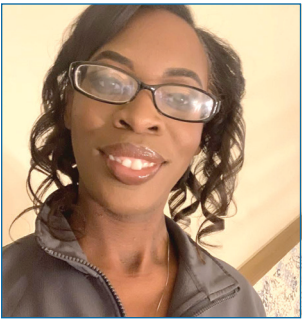




Event and special
publication by Fort
Wayne Newspapers



GREATER FORT WAYNE
Business Weekly
FORTY
UNDER
4 2025TM

Cassandra Rosene

Age: 34

Stillwater Hospice

Director of Business Development



What is your education?

University of Saint Francis, Master of Business Administration
IPFW, Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs-Healthcare Administration

What community organizations are you involved in?

Chairperson of the Board, Madison Township-Allen County, Indiana
Member of Women's Network Active Council-Greater FW INC.

What are your hobbies?

My biggest hobby is spending time with my family! I cherish every opportunity to create lasting memories, especially when we're outdoors. And I must admit, I also have a soft spot for Bravo TV shows!

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Northeast Indiana, and my roots here run deep. I'm married to a farmer whose family has been in Allen County for generations. If my sons choose to farm, they would be the seventh generation, further solidifying our ties to this area.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

My profession is not just a job but a platform for me to express my deep-seated passion for helping others. Every day, I have the privilege of engaging with patients and families, discussing the beauty of hospice services, and educating the community on end-of-life choices. I get to use data to benefit our company and our patients, I love a spreadsheet. Most importantly, I find joy in nurturing and supporting my team members.

What does success mean to you?

For me, success is not just about professional achievements but about giving my sons the best life possible. I strive to instill in them a strong work ethic, the importance of family time, and the tools to build a successful future. Whenever I receive a compliment about my boys, it reminds me of the best success I can ever achieve.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a genetic counselor. After watching my grandmother suffer from Alzheimer's Disease, I wanted to make a difference so no other family had to experience that! I may not be doing that exact job, but I get to help families experience a beautiful end of life and feel that it is making the same difference I was always hopeful to make!

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck was from Zesto in New Haven! I was 15 years old and loved working hard and earning my own money. Having ice cream and great co-workers made the job even more fun!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have two.
My husband, Dale, has been a huge supporter since our very early dating days. He always says, "If it's going to make you happy, do it." He does whatever he can to help me. He does a great job of teaching our boys how to support a wife in any of her dreams!
My best friend, Amanda, is also a driven career woman, wife, and mother, so she understands my struggles and is always willing to help me problem-solve.

See ROSENE, page A19

THE STILLWATER HOSPICE FAMILY CONGRATULATES

Cassandra Rosene, MBA



Thank you for your compassion, commitment and leadership.

Stillwater HOSPICE

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FORT WAYNE NEWSPAPERS

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

GREATER FORT WAYNE Business Weekly

What is your education?

Marlboro High School – Marlboro, New Jersey
Seton Hall University – B.A. in Social & Behavioral Science, Psychology Concentration
Huntington University – Doctor of Occupational Therapy
In progress:
Indiana Wesleyan University – Doctor of Business Administration | Healthcare Administration (expected completion Dec. 2026)

What community organizations are you involved in?

State Representative: Representative Assembly of American Occupational Therapy Association
Advisory Board Member: Northeast Indiana Area Health Education Centers
Member: Indiana Occupational Therapy Association
Medical Team Volunteer: Pine Hills Church

What are your hobbies?

Lifelong learner
Church softball
Golf leisure
Exercise
Spending time with my wife and two children

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Ten and a half years ago I moved to Fort Wayne for occupational therapy school and met my wife, a first-grade teacher, and we decided to make it our home!

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the ability to shape the next generation of occupational therapists, helping them develop the skills and compassion needed to make a real impact in people’s lives. Teaching allows me to share my expertise, inspire students, and contribute to the growth of the profession.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means making a meaningful impact on my students and the occupational therapy profession while integrating work, health, well-being, and Christ-centered service. My faith guides my purpose, reminding me that teaching is also an act of service. Most importantly, my family’s love and support inspire me — without them, I could never truly feel successful.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Like any young boy playing Little League, I wanted to become a baseball player – however, I recently looked over my elementary school yearbook and it read that I wanted to cure a disease like leukemia. While that may not be in the cards for me at this time, I am blessed to be a health care provider in a profession like occupational therapy that brings hope to the hopeless and helps patients find their greatest level of independence despite the deficits their health and well-being may face.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Pier 1 Imports in Freehold, New Jersey – I was 16 years old and worked as a sales associate.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My father. He set a great example of ‘Living Our Values,’ as he learned from Con Edison, Inc. — seeking and accepting responsibility, planning the work and working the plan, and celebrating success. He instilled in me a strong work ethic that kept me focused, ultimately helping me achieve milestones like Fort Wayne’s Forty Under 40. His guidance shaped me into the purpose-driven professional and leader I am today.

Andrew D. Rivera

Age: 34

Huntington University - Fort Wayne

Director of Capstone Education, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy & Recruitment Coordinator



What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

When I transitioned from full-time clinical practice to academia, I never anticipated the far-reaching effects of this decision. Teaching and mentoring students has been a privilege, and I am continually humbled by the opportunity to help shape future occupational therapy professionals. While my role is in the classroom, the true impact comes from the students themselves — through their dedication and growth, they go on to make a difference in the lives of countless patients. It is deeply rewarding to know that, in some small way, I contribute to a ripple effect of healing and positive change in individuals, communities, and beyond.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my greatest lessons has come from moments where I’ve stretched myself too thin, believing I could manage every responsibility without stepping back to recharge. Through this, I’ve learned that leadership isn’t just about doing more — it’s about fostering clarity in communication and ensuring alignment with those around me. By refining how I articulate vision and expectations, I’ve strengthened collaboration, empowered my team, and driven high-impact outcomes. Effective leadership isn’t just about hard work; it’s about ensuring others can move forward with purpose and understanding.

What are your current professional goals?

My professional goals include advancing my expertise in health care administration through my post-professional doctorate while strengthening

See RIVERA, page A20



Huntington University celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its Doctoral Program in Occupational Therapy with an event for OTD faculty, students, alumni, colleagues, and the community on November 2nd at The Pavilion at Promenade Park. Fort Wayne Mayor Sharon Tucker, pictured with HU President Sherilyn Emberton and HU OTD Associate Professor Andrew Rivera, was in attendance to celebrate following her proclamation on Aug. 25 to officially mark the 10th anniversary of the OTD program in Fort Wayne.

Forty Under 40 Congratulates Dr. Andrew Rivera

10 Years in the Occupational Therapy Program

Huntington University
Doctoral Program in Occupational Therapy
1819 Carew St. (Parkview Randallia Campus) 260.702.9621
huntington.edu/OTD • Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8 am-5 pm



HUNTINGTON
— UNIVERSITY —
CHRIST. SCHOLARSHIP. SERVICE.

10 YEARS OF SERVING
FORT WAYNE

huntington.edu/OTD

Kassee Lamm

Age: 36
Fort Wayne
Metals
People
Rewards and
Development
Manager



What is your education?

Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from Ball State University

What community organizations are you involved in?

Board Director of Operations — First Fridays Fort Wayne

What are your hobbies?

Running and watching Notre Dame Football. Go Irish!

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I am what most call a “boomerang.” I moved away after college to Indianapolis and then L.A. When deciding to move back to Indiana, my husband and I landed on coming back to Fort Wayne because it’s an incredible community. You can be impactful in a variety of ways; my family is here, and the opportunities are endless if you are willing to put in the effort.

What is it about your profession

that you enjoy and why?

I’ve always worked in the health and well-being space. I had an incredible opportunity to join Fort Wayne Metals just shy of 2 years ago in a role that was brand new. Being part of a team that helps others develop, get healthy and reach their full potential is rewarding every single day. I love working with our diverse employee population and learning from them.

What does success mean to you?

As a leader it’s important to focus on the success of the team. If we are performing at the best of our ability and supporting the organization and employees, then we are successful. I firmly believe that you cannot define “success” without others.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a teacher. My aunt was my role model and that’s what she did. I got to see her helping people and influencing their lives for the best and without her I wouldn’t be doing what I do today.

Teaching, just not in a classroom.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I cleaned a furniture store! Due to my after-school sports schedule in high school, I could only work on Sundays so every Sunday after church I would spend 5 hours dusting, vacuuming and cleaning glass tables!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have been lucky to have incredible support from my immediate family. My mom is always there with an encouragement or idea on how to creatively approach a situation, my brother asks great questions that challenge my thought process, and my dad has supported me every step of the way and provided knowledge and insight that was impactful in my progression.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment was in a prior role where I got to watch an employee be promoted after working with and coaching them. It’s incredibly gratifying to see someone turn their attitude and work ethic around for the best. Sometimes people just need you to believe in them.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake thus far was working for an organization that did not value my contributions, opinions or suggestions. The stress was wreaking havoc on my health (both physically and mentally). The lesson I learned was to be a leader who values people, their individual contributions and their willingness to learn and get better. I also learned that sometimes you have to walk away from what you thought you wanted and walk into something even better.

What are your current professional goals?

In the short term I want to keep improving my leadership skills while working on mentoring and fostering growth with my direct reports. On my vision board? TED Talk and Global Leadership Summit speaker!

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Fort Wayne is unique in the fact you have access to a LOT of high-level leaders. I invest in my own development just as much as I invest in those I work with daily. We’ve all heard that “Leaders are Learners” and I find that to be so true. I listen to a lot of development podcasts, read development books, attend networking events around town and try to connect and learn from leaders who have excelled in their professional careers within our community.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Still figuring that out. I heard a phrase recently — “work life integration”. I aspire to have more of that. Sometimes you just have to give yourself grace in the process — still working on that too.

What do you do to relax?

Go for a walk while listening to a true crime podcast, watch a movie with my kids, do yoga!

What book do you recommend?

“The 360 Degree Leader” by John Maxwell

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Be kind, to everyone, always. Don’t ask others to do things you wouldn’t humble yourself to do. Ride the waves: there will be exciting waves and there will be extremely painful waves. Ride them both and find the lessons throughout. Positivity is contagious — don’t be negative, it’s contagious too.

Josh Ambrose

Age: 34
Custer Inc.
General
Manager



What is your education?

Graduate Degree – MBA in Business Administration – Management

What community organizations are you involved in?

Board of Directors – Iris Family Support Center (Formerly SCAN)
Board of Advisors – Indiana Tech
Cunningham School of Business
Committee Member – GFW Inc.
Investor Growth and Retention Committee

What are your hobbies?

Golf, coaching, traveling, cooking.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I moved here in 2009 to go to school

and play lacrosse for Indiana Tech in their inaugural season. Fell in love with Fort Wayne and it has been home ever since.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I get the opportunity to work with so many different people and organizations. We service businesses, health care providers and Schools. In every space our goal is to help clients do what they do best and provide spaces and interior design that help them achieve that for those they serve.

What does success mean to you?

