because it's more than home — it's where her story began. Growing up in this community gave her a deep appreciation for the people, the values, and the small-town connections that shaped her life. The memories she cherishes from Lone Oak fuel her commitment to serve the families and businesses who make this place special. By keeping her agency here, she honors her roots, invests in the community that raised her, and ensures her work continues to reflect the heart of Lone Oak.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

Outside the office, Jessica can usually be found with a good cup of coffee in hand or spending time with the people she loves most. She cherishes slow mornings, great conversations, and any opportunity to connect with friends and family. Those everyday moments of joy and community keep her grounded and inspired in her work.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?).

Jessica credits some of her strongest business guidance to her mother, who taught her not to carry every worry alone. "Don't worry about it — pray. God has already got it figured out." That simple but powerful advice has shaped Jessica's leadership and grounded her throughout her entrepreneurial journey, reminding her to lead with faith, trust, and a steady heart.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Jessica's own best advice is simple: make a plan and put it on paper. She believes that clarity creates momentum, and that "a plan without a map is just a wish." It's the philosophy that guides her leadership and the intentional way she approaches business, growth, and purpose.



Kenny Pratt

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Coroner of Marshall County, Kentucky. The coroner serves as a bridge between the living and the deceased. It is my responsibility to give the deceased a voice in the manner of their passing. The coroner strives to investigate all deaths with professionalism, integrity, and efficiency. Professionalism is used in every aspect of the investigation process. Integrity is instilled in every step of the investigation in your loved one's death. As the death is researched and investigated, efficiency is called upon for the death certificate to be completed as quickly as possible. These three cornerstones guide our office in treating all deceased cases with respect, equal treatment, and compassion. The coroner is here to serve the citizens of Marshall County during their darkest times.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

Upon graduation of Marshall County High School, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Where I served for 10 years. During those years I deployed in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom four separate times. I was later selected to be the Guard Chief of Presidential retreat Camp David. Where I oversaw the security for President Bush and all presidential guest and dignitaries. My service in the military instilled discipline, leadership, and teamwork. It broadened my worldview by exposing myself to diverse cultures, built my confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of purpose.

#3. Where is your business located?

Marshall County Coroner Office is located at 107 B Street, Benton, Ky, 42025

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not working my greatest joy is spending time with my beautiful wife Yvonne, my children (Jordon, Faith, Cameron, Hope, Easton, Aubrey), and grandchildren (Stetson and Karoline). I also enjoy

the outdoors where I scuba dive, ride horses, explore the outdoors, and work on our small farm.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

Best advice is to cultivate critical thinking, attention to detail, and strong communication skills while maintaining objectivity and emotional resilience. Always treat others the way you want to be treated.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

My best advice is to focus on balancing personal growth, long-term health, and family time while navigating challenges with a resilient mindset.



Kate Russell

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I'm the founder, co-owner, and one of two brewers at Hopkinsville Brewing Company. In addition to brewing beer (which is my favorite part of my job), my duties involve packaging (kegs and cans), selling and delivering to our commercial accounts, as well as working behind the taproom counter when needed. The more mundane parts of my job are the day-to-day administration of running a small business - I scrub floors, clean bathrooms, file taxes and licenses, strategize marketing, plan events, coordinate musicians - the list is pretty much endless.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was as a cashier at a boating supply store. (I grew up living on a boat, so this made total sense for teenage me.) I learned little things about customer service that I still use today - the importance of greeting customers when they walk in the door, making eye contact, listening to feedback and constructive criticism.

My first grown-up job was as an intelligence analyst in the Army. I served with G2, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and deployed to Iraq during OIF 05-07. Deployment taught me a lot about perspective - nothing I've handled running a small business has risen to the level of life or death. Serving in the Army taught me the importance of seeing a mission through to completion (definitely important when I found myself trying to troubleshoot a malfunctioning glycol chiller in the middle of the night), as well as 'embracing the suck,' and how much it helps to keep a sense of humor when things aren't going according to plan.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.
Definitely my parents, Dave and Maria Russell. Living on a boat, my dad handled all the mechanics, and taught me the importance of maintaining equipment and how to go about fixing just about anything. My mom founded a group for women in boating, with an emphasis on women's influence on consumer behavior. I think this combination gave me a different perspective on how to market a product traditionally aimed at men toward women.

Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.
Being a mom has influenced how I run the brewery - I want our space to be family-friendly and welcoming to everyone, whether or not they drink alcohol. My interest in - and determination to be a part of - downtown revitalization drove my decision to purchase property downtown and continue investing in this part of the city. I try to partner with organizations that are doing good in the community and can use my platform to increase their visibility - Hopkinsville-Christian County Public Library, Christian County High School Baseball and Volleyball teams, Aaron McNeill House, the Boys & Girls Club, Christian County Master Gardeners, etc. - I like being able to give back to groups that are helping to make Hopkinsville a better place.

#3. Where is your business located?

102 E. 5th Street, downtown Hopkinsville
Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?

(i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

I bought a tiny building at the north end of downtown Hopkinsville because I believed the area could be amazing if 'someone' invested in it. The building was being used as office space for a carpet cleaning business, it had once been a barber shop and - way back in the day - had been a filling station. We gutted it down to the bare brick walls and built it completely back, from the concrete floor the second story to the roof. The community responded well to our business model and we outgrew the space within two years, so we purchased the auto body shop next door, renovated it (while still running the existing brewery), and opened it at the beginning of 2020.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

I enjoy being active - working out, running, walking my dog. I'm a baseball and volleyball mom, so I spend a lot of time going to my kids' games. I love to read.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

It wasn't about business at the time, but I've lived by this Margaret Mead quote ever since my sociology professor said it in class: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." I've adapted this mindset to my business: if I want to see downtown revitalized, or if I want Hopkinsville to have its own brewery, or make sure the baseball team has money to rebuild a damaged dugout, or make sure there's a place in Hopkinsville where everyone feels welcome, I can do my own small part to make those things happen. I truly believe that, in a world full of big-box corporations, small mom and pop stores still change their communities every day.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Learn everything you can about whatever business you're going into, but know when it's time to bring in the experts - spending money on a good engineer or attorney or accountant will save you time and money in the long run. Oh, and always treat your customers the way you would like to be treated.



to

Kenley Ringstaff-Hefner

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am Principal of North Livingston Elementary School and the Athletic Administrator for Livingston County Schools. At the elementary school, I'm working to encourage both teachers and students to be their very best and push themselves. I'm really here to help. Good teachers show up and teach, no matter what. It is my job to ensure that they have the supports that they need to help them be successful. Our students deserve the very best and I want to help open up as many avenues as I can for them. As an Athletic Administrator, I'm doing just about the same. I'm working to take some of the load off of players and coaches so that they can focus on building the programs that we have here.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

My very first "job" was working with my papaw and dad (Don and Greg Ringstaff) when they worked as commercial fishermen. I can remember being five or six years old and running up trot lines, trying my best to filet a fish, and going out on the river with them to pull nets. I thought I had hit the lottery when I was paid in grape soda and a bologna sandwich on the way home. But truly, that's where I learned that you work hard, no matter the job in front of you, and you do your job right. I learned that people were counting on me. I was taught that there are no short-cuts or doing things halfway... They also ensured that I knew that there was no job that I was "too good" to do. Today, if there is a need or a job to be done, you will never hear me say "that's not my job" or "that's above/below my pay grade". You'll see me grab the mop, shovel, or what have you and get to it. If there is anything that my parents and grandparents, or that first "job" taught me, that I'm grateful for, it's that.

My grandfather taught Health and PE at Livingston Central for over 30 years. I have several other relatives who went into education, filling a variety of roles and responsibilities. While things have changed throughout the years, this job just feels right. It feels right to serve a community that helped raise me.

#3. Where is your business located?

My elementary school is located in Burna KY. It was built in 1995 and, fun fact, my class is the first group that attended Kindergarten through 6th grade here. So, it's really neat to come back here as principal. I used to be one of these students. Our backgrounds are similar, and I think that really helps when we are talking about expectations and growth.

Livingston County Middle School served as the high school until 1984, when the new high school was built in Smithland.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

When I'm not working, I'm a full-time mom. My kids, Elsie and JackDon, are my biggest blessings and they keep me busy. We travel. My daughter feels that her year isn't complete without a trip to the beach. I enjoy reading and cooking. We eat dinner as a family every Sunday, I think that's extremely important.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

Dr. James Duane Bolin, a Murray State History professor and friend, once told me that the day I show up to work and I'm not excited, a bit nervous, or passionate about what I'm working towards is the day that I should look for a job somewhere else... and that has stuck with me for sixteen years. Bad times happen... but, in education, if you can't find one of those things anymore, this isn't for you. Too many people are counting on you. The future is counting on you. That might sound dramatic, but it's true.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Speak to people. Not through text, email, or through any other screen or device. Meet people. Have a conversation. Build relationships. Everyone you meet has something that you can learn from... good or bad. I think one of the most important things that you can do is understand people from all walks of life and be able to sit down and just talk.



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Lisa Terry

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

My job title is a family nurse practitioner. I started my career as a family nurse practitioner in 2007. I have only had the privilege to work with Dr. Jeff Riney, since I graduated as a family nurse practitioner.



#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My job at work is to see patients in the office. I diagnose and treat multiple illnesses. My job includes not only to treat but to educate my patients on their disease process, teach them about their medications and why they need their medications.

My first job was a certified nurse's aide at the local nursing home in my hometown of Rosiclare, Illinois. I started my CNA career as a senior in high school. I worked after school on the weekends at the nursing home. Being a CNA is very hard and demanding work. But it made me realize I truly enjoy helping others.

During my nursing program at Southeastern Illinois college in Harrisburg Illinois one of my clinical instructors was Ms. Maria Pavilonia's. She was a true inspiration to the nursing field. She taught us how to carry ourselves in the clinical setting, how important it was to be presentable to our patients, the importance of courtesy and respect to the patients that we took care of.