Success for me is about providing for my family, being an example for my children, and making the world around me a

better place.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always loved the ocean, and for a long time dreamed of being a marine biologist.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck was from a bowling alley in Minnesota, where I did odd jobs, helped serve and run the register.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My wife – she has supported me completely in pursuing my goals.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Guiding the team through significant changes and challenges in our organization in one year to a 10x improvement on bottom-line profitability in just 12 months and our best year to date

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Waiting too long to make a personnel decision I knew needed to be made. Honesty is kindness, even when it is hard. If someone is not a good fit in your organization, you aren’t doing them any favors by keeping them around. It’s best to address it as soon as possible, so you can both move on and find a better fit!

What are your current professional goals?

Continuing to grow our business and ultimately expand our territory to serve

more clients in the state of Indiana.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Reading books, listening to podcasts, seminars, and coaching. I’m a development junkie and always looking for ways to grow and develop.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

This is one that I have had to learn over time. I have 3 wonderful boys at home, an incredible wife and two labs. I love being home with my family and doing things together. When times get busy with work, I rely on intentional planning and owning my calendar to make sure that the things I value most don’t get lost in chaos. Auditing how you spend your time and proving it through what you schedule is one of the most valuable things you can learn to do as early as possible.

What do you do to relax?

Really anything outdoors, I love to get fresh air, whether that is a round of golf, a walk, hunting or just sitting by the pool. Sunshine and fresh air are vital.

What book do you recommend?

I have really been into Stoicism the last couple of years. “Meditations” by Marcus “Aurelius is where it started, that transitions to The Daily Stoic,” “Ego is the Enemy and The Obstacle is the Way,” all of which are written by Ryan Holiday.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Just keep moving. Stay true to yourself. Be kind. Help others. It’s all gonna be alright.



Our next generation of leaders

**Congratulations to the 40 Under
40 honorees—the future is
brighter because of you!**

**We're especially proud to recognize
Kassee Lamm for her leadership and
impact. From all of us at Fort Wayne
Metals, thank you for your dedication.**



FORT WAYNE METALS
Turning knowledge into solutions.®

Melissa Ford-Kalbfell

Age: 29

Community Foundation of Wabash County

Development Director, Director of Wabash Valley Dance Theater



What is your education?

Master of Public Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington

What community organizations are you involved in?

Wabash Valley Dance Theater, Director
Wabash County YMCA, Board Chair
Young Professionals of Wabash County, Steering Committee Member
Waypoint Wabash County, Board Member

What are your hobbies?

Traveling, cycling, skiing, scuba diving, cooking

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

For a couple of reasons...I was raised in Wabash County and my parents are from here for one. The reason I returned though, is because when I was in college, the city of Wabash was going through lots of revitalization, which greatly excited me and inspired many of my college papers and projects. When it was time to choose a major, I knew I wanted to do something with community development, so that I could return to Wabash County and help to improve the quality of life in my hometown. I chose to major in Nonprofit Management through the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University and immediately loved my classes. My studies helped me secure a multi-year internship at the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, which ultimately led to my position at the Community Foundation of Wabash County immediately after I graduated my Master's program in 2019.

that you enjoy and why?

In my Community Foundation role, I absolutely love helping individuals, families, and organizations achieve their charitable goals. Oftentimes, individuals and families meet with us wanting to create a fund or endowment to further the legacy of a loved one. Often, they want the fund to support what that individual had cherished during his or her lifetime. It brings me such joy working to find a solution that best fits the goals of the family and needs of the organization or programs they wish to support. It's very rewarding work.

As the director of Wabash Valley Dance Theater, what I enjoy the most is seeing dancers build confidence in themselves throughout the year as they learn new skills and develop their technique. It's always exciting for me to see how proud parents are of their children after our recitals. I also danced at WVDT growing up, so serving in an administrative role is a way I can give back to an organization that meant so much to me during my childhood.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means that I enjoy and feel rewarded by my work, and that through my work, someone's life is made better.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I don't think I had a career in mind. I just knew that I wanted to graduate high school, go to college, and have a family.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your


See FORD-KALBFELL, page A20

Atif Chowdhry

Age: 39

Parkview Physicians Group/
Parkview Health System

Vice President of Primary Care



What is your education?

I have Master of Healthcare Administration from University of Saint Francis.

What community organizations are you involved in?

Thakkat Foundation, it is a nonprofit which helps combat poverty with providing underserved population with education, housing and food support.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy culinary exploration and golf.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Northeast Indiana has been home ever since.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on patient care and accessibility, improving health care operations and efficiencies by collaborating with diverse teams to help drive these initiatives.

What does success mean to you?

For me, success is a continuous journey of learning, growth, and making a difference. It's about waking up every day knowing that my work contributes to the well-being of individuals and communities.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I always wanted to be a race car driver when I grew up.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first job was when I was 16 years old at American Payday Loans where I served in the role as a teller.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My family has been my biggest supporter, offering unwavering encouragement and balance throughout my career. Their belief in my abilities and sacrifices have allowed me to focus on making a meaningful impact.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

During COVID, collaboration with the team through rapid adaptation by implementing protocols, ensuring coworker and patient safety and maintaining service continuity. This experience reinforced the importance of agility, resilience and strong leadership and support in challenging times.

What has been your greatest

mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my leadership journey, I took on too much responsibility myself, believing that personally overseeing every detail would ensure success. However, I quickly realized that this limited both my effectiveness and the growth of my team. The lesson I learned was the power of trusting and empowering others not only enhances team performance but also fosters leadership development within the organization.

What are your current professional goals?

My goal is to implement strategies that improve both the quality of patient care and operational efficiency. Whether through process optimization, workforce development or cost effective solutions, I want to ensure that health-care delivery is both high-quality and sustainable.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I actively network with peers, mentors and other industry leaders and regularly reviewing health care journals and industry reports and academic research. I gain fresh perspectives and insights that help me stay at the forefront of health care and market trends.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I balance my professional and personal life by both being intentional with my time and setting boundaries which have helped me prioritize my commitments and allocate time accordingly.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy spending quality time with my family. Whether I am coloring & painting with my son and daughter or going on a weekend family trip or just relaxing at home with my wife and kids, being with loved ones helps me recharge and keep a balanced perspective.

What book do you recommend?

"Dare to Lead" by Brene Brown. The book provides insight into importance of building trust, empathy and fostering meaningful connections and collaboration.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

The world is constantly evolving and so is health care, Don't ever stop learning; always and in all ways stay curious.



Melissa Ford-Kalbfell

Congratulations
Melissa!

40 Under 40
Award Winner

Congratulations to Melissa and all of the 2025 Forty Under Forty recipients. Honeywell Arts & Entertainment is proud to celebrate Melissa's leadership, innovation, and passion for community development that continue to make lasting impact on Wabash County.

Thank you, Melissa, for your dedication, vision, and commitment to strengthening and enriching our community.

 honeywellarts.org • 260.563.1102 • Wabash, IN

Ohlashia Cowley

Age: 33

Itor & Don’s
Kwik Wash

Multi Store
Laundromat
Owner, Certified
Therapeutic
Recreation
Specialist



I am also a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) for New Wave Wellness working with individuals with special needs. My laundromats are named after my sister Itoro who passed away 2 years ago who had special needs and my dad, Don, who passed away from COVID.

What is your education?

I have a Bachelor’s Degree from Central Michigan University. I graduated Cum Laude with a 3.71 GPA with a degree in Recreation Therapy. I am certified by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation (NCTRC)

What community organizations are you involved in?

I am involved with the Special Olympics, YMCA Adaptive Services Trail Buddies Volunteer Program. With the laundromats we do clothing drives, toy drives, food drives, giveaways, etc. We will be doing Bible Studies as well. We call ourselves the Laundromat Ministries because we want to spread the love of Jesus to everyone

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy traveling, watching sports, especially the Detroit Lions, and the WNBA. I enjoying playing with my bunnies, watching “Shark Tank,” and watching YouTube podcast, and spending time with family.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I originally moved out here for my Recreation Therapy job after college. There were more job opportunities due to the Medicaid Waiver program. While working my Recreation Therapy job I wanted to start earning more revenue streams of income. The week after my sister’s funeral I went on YouTube to look at different ways to earn extra income and laundromats came up. I began my laundromat search by going to all the laundromats and towns and speaking with the owners. I eventually ran into a owner who was willing to share the inside scoop of the business and he got me connected with his people who helped him get started and the rest is history. I was able to make a deal and purchase my first laundromat. Eventually I started acquiring more. Now I have 3 in Northeast Indiana.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

What I enjoy is being able to put a smile on my customers faces and brighten up their day. I love being able to spread the love of Jesus to all my customers. You never know what someone can be going through and want my customers to know that I care about them.

What does success mean to you?

Success means to me is being able to take care of my family where they don’t have to worry about anything financially

anymore. I want to retire my whole family and I want to retire in my 30s. I grew up dirt poor and homeless at one point and time. I remember sleeping in cars, and staying at the homeless shelters, taking showers outside with a water hose, living in a rat infested house. Those experiences when I was younger molded me into the person I am today. I don’t want my momma or brother ever have to worry about living like that ever again. I want them to be able to relax and enjoy life. We have been through so much as a family.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child I always knew I wanted to help people. I always wanted to work with the elderly population.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck was my job as a Deskie at Central Michigan University in the Residence Hall of Fabiano/Emmons/ Woldt Hall. I worked the front desk and I would help answer the students questions, navigate the campus, help the new freshman, take care of their mail, etc. I also was a mini mentor to many of the students. I would give advice and try to encourage the younger students that they will be successful just to continue to apply themselves and stay motivated. My first paycheck went to my family. I gave it to my momma. I know things were tight financially. I always wanted to make sure they were OK.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have several biggest supporters. My momma, she is always in my corner encouraging me. Always there for me whenever I need her. My brother Ehke tells me all the time how much of a impact I made in his life and he always lifting me up. My big sister Melinda has been rooting for me every step of the way. I appreciate her! My dear dad Don who passed away. He would drive to CMU every weekend to pick me up and bring me back home to be with the family. He would go to the CMU football games with me. When it came time to look for jobs he drove me. Don rescued me and my family when we were growing up in Texas and poor. My momma met Don on the job and when Don saw how we were living Don asked momma if she wanted to move to Michigan with him because his dad had a house up their we could stay in. We packed everything up and moved to Michigan and that changed our lives forever.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I would say my biggest

See COWLEY, page A19

Ashley Miller

Age: 34

Asher
Agency
Account
Executive



What is your education?

Snider High School
IPFW Fort Wayne – Bachelor of Arts, English

What community organizations are you involved in?

Fort Wayne Pet Food Pantry

What are your hobbies?

Reading and reviewing books on social media, kayaking, going to workout classes, watching reality TV – specifically BRAVO! playing board games, spending time with my family and friends.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and while I got the itch to leave for a bigger city just like any other young person, I knew I wanted to grow roots here because my

family and my husband’s family are here. Having previously worked in economic development, I have been fortunate to see (and be a part of) the growth that Northeast Indiana has not only experienced but is capable of. NEIN has a lot to offer us if we take advantage of it, we truly have everything here...well not, mountains or oceans but you get the point!

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

It’s a great mix of strategic thinking, project management and relationship building. By nature, I am an introvert who could easily hide behind spreadsheets and be happy but being an Account Executive at Asher has brought on exciting and fun challenges and gets me out of my comfort zone on a daily basis. I get to work with great people and have fun while doing it.

See MILLER, page A20



Forty Under 40
Winner!



Writing her own
Success
Story

Ashley Miller

Congratulations to A-team member Ashley Miller on being named to Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly’s Forty Under 40. While we’re not surprised, we are thrilled that we get to be a part of her success story!

Congratulations from everyone at Asher.

asher

Ashley McClanahan

Age: 37

Bill's Professional Towing & Repair

Operations Manager



Nicholas Eltzroth

Age: 31

Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative

Chief Operating Officer (COO)



What is your education?

Graduate of Prairie Heights High School - LaGrange, IN

What community organizations are you involved in?

Angola Area Chamber of Commerce Board Member
Therapeutic Riding Center of Steuben County
Junior Achievement

What are your hobbies?

Snow skiing, fishing, paddle boarding, reading, spending time with family

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Born and raised

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

Getting to help people in stressful situations & hopefully making their day better. Every day is something different.

What does success mean to you?

Being able to wake up every morning and look at myself in the mirror and be proud of the work I do
As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
I bounced all over! I wanted to be Britney Spears (except I have terrible stage freight, lol) - a teacher, a fashion designer, a real estate agent....

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

Sales Associate at the GAP Outlet in Fremont, IN – age 16

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My father

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Growing my family business into a multimillion-dollar operation and building a brand-new facility in 2022

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Not really my greatest mistake, but one lesson learned that I have lived my management career by is: As true in business as it is in life, ex-employees are like ex-boyfriends.... An “Ex” is an “Ex” for a reason. Whether it was on good terms or bad terms, it ended for a reason.

What are your current professional goals?

To be able to maintain our growth and keep up with the ups and downs of the industry

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Hands-on training. Networking and maintaining good relationships with fellow towing/repair companies in the area

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

With the help and support of my family and friends

What do you do to relax?

Long bubble baths, spend time with family, read, escape to northern Michigan and lose cell service

What book do you recommend?

“Luckiest Girl Alive” by Jessica Noll

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Don't live for other people's happiness, live for what makes you happy and do the best you can in everything you do

What is your education?

High School GED – Saint Francis DeSales High School – Columbus, OH
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (BSEE), Minor in Applied Mathematics, Concentration in Advanced Energy – Ohio Northern University – Ada, OH
Masters of Business Administration (MBA) – Ball State University – Muncie, IN

What community organizations are you involved in?

I am actively involved in the Knights of Columbus, where I participate in various community service initiatives. I also actively participate in church activities. Additionally, Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative is very active in the communities we serve, supporting local parades, fairs, and other community events to stay engaged and give back.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy golfing whenever I get the chance, as well as spending time outdoors. I love riding around the neighborhood with my kids and wife on the golf cart and heading to the pool together. I'm also a sports junkie, whether it's watching games, officiating as a licensed high school umpire, or just keeping up with the latest in sports. I like working on DIY projects, whether it's around the house or around the yard.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born in Fort Wayne, and after starting my career elsewhere, my wife and I decided to return home once we had two young kids so they could grow up close to family. The opportunity at Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative has allowed me to do what I love while being at home, which makes it even more meaningful.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the problem-solving and leadership aspects of my role. Working as COO of Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative allows me to ensure reliable service for our members while also tackling strategic projects like broadband expansion. I love the cooperative business model and what we stand for as a not-for-profit — we are here to improve the quality of life for the communities we serve, not to maximize profits. It's rewarding to work in an industry where service and community impact come first.

What does success mean to you?

Success means making a positive impact on the people I serve — whether that's through providing reliable electricity and broadband, fostering a strong workplace culture, or giving back to the community. It also means balancing professional achievement with personal fulfillment, ensuring that I leave a lasting legacy for my family, my team, and the cooperative.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to play professional sports and was fortunate to compete at high levels for much of my life. Outside of sports, I aspired to be a teacher and coach because I love teaching and making a positive impact on others' lives. While I didn't become a traditional teacher, my leadership role at the cooperative allows me to mentor, guide, and support my team, which is incredibly rewarding.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

During summers in high school, I did landscape manual labor for my neighbor, which taught me the value of hard work and perseverance. I also worked at another neighbor's Italian restaurant, where I gained experience in customer service and teamwork.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My wife, Claire, has been my biggest supporter throughout my career. Her encouragement, patience, and belief in me have been invaluable as I've navigated challenges and opportunities. Additionally, my family as a whole, including my parents, has always been there for me, providing guidance and support. I've also been fortunate to have great mentors in my current and past bosses, who have helped shape my leadership style and career growth.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

One of my biggest accomplishments has been helping lead Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative's expansion into broadband, bringing a critical service to the communities we serve. Additionally, I take great pride in building a strong, service-driven culture within the cooperative, ensuring that our team is engaged, motivated, and committed to providing exceptional service to our members. Seeing the positive impact of these efforts on both our employees and the communities we serve has been incredibly rewarding.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my biggest lessons has been the importance of clear communication and delegation, both at work and at

Congratulations Ashley McClanahan

Operations Manager





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See ELTZROTH, page A18

Nicole Fairchild

Age: 38
McMillen
Health
CEO



What is your education?

Masters in Business Administration, Masters in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management, and Bachelor's of Science.

What community organizations are you involved in?

First Church of God, Columbia City – I teach 4-year-olds in the mornings about Jesus and co-lead 4th- and 5th-grade girls for Girls of Grace in the evenings.

I also lead a women's group called IF Table the second Tuesday of each month.

Oak Farm Girl Scouts, Cookie Co-Chair –My girls are both in Girl Scouts, so I volunteer as a Co-Cookie Chair for cookies selling season — which is currently happening.

Rotary Club of Fort Wayne – Member and Golf Outing Committee Member

Junior Achievement, Volunteer – I volunteer in my children's classrooms to provide JA lessons in the spring.

What are your hobbies?

Reading, exercising, spending time with my family and friends.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in LaOtto, Indiana, and attended Churubusco High School. Following graduation, I pursued my undergraduate and graduate studies at Indiana State University. Afterward, I relocated to Alabama for a year, where I applied my Bachelor's Degree as a Legal Assistant at a law firm.

Upon returning to Indiana, I took on the role of Executive Director of the Greencastle Housing Authority. It wasn't long before we uncovered significant misappropriations of funding from the previous administration. For the next year, I navigated a federal audit and led fundraising efforts to repay HUD for the misused funds. During that time, I successfully petitioned the county to expand the Greencastle Housing Authority's capabilities to serve the entire county through the Housing Choice Voucher Program. With widespread support, the county council approved this transition, and the state authorized the Greencastle Housing Authority to evolve into the Putnam County Housing Authority. I then focused on liquidating all assets and ensuring that HUD was reimbursed for the misappropriated funding.

Once I completed this critical work, I felt the pull to return to North-east Indiana. I accepted a position at Indiana Tech, where I earned my Master's in Business Administration with aspirations of working for the State to help prevent future misappropriations. Having earned my MBA, I began to explore new opportunities, which ultimately led me to McMillen Health.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

As the CEO of McMillen Health, the oldest independently operated health education center in the United States and one of only four remaining nationwide, I have found my true calling in the nonprofit sector. My journey began while pursuing my first Master's Degree at Indiana State University, where I completed an AmeriCorps internship with Chances and Services for Youth (CASY) in Terre Haute. This experience led me to a role as Program Director for the Afternoons ROCK in Indiana Program, where I supervised 12 program providers across six counties. This pivotal experience ignited my passion for the nonprofit world — each day presented new challenges and opportunities, keeping the work dynamic, and fulfilling.

I accepted the role of Executive Director at McMillen Health in 2016 and have been deeply committed to our mission for the past 9 years. We serve nearly 100,000 students each year, providing essential and impactful preventive health education programs. This means countless students — regardless of their age, ability, or background—are receiving health education that is transformative, impactful, and fun! Our programs and curriculum are designed in a low-literacy format, ensuring accessibility, and we make learning engaging through interactive activities and role-playing, creating memorable experiences for each student.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my role is dispelling myths about McMillen Health. Many people associate us solely with sex and drug education, unaware that these topics represent less than 10% of our offerings. In reality, we provide over 250 diverse health education programs, reaching students of all ages — from birth to 100+ — and extending our impact globally through our advanced green screen rooms. Our programs have reached students in all but nine states across the country.

In 2012, we launched the Brush Oral Health program in response to a request from the Isaac Knapp District Dental Society, and today, Brush serves more than 2.9 million children and families across 38 states. To further diversify our revenue and impact, in 2015 we began collaborating with various organizations nationwide to develop low-literacy health education tailored to their specific needs. Our partnerships include health departments, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Michigan's Dental School and Depression Center, the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry, and many more.

Sharing this comprehensive vision of what we do at McMillen Health not only enlightens others but also brings a sense of joy — the way people's faces light up when they learn about our

Ryan Ferguson

Age: 36
Cole Center
Family
YMCA
Health and
Wellness
Director



What is your education?

I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology from DePauw University.

What community organizations are you involved in?

I serve as the Chair of Activate Noble County, a board member for Parkview Noble Hospital, and as the Sprints/Jumps Track Coach at East Noble High School.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy golfing and spending time at the lake with friends and family.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I chose to stay in Northeast Indiana because family is incredibly important to me, and most of my loved ones are here. Having grown up in this area, I feel a deep connection and a strong desire to help our community thrive. This was a wonderful place to grow up, and I want to contribute to its success so that other families and individuals can have the same positive experience I did.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I love being able to engage with our community in meaningful ways. I am deeply passionate about health and wellness in all its forms — physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and financial. Sharing my knowledge, expertise, and experience to support others on their wellness journey is incredibly rewarding. Wellness is multifaceted, and challenges are inevitable, but I take great pride in helping our community overcome obstacles and improve their overall health and well-being.

What does success mean to you?

To me, success means helping

someone along their journey. Health and wellness looks different for everyone, and we all start from different places. Along the way, we all need support, and if I can play a role in improving someone's overall health and well-being, then I consider that a true success.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A professional soccer player.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first job was at Pizza Hut, where I worked on the line making pizzas.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My CEO, Casey Weimer, has been my greatest mentor and source of support throughout my career. From Day One, she has provided guidance, answered my questions, and offered invaluable advice. She has created countless opportunities for me to learn, grow, and succeed, shaping me into a stronger leader. Her mentorship has been instrumental in helping me navigate the challenges and triumphs of my career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

One of my biggest accomplishments has been successfully launching multiple chronic disease programs. These include EnhanceFitness, LIVESTRONG at the YMCA, the Diabetes Prevention Program, and Rock Steady Boxing, among others. These initiatives have provided vital resources and support to individuals managing chronic conditions, helping

See FERGUSON, page A19



Congratulations, Ryan!