#3. Where is your business located?

I work at the Riney family practice at 2413 New Holi Rd., Paducah, KY. We have been at that location since November 2021.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Hobbies include reading, crafting, staying busy on the farm and enjoying family time.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

The best advice I was given was Dr. Riney. He always told me when the patient comes to see you they are seeking help. They are looking for someone to listen and help figure out what is going on with them.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best advice is to always listen to your patient. Allow your patient to be involved with the plan of care for them.

Mallory Lawrence

Mallory Lawrence
Hancock's
Neighborhood
Market, Cadiz, KY

Mallory Lawrence began working in her family's Princeton, Ky., grocery business while in high school. After earning a B.S. in Textiles and Clothing Merchandising from Western Kentucky University, she opened the Cadiz location of Hancock's Neighborhood Market in 1991, managing it until purchasing the store in 2009.

Since then, Lawrence has expanded Hancock's from 16 to 50 employees and added new services, including a deli department in 2007. The store now caters events ranging from 20 to 350 guests, making catering a major part of its operation.

Lawrence is active in community leadership, having twice served as president of the Cadiz/Trigg County Chamber of Commerce and the Cadiz Rotary Club. She has also served on the Trigg County Hospital Board, the Chamber Board, the Trigg County Tourism Commission, and is currently a member of the Trigg County Hospital Foundation.

In 2023, she became co-owner of The Persnickety Pig, a gift shop and boutique in Cadiz—a longtime goal inspired by her WKU degree. She saw a need in the community following the closure of Broadbent's Food and Gifts.

Lawrence and two partners plan to open The Crusty Pig in Hopkinsville in summer 2026, offering brick-oven pizza, salads and sandwiches as they join the downtown business community.



Jason Workman

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I'm the President of Workman Bins, Inc. I oversee all aspects of the business, from operations and production to customer service and strategic planning. My role involves everything from managing the day-to-day workflow to ensuring long-term growth and innovation in our industry.



#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My father, Sammy Workman, was a huge influence on me—he helped shape who I am today. I often tried tasks I didn't fully know how to do, and he was right there beside me. Sure, mistakes were made, and sometimes fixing them cost more, but those experiences taught me valuable lessons about perseverance and learning from failure.

I also grew up spending time on my uncle's farm. Being around tractors, combines, and the day-to-day rhythm of farming gave me a deep appreciation for hard work, practical problem-solving, and the farming community—values that guide how I run my business today.

#3. Where is your business located?

Our first location was a small shop behind my house. In 2014, I purchased Perry Farm Supply in Palmersville, TN, and in 2021, we expanded to a second location in Mayfield, KY, on six acres at the old General Tire site. Each location has its own history, and we've adapted the spaces to meet the needs of our growing business.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Outside of work, I enjoy being on the farm. The last few years, my wife and I have also spent a lot of time traveling for our daughters' activities—it's been hectic, but incredibly rewarding. These moments help me recharge and stay grounded.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

"Sell it, we'll figure out how to get it built!" – Robert Perry. This advice taught me the importance of action and trusting that solutions can follow bold decisions.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

When starting a business, know that there are no regular hours. Don't try to grow too fast, and don't rely on someone else to handle critical tasks just because you're the owner. Many businesses fail because owners detach themselves too early. I still take calls after hours, on weekends, and even holidays, and I'm willing to run to the shop for parts myself. Staying hands-on and committed is key.

Mark Edwards 1

I am Mark Edwards. I'm a Lawyer at Edwards and Kautz. We represent people who have been accused of criminal offenses and those who have been injured or are disabled. I do everything necessary to pursue or defend those cases. I first started working at the age of six for my father who started a construction rental and supply company named Kitmo Rental and supply. I believe I learned my work ethic from my father and from the demands he put on me and all my siblings. I have worked at a number of jobs while growing up and attending college. I have worked with a sod company, at a tobacco redryer company, Kmart, a tire store, as a bartender, delivering furniture, making and putting in counter tops, delivering beer to retailers, driving an ambulance, as a security guard and I'm sure a few I've missed. I went to Southeast Missouri State University and played football as a freshman. I transferred to Western Kentucky University as a sophomore and started playing rugby for the first rugby team at WKU. While at Western my first child Michelle was born. When I graduated I went to OCS in the Marine Corps and after I graduated from OCS I went to UK to law school. After law school I spent five years on active duty in the Marine Corps and two years in the active reserve as an infantry officer. At that time I was practicing law in Paducah. I started working for Charlie Saladino and after four years I started my own practice. I began racing dirt late model cars as a hobby. At some point I started buying Commercial Property. I eventually got into the business of owning liquor stores. Somehow I started racing horses. I was very lucky in that I bought into a filly which I named after my granddaughter. The horse's name is Thorpedo Anna.



She won the Kentucky Oaks, the Breeders cup distaff and Horse Of The Year in 2024. The best advice I can give you about business is work as hard as you can taking care of your clients. And as far as advice I would say do what you know how to do and when someone brings you an idea that you are comfortable with the go for it.

Melanie Quinn-Noffsinger

1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am the Executive Director of the United Way of the Pennyryle. We facilitate an annual fundraising campaign to support 16 local non-profit organizations that serve 3 counties. These agencies provide programs focused on health and wellness, youth education, support for active service members, assistance for the elderly, aid for abuse victims, and help for those facing economic hardships. Guided by its mission, "uniting people and resources to improve lives and strengthen communities throughout the Pennyryle", the organization invests donor contributions in essential health and human service programs to create a stronger, more supportive community. United Way of the Pennyryle also works to bring awareness to the programs provided by our agencies and advocate for them in our community.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

I have worked in the hospitality industry for almost 13 years, working as an event sales manager at The Bruce Convention Center, managing 2 privately owned wedding and event centers- Southern Springs Events and The Silo Event Center, and most recently as an auction and marketing manager for Bolinger Real Estate and Auction.

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Working in the hospitality industry has taught me to think quickly, solve problems efficiently, and anticipate customers' needs before they arise. My experience serving people from diverse backgrounds has strengthened my ability to connect with others and sharpened my customer service skills. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession. Since returning to my hometown after college in 2011, I knew I wanted to become more involved and give back to our community. Over the years, I have served in a variety of leadership and volunteer roles, including:

- Pennyroyal Arts Council – Board of Directors (2016-2020)
- Museums of Historic Christian County – Hopkinsville – Board of Directors since 2019; Vice Chair (2021); Secretary (2025)
- Pennyryle Children's Advocacy Center – Board Member (2020-2023); Vice Chair (2022)

Christian County Chamber of Commerce – Board Member since 2022; Non-Profit Organization Representative beginning in 2024

I am also active in several civic and professional organizations,

including the Hopkinsville Rotary Club (member since 2022), Hopkinsville Young Professional Engage (HYPE) (member since 2017), Junior Auxiliary of Hopkinsville (2012-2015), and served as a Chamber Ambassador from 2011-2015, receiving the Bob Kelso Ambassador of the Year Award in 2015.

Each of these opportunities has allowed me to support our community through both volunteerism and financial contributions. Volunteering has opened my eyes to the many needs within our community and has strengthened my commitment to continue giving back.

3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?) We rent our office space and it is located at 1110 S Main Street in downtown Hopkinsville, KY.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

In my spare time, I enjoy being with my family—my husband, Cody, our almost three-year-old daughter Isabelle, and our dog, Penny. With most of our relatives living nearby, we also spend a lot of time with our extended family. I love unwinding with a good book, attending Broadway shows or local theater productions, traveling, and binge-watching great movies and series. I also enjoy crafting and baking whenever I get the chance.

5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

Know your worth—and don't be afraid to ask for it. Advocate for yourself. Negotiate. Speak confidently about what you bring to the table.

My mother gave me this advice. She is a retired lawyer and District Judge for the 56th District in Kentucky.

6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Surround yourself with people you lift you up! Celebrate your wins & have colleagues and friends in your corner who challenge, support and motivate you.



Mike Williams

1. Tell us about your work and what you do from start to finish.

Double-U Properties, LLC – I own and manage nine rental homes. My responsibilities include coordinating repairs, addressing tenant needs, and overseeing all financial operations.

Panhandle Park, LLC – I own and manage a mobile home park and storage units. I focus on maintaining a safe, family-friendly environment, managing resident contracts, and handling the finances.

Lawn Enforcer Lawn Care, LLC – I operate a lawn care company where I oversee employees, equipment, scheduling, and customer service. My crew handles daily operations while I support equipment maintenance and manage invoicing and finances for about 50 customers.

Williams Enterprise, LLC – I serve as an independent distributor for Pepperidge Farm in the McCracken County region. I manage vehicles, trailers, orders, personnel, payroll, and equipment needs. I also oversee route checks, sales, inventory, and ensure customer satisfaction.

Livingston County Judge/Executive – I manage the daily operations of county government, including budgeting, roads and infrastructure, departments, employees, and the wide range of issues brought forward by residents. My goal is to keep Livingston County responsible, competitive, and—above all—a great place to raise a family.

2. What was your first job, and how did that experience shape the way you work today?

My first job was hauling hay for Calendar Farms—long before I was old enough to drive. Anyone who has hauled hay knows it's tough work, but the camaraderie made it worthwhile. That job taught me a lesson that has shaped every career I've had: set the goal, make sure the team is working toward the same mission, push through until the job is done, and enjoy the good moments along the way.

Mentors & Influences:
Without question, my father, Tommy Williams. As a Kentucky State

Trooper and later Livingston County Sheriff, he showed me—not just told me—how to treat people. He taught me to be fair, to do the right thing even when no one is watching, and that respect is earned through consistency and character.