Ryan is a significant example of a pillar in our community. He is actively involved in promoting Health and Wellness to Noble and LaGrange counties. His leadership skills encompass the Y's character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, & Responsibility while focusing on Youth Development, Healthy Living, & Social Responsibility, and promoting the Y's mission: to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Thank you, Ryan, we appreciate you!!

Allison Acosta-Smith

Age: 35
Parkview
Health
Manager
Financial
Planning



What is your education?

M.S in Accounting – Indiana Wesleyan
B.S in Accounting – IPFW
High School – South Side High School

What community organizations are you involved in?

I currently serve on the board of directors for the Embassy Theatre. I also am on my 3rd year of being a Big with Big Brothers Big Sisters. I have previously been involved with Fort Wayne Pet Food Pantry (board member) and other organizations, such as YLNI.

What are your hobbies?

Traveling, reading, live music, trying all the new, local food spots, and spending time with my family, friends, & my dog.

Why are you in Northeast

Indiana?

I was born on in Southern California but have lived in Fort Wayne most of my life. I’ve chosen to stay here because of the community & endless opportunities.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I’ve always liked working with numbers and like to have a plan A, B...probably C & D. Financial planning/budgeting is a perfect combination of my two strengths. I also take pride in working for a local, nonprofit that plays such a large impact in NE Indiana.

What does success mean to you?

Success is being able to have a fulfilling career, support my family & the ability to give back to my

community.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I wanted to be a “singer girl,” as I loved performing. Ironically, I was quite shy (hence the Accounting/Finance profession) but felt comfortable on stage. I quickly realized I should probably settle for business but love that I can still use my skills for what I’m passionate about (serving the Embassy’s mission).

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first job was at Casa Ristorante as a busser at 16. It wasn’t the most glamorous, but it helped pay my way through college and taught me a lot of valuable life skills.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

It’s hard to pick just one because it truly takes a village. I’ve been lucky to have connected with wonderful mentors that have guided me through my career progression. My husband has also encouraged every decision I’ve faced & helps accommodate my work/volunteer/life balance. My mom has instilled in me to follow my dreams & stay true to myself.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I’ve had a goal to lead a team with a company that makes a positive impact. I’ve been lucky to work for a few companies that have fulfilled that goal. I also started my own financial coaching business, where I never considered myself an entrepreneur. All of that said, this nomination might be the biggest accomplishment.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what

lessons did you learn from it?

Lack of confidence/thinking I didn’t deserve a seat at the table. It’s still a thought that creeps up often, but I’m learning to push it to the back of my mind.

What are your current professional goals?

I always want to continue to grow as a leader for my team. I’ve recently transitioned to healthcare, so understanding this segment is my current goal.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Always staying open to new ideas, keeping flexible and learning from others.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Remain intentional, set boundaries, and lean on those that are willing to offer a helping hand.

What do you do to relax?

I love to read a good book while snuggled up with my dog. I also take a weekly boxing class that is a great way to unwind.

What book do you recommend?

My favorite book for fun – “The Women” by Kristin Hannah. For personal development - “The Let Them Theory” by Mel Robbins.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

In the words of Billy Joel – “slow down, you’re doing fine. You can’t be everything you want to be before your time”.

FORTY
UNDER
40²⁰²⁵

Congratulations,
Allison & Atif,
for being Forty Under 40 winners.

Dedicated. Knowledgeable. Inspiring. As Forty Under 40 winners, Allison and Atif have been recognized by Business Weekly for making a difference in their careers and our community. We are honored that they have chosen to share their talents with Parkview, where they help ensure the well-being of our health system and the people who call our region home. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!

Allison Acosta-Smith, Manager of Financial Planning
Atif Chowdhry, Vice President of Primary Care Operations



What is your education?

Snider High School
Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs with a concentration in Health-care Administration and a minor in Psychology-IPFW

What community organizations are you involved in?

Currently serve on the Leadership Committee for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, which is extra special to me, as this year I Celebrate 15 years CANCER FREE!
Board Secretary for Council on Senior Services. Lead for the Geriatric Sunrise Networking Breakfast. Volleyball Coach at Empowered Volleyball Academy.

What are your hobbies?

When I am not working or coaching, I enjoy watching documentaries, watching my son Gavin play baseball or football and spending time with friends.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised here in Fort Wayne. I love the community feel Fort Wayne has and have absolutely loved seeing all the updates and growth Fort Wayne has had over the last few years and is continuing to have.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

Working in Senior Living, I love having the opportunity to walk along side Seniors and their loved ones in their season of life and helping to try to make their lives purposeful and full of joy. Getting to know them and learn the history and wealth of wisdom and stories they hold is forever priceless.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me is being able to give back and make a lasting impact to those around me, leading with integrity

and a servant’s heart and always being willing to learn and grow.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Growing up, I always wanted to be a nurse and still at time do!

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from working for my uncle’s business, “Cinnamonster” at Glenbrook Square when I was in high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have been so blessed to have had so many mentors in my life not only personally, but professionally, but I really would have to say it would be my mom. My mom was someone who always pushed and encouraged me. My mom led me to get my CNA license in high school, which has led me to where I am today in my career. I wish she was here to see this!

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment thus far in my career has been exceeding occupancy goals, having a deficiency free survey with the state, along with being nominated and place for Best Assisted Living and Best Senior Housing, all in my first year as director.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake thus far would be doubting my ability at times and not knowing or believing I have what it takes to accomplish anything. I continue to learn to believe in myself and remind myself when we take away

Amanda Craig

Age: 36

Kingston Residence of Fort Wayne

Executive Director



that self-doubt our opportunities are limitless!

What are your current professional goals?

Over the last couple of years, I have been so lucky to have accomplished so many goals I set for myself professionally. I now want to take this time to learn and become the best version of myself and become a strong leader that my team looks up to.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I am always looking to grow and be in the know of all the things that are everchanging in our evolving Health-care industry so that I can be a better leader for my residents and team. I continue to be involved in organizations in the community and building and maintaining relationships.

How do you balance your career,

family, life and community service?

Trying to get better at being OK saying “No” to things. Ensuring to try and take time for myself occasionally because no one can pour from an empty cup.

What do you do to relax?

Relaxing to me is enjoying an iced coffee while shopping alone at Target or indulging in a good crime documentary!

What book do you recommend?

“Make Your Bed” By Admiral William H. McRaven

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell that girl to take chances, believe in yourself and DON’T GIVE UP and stay true to who you are!





WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE

Amanda Craig

Your dedication, leadership, and impact in the community continue to inspire. We're so proud to see your hard work recognized!

Congratulations to Amanda, our Executive Director of Kingston Residence of Fort Wayne, on her well-deserved nomination for Fort Wayne's Business Weekly 40 Under 40!



Jasmine Bejar

Age: 32

One Lucky
Guitar

Content
Strategist



What is your education?

College — BA in communication from the University of Saint Francis

What community organizations are you involved in?

I am currently involved with Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne. My previous involvement includes Middle Waves Music Festival, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Renaissance Pointe YMCA and Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading, writing poetry, crafting, backpacking, camping, hiking and caring for my newly acquired chickens (and one duck).

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I moved from Northwest Indiana to Northeast Indiana to attend the

University of Saint Francis in 2011. I initially chose USF to pursue a nursing degree because the recession scared me into seeking a “safe” career path — but after one anatomy class, I knew it wasn’t for me. I feel grateful for the professors and advisors at USF who helped me find a new career path that better complements my skills and interests.

I choose to stay in northeast Indiana because as I’ve grown and evolved, northeast Indiana has met my wants and needs in each phase of my life.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I believe one of the greatest human desires is to be understood. I enjoy that my profession allows me to help businesses and organizations — and the people who drive their work — achieve that.

What does success mean to you?

Epictetus said, “Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants.” Applying this idea to success, I would say, “Success consists not in having great accolades, but in having few ambitions.”

This isn’t to say we shouldn’t set goals and strive for great things in our careers and lives. It’s saying that the measure of our success shouldn’t be driven by the outcomes, but by the process.

It’s trusting that doing something because it is the right thing to do and the right way to do it — rather than doing something for recognition or celebration — is more important than what you achieve at the end of it.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I started writing poetry at 10 years old, and from then on, I knew I wanted to write. I always thought this meant I would become a journalist or an English teacher.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from the Hoosier Theatre in Whiting, Indiana. I don’t remember my exact title, but I took movie tickets and worked the concession stand.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter who helped me define and advance my career has been my college advisor, Jane Martin. She has been my unwavering cheerleader from my early days as a floundering college student, and continues to be a close confidant and trusted friend. She taught me how to ask good questions, chase what I want, and not settle for less than I deserve in my career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Working at a creative agency, my successes are often defined by our clients’ successes. I approach each project thinking of myself as a steward of their brand and resources, and our ongoing relationships are a testament to their trust in OLG, and me. I feel honored that the OLG team and our incredible roster of clients —who are doing important and urgent work in our community — continue to seek my input in their strategic brand positioning and communications.

While we’re never on the frontlines with them, I see our work make a difference in their work. In that way, I see our impact throughout northeast Indiana, and that’s the greatest accomplishment I could achieve, and continue to covet, every day.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake thus far has been setting poor boundaries and running from the consequences. I was very ambitious when I graduated from college, and I overcommitted myself at work and in my community service to the point of burnout. I then sought to reset my life by moving to a different community, where I learned that if you don’t address the root cause of a problem, it follows you. I learned that understanding my capacity — and committing my time, energy and passion accordingly — results in my most significant impact.

What are your current professional goals?

My top five Clifton Strengths are Strategic, Intellection, Individualization, Connectedness and Learner (all Strategic Thinking and Relationship

Building themes), and I don’t have any Influencing themes in my top 10—which is no surprise to me, as an introvert. While I continue to thrive in my position, which is a great fit for my top 5 skills, I seek to pursue opportunities that push me out of my comfort zone to grow in some of these other areas of my leadership.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

In an industry where creative ideas are the currency, the most critical way to remain relevant is to read and learn from things that are unrelated to our industry, or the industry of the client we’re serving. What can I learn from a documentary series about a historical event that would apply to a nonprofit fundraising campaign? Did they do anything unique in how they organized content? Did they use a technique to foster connection in an unexpected way that I could leverage? Divergent thinking can be sussed out of any source.

It’s helpful to learn what has been done, but this approach broadens my perspective to what could be done.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I’m not quite convinced true “balance” is possible. Nowadays, I strive for what I call “fluidity.”

I remain fluid by looking at every aspect of my life — career, family, personal obligations, community service — as a whole, and not in silos. I cannot separate the “me” that has to show up in each of these roles. They draw from the same physical, mental and emotional energy source, and thus, any time I dedicate to one area of my life is sacrificed in another.

The word “balance” implies a state where we have all our scales equally weighed. If that’s the case, we may be doing a little bit of everything, but we’ll be doing none of it well. I believe that’s what led to my burnout, and in recovery from that, I learned that there are seasons for everything. It is critical to identify what’s most important during that time, assign the appropriate commitment to it, and communicate that with those it affects. The biggest “tool” in my arsenal has been learning to say, “[This] is how much I can commit to [that] right now,” whether talking to my partner, friends, family, peers and so on. It acknowledges that I have other commitments that I need to live up to, and it doesn’t mean I won’t do more in the future.

What do you do to relax?

Going for walks is one of the greatest ways to unwind my mind (which is a prerequisite for me to physically relax). Preferably outdoors, with my attention unencumbered by any digital devices (including listening devices).

What book do you recommend?

I recommend “Tribe” by Sebastian Junger. At the center of everything we do — at work, with our friends and families, etc. — is our ever-connectedness to each other, and the natural world around us. This book explores our ability to withstand hardships when we feel we feel purpose, agency and belonging.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Change is the only constant. Your ability to proactively anticipate all potential paths and outcomes will be a strength, but it will not help you avert challenges. You have to go through it, to get through it. And you will.



Jasmine Bejar,
Content Strategist

CONGRATS!

JASMINE,

Thank you for making such a positive impact on our company, our clients and our community.

We are proud and privileged to work alongside you.

—TEAM OLG



oneluckyguitar.com

Keith Harrison

Age: 39

Harrison
Dental
Group

Dentist,
Owner, CEO



What is your education?

Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) – Indiana University

What community organizations are you involved in?

I volunteer at Matthew 25, where I serve both as a clinician and as a member of the dental advisory committee, in addition to sitting on the Board. I’m also actively involved in the Isaac Knapp District Dental Society, a branch of the Indiana Dental Association.

What are your hobbies?

Playing guitar, woodworking, and exercising.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Fort Wayne, attended Homestead High School, and aside from a brief time away for college and dental school, I have lived in the area my entire life. I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I love that dentistry is a unique blend of science, engineering, art, and business. But at the core of it all, I enjoy working with people. While patients and staff can bring challenges, they also provide the most rewarding aspects of my career.

What does success mean to you?

Success is helping others while also achieving my personal and professional goals.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A music producer.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first job was as a grocery bagger at Kroger during high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My father was my biggest supporter. After dental school, I joined his practice, and he became an invaluable mentor — both in business and in clinical practice. Much of my success stems from his early guidance.

What has been your biggest

accomplishment thus far in your career?

I am most proud of the growth we have achieved as a company since I joined.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my biggest mistakes was keeping a toxic employee on board at the expense of great team members. Through staff turnover, I’ve learned the immense value of a strong workplace culture and the importance of protecting it.

What are your current professional goals?

I aim to continue expanding our company — whether through growth at our current locations or expansion into new ones — while remaining true to the principles and legacy upon which we were founded.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay on top of industry trends, particularly as dentistry becomes more consolidated and technology-driven. Staying ahead of these shifts helps us make strategic decisions that keep our practice well-positioned for the future.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

It’s always a challenge, but I make it a priority to set aside uninterrupted time for my family. It’s easy to get caught up in work, but making intentional time for family keeps everything in perspective.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy watching movies and binge-watching TV shows with my wife after the kids are in bed. In the summer and fall, I love unwinding by the fire pit.

What book do you recommend?

“Traction” by Gino Wickman. This book helped shift my business mindset from a hero mentality to focusing on building a great team with strong systems.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

You’re doing just fine. Success is a lifelong journey—stay true to yourself and your values, and you’ll end up where you’re meant to be.

Lisa Clemens

Age: 38

Trine
University
Dean Brooks
College
of Health
Professions



What is your education?

High School: New Haven
Undergraduate - Biology: University of St. Francis
Master’s of Science in Physician Assistant Studies: University of St. Francis
Doctor of Medical Science – Education: A.T. Still University

What community organizations are you involved in?

Junior Achievement Engagement Committee

What are your hobbies?

Walking my dog and playing board games with my kids. I’ve also started using a bird identification app, so I suppose novice birdwatcher would also be appropriate.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in North-east Indiana and have found it to be a wonderful place to work and raise a family.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

As a physician assistant, I get to serve members of my community often when they are feeling at their worst. As a dean, I get to serve and support my faculty team and students. I have the opportunity to plan future healthcare education programs that will ultimately train the future healthcare providers in our region. The positive impact that this can make on the health of our community is what brings me the most satisfaction.

What does success mean to you?

Always striving to be better both professionally and personally.

As a child, what did you want to

be when you grew up?

Although I didn’t learn about the role of a physician assistant until I was starting college, I had known since I was a child that I wanted to be some type of healthcare provider. I did not envision myself in education as a child, but I come from a family full of K-12 educators, so it was a very natural transition for me.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Zesto Ice Cream in New Haven. I was a cashier/server.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My husband has been my biggest supporter. He had to put up with me when I decided that I wanted to make the leap into education and go back to school.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

We moved all of our health professions programs into the brand-new Brooks College of Health Professions building last summer. With this move, we’ve been able to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and integrate use of education technology such as simulation-based education and virtual reality. That is something that I’m proud of and I’m excited to continue to see the positive impact that this has on students and ultimately patient care.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what

See CLEMENS, page A19

Trine University
salutes our member of the
Business Weekly Forty Under 40
Class of 2025

Lisa Clemens

Dean, Associate Professor
Brooks College of Health Professions



We are proud of your success, exceptional leadership and service to Trine University.

Stephanie Bourounis

Age: 38

Salvatori’s Hospitality Group, Co-Owner



What is your education?

I graduated with Honors from Bishop Dwenger class of 2005. I went on to attend Indiana University, Bloomington. After my freshman and sophomore college years, I met my now husband, which motivated me to move back home to Fort Wayne. I graduated in 2009 as a Registered Nurse from IPFW School of Nursing.

What community organizations are you involved in?

This is what really motivates and drives myself and our company as a whole. This community is my home. It’s been so important to grow with our community and look for ways to give back. We look to participate in opportunities that create real value and importance to those in need. From donating financially through gift cards and auction items, to one of our most popular events, our Dine to Donate program. This allows the amazing community members to come alongside us and give together. I firmly believe it takes a tribe to make the biggest impact! The Carriage House is another avenue that I’ve loved being a part of. I went far outside my comfort zone and competed in their Fort Wayne Dancing with the Stars event, and I’m proud to say that along with the support of my family and friends I was able to earn the coveted mirror ball trophy in 2015. It was such an incredible experience that I have chosen to serve on the committee ever since. And I can’t leave out one more organization that is held near and dear to my heart. We’ve named it our Annual Turkey and Toy giveaway. This originated back in 2014 with a desire to just meet people where they are. No forms to fill out, no prerequisites to meet, just giving one of the most basic needs that unfortunately still exists today and that is food! Specifically Christmas dinner. I have been abundantly blessed to be able to gather around a Christmas meal my whole life and I know there are so many community members that just can’t provide that. So we open up one of our Salvatori locations and offer free turkeys to the public. We purchase hundreds of turkeys and advertise the date they will be available. My daughter Daphne when she was just 3 years old decided to donate some of her toys as well and now, it has turned into a turkey and toy extravaganza! This past December we had over 1,000 toys we were able to give away! The parents and grandparents that came through were so kind and gracious, that it makes us feel like we were the ones being blessed! Being able to teach my children that it is far better to give than to receive has been so rewarding. One last organization I will mention is our amazing school systems, teachers and faculty. We are big supporters of not only the Catholic Schools that my children attend, but to Fort Wayne Community Schools. Our local teachers, including my sister, have always had a special place in my heart. They are the ones guiding, teaching and loving our kids during the day when we as parents can’t be with them. They deserve so much respect and any recognition we can give them.

What are your hobbies?

I believe the Lord gives us all our own unique gifts and talents, and our hobbies tend to reflect that. Most of my hobbies revolve around family, food, and service. From consulting and giving advice to other business owners, looking for ways to help them grow, to providing design ideas to help keep their space fresh and up to date. Although my degree is in nursing, I now realize I could have just as easily taken the design path. Taking an old space and making it new again is so much fun! I also love to bake. I have a huge sweet tooth and as much as I love to eat sweets, it’s even better to watch my family and friends enjoy my creations. My daughter has also found a love for baking and it’s been a wonderful way to spend quality time with her. Being a business owner has its fair share of stress and baking has been a great outlet for that.

Why are you in northeast Indiana?

I am so thankful to be a Hoosier! Being born and raised in Fort Wayne Indiana has helped me become who I am today. I have always cherished the big city- small town feel and I can’t imagine living or raising my children anywhere else. We love to travel, but Indiana will always be home. This is also where my family is from and still resides. Without them and their support I am certain we would not be the business owners we are today. My parents and my sister have been a key component that has allowed my husband and I to find success within our business ventures. We could not have done it without them. Another reason we have chosen to stay here are the people. The people of NEI believe in helping to support locally owned businesses. They understand the value of a dollar and what it means to support locals.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

The people. From our team, staff members, customers, community members, I have met and worked with some of the most remarkable people. Most recently, preserving some historic Restaurants in and around Fort Wayne has been extremely exciting for me. What can I say? No matter how stressful it can be, the restaurant business is in our blood and we can’t imagine doing anything else. The saying, it doesn’t feel like work when you’re doing what you love? It is so true. I want to go to work, I am excited, and sometimes I can not wait to get there.

What does success mean to you?

I have found that success has very different meanings to many different people. To some, it’s all about the financial aspect. To others, it’s about time freedom. To me, success is defined by getting to a point in life where my career is no longer about me and what it can do for me, but instead how I can use it to help those around me become the best they can be. When I see a team member grow within our business and prosper beyond what they ever thought possible for themselves, that is success.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I have always been intrigued by the

medical field. My mother is a nurse and I have such a respect for anyone who works and serves in the medical field. When I was younger I wanted to be a dentist. I loved the idea of becoming a doctor, but the hours they have to keep can make it challenging to also be the kind of mother I knew I wanted to be. Becoming a dentist seemed to be the best of both worlds. However, while attending IU Bloomington on my path to becoming a dentist I met my amazing husband and switched gears to nursing. Knowing he had a love for business and believing in his visions for our family, switching career paths was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My very first paycheck, ironically, came from a local Italian restaurant called the Blu Tomato. I guess you could call it fate! I was 15 years old and it was located just behind my parent’s neighborhood. Unfortunately it is no longer in business, but I had such an incredible experience learning all about the restaurant world. I started as a hostess, worked my way up to server and also helped out with all of their catering jobs.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I’ve spoken about how God and my family have been the rock and foundation to where I am today, but I have to say, when it comes to the question of who has helped me advance in my career, that person is my husband Panos. He was and is my biggest supporter. He saw how much I was struggling as a nurse, how I took every patient to heart and how difficult it was to be my “happy self”. He knew I could take the part of my job I loved the most which was serving people, and turn it into something else that didn’t involve the emotional roller coaster that nursing can be. He encouraged me to explore a different career, one that seemed and has proven to be a better balance for me and my life. He has shown me the true meaning of what drive and work ethic looks like. He has a huge heart and has made me a better person. God knew what he was doing when he brought him into my life. Where I am weak, Panos is strong and vice versa. It’s one of the reasons we make such a great team.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

When I think about the word “career” I don’t minimize it to my “job”. I believe my career is more than running and designing restaurants. It’s also being a mother and wife. It’s being a good friend and daughter. Based on my definition of career, my biggest accomplishment has been my two children. Finding balance within all aspects of my life is so important. And becoming a mother has taught me so much about that. Being a mom has helped to make my career what it is today. They have taught me more than anyone or anything. They are the reason for and behind everything I do. They have driven me to be not only a better mom, and a better Christian, but a better leader as well. Daphne is fourteen and runs the front of the restaurant better than I do! At three years old, she gave me the idea to add toys to our turkey dinner give away. She has the most giving heart of anyone I know. My son Petros is ten and reminds me so much of my husband. He is beyond his years in life and keeps me young. He makes all of us laugh on a daily basis! We are seriously so blessed with the best! I can 100% say that I wouldn’t be where i am today if it wasn’t for them.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I have always looked at any mistakes as a lesson, we learn from them and move on. With that being said, I can’t think of anything I would do differently. All of the decisions made that maybe didn’t turn out the way I had planned, have been stepping stones that have helped to pave the road to where I am where I am today. One of the best things my mom taught me was to always find the silver lining. Look for the positive in every situation. Don’t focus on the negative. One of my favorite bible

verses is: Philippians 4:8. It says: “Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, if there is any excellence or anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

What are your current professional goals?