Personal Interests or Community Influences:
I didn't always plan to become a police officer, but the calling eventually found me. Wanting a better life for my family is what pushed me to start my first business. I've always worked multiple jobs, and that drive has never faded.

3. Where is your business located, and is there anything special about how you acquired your properties?

Double-U Properties: Livingston County
Panhandle Park, LLC: Ledbetter, Kentucky
Lawn Enforcer Lawn Care, LLC: Operated from my residence
Williams Enterprise, LLC: Based in Ledbetter, distributing in McCracken County

Livingston County Judge/Executive: Livingston County Office & Library Building

How it all began:
Lawn Enforcer LLC started simply from a need for additional income—then grew into something larger than I ever expected.

Double-U Properties began due to the 2011 flood. After being forced to relocate, we planned to sell our home—until someone asked to rent it instead. That opportunity opened my eyes to the potential. We purchased another house, remodeled it ourselves, and repeated that process until we built a portfolio.

Most properties we bought needed major work—because those were the homes we could afford. Each one has its own story. Many times during renovations, former residents would stop by, share memories, and thank us for restoring the home.

The other businesses grew naturally from being active in the community. I know a lot of people, I listen, I ask questions, and I'm always learning. Folks recognized that I had a business mindset and a knack for making deals happen. If you had told me five years ago that I'd own a business responsible for putting Goldfish Crackers on the shelves of major grocery stores, I would've laughed. But here we are—and that business now earns more than I ever did as a police officer.



4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Free time isn't something I have a lot of, but I genuinely enjoy serving as Judge/Executive. Every day brings new challenges, and I thrive on that.

When I do get downtime, there's nothing better than spending it with my family. And when I really get a chance to unwind, I love taking my Jeep out for some rock-crawling adventure.

5. What's the best business advice someone has ever given you?

"Never take advice about money from someone who has none."
I've heard it from several people over the years, and it has stuck with me every time I've made a major decision.

6. What business advice would you give others?

Learn to take calculated risks, and always stay ready for the next opportunity that might land in your lap. Find a spouse or partner who shares your goals and understands the long hours and sacrifices required. Working as a team toward the same mission is far easier—and far more rewarding—than trying to do it alone.

Nick Daugherty

1. Tell us about your work and what you do from start to finish.

I co-own The Golf Complex with my brother-in-law and also operate a Golf Instruction business based within the facility. In the golf industry, no two days are the same, but most of my time is dedicated to providing golf instruction and helping players improve every aspect of their game—including full swing, pitching, chipping, and putting. Having grown up playing golf, I always aspired to teach the game and to one day own The Golf Complex, so being able to do both is truly a dream come true. When I'm not working directly with students, I focus on managing Accounts Payable and overseeing our corporate logo apparel and hat projects.

2. What was your first job, and how did that experience shape the way you work today?

After leaving college, I began my career at the Country Club of Paducah under the leadership of Chad Martin. He taught me invaluable lessons about what it means to be a PGA Professional and how to effectively manage a golf shop. His influence shaped my understanding of the profession—from merchandising to customer service—and I remain deeply grateful for the guidance he provided.

Following my time at the Country Club of Paducah, I joined The Golf Complex to pursue my passion for golf instruction. From a young age, I admired Todd Trimble and Barry Kight, who served as exceptional mentors and role models. When I started at The Golf Complex, I was simply a shop employee with the dream of becoming a full-time instructor.

The golf boom of 2020 played a significant role in accelerating my path, allowing me to transition into full-time instruction much sooner than

I anticipated. After several years of teaching full time, my brother-in-law and I were presented with the opportunity to purchase a portion of The Golf Complex. We didn't hesitate and embraced the challenge wholeheartedly.

3. Where is your business located, and is there anything special about how you acquired your properties?

We are a true one-stop destination for golfers of all levels, offering a full-service pro shop, golf instruction, professional club fittings, strength and conditioning training, and a state-of-the-art driving range with both indoor and outdoor hitting areas. One of the unique advantages of The Golf Complex is that we are among the few facilities where golfers can see full ball flight year-round, regardless of weather conditions. Whether indoors or outdoors, players can watch the ball fly and accurately evaluate their shot shape and performance. The practice range at The Golf Complex spans thirty acres and is conveniently located just one mile west of Kentucky Oaks Mall. The facility features a 200-yard-wide natural Bermuda grass tee that stretches more than 300 yards in length, fifteen artificial hitting mats, and eight heated indoor/outdoor bays. Fifteen distinct target greens provide precise and purposeful practice opportunities for both amateur and professional golfers, accommodating shots from 25 to 250 yards.

Our dedicated short-game area includes a Champion ultra-dwarf Bermuda green and a sand trap designed primarily for chipping. This space allows players to practice a variety of challenging lies—side-hill, uphill, downhill, deep rough, and zoysia fringe.

Unlike most facilities, The Golf Complex is intentionally oriented north to south, mirroring the design of premium PGA Tour ranges. This

alignment protects golfers from the glare of the late day western sun during the summer and shields them from harsh northern winds during the cooler months when utilizing our indoor bays.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

In my free time, I enjoy playing golf and spending quality time with my wife and stepdaughter. In the fall, we love watching football together, and throughout the rest of the year we enjoy following the PGA Tour and tuning in to whichever event is on that week.

5. What's the best business advice someone has ever given you?

In business, we understand that not every decision will please everyone, but we remain focused on what best supports our mission and customers.

6. What business advice would you give others?

We always strive to exceed customer expectations and appreciate the positive feedback we receive from satisfied clients. However, we have to recognize that feedback from dissatisfied customers is equally valuable. Their insights highlight opportunities for growth and improvement. By listening carefully to their concerns, we can continually refine our services and strengthen our businesses.



Western Kentucky's 2025 Top 100

BARGE CONSTRUCTION & REPAIR

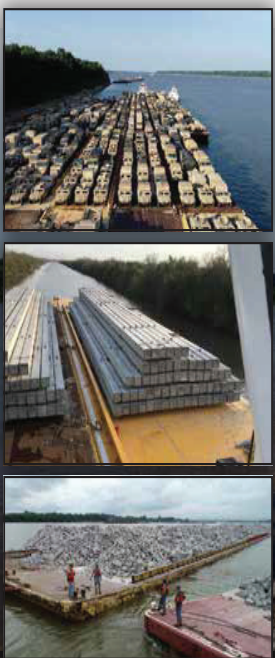
- Dock Barges
- Deck Barges
- Crane Barges
- Dry Docks
- Barge and Towboat Repair



Ohio River Mile Marker 752.6 OR
5001 Hwy 2830
Owensboro, KY 42303

David Graves
270-231-4684
david.graves@mulzer.com

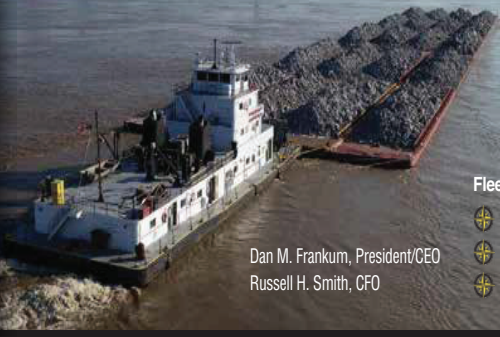
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Dan M. Frankum, President/CEO
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Larrah Workman

1. Tell us about your work

(MARKETING DIRECTOR, KPI Newspaper Group) and what you do at work (Handles all aspects of Advertising: • Ad Sales • Manage ky-news.com website • Coordinate Marketing efforts for Kentucky & Indiana Newspapers; along with all Special Sections • Assist in Layout & Design • Help with Accounting Dept. whenever needs arise).



2. What was your first job, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was at Whipple’s Grocery in LaCenter, Kentucky, where I worked as a cashier, stocked shelves, and spent time in both the deli and produce departments. Those different responsibilities taught me early on how to multitask and recognize when someone needed help—what we’d now call cross-training.

I learned a great deal from my bosses, Joe Brooks Whipple and Glen Wildharber. They always reminded me that “the customer is always right,” and that if a problem came up, I needed to stay calm, get the facts, and handle the situation with patience.

Working in the public showed me how far compassion can go. I remember watching Joe Brooks treat people with understanding, even on their hardest days. He taught me that my attitude and words can shape how quickly a conflict either settles or escalates.

Now, in my sales role, those lessons guide me daily. I don’t face much conflict, but when something does arise, I know how to approach it with patience and a level head. I even have a subscriber who calls from time to time just to catch up, and I make it a point to listen. That compassion might seem small, but it can make a real difference in someone’s day.

3. Where is your business located? Our Headquarters is located at 1540 McCracken Blvd., Paducah, KY

4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

When I’m not working, I stay busy with my other business, Bin Livin’ in Mayfield, KY. I also love traveling with my family whenever I get the chance—preferably somewhere warm with an ocean and a nice beach. Spending time with my husband, Jason, and our girls, Laurna and Abbi, is one of my favorite things.

My creative hobby started years ago when my daughters were little. I called it Abbikat Kreations, and over time it grew to the point that I needed my own dedicated space. When we built the Mayfield location, Jason suggested using the upstairs office, and that’s how Bin Livin’ officially came to life.

I enjoy painting furniture and creating custom pieces with chalk paint, as well as crafting and making items with sublimation or vinyl. I’m also hoping to start making candles for the shop next year. I love offering unique items that no one else has—because each piece is something I’ve created myself.

5. What’s the best business advice someone has ever given you? One of the best pieces of advice I’ve received is that not everyone can bake, paint, or be creative—and that’s exactly why they buy handmade or custom items. People either don’t want to do it themselves or simply can’t, and that doesn’t make the work any less valuable. Just because I know how to create something doesn’t mean everyone does or wants to.

I was also told to stock my shop with things I personally like and have tried myself. That way, when customers have questions, I can honestly share my own experience and help them feel confident in what they’re buying.