In this industry, goals are constantly growing and evolving. For now, I am staying focused on building and fine tuning our current operations. Providing consistency in our service to the community is something we are always keeping a priority. I am also focused on remodeling and restoring some of Fort Wayne’s most iconic restaurants.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

We dine out, ALOT! Especially while on vacation or out of town. Dining out with me, you will soon find out my ears hear and see everything! Not always a positive trait but I naturally hear every conversation going on in the room, reading the guests, and instinctively knowing if and when they need something. I draw inspiration from everywhere. Maybe it’s something a server said, maybe it’s a fabric I saw, or a drink I had. All of this inspires me to bring those little things back to our business.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

This is something I am always working on and if I’m being honest, is what I struggle with the most. Being a wife and mother is the most important role I have and balancing that with the hectic schedule of running 11 restaurants can be difficult. Nights and weekends are our busiest time and of course that is when my family needs me the most. At one point I remember feeling so defeated because every time I would plan something for my family, the restaurant would need me and I’d have to cancel. I have an amazing support network with my family and friends. Everyone steps up and steps in where needed at home so we can focus on the restaurants. Panos and I finally made the decision to hire another business partner and office manager so I could take a step back and focus more on my children. Mixing community service into my business also helps balance both of those.

What do you do to relax?

I absolutely love the lake! The water, the boat, and watching my kids play outside the old fashion way is the best recipe for relaxation. Seeing my son fishing at the end of the dock and seeing the huge smile on his face after a big catch is priceless. I have some amazing childhood memories hanging out at the lake and I’m so glad we can provide these memories for our children as well.

What book do you recommend?

I love to read and wish I had more time to do it. There are a lot of books that I’ve enjoyed reading over the years but there’s one that I have to say has been the most profound in my life and that’s the bible. I’ve never found another book that has the answer to everything I am looking for except for the Bible and I don’t find that ironic. When it comes to business specifically the book of Proverbs has been my go to.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

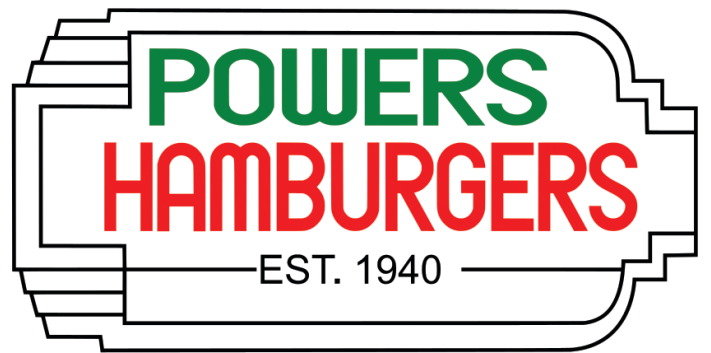
Oh there is so much I would tell my younger self. First, stop worrying about what other people think. Find out what you are passionate about, even if it doesn’t seem to be the social norm. Don’t waste your time or money going away to college and renting. Stay home! Save your money and invest in real estate somehow. I promise, the “experiences” you are dying to have in college don’t end up having the meaning and value you think they do. Create a business that you look forward to going to every single day. Remember, you should never strive to be better than someone else, just better than who you were the day before. Let your drive and competition come from you, not your neighbor. And always be generous with everything you have, it will come back to you tenfold.

Congratulations to the entire Forty under 40 Class of 2025!



The Salvatori's Hospitality Group
is proud to congratulate
one of our own,
Stephanie Bourounis,
as a top professional in
Northeast Indiana!

We are inspired by your passion for people and your commitment
to making a positive impact in our community! Thank you for making
our organization and our community shine brighter!



Our Family Serving Yours



Salvatori's
AUTHENTIC ITALIAN EATERY




Vanessa Escobar

Age: 39

Renaissance
Pointe
YMCA

Fitness
Instructor
and Personal
Trainer



What is your education?

Master Degree Of Teaching (MA)
Instructor Fitness Certified & Licensed.

What community organizations are you involved in?

- Renaissance Pointe YMCA
- Great Fort Wayne INC. Women’s Network on board.
- Fort Wayne Community Schools
- Embassy Theatre Fort Wayne Indiana
- Purdue University Fort Wayne Indiana.

What are your hobbies?

- Painting mandalas
- Walking in to the forest

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I came here 10 years ago, I really like the warmth of the people and the tranquility with which my family and I can live here.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I really like the connection & Resilience with the community, empowering each person in each class & training, because making them feel welcome and making us all feel a sense of belonging and love.

What does success mean to you?

Happiness & joy in your life, family & job.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A fitness instructor & choreographer

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

From my aunt’s veterinarian Clinic, I was 14 years old, I did dog grooming.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

God & my parents

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Have my own fitness studio and live of what like most, dancing & workout.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Overthinking the things – I learned to trust in God and have faith.

What are your current professional goals?

- Expand my fitness business and to be able to work more closely with the community.
- Empower each woman at my classes, in person and through the network.
- Server & empowerment to community .

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?

- I am constantly training physically and mentally. I update my fitness certificates & licenses once a year and I receive advice on business development. I update the methodology & structure of my classes and trainings every 3 months.

See **ESCOBAR**, page **A19**

Brittney Hernandez

Age: 32

The Arc
of Wabash
County

Director of
Residential
Services



What is your education?

Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology

What community organizations are you involved in?

Wabash County Special Olympics

What are your hobbies?

I like to coach track & field with Special Olympics and travel.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Wabash, Indiana. I have never wanted to move because I love living in a small town.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I really enjoy working with the clients because they bring a lot of meaning to my life. I believe working for a non-profit brings a lot of value to my life because I am working to make a difference.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means learning and improving myself as well as achieving my goals that bring happiness and fulfillment to my life.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I wanted to be a nurse because I wanted to help people.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from McDonald’s and I was a cashier.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter has been Connie Pulley. I, originally, started out working along side her in the program that I now supervise. When the position opened up, she encouraged me to go for it and assured me that she would always be in my corner rooting me on.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment was going from a frontline staff to being in a leadership position. While being in the leadership position, I have been able to make changes in the program that has been beneficial for my staff and the clients that we serve.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake has been not looking at my staff as people who have lives outside of the job. I learned that they are people separate from the position they work and have families. This lesson really taught me to view my staff differently.

What are your current professional goals?

My professional goal is to eventually have an executive level role within the organization that I am currently employed with as well as be the best leader that I can be. I want to motivate and empower others and to coach my team to reach their fullest potential.

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?

I stay relevant in my profession by attending conferences/trainings to gain additional knowledge for my career.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Thankfully, my position allows a flexible schedule, so that has been extremely beneficial in balancing my career and family. Also, our president CEO encourages community services.

What do you do to relax?


I enjoy taking a dance fitness class at our local YMCA and I like to walk as well.

What book do you recommend?

Our leadership team has been going through the book, “Introduction to Leadership,” and it has been extremely helpful to review it and talk about it as a team.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Keep working hard and don’t give up,




CONGRATULATIONS VANESSA!

Thank you for all you do to change lives by empowering women and improving the physical and mental health of our community.

We are proud of your work at the Y!

fwymca.org



Vanessa Escobar

Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer

RENAISSANCE POINTE YMCA

Awards Reception

March 27 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Ceruti’s Summit Park II

6601 Innovation Blvd.

What is your education?

I graduated from South Side High School in 2004 with an International Baccalaureate diploma. From 2004 to 2008,

See Education section in attached resume

What community organizations are you involved in?

I previously served as The Board President of Wellspring Interfaith Social Services, as well as a board member and secretary of Family Centered Services in Bluffton, Indiana. Currently, I serve as Vice Chair of the Embassy Theatre's Board of Directors, and am a Leader of the Allen County Bar Association's Real Property Section, member of the Community Foundation's Professional Advisor Leadership Council, and member of the Board of Trustees of the Trinity English Lutheran Church Foundation. I also serve as a board member of the Foster Park Little League and enjoy coaching my son's teams.

What are your hobbies?

I have a passion for cooking and enjoy spending time on the golf course, finding the game both engaging and challenging. I also love relaxing at the lake, especially when fishing.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

This is home — where I grew up and where my roots run deep. Aside from eight years in Bloomington and a few months in Dublin, Ireland, I have lived in the same zip code my entire life. I am not here because I have nowhere else to be; I am here because this is the place to be.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

Every day is different. While many people can say that about their jobs, I truly experience it firsthand. I walk into work with a plan, but the nature of what I do means that each day unfolds in unexpected ways. I'm fortunate to have great clients who trust us with some of their most complex and sensitive challenges, as well as exciting milestones in their growth. Whether it's developing a new real estate venture, acquiring property, or solving issues for local municipalities, I'm grateful to play a role in helping them achieve their goals.

What does success mean to you?

Being able to support my family is incredibly important to me, but it's not about giving them things I didn't have — because there was nothing I lacked. My parents always made sure that every need was met. Of course, I didn't always get everything I wanted, but I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. Not having everything handed to you builds character.

To me, success is about earning the trust and confidence of both my peers and my clients. It's about being known for dependability, excellence, and the ability to deliver when it matters most.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

This might sound boring, but I always wanted to be a lawyer. One of my earliest memories from elementary school was learning that Gandhi was once an attorney — something not everyone knows. That stuck with me. I was fortunate to have great parents, and my mom's younger sister, married an attorney I looked up to. I remember seeing him in law school when I was just four or five, visiting Bloomington's campus and getting my first glimpse of that world.

I think it's in my nature to want to help people, and that's what being an attorney is all about. People and Businesses come to you because they

need help, and what that help looks like is as varied as the community we serve. The practice of law is broad, and what it means to be an attorney can be completely different from one practitioner to another. But at the end of the day, it's about service. You're in the business of helping others, and that's something I've always been drawn to.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My very first paying job — where I actually received a paycheck — was coaching Wildcat baseball. It's the only job I've had outside of being an attorney. and I coached for almost a decade. It was in the 46807 zip code, on the exact same field where my son now plays baseball;it's a memory, I'll always cherish.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have no flipping idea. But if I had to choose, it has to be Lauren, my wife. When I graduated from law school in 2011, the legal market was in rough shape-but through all of that — every opportunity, every challenge, every late night — Lauren has been there. We met when I was in law school, got married when I had barely two years of practice under my belt, and we've seen it all together. And through it all, she's still right by my side.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Every positive outcome for my clients feels like an accomplishment. My weeks, months, and years are filled with moments that represent some of my clients' biggest achievements — whether it's closing a major deal, finalizing a real estate transaction, developing a new ordinance, or launching a new project. These are high-stakes matters that are incredibly important to them, and to single out one accomplishment would feel like minimizing the significance of the others. For each client, their transaction or legal issue is the most important thing they're facing at that moment. So for me, the real accomplishment is being able to continue doing this work and seeing it grow. A reflection of that growth was the opportunity to speak at a national conference last year. That moment was the culmination of years of hard work — countless non-billable hours, building relationships, and making a name for ourselves in the industry. But at the end of the day, my greatest achievement is being trusted to help my clients navigate their most important challenges and milestones.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

As for my biggest mistake — I don't think I have just one. Instead, I've learned that in this profession, there's often pressure to have an immediate answer. But the reality is, you can't possibly know everything on the spot. Clients, colleagues, and even opposing parties often expect a quick response, but I've learned that resisting the urge to answer when you're uncertain is crucial.

The real skill is being able to say, 'I don't know, but I can find out.' It's about knowing how to get the right information quickly so that clients can make informed decisions. Speed is important, but getting it right is what truly matters.

What are your current professional goals?

I want to continue growing as a real property attorney, expanding my knowledge and expertise in meaningful ways. Beyond that, I want to

Christopher Nusbaum

Age: 38

Carson LLP

Partner



be a resource — a steady presence for both my colleagues and clients. I hope to play a role in developing the next generation of attorneys, working alongside my partners to strengthen our team and build something lasting. It's not about 'mentoring' in the buzzword sense, but about creating an environment where we all continue to grow, support one another, and push the practice forward.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

You're always learning in this field. Staying on top of new developments is essential, and one of the best ways to truly understand something is to teach it. That's why I look for opportunities to explore areas that matter to our clients and the industry — whether through research, presentations, or sharing insights. It's about staying engaged, contributing knowledge, and helping others navigate an ever-evolving landscape.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Work/life balance doesn't exist — not in the way people often talk about it. Balance implies a zero-sum game, where giving to one area means taking from another. But in reality, it's all about work/life integration. The people who feel the most content — whether in their careers, family life, or community involvement — are the ones who find ways to make those aspects complement each other rather than compete. I'm fortunate to be part of a fantastic firm, and so is my family. When work requires travel, and it makes sense from a career standpoint, we find ways to make it a family experience. If there's a conference in a great location, and I can bring my wife and

kids along, we do it. It's not about rigidly separating work from personal life — it's about being intentional. You make time for what matters. If there's a baseball game, you go to the baseball game. If that means working at a different time of day, then you adjust. There's room for all of it — you just have to prioritize what's important in the moment and integrate the rest in a way that works for you.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I love to cook, especially when it comes firing up a grill or smoker, but I have been known to bake my share of cakes and breads. There's something satisfying about the process — taking the time to do it right, experimenting with flavors, and sharing the final result with family and friends. It's one of those things that's both a hobby and a way to bring people together.

What book do you recommend?

I'd recommend "Unreasonable Hospitality". I just finished reading it, and it's one of those books that applies no matter what profession you're in. The insights on going above and beyond, creating meaningful experiences, and truly serving others are valuable in any field.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I'd probably say something cliché — but honestly, it's just hard for a highschooler to not worry about the social anxieties that come with growing up! I'd just reassure my high school self that he's on the right path. Work hard, be kind, be of service, and stay humble. Everything good will come from that. Oh and buy some Apple stock!



40 UNDER 40

Christopher Nusbaum
RISING TO THE TOP

Congratulations to Christopher Nusbaum on being named a 2025 40 Under 40 honoree! A trusted leader in real estate, municipal and utility law, and estate planning, Christopher's expertise, strategic approach, and dedication to his clients are what set him apart.

 **CARSON LAW**
Let's Talk. ☎ 260-423-9411 | 🌐 www.carsonllp.com

FAIRCHILD

FROM PAGE A9

extensive programs is one of the many reasons I am passionate about the work we do every day.

What does success mean to you?

To me, success means making a meaningful impact on individuals and communities through health education. It's about reaching nearly 100,000 students each year and ensuring they receive vital information that could change their lives. I find success in creating engaging and accessible learning experiences that empower people of all ages and backgrounds to make informed health decisions.

I also thrive on breaking down misconceptions about the work we do at McMillen Health. I want to show others that our efforts extend far beyond limited perceptions of sex and drug education. I take pride in expanding the range of programs we offer, reaching diverse populations nationwide, and collaborating with various institutions to tailor health education to specific needs.

Ultimately, my definition of success is not just about the reach and effectiveness of our programs, but also about the transformative experiences of those we serve and the enlightenment that my efforts bring to the community.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A Ninja Turtle. Michelangelo to be specific!

When I reached high school, my aspirations became more realistic and shifted toward law, leading me to major in Political Science and Legal Studies with concentrations in History and Women's Studies. I interned with a Civil Rights Attorney in Chicago and spent a summer at Loyola University during my sophomore year.

During that time, I served as an intern for one of the partners. I recall one day all the interns were invited to attend a hearing at the Federal Appellate Court. To my surprise, I found myself dozing off within just 20 minutes — clearly a sign that law might not be for me.

Later on, during graduate school, I chaperoned a trip to Washington, D.C., where we took students to witness the U.S. Supreme Court in action. After waiting in the frigid cold for hours, we finally entered the building, and once seated in the warm, cozy chamber, I fell asleep! I'm still bummed I missed seeing RGB. It turns out a career in law was not for me. up. Moments like these reaffirmed that a career in law

simply wasn't meant for me.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

It was a \$5.00 check from my mom for answering the phones for her business she ran out of our home. I still have that check!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I feel incredibly grateful to have had mentors and supporters at every stage of my life and career. Throughout college, Dr. Linda Maule at Indiana State University played a pivotal role in my development. In my professional journey, I've been fortunate to have the unwavering support of friends and family, especially my adoptive parents, Tracy and Jeff Holemo. My husband, and family, have also been a steadfast supporters behind the scenes, providing encouragement and strength when I need it most. My former boss, Dr. Holli Seabury, along with inspiring board members like Grant Goeglein, have encouraged me to strive for excellence and pursue greater aspirations. My colleagues also inspire me to be better every day, and I am extremely grateful for them, as they consistently push me to become a better leader.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My proudest career accomplishment has been the remarkable growth of McMillen Health over the past 9 years. When I joined the organization in 2016, we had a small team of 12, three of those positions worked part-time. Our two full-time and two part-time health educators served 40,000 students annually, all while operating on a modest budget of \$700,000. Today, our team has expanded to 34 staff members, including 11 full-time health educators, and our budget has grown to over 1.8 million. This remarkable growth reflects the increasing demand for preventive health education, as we now serve nearly 100,000 students each year --a 150% increase since 2016 — providing students with direct access to vital health education and resources.

In our efforts to diversify our revenue streams, we have harnessed our staff's expertise in developing low-literacy, interactive programming by establishing an Educational Resource Development and Design department. This initiative creates tailored curricula for third-party organizations across the country, and some

of our very own. Two Educational Resource Trainers implement our own developed curriculum including our Brush Oral Health Curriculum and out most recent social-emotional health curriculum funded by the Lilly Endowment- Mini Mood Monsters. Our Brush Oral Health program now incorporates oral health educational resources including curriculum, children's books, manipulatives, videos, and more. Brush is provided through third-party organizations like Health Start, Early Head Start, WIC, and recovery organizations.

This growth has been made possible through the generous support of our donors, local foundations that have championed our cause for over four decades, and trust placed in us by school corporations and other organizations we serve.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake was not seeking help when I truly needed it, believing that I could manage everything on my own. This experience taught me the invaluable lesson that collaboration is key, and that I have a remarkable support network of peers, coworkers, and board members who are ready and willing to assist. Embracing this realization has not only strengthened my approach to challenges but has also deepened my appreciation for the power of teamwork.

What are your current professional goals?

I have several key goals I'm eager to pursue over the next few years. One of my primary objectives is to develop a comprehensive leadership training program for our staff at McMillen, aimed at enhancing their skills and improving staff retention. I also envision McMillen continuing its growth trajectory, particularly as we approach the launch of an ambitious capital campaign that will enable us to add a second building on our 9 acres of land. This new facility will feature greenhouses, teaching kitchens, and a warehouse for the resources we distribute nationwide, all of which will support our team's ongoing development.

I anticipate that this initiative will take around 3 to 5 years to realize fully. Beyond that, I aspire for McMillen to gain recognition as a leader in health education, both statewide and nationally. These goals reflect my commitment to fostering a nurturing environment for both our staff and the communities we serve.

How do you remain current/

a challenge especially working for a company whose operations are 24/7/365, but I make sure to prioritize family first and be fully present when I'm with them. I also try to stay organized, delegate when necessary, and set clear boundaries so I can give my best in each area. My role at Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative allows me to serve the community as part of my career, which helps me integrate work and service in a meaningful way. I also lean on my wife and my family for support, and we make the most of our time together doing the things we love to do as a family.

What do you do to relax?

To truly relax, I like to spend time outside, especially when the weather is nice. One of my favorite ways to unwind is sitting out back on our patio, enjoying the fresh air and a quiet moment. Whether it's just taking in the surroundings or having a laid-back evening with family, being outside helps me reset and recharge.

What book do you recommend?

I recommend "You Win in the Locker Room First" by Jon Gordon and Mike Smith. It's a great book that

relevant in your profession?

To stay current and relevant in my profession, I dedicate a minimum of 50 to 75 hours each year to professional development. This commitment is a relatively new focus for me; in the past, I often prioritized the growth and support of my team at the expense of my own development. It has been an essential learning experience, highlighting the importance of continuous self-improvement alongside empowering others. By investing in my own knowledge and skills, I not only enhance my capabilities but also set a positive example for my team, fostering an environment where everyone is encouraged to grow.

How do you balance your career, family, life, and community service?

Finding the right balance between my career, family, personal life, and community service is an ongoing journey for me, and I'm continually learning and adapting to make it work. Over time, I've developed strategies to enhance this balance. I strive to separate work and family time, ensuring that when I walk through the door at home, I'm fully present for my family.