6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others? The best advice I would give—whether you’re working for a company like Kentucky Publishing or running your own business like Bin Livin’—is don’t give up, even when you hit a funk. We all have days when motivation is low, but the key is to get up, shift your focus, and work on something else until the momentum returns.

I also believe it’s important to learn every part of the business you’re involved in. The more you understand, the more valuable you become. Make yourself someone your bosses and customers can rely on. Being dependable, adaptable, and willing to grow goes a long way in making yourself not easily replaceable

Melinda Humphries

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Melinda A. Humphries, Christian County Clerk. I have worked at the Clerks Office for almost 25 years and going into year 4 as County Clerk.

Ensuring that every record, license and elections is handled with integrity and care.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today? Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

My first job was at Bartholomew’s Restaurant in Downtown Hopkinsville at the age of 16. Working with the public has helped me develop in my career.

My grandparents were my mentors growing up. Be Kind and Be On Time, they would say.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

Historic Christian County Courthouse at 511 S. Main St. in Hopkinsville KY

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge) Spending time with my kids. Just being outside, especially during the spring and fall months.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone has ever given you? (And who was it?)

My grandmother would reminder me.....No one is perfect, but you can Be Better & Do Better than the person you were yesterday.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Listen to people....don’t just hear what a person is saying, listen to what a person is saying. There is a difference.



Mike Love

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am currently Chairman of the Board for the Love Family McDonald’s Organization. A short description of my job is that I am constantly monitoring how our great team is serving customers every day in our restaurants and communities.



#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was sweeping floors in a warehouse. My boss shared the philosophy of Ray Kroc, “If you have time to lean, you have time to clean.” It is a good business practice that I have carried over into my business. There is never a reason not to be productive.

#3. Where is your business located?

Our 10 restaurants are in the counties of McCracken, Graves, Calloway and Marshall in western KY and Massac county in southern IL. An eleventh one will soon open in Murray, KY. Our main main office is in Paducah.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I can get away, everyone knows my love of fishing and that being in a boat on the water is my favorite way to recharge. But in the last year, I have discovered a whole new way to have fun as I have been able to spend time with my first grandson, what an adventure! And, if time allows, some will see me on the golf course when possible.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone has ever given you? (And who was it?)

The best piece of advice that I have ever received came from Kevin Dunn, regional McDonald’s manager, who oversaw 800 McDonald’s restaurants. “Always take time to make a business plan. Create a plan that can be measurable by time frames,” He believed that making that plan with solid means of measuring success of the plan was crucial to being in the business world.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

My advice to young people coming into the business world would be to see the value of making a business plan and to make lots of friends who inspire and challenge you. Most important, get to know your own people, the people who work in your own business. Doing that creates the best teams.

Sonya Williams

1. Tell us about your work.

I proudly serve as the Livingston County Clerk, where my duties include motor vehicle registration and titling, documenting and recording legal instruments, overseeing delinquent property tax collections, and managing all aspects of local elections. Every day brings something new, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to help our citizens with the services they depend on.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences shape you?

My early work experiences were wonderfully diverse. In my teen years, I worked sales at local malls, then spent my college summers at a private children’s camp in upstate New York. Later, I worked at Drake Creek Golf Course, served as a high school cheerleading coach, and spent nine years as an elementary school teacher.

Each of these roles taught me patience, adaptability, and the importance of serving others—skills that prepared me well for working with the public and ultimately stepping into my role as Livingston County Clerk.

3. Where is your business located?

The Livingston County Clerk’s Office is located on the first floor of the county’s combined library and office building, built in 2011. Our address is

321 Court Street, Smithland, Kentucky. We’re fortunate to work in a building that serves both practical needs and remains an important hub for our community.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

Nothing makes my heart happier than spending quality time with our sons, especially when we are traveling out west with our rock-crawling Jeep family. I also love preparing our annual Bayou Bluff Bales display with my family. What started as a fun project has grown into a community tradition that has raised thousands of dollars and countless canned-good donations for Livingston County families. Giving back together has become one of our favorite ways to spend time.

5. Best business advice someone has given you.


The best advice I’ve ever received is simple but powerful: “Give it to God.” It keeps me grounded, centered, and focused on what truly matters.



Nikki Chambers

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Drinking Water Environmental Compliance Coordinator/Class IV-A Water Treatment Operator; Hopkinsville Water Environment Authority



#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits. Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

My first job began at HWEA in August of 1996 as a co-op student in high school. I was able to develop a work ethic that ensured that I would have longevity in this field. The initial job as customer service representative moved on to a transfer to drinking water operations at the water treatment plant. From that point, I developed a passion for the field of drinking water and making sure that #1 goal of protecting public health through safe drinking water was followed.

I am certain that I will accidentally leave someone out but in those early years at HWEA, I learned from everyone who I came in contact with, so I consider them all mentors. I was able to pick up something from every one of them. LaDonna Downs, Len Hale, John Rittenhouse, Connie Sue Isom, Derrick Watson, Melissa Kempa, Debra Bailey, Becky Armstrong, Tonya Blanton, Edwin Ford, Lynn Kates, Randy Hunt, Joe Chewning, Butch Hancock, Tommy Joslin, Richie Bowman, Leslie Rogers and Billy McNichols.

I have a personal interest in anything that will help my community. My role at HWEA has allowed me to volunteer in different aspects of our community. I am the current Western Chapter President for the Kentucky Water and Wastewater Operators Association. Immediate Past Chair for the Christian County Chamber of Commerce, Immediate Past President of Hopkinsville Kiwanis, Past Chair of the Hopkinsville Christian County Human Rights Commission and current board member, Immediate Past President of the Dyslexia Association of the Pennyrile, Immediate past President of the Hopkinsville League of Women Voters, Environmental Chair for the Kentucky League of Women Voters, Vice Chair for Leadership Christian County and Co-coordinator for Christian County Youth Leadership both through the Christian County Chamber of Commerce

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?

(i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

401 E 9th Street Hopkinsville KY. I do not own this business. It is a privately owned municipality.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not working, I love to serve the community and help anyone in need. If I need to recharge, I listen to music either at the gym or doing yard work. I love to read when time allows. During NCAA basketball season, I love to watch teams play. Go DUKE!

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

You can only do so much to help customers. Do your best and walk away knowing you did what you could. (Many have told me that, one particular person doesn’t come to mind)


#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Try to be aware of what is going on around you and what the need is. Network! You never know what person that you will come in contact with that may have the solution or answer to what you are looking for.

Paige Taylor

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Paige Taylor, City Clerk for the City of Salem, KY. I am responsible for all water and sewer billing and collecting, property taxes billing and collections, payroll and HR, reporting payroll taxes, reporting sales and school taxes, keeping all records, financial records, meeting minutes, etc.



#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

My first “real” job was an assistant manager of a convenience store in Fredonia KY at 17, John Ray Baker was the proprietor. This job taught me how to handle finances and handle daily deposits. Later, I worked at the Caldwell County PVA Office for a time for PVA Administrator Jimmy Wallace. I worked closely with his wife Bettie Sue Wallace and Assistant Ann Barnwell. This job introduced me to “office work” and showed me what work the PVA office does and what it means for citizens and their property taxes. I attend North Livingston Baptist Church and am strong in my faith. My faith teaches honesty and integrity. In dealing with people’s money and private information, my faith steps in and takes over.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?

Salem City Hall is located at 111 Court Street, Salem, KY. My daughter Sadie and I came to live in Salem in 2005, I later had my daughter Katie and married Jon Taylor and gained a son Rett Taylor. I began work as Assistant City Clerk for the City of Salem KY in July 2010. In July 2017 I was put in the Clerk position at the retirement of Hazel Croft who had held the clerk position for 20 years.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I am not working I enjoy spending time with my family, gardening, quilting and needlework, and cooking.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

It is important to be honest, organized and keep receipts, all of my aforementioned managers were insistent on that. My Dad always said if you are going to do a job do it right or don’t do it at all. That is always how I have approached work. If I cannot do my best, it is time for me to move on. My main example of good work ethic came from my parents. My father Houston Peek worked out of the Labor Union and co-owned and operated a saw mill with his Brother Billy. He also worked in the logging industry his entire life and drove the school bus for the Crittenden County School System for years. My mother Sue Peek carried the mail out of Fredonia KY, drove the school bus for Crittenden County School Systems, cleaned the Caldwell Springs Baptist Church and took care of her ailing parents, Carl and Elizabeth Knight. There were points in her life she was doing all of these jobs at the same time. Yes, I have been fortunate to have some wonderful managers and coworkers, but my parents are who instilled in me the importance of doing a good job and the importance of your word.


#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Pretty much the same I was given. Organization and receipts are very important in life in general. Also, do a job you love. We spend the majority of our lives at work and if you don’t love it, it will make for a miserable life. I love my job, there is a lot to it, especially for 1 full time position; but with this job what I do helps the town I live in, my neighbors and my family. That being said, it holds a special place in my heart. I am not sure how much longer I will be Salem City Clerk, I’d like to say I will be here until I retire; but I have learned all too well to take one day at a time. I lost my oldest daughter Sadie last November, unexpectedly. After that I do not look too far into the future, I just get up every day, put one foot in front of the other and see where the day and the Good Lord take me.

Perry Newcomb

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am proudly serving the citizens of Crittenden County as County Judge Executive, an honor I have experienced for the past 15 years. My days generally start early and finish late and are rarely the same. The primary focus of my work is to ensure the county government operates as fiscally responsible and as efficiently as possible. Although county government is managed by locally elected officials, many of our duties are subject to State guidance and directives. Therefore, as locally elected officials we must have a clear understanding of State laws as they apply to the operations of local government to ensure we remain within the parameters set forth.



#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

After graduating from Murray State University with a degree in Agricultural Business and Business Administration, my first job was with a regional farm, home, and industrial retail business where I was able to begin my real education. The four years spent in this environment prepared me well with respect to working with the public and doing all I could to help solve problems. The next four years I spent serving in the United States Air Force as a satellite operations specialist at Global Weather Central located on Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha Nebraska. My time serving in our country was one of the highlights of my career path. I was able to learn how to better manage personnel and work in a team atmosphere focused on ensuring critical timelines were met and accurate information was available across the globe in support of Air Force operations. Following my service with the Air Force, I came back to the retail management field working for another regional company in the field of agronomy and transportation for three years. I then was fortunate to purchase an existing agricultural retail business and carry that on for the next 16 years, after which I was asked to consider a candidacy for Crittenden County Judge Executive. Through all my work, I have been able to focus on service to others, and I am privileged to be able to continue that work today.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?

Not applicable.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

With my job as the chief elected official of Crittenden County, there are few times when I am not working. The work is constant throughout the 365 days of the year and 24 hours a day, much like my work for the Air Force. We are always on call and ready to respond as needed when needed; or at least that has been my philosophy as Judge Executive.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

The best advice was to put in 110% effort, don’t worry about trying to know everything because that is impossible – the most important thing is to know where to find answers to questions and problems, and to know managing employees is the most difficult part of any supervisory job.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

Ensure business is your passion and one of which you will enjoy. If we aren’t doing what we enjoy it will more than likely not work out over the long term.

Ronda Smith

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

Tell us about your work. Mayor City of Corydon, Ky. The mayor’s job consists of overseeing the day-to-day operations of the city, administering the budget, preside at council meetings, and so much more.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

What was your first job? The Dairy Bar at 15 years old. It taught me how to work with the public and gave me a sense of independence.

There have been many influences in my life, who helped shape my work ethic, parents, grandparents, and co-workers. One of my early lessons in hard work came from my dad.

It was during the blizzard of 1977-1978. We were snowed in for weeks. My dad walked 3 miles down a tunneled path every day to hitch a ride to work and then 3 miles back home. That instilled the importance of hard work and providing for your family.

#3. Where is your business located?

We are in Corydon, Ky., which is in Henderson County. The City of Corydon was incorporated in 1867. Corydon is the birthplace of A.B. Chandler. He served as Governor of Kentucky and was the commissioner of baseball.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?


What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working. Genealogy research, gardening, and spending time with the grand kids.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

What’s the best advice about business that someone has ever given you? To treat everyone the same, regardless of their role.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give others?

Don’t ask anyone to do anything you wouldn’t do.



Russ Guffey

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I wear many work hats, ranging from business owner to elected official to entrepreneur.

For 17 years, I have been a Little Caesars Pizza franchisee, with locations in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and Clarksville, Tennessee (and formerly in Madisonville, Kentucky). For the past three years, I have also served as the Magistrate for District 7 on the Christian County Fiscal Court. And just this year, my wife and I (along with another couple) opened up The Wellness Collective, an all-natural health and wellness business in Hopkinsville.

Collectively, this can create quite a full calendar... But it especially creates so many different ways to serve.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits.
Mention personal interests or community activities that have influenced your profession.

After graduating from Centre College, some of my first jobs were teaching/coaching and construction. I later worked in banking, insurance, and community development. The knowledge and experience gained from these professions were invaluable to my growth as an employee, employer, and public servant.

I was fortunate to have wonderful parents that taught me firsthand the ethics and habits necessary to contribute and succeed in society... While also helping others to do the same. My father, Danny, was a model of work ethic and providing for his family. As a good balance, he also instilled in me the importance of levity. My mother, Anna Caryl, epitomized what it meant to serve others, create networks, and love unconditionally.

I strive to draw from my blue and white collar experiences and my parent's example; and in turn, share the same with my wife, kids, and community.

#3. Where is your business located? Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located? (i.e. did you build, remodel an existing place, is there a unique history of your business?)

We purchased our first Little Caesars location in Hopkinsville from an existing franchisee. It was opened in 1989 on our city's main thoroughfare, and in 2017 we relocated across the street with a complete remodel. In 2011, we built our second location in Clarksville. Then, in 2025, we opened The Wellness Collective in the heart of our historic downtown Hopkinsville.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions to help recharge)

When I'm not at work, I love to cook and occasionally play golf. More than anything, though, my wife, Mandy, and I enjoy watching/supporting our kids and their activities.

Our oldest daughter is 21, and in addition to studying at Asbury, she is heavily involved with our church. She has also started three business ventures of her own. Our middle daughter is 18, and attends the University of Kentucky, where we try to visit and attend football and basketball games. Our youngest daughter is 12, and keeps us busy with her school and club volleyball schedule. We are also blessed with a five year-old son... who keeps everyone on their toes!

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you? (And who was it?)

My grandfather always said, "Any job worth doing, is worth doing right the first time." As a member of "The Greatest Generation" and war veteran, his words always resonated with me. And the older I get, the more they continue to do so.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

"You can't control what other people say. You can only control whether it is true or not."



Rita Dotson

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am the Mayor of the City of Benton. I meet with citizens to try to help them with any issues they may have. I also meet with department supervisors throughout the day and staff to brainstorm and resolve issues. I plan for the future, inventory our equipment and replace it as needed. I drive the city streets and work with our maintenance supervisor to mill and pave the ones that need it the most every year. I look for grants for different projects, upgrade our park system, upgrade water and sewer lines and work with our gas department for expansion of our system. I have been involved with the Kentucky League of Cities and served as their president this past year. I traveled throughout the Commonwealth visiting other cities, talking with their mayors, administrators and staff. It was so interesting to see how other cities operated, their park systems and all their unique assets from each end of the state. I also served as chair person for the past 2 years for our ADD and served on the board of our state ADD. I'm a member of multiple boards and committees. I have worked with our Judge Executive to resurrect our Senior Citizens Center as we have sought a CDBG grant to upgrade their building and get them back in it. They currently meet at our Community Building for bingo every week. We are also working to build a park that will be dedicated to our first responders. They are the real backbone of our community.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

My first job was a car hop at a K&N Root beer stand at the age of 13. I worked for several years at our hospital in Paris, Tn as a nursing assistant through out high school. It was hard work but it taught me job skills and work dedication.

My mother was one of my mentors. She worked hard every day and I watched and learned.

My husband Doug was also my mentor. He was involved in City Government and the Kentucky Motor Vehicle Commission and made a real difference with both. He also worked very hard as a car dealer to provide for our family.

Mike Miller, Marshall County Judge Executive was also a mentor politically. The advances he made for our county was remarkable and I knew when I wanted to run for Mayor that if I was elected I wanted to run the city similar to the way he ran our county.

#3. Where is your business located?

This question is answered with #1.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

I love to golf with my husband, grandkids and our kids. I also love to go on golf trips with our friends. We swim in the summer and hang around the pool. We love to cook as well as restaurant hop. I love to read and catch a few good tv shows. I'm also always up for travel.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

My husband probably gave me the best business advice: work hard, make sure everything is done and work within your budget. Treat your employees well and you get what you pay for. In other words, if you want good employees, treat them well and pay them well.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The same advice that was given to me in #5.



Pete Conrad

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).

I am a Compliance Specialist with Kentucky Rural Water Association (KRWA). KRWA is an affiliate of the National Rural Water Association, along with all 50 states and Puerto Rico. I was brought on to work with water systems in the state of Kentucky to help them complete their Service Line Inventory (every water system in the nation had to complete these). With my background running a water system for 10 years, my job varies day to day. KRWA. has folks here who work as advisors to water and wastewater systems across the Commonwealth. I have the honor of being part of that team. I get to help systems with regulator paperwork one day. Next, I might be helping write policies and ordinances, or working with systems to find and/or fix water leaks.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?

Names of any mentors or early influences or work habits: Mention personal interests or community activities that's influenced your profession. I had a few jobs as a kid, from maintenance work to mowing lawns. My first real "adult type" job was when I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps as a Light Armored Vehicle Crewman (0313). I had quite a few mentors there, Cpl. Bennie Wagers probably had the greatest influence on me. The Marine Corps instills a lot of great habits in a person, but Bennie really helped me focus those habits to make me a better Marine. He always made me strive to be the best in everything I did and, in turn, built a reputation and set of personal standards for how "I" make sure things are done. I have a standard of how work is done right. Also, taking responsibility for mistakes, along with never being anything but totally honest at all times. Anyone can fix mistakes, but lies get you nowhere, and they just make a mess of everything. As a licensed water operator in the state of KY, I have been entrusted with a certain amount of trust that I will follow the rules and regulations to ensure customers receive the best quality drinking water possible. I, and all the drinking water professionals I know, take that charge very seriously, and that started for me in the Marine Corps.

#3. Where is your business located?

Anything special about how you acquired the real estate where your business is located?

The KRWA Office is located about a mile away from the Corvette Museum in Bowling Green. I drive past it every time I go to the office. My "official daily office" is here on my farm in Henderson, KY. However, I work lots of days from City Halls, Water District Offices, or out in the field out of my pickup truck; it's all dependent on the needs of the water system I am currently working with.

One thing that KRWA has done over the years is hire individuals around the state, so I have counterparts that are fairly close to systems wherever they are across the state. When there is a disaster or a need for help, there is typically a Rural Water Staff member close by who can usually stop in in a few hours to lend help and see about pulling in resources to get through an event.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working? (hobbies or passions that help you recharge)

I love what I do, so sometimes it is just to work (2 years ago, I stayed on a job getting the water back on on my birthday- no one knew- because I was having fun and the work needed to get done). When I get the time, I collect and build Lego sets. I absolutely love them, and I have hundreds of sets. I have also been working on the farm, planting trees and pollinator-friendly plants for the wildlife and my bees, as I'm also a beekeeper.

#5. What's the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?

This isn't per se advice about business, but in the end, it really does affect business. When I was a kid, my dad told me you only have one name, it takes years to make it, and minutes to destroy it. At the end of the day, all you have is your name; don't mess it up.

I interned for the City of Paducah (with the city manager James Zumwalt during the ice storm of 2009) and, after that, moved to Owensboro to work at the Green River Area Development District. At the time, I basically didn't know a soul in Kentucky. I have worked hard over the years to learn and grow as a person and professional, and through that work, I now get to work with individuals around the state, and as far as I know, my name is still in good shape and it helps me help the water systems I am working with

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

I was in a class years ago for utility managers, and a basic skill you are taught as a child was covered. For some reason, it truly resonated, stuck with me, and shaped how I did things as a manager. Quite simply, treat everyone decently/ with respect, as you never know where they will be next.

I push that a bit further and remind folks to treat everyone like they are talking to their own family. That difficult customer or person is someone's family member. Would you want someone to be rude to your family members? That person you just treated either rudely or with respect, you may have to work with their son/mother/daughter/father next week, and how do you think that interaction will go? Treat everyone you meet decently, and in the long run, it will work out.



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Russell Mills

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
Auctioneer/Broker/Co-Owner along with my wife Sandy Mills of Mills Real Estate & Auction Co LLC
I oversee the day to day operations of our auction division and mange our auction team.

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?
I began working at Smith Grove Horse Sale & Mammoth Cave Dairy Auction in Smiths Grove Ky as a teenager in high school. That inspired me to become an auctioneer. In 1995 I attended Missouri Auction School and got my Auctioneer license followed by getting my real estate license in 1997. I worked for Bud Greenup Real Estate & Auction Co for 9 years before opening up Mills Real Estate & Auction Co in 2004. I also worked as an auctioneer at dealer auto auctions for over 25 years across KY,TN,&IN I’m thankful for Glen Stanley who gave me that first job at the stockyard,Mike Hatcher who let me auctioneer for the first time,Tim Haley for allowing me to start out as an apprentice,and Bud Greenup for teaching me the auction business.

#3. Where is your business located?
Are main office is located in Scottsville Ky where we have been since 2004. We recently expanded to three other locations located in Bowling Green, Glasgow & Gamaliel Ky. We are licensed in Kentucky,Tennessee,Alabama & Indiana.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?
When not working at auctions I enjoy spending time and my wife,family and playing with our 3 grandchildren. I also Pastor Freedom Hill Church in Scottsville Ky.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?
My Dad,James Mills gave me the best advice for business and life. Treat all people the same and fair,the way you want to be treated. All we have is our good name and reputation. It’s easy to lose it and hard to get it back.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?
My best advice for someone in the business world is work hard,treat people right and most importantly live for The Lord. Don’t get discouraged , keep doing pushing forward and dont be afraid to try something different than everyone else is doing. Also pay attention to your business. Don’t be concerned about your competition. Your only competition should be yourself to do your best.

Sebastin Hawk

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
Sebastian Hawk. Owner of Smithland Tire since July 28 1991. we do batteries, tires, oil changes, brakes, minor mechanic work, service calls, alignments shocks struts lift kits, leveling kits, tractor tires and tractor tire repairs out in the field, anything suspension,

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach your job today?
Worked at dry docks boat and barge repair, my Father in Law at the time was Dale Buford and he and I went into business together until I bought him out after a few months. I have a sense of commitment to my community and my customers are my friends.

#3. Where is your business located? Located right in Smithland, KY, I bought a very small cinder block building and ran my business which was primarily tires and tire repair for several years, then I was able to purchase the lot beside my shop which at the time was a huge hole in the ground, after years of having fill donated I was able to get turn the hole into a usable lot, then I was able to purchase a little strip of property that ran parallel to hwy 60 , then after 3 years of trying to get a bank to loan me the money I had a new shop built by Jimmy Smith and his crew. we’ve been in the new building now for about 7 years



Steve & Lori Bunch

STEVE:
#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
Bunch Brothers Auctioneers & Realty, Inc.
President, Licensed Auctioneer in several states
Sign Up & List Auctions, Get Auctions ready, Auctioneer at the auctions. Handle settlement after the auction.

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?
It seems like I have always worked, I farmed when I was young, I worked in the tobacco fields, raised cattle, hauled hay etc. When I got out of high school, I went to work for Ferry Morse and did a lot of traveling and learned to pinch my pennies so I could support the family.

#3. Where is your business located?
Our office is in Wingo KY. Our Auction barn is the old Feed mill next door to our office.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?
When not working (not very often) I love spending time with my 10 year old grandson and 7 year old granddaughter. I enjoy spending time on my farm, and just relaxing.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?
Be honest, be humble, work hard, treat people the way you expect to be treated. I worked for James R Cash when I became an Auctioneer and learned a lot from him and his wife Cindy. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity he gave me.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?
When you work with family as closely as we do, Steven, myself, and our son Joe, it can sometimes be a little difficult. Be Honest, humble & work hard!! Owing your own Business is pretty much a 24-7 job. But remember to take time for your family, friends, & have a little fun!!

LORI:
#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
Lori: 1. Bunch Brothers Auctioneers & Realty, Inc.
Secretary/Office Manager, Licensed Auctioneer
Write Up & List Auctions, Get Auctions ready, handle advertising, Accounting, Cashier at Auctions & More!

#2. What was your first jobs, and how did those experiences that helped shape the way you approach

your job today?
First National Bank of Mayfield, bookkeeping. My aunt Marilyn Boyd was the Vice President and was a wonderful teacher. My sister & I grew up on a farm with Cattle & Horses. Since there were only us girls, we were taught to work from a young age no matter the job. My dad taught me how to work, build, shoot & ride. All of my family were hard workers. I learned from the best.

#3. Where is your business located?
Our office is in Wingo KY. I ran a printing company for a few years in a building that was an old gas station. We remodeled it and made it our office.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?
When not working (not very often) I love spending time with my 10 year old grandson and 7 year old granddaughter. I love watching them play soccer, softball, basketball, etc. I enjoy playing golf, but never seem to have time. I have always coached or helped coach little league baseball, softball, asketball etc.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?
Be honest, be humble, work hard, treat people the way you expect to be treated. Steven has Probably taught me the most about working hard and the benefits of it. I don’t think I know Anyone who has worked harder than he has all his life.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?
When you work with family as closely as we do, Steven, myself, and our son Joe, it can sometimes be a little difficult. Be Honest, humble & work hard!! Owing your own business is pretty much a 24-7 job. But remember to take time for your family, friends, & have a little fun!!

Sharee Schoonover

#1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work (from start to finish).
Agent for 4-H Youth Development, Livingston County Cooperative Extension

#2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences help shape the way you approach your job today?
For the past five years, I have served as a 4-H Youth Development Agent, providing a wide range of in-school and out-of-school educational opportunities for young people in my community. I lead Classroom Club meetings for 3rd–6th grade students during the school day, offering hands-on leadership and STEM learning. Beyond the classroom, I coordinate numerous special-interest clubs—including Sewing, Crafts, Gaming, Cooking, Homeschool, Cloverbuds (ages 5–8), Community Service, Shooting Sports, and Outdoor Exploration—giving youth meaningful ways to explore interests and build life skills.

I also support leadership development for 6th–12th graders through programs like Teen Leadership Academy, a multi-county partnership that exposes students to workforce opportunities and local industries, and Area Teen Council, which brings together teens from 11 counties across our region. Many of our youth also participate in statewide leadership experiences such as Teen Summit and Teen Conference.

Throughout the year, I help organize and support a variety of contests and competitive events, including the Communications Contest, Trash Sculpture Contest, and Shooting Sports competitions, many of which advance to area and state levels. I also oversee and train volunteers who make 4-H programming possible.

One of the biggest highlights of the year is 4-H Camp, where I help coordinate and lead an immersive, week-long summer experience for youth. Altogether, my role focuses on empowering young people, expanding access to hands-on learning, and building strong youth–adult partnerships within the community.

My first job was lifeguarding, and the most impactful place I worked in that role was as a 4-H Camp staff member in 2016, where I taught canoeing. That experience was truly the spark that pushed me toward the career I serve in today. Teaching youth at camp showed me how powerful hands-on learning can be—how a unique experience can build confidence, leadership, and responsibility. It reinforced my passion for creating safe, meaningful opportunities where young people can explore, try new things, and discover their strengths. The patience, communication, and quick decision-making I learned as a lifeguard still show up in my daily work with youth and volunteers.

A major mentor and influence in my journey has been Wanda Paris, a

Livingston County native who served as the 4-H Youth Development Agent in Lyon County. I deeply admire the way she showed up for her students—not only while they were in school, but as they grew into young adults. Her compassion, consistency, and commitment set a standard for the type of agent I strive to be.

I was also a very active 4-H member in Lyon County from 3rd to 12th grade, and I continued volunteering at 4-H Camp and events like the Area Communications Contest throughout the years between graduation and stepping into my current position. The skills, support, and experiences I gained in 4-H as a youth made a tremendous impact on me. They shaped my work habits, my leadership style, and ultimately my desire to give back to the program in the same way it poured into me. My personal connection to 4-H—through camp, leadership roles, competitions, and community involvement—continues to influence the way I approach my job. I carry with me a deep appreciation for positive youth development, a belief in hands-on learning, and a commitment to offering the same life-changing opportunities that shaped my own childhood and career path.

#3. Where is your business located?
Our Office is located at 803 US 60 East in Smithland, Kentucky. It positions me in the middle of our schools and allows me the opportunity to adequately serve them.

#4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?
In my free time, I enjoy hiking in LBL with my husband, visiting national parks, thrifting, creating handmade gifts for close family and friends, and spending time with my family.

#5. What’s the best advice about business that someone ever gave you?
The best advice I received about business and my career overall also came from Wanda Paris. If you consistently show up and let your heart lead your work, you will not only make an impact on the people you work with, but they will make an impact on you.

#6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?
I would have to echo that as my piece of advice, too. Show up, give back, and care about what you’re doing. People can tell when you’re being genuine; the rest will work itself out.

Dr. Ryan Beck

Dr. Ryan T. Beck:

A Leader in Sports Medicine With Local Roots

Dr. Ryan T. Beck, a Marshall County native, has built a respected career in sports medicine and orthopedic surgery by combining advanced training with a strong commitment to patient care. His path began at the University of Kentucky and continued at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, where he earned his medical degree in 2010.

Following medical school, Dr. Beck completed elite fellowship training at Brigham & Women’s Hospital through Harvard Medical School—an experience that sharpened his skills in treating complex orthopedic and athletic injuries. Today, he specializes in everything from shoulder injuries to total knee replacements, using the latest surgical techniques and evidence-based treatments.

Dr. Beck’s approach is defined by precision, innovation, and compassion. He works closely with athletes of all levels, from local high school programs to professional organizations, helping them return to peak performance as safely and quickly as possible. His dedication to the community and to the advancement of sports medicine has made him a trusted resource for active individuals across the region.

Whether treating a young athlete or an adult seeking to stay active, Dr. Beck brings world-class training and a hometown commitment to every patient he serves.

Stan Humphries

Stan Humphries:

Trigg County Leader

Stan Humphries, a farmer, educator, and longtime public servant from Cadiz, Kentucky, currently serves as Trigg County Judge-Executive, a role he first held from 2006–2012 and resumed in 2023. Born on August 2, 1969, Humphries earned a bachelor’s degree in education from Murray State University and remains active in teaching, coaching, and operating his family’s farm.

He became the first Republican in decades to hold the Judge-Executive office and oversaw key local initiatives, including the 2009 vote to allow alcohol sales, boosting county revenue. After serving in the Kentucky Senate from 2013–2021, where he championed county funding, infrastructure, and rural development, Humphries returned as Judge-Executive in 2023. His current focus includes economic development, broadband expansion, and infrastructure improvements. In 2024, he was named chair of the Cadiz-Trigg County Economic Development Commission to further support business growth in the region.

Sidebar: Key Milestones

- 1969 – Born in Cadiz, KY
- 1990s – Graduates Murray State University; teaches, coaches, and farms
- 2006 – Elected Trigg County Judge-Executive (first Republican in decades)
- 2009 – Oversees vote to allow alcohol sales
- 2012 – Elected to Kentucky Senate (1st District)
- 2013–2021 – Serves two Senate terms; focuses on county funding and infrastructure
- 2021 – Announces run for Judge-Executive
- 2023 – Begins current term as Judge-Executive
- 2024 – Named chair of Cadiz-Trigg County Economic Development Commission
- 2025 – Announces re-election bid for 2026

Sonia G. Osman

1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work from start to finish.

My name is Sonia G. Osman, SHRM-CP and I am the Owner and Principal HR Consultant at SG Consulting and SR HR Business Partner at Bristol Industries, LLC. My work centers on helping organizations build strong, legally compliant, and people-focused HR systems. A typical project begins with a discovery meeting where I assess a client’s needs—everything from organizational structure and compliance gaps to culture challenges or leadership development. From there, I design customized HR strategies, develop policies, implement performance management tools, and facilitate training for managers and staff. Throughout the process, I coach leaders, ensure regulatory compliance, and provide ongoing HR support so businesses can grow with confidence and clarity.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences shape your approach today?

Mentors, early influences, work habits, and personal/community interests.

My very first job was working as a car hop, and while it may seem simple, it taught me foundational lessons that I still rely on today—customer service, accountability, clear communication, and the importance of staying calm and positive under pressure. Those early experiences sparked my interest in how people work, interact, and succeed in their roles, which ultimately led me into the field of human resources. Over time, with mentors who encouraged my growth and modeled professionalism, I pursued training and became a certified HR professional. Additionally, my involvement in community organizations, women’s leadership groups, and local professional networks helped shape my belief that meaningful work is built on respect, empathy, and strong relationships—values that guide my HR practice every day.

3. Where is your business located? Anything special about the real estate or history?

My business is based in Paducah, KY, housed in a home office space. I intentionally chose this location because I wanted my office to feel accessible and rooted in the community I serve. My space was redesigned to be warm, modern, and people-focused—reflecting the way I strive to approach HR consulting: clear, comfortable, and built to support growth.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

When I’m not working, I recharge by enjoying traveling, training for ½ marathons with my husband, smashing weights in the gym, and spending quality time with family and friends. I also love participating in women’s leadership groups and community events, which continually inspire me both personally and professionally.

5. What’s the best business advice someone ever gave you, and who was it from?

The best business advice I ever received was from a mentor Lyle Hanna from Hanna Resource Management: “People may forget your words, but they will remember how you made them feel—lead with that in mind.” That reminder keeps me focused on empathy, clarity, and professionalism in every interaction.

6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best advice I can offer is this: Build your business around values, not trends and meet people where they are. When you operate from integrity, communicate clearly, and genuinely invest in people, you create an organization that attracts talent, earns trust, and stands the test of time.

Sonny Evans

I must begin by saying that I am not very good at or comfortable talking about myself. I look at what we do at Livingston Co. EMS as a team effort. I am extremely proud of the service we provide and none of it would be possible without the contributions and sacrifices that everyone here makes.

1. Tell us about your work (Job Title, Business Name) and what you do at work from start to finish.

I am the Director of Livingston County EMS, and I do work on an ambulance as a Paramedic regularly when needed. The most basic duties of the Director are administrative and include overseeing all staff, operations, performance and training, logistics, finances, quality assurance and improvement, compliance, public relations, as well as working interdepartmentally with other emergency services both in and out of county which helps ensure continued positive relationships and quality collaborative care. Although, none of this is possible without the contributions of all team members here. Ultimately, the team at Livingston County EMS and I work together to ensure the highest quality care for the people of Livingston County and doing so in the most efficient manner possible. I genuinely care about the citizens of Livingston County, and to simplify the above, in my position I manage this ambulance service using both head and heart to make sure we are here to help both patients and their families through some of their toughest days.

2. What were your first jobs, and how did those experiences shape your approach today?

EMS is the only job I have had as an adult. Prior to my career in EMS, I was a volunteer firefighter, sometimes working along side of EMS crews in certain situations. This did get me interested in the field. During a discussion with Andy Oliver, the fire chief at the time, he encouraged me to become an EMT-B, even if I wasn’t planning on a career in it. I thought this would be a good idea to further my knowledge within emergency services and help the fire department with medical assists. I then got bit by the EMS bug and fell in love with the field, which led me to this fulfilling career.

I do have to thank Andy Oliver, a previous chief of Smithland Fire Department, for seeing a spark in me that I did not and helping to guide me to a career I love when I likely would not have otherwise found it. He was an exceptional example of leadership early in my career and I cannot express how grateful I am to him for everything he has done for me.

I also must thank David Koon, an EMT-B who has now retired from Livingston County EMS. David took me under his wing as my career in EMS was just beginning and later, we were partners at work for the last eight years before he retired. Not only a remarkable EMT-B, but David also truly cares about his community. He has shown unbelievable dedication to this county and has sacrificed far more than most would for the citizens of it. Although not related, David has become a part of my family, and I am honored to have worked beside him and to have him as a friend.

I am eternally grateful to my father, Hershel Evans, and my mother Marletta Evans, for raising me within a family of love. I believe they are the reasons I enjoy this career as much as I do. My father loved people and never met a stranger. He also was a leader of many things throughout his life, the most difficult being a family, and he shined at this, always knowing how to handle any situation with words of wisdom and love. My mother has always been the most caring person I know. She has shown this unfailingly throughout her life, not only to her family, but to anyone she has met. Her kindness, selflessness, and love are something that I will always admire and appreciate, and I hope to be able to show the same to those around me.

3. Where is your business located? Anything special about the real estate or history?

Livingston County EMS operates two stations. The main station is at 1227 Iuka Rd, Smithland, KY. The second station is at 1441 US 60 East, Burna, KY.

4. What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

If I am completely honest, I don’t have much time away from work for hobbies, and it’s not exactly the job you can’t take home with you. Because of that, being with my family is my hobby and how I recharge. They are my world.

5. What’s the best business advice someone ever gave you, and who was it from?

I tend to look at EMS as more of a service than a business. However, you must still have a business mind and operate as fiscally responsibly and efficiently as possible to provide a service. I think the best advice I have been given was not spoken but it has been shown through the actions of many people I have worked with or been around over the years, including those discussed above. Seeing someone be a living example sticks with me more than words, and I am thankful for all of those that have been that example for me.

6. What is the best piece of business advice you would give to others?

The best “business” advice I would give to others:

If you lead with only your heart, you will fail. If you lead with only your head, you will fail others. Use both and everyone will succeed together.

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4	8	9	7	1	6	2	3	5
5	6	1	3	2	8	9	4	7
7	2	3	5	4	9	1	8	6
6	7	5	2	8	1	4	9	3
9	1	8	6	3	4	7	5	2
3	4	2	9	7	5	8	6	1
1	5	6	4	9	2	3	7	8
8	3	4	1	5	7	6	2	9
2	9	7	8	6	3	5	1	4

Word Search Answers

S	V	S	R	I	M	O	J	E	T	J	R	W	D	N
G	M	L	E	E	N	O	B	L	I	X	A	D	O	X
S	T	V	X	L	I	B	O	M	T	L	S	L	A	L
C	H	C	S	J	O	N	B	I	S	V	O	M	O	A
d	X	W	L	N	R	W	A	N	A	S	C	M	I	V
A	I	O	T	V	N	E	I	S	T	E	O	L	X	N
W	N	L	I	T	H	E	O	N	V	E	H	I	S	T
O	O	N	R	I	L	O	O	I	G	C	N	V	E	N
I	G	G	S	N	M	E	X	S	S	W	O	I	N	A
C	d	L	V	S	O	N	X	O	I	S	J	R	L	V
X	M	L	V	S	A	M	X	R	L	R	T	S	V	I
G	R	X	H	C	I	A	O	O	B	N	S	O	H	M
M	T	L	X	C	O	H	I	T	J	O	S	B	O	O
H	H	B	X	L	T	S	T	C	X	W	I	L	T	A
L	I	S	O	S	X	A	A	R	A	d	H	I	L	O
H	S	O	S	X	A	A	R	A	d	H	I	L	O	N
I	d	M	d	J	E	O	B	L	S	O	M	O	C	I
K	O	W	V	M	K	R	X	J	V	B	A	S	S	I
d	I	O	R	I	E	S	J	T	C	V	K	C	B	A

Puzzle Page in A Section

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University of Kentucky finds Antarctica’s toughest insect is already eating microplastics

By Jordan Strickler

Lexington, Ky.— A global research team led by researchers from the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment has found that Antarctica’s only native insect is already ingesting microplastics, even in one of the planet’s most remote regions. The study, published in the journal Science of the Total Environment, is the first to examine

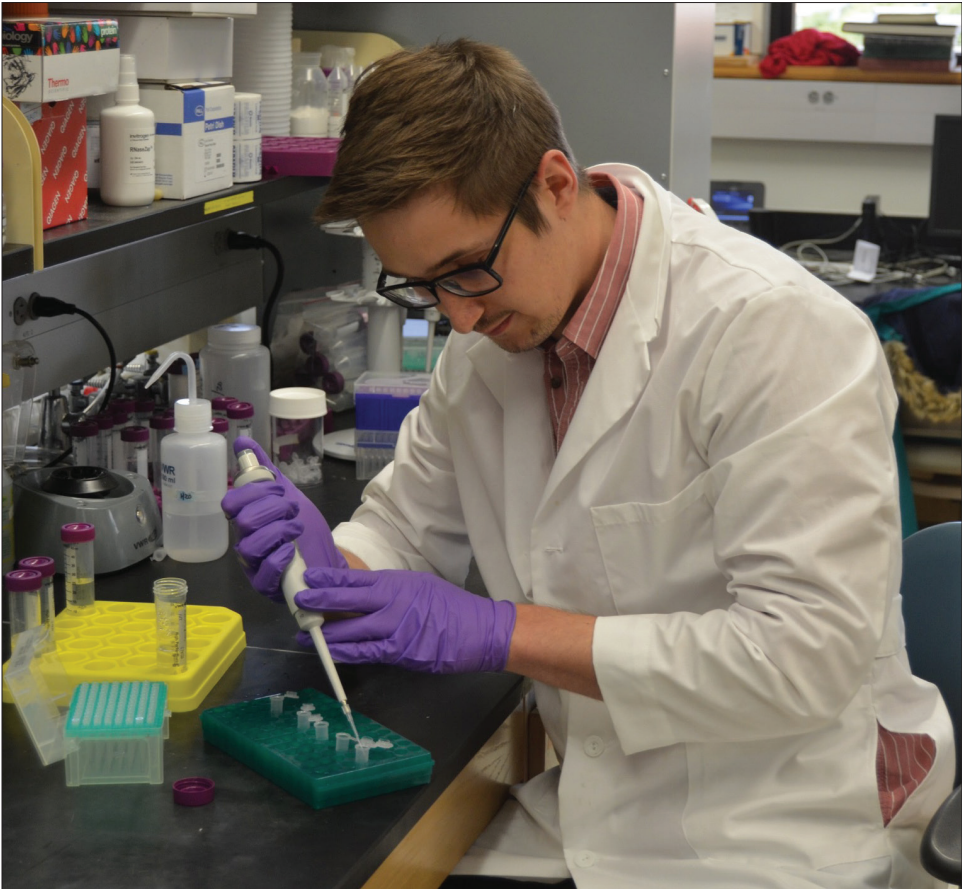
how microplastics affect an Antarctic insect and to document plastic pieces inside wild-caught midges. Jack Devlin, who led the work back in 2020 as part of his Ph.D. before moving to Scotland to work as a marine ornithologist, said the project started after a documentary on plastic pollution left him stunned. “Watching that film just blew my mind,” Devlin said. “I started reading about plastic’s effects on insects and thought,

‘If plastic is turning up everywhere else, what about rare places like Antarctica?’” *A tough little midge in a changing environment* Belgica antarctica is a non-biting midge (a small fly) about the length of a grain of rice. It is the southernmost insect on Earth and the only one found exclusively in Antarctica. Its larvae live in moist patches of moss and algae along the Antarctic Peninsula

and can reach densities of nearly 40,000 per square meter, helping break down dead plant material and recycle nutrients through the soil. “They’re what we call poly-

extremophiles,” Devlin said. “They cope with intense cold, drying out, high salt, big swings in temperature and UV radiation. So, the big question was: Does that toughness protect them from

a new stress like microplastics or does it make them vulnerable to something they’ve never seen before?” see **INSECT**, from page B17



Jack Devlin working on microplastics effects in 2022 as part of his Ph.D. Photo by Jordan Strickler.

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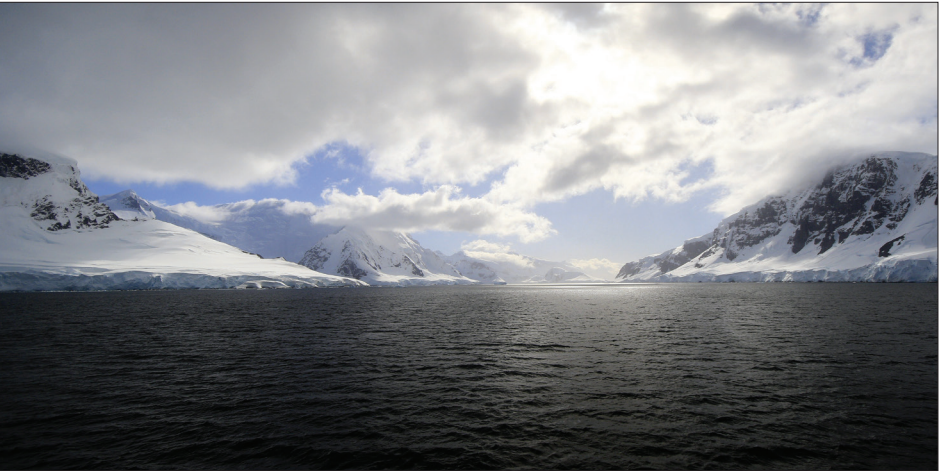
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One UK alum visited one of the harshest places on Earth for his work on microplastics’ effect on Antarctica’s toughest insects.

Photo by Jack Devlin

INSECT,
from page B17

Although Antarctica is often seen as a pristine wilderness, earlier studies have detected plastic fragments in fresh snow and surrounding seawater. Concentrations are lower than in most regions, but ocean currents, long-distance wind transport and

human activity from research bases and ships still carry plastics into the continent.

Putting microplastics to the test

The research team put the midges through a battery of tests, and the results were unexpected, Devlin said. “Even at the highest plastic

concentrations, survival didn’t drop,” Devlin said. “Their basic metabolism didn’t change either. On the surface, they seemed to be doing fine.” A closer look revealed a subtle cost. Larvae exposed to higher microplastic levels had lower fat reserves, while carbohydrate and protein levels remained about the same.

Devlin believes slower feeding at low temperatures and the complex natural soil the insects live in may limit the plastic they consume. Because of the logistical challenges of working in Antarctica, the exposure period lasted only 10 days. Longer-term experiments are needed to further understand the potential impacts of microplastic exposure, he said.

Hunting for plastic inside wild Antarctic insects

The project’s second phase focused on a more basic question: Are wild Belgica larvae in Antarctica already ingesting microplastics? During a 2023 research cruise along the western Antarctic Peninsula, the team collected larvae from 20 sites on 13 islands, and preserved them to prevent further feeding.

To search for plastics inside the larvae, Devlin collaborated with Italian microplastics expert Elisa Bergami at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and imaging expert Giovanni Birarda at Elettra Sincrotrone Trieste. The team dissected the five-millimeter larvae and analyzed their gut contents using imaging systems capable of identifying chemical “fingerprints” of particles as small as four micrometers — far below the threshold of human vision. After examining 40 larvae from across the region they found only two microplastic fragments.

Finding just two

see **INSECT**,
from page B19

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INSECT,
from page B18

pieces may seem minor, but Devin views it as an early warning.

“Antarctica still has much lower plastic levels than most of the planet, and that’s good news,” Devlin said. “Our study suggests that, right now, microplastics are not flooding these soil communities. But we can now say they are getting into the system, and at high enough levels they start to change the insect’s energy balance.”

Because the midge has no known land-based predators, any plastic it ingests likely does not travel far up the food chain. The concern, Devlin said,

is what may happen if long-lived larvae continue ingesting microplastics throughout their two-year development, especially as warming and drying add additional stress.

A global problem reaching the ends of the Earth

For Devlin, the findings show how far human pollution has spread.

“This started because I watched a documentary and thought, ‘Surely Antarctica is one of the last places not dealing with this,’” Devlin said. “Then you go there, you work with this incredible little insect that lives where there are no trees, barely any plants,

and you still find plastic in its gut. That really brings home how widespread the problem is.”

Devlin said future work will track changes in microplastic levels in Antarctic soils and test longer, multi-stress experiments on Belgica antarctica and other soil organisms.

“Antarctica gives us a simpler ecosystem to ask very focused questions,” Devlin said. “If we pay attention now, we might learn lessons that apply far beyond the polar regions.”

This work was supported by the Antarctic Science International Bursary, the U.S. National Science Foundation and the National Institute of

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