However, I recognize that certain situations, like school breaks or the summer months, can blur these boundaries, requiring me to be flexible and creative in my approach. It's definitely a juggling act, and while I occasionally drop the ball, I've learned to pick myself back up and keep moving forward. Taking it day by day helps me stay grounded, and I rely heavily on my phone's calendar for reminders and organization. This system keeps me on track and allows me to prioritize what matters most. in each aspect of my life.

What do you do to relax?

Read, exercise, play with my children, and take the dog for long walks

What book do you recommend?

I am terrible at reading nonfiction. It puts me right to sleep! Sorry, I don't have any page-turning books to inspire you. My favorite book that I have read this past year, and was recommended by some dear friends, is the Night-ingle by Kristin Hannah. The main character's resilience is truly inspiring.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

It's good to have a plan, but the plan will change, and that's okay. Things happen for a reason, just enjoy the ride.

focuses on building a strong culture, teamwork, and accountability, using lessons from the NFL that apply directly to leadership in business and life. The book emphasizes that success starts with the foundation you build behind the scenes, and that great teams — whether in sports or in an organization — are built through trust, communication, and shared commitment to a vision. It's a valuable read for anyone looking to lead effectively and create a winning environment.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I'd tell my high school self to enjoy the journey and not stress over things outside of my control. Work hard, but also appreciate the moments along the way. Trust the process, surround yourself with great people, and never stop learning. Most importantly, never sacrifice your values, because at the end of the day, your legacy means more than any single decision in the moment. The relationships you build and the way you treat people will always matter more than any title or achievement.

ELTZROTH

FROM PAGE A8

home. Early in my leadership role, I sometimes took on too much myself rather than fully trusting my team to handle certain responsibilities. Similarly, at home, I've learned that effective communication with my family make things run smoother. Over time, I've realized that empowering others, fostering accountability, and clearly setting expectations leads to better outcomes, a stronger team, and a more balanced life. This experience has reinforced the value of building trust and developing those around me, ensuring long-term success in both my personal and professional life.

What are your current professional goals?

My main goal is to continue improving and growing Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative, ensuring we provide the best possible service to our members. A key focus right now is successfully implementing broadband expansion, which will have a significant impact on the communities we serve. I also want to develop and mentor future leaders within our

organization, making sure we have a strong team in place for the future. Lastly, I aim to strengthen our collaboration with key partners, enhance operational efficiency, and position the cooperative for long-term success in an evolving industry.

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?

I stay current by continuously learning and engaging with industry peers. I attend cooperative conferences, training sessions, and regular meetings to stay informed about industry changes and best practices. A key part of my professional growth is also fulfilling the continuing education requirements needed to maintain my license as a Professional Engineer (PE). Networking with other cooperative leaders allows me to exchange ideas and stay ahead of trends, while mentoring and coaching my team keeps me connected to daily challenges and opportunities.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Balancing everything is always

ROSENE

FROM PAGE A2

She also is one of my biggest cheer-leaders when I have a win!

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My many years of hospice work have given me the opportunity to educate hundreds of families and community members on hospice and how it can truly help patients and families. I get to promote helping our community die with dignity, a service everyone deserves! I feel honored to share this message each and every day.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

CLEMENS

FROM PAGE A13

lessons did you learn from it?

Trying to do too much myself and not delegating was a mistake that I made early on as a leader. I am very much a “doer,” so I have to be intentional and strategic about delegation, but I have learned that it’s vital to overall team success. I am lucky that I have had the opportunity to lead great teams with great people!

What are your current professional goals?

The usual challenges are knowing when to say no or speak up for yourself regarding your capacity. It’s easy to take on too much to show how dedicated you are, but the quality of your work can suffer. I have learned that asking where you would like me to prioritize my time can help with some of these situations.

What are your current professional goals?

I want to continue learning more! I want to utilize my data analytics skills more and learn more about using and analyzing data, maybe pursuing a certification in data analytics. I also want to learn more about the fundraising side of non-profits and general operations.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Similar to my goals, continually learning is how I stay current. There

are always new ideas we can learn and utilize in our work as a company or individual. Listening to feedback from my team is another thing that has helped me over the years. They are such experts that I love learning from them.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I acknowledge that I can’t always give 100% to everything, so it’s about shifting that energy based on where I’m needed most. I also think explaining to my children why I am away helps — I want them to understand why I believe helping others and giving back is so important. I hope they will one day respect the way I split my time and want to do the same.

What do you do to relax?

I wish I had time to relax, my life is

pretty busy right now! Future me hopes relaxing looks like time to read and attend more concerts.

What book do you recommend?

I love autobiographies and memoirs about people with different career paths and backgrounds. I like to learn about the person, their background, and what they have learned. I always take a new piece of advice from them.

It’s not a true autobiography, but “Being Mortal” by Atul Gawande is a great read!

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

It’s OK if not every piece of your plan turns out perfectly; sometimes, the changes bring the best results to the plan!

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I would say that I just do the best that I can and realize that during certain phases of life things don’t always feel “balanced.” I’m learning to be more comfortable with that every day.

What do you do to relax?

In the evenings, I typically relax with my kids. Often this looks like watching a few episodes of “Bluey” or playing outside.

What book do you recommend?

I recently read “Habits of the Household” by Justin Whitmel Earley. I’d recommend it if you have young kids and desire to build intentionality and spiritual connection into your daily family routine.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Not to stress so much about planning out the future. Do the best you can, work hard, and be kind.

FERGUSON

FROM PAGE A9

to improve their overall health and well-being.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Communication has been the area of my greatest growth throughout my career. Early on, there were situations where I may not have communicated as effectively or as promptly as needed. However, over time, I have developed stronger communication skills and gained a deeper understanding of its importance in working with my staff and colleagues. Clear and effective communication is vital to success, and I continue to prioritize and refine this skill.

What are your current

professional goals?

I plan to continue growing as a leader, constantly learning and improving to be the best I can be. My goal is to expand health and wellness opportunities across the county, ensuring more individuals have access to valuable resources. I enjoy challenging myself to learn new skills while building meaningful relationships that can evolve into partnerships, allowing multiple organizations to thrive and better serve our community.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I make it a priority to stay informed about the latest trends in fitness and wellness while keeping an open mind to new ideas in the field. I recognize that health and well-being encompass much more than just physical fitness, so I actively seek opportunities to collaborate with organizations and individuals to

introduce innovative approaches to wellness across various aspects of life.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Balancing my time between the organizations I’m involved with and my family can be challenging, but I’m grateful to work with organizations that truly value family. Since having children, I’ve learned to create a healthier balance, ensuring I’m present both at home and in my professional commitments. I also involve my family in some work and community events, allowing me to stay engaged while spending quality time with them. Maintaining this balance is essential—not just for being the best version of myself at home, but also for showing up as my best self in the workplace.

ESCOBAR

FROM PAGE A16

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

• I do everything in honor of God. My family is my inspiration to be able to dedicate myself to my work and career, and along with that, my life is complemented by each person in the community who trust me and gives me a space to serve and create empowerment.

What do you do to relax?

Connection with the nature

What book do you recommend?

The Bible

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

• Don’t run, walk! Everything has its time, you will achieve all your dreams, live and love, Discipline & determination will take you to the top! God in mind, help others and be humble.

COWLEY

FROM PAGE A7

accomplishment in my career would be getting this award. It’s a great honor. I always wanted this award and to be recognized on this platform I am beyond grateful what God has done for me.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistake is realizing not everyone I can trust and call friends. Not everyone has my best interest at heart. I am very careful of the people I talk to and how I operate my businesses.

What are your current professional goals?

My current professional goals is

to continue to grow and expand my laundromat businesses. I want to own locations outside of the state of Indiana. I want Itoro & Don’s Kwik Wash to be NationWide

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I remain current and relevant in my profession by attending conferences, listening to laundromat podcasts, and being involved in multiple laundromat forums and groups.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

It honestly can be difficult. I work 7 days a week. I attend church regularly. I do allocate time with my family and I take lots of vacations.

Awards Reception

March 27 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Ceruti’s Summit Park II, 6601 Innovation Blvd.

MILLER

FROM PAGE A7

What does success mean to you?

It’s funny how the idea of success changes as you get older. To me, success is finding joy in what I do. If I am continuously learning and improving AND I’m happy - I couldn’t ask for anything more and I think this applies to all aspects of life.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I went from wanting to be a cake baker to a wedding planner. Now as an adult, I need to stay as far away from the kitchen as possible. And while I haven’t planned any weddings other than my own, I have been fortunate to plan dozens of events over my career which filled that cup.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck was from American Eagle in Glenbrook Square. This was my first job and kickstarted my ‘mall rat era’ from late high school through college.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your

career?

This is answer is twofold. My family and husband have always been my number 1 supporters when it comes to behind the scenes encouragement. But in my early days with Regional Partnership, I was lucky enough to have Kylee Shirey as my boss – who later turned mentor and friend. She not only pushed me to discover my strengths but rallied behind my ideas and helped me figure out how to go after what I wanted in my career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

In 2018, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the Disney Institute for Quality Service at Disney World, where I gained valuable insights into the importance of a holistic approach to customer experience. After returning, I developed an organizational framework and quality standards for the Regional Partnership, shaping how we engage with partners, vendors, and each other. As a mega Disney fan, this experience was especially meaningful on a personal level, but it also gave me the chance to take ownership and lead an initiative that made a lasting impact within the organization.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what

FORD-KALBFELL

FROM PAGE A6

job then?

My first paycheck (outside of my internship) came from the Community Foundation of Wabash County doing the same kind of work I do now!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My boss, Patty Grant, has helped me develop the most in my career. She’s taught me the ins and outs of the Community Foundation, from day-to-day administrative work and drafting fund agreements to building relationships with donors and professional advisors. She’s helped me to build confidence in myself and think more analytically. When I had the opportunity in 2021 to become the Director at Wabash Valley Dance Theater, she allowed me to do so, which I feel has only helped me to develop my competence in both roles.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

So far, I feel my biggest accomplishment has been helping to resurrect our local dance studio, Wabash

lessons did you learn from it?

Looking back, it’s quite trivial but I was organizing an event and was responsible for bringing 200 giveaways for the attendees and didn’t realize I forgot them until the event was nearly over.

What are your current professional goals?

Pretty general but I want to keep growing and learning and find my niche in the space I’m in.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I listen. I think one of the most important things we can do in a professional or personal setting is listen to those around us and learn from others who we admire, and I try to do that on a daily basis. I’ve found that it’s not always necessary to attend a conference or read a professional development book to remain relevant, sometimes the resources are in the same building as us.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Maintaining balance has always been my top priority and something I have always encouraged my peers to think about. Seeing firsthand how

positions Attend more networking events and conferences to learn, meet more people, and build relationships Earn my CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive)

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I read e-newsletters and articles on development and planned-giving related topics, watch webinars, and attend conferences and trainings (for both CFWC and WVDT).

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I wouldn’t say my career, life, and volunteer work is completely balanced, but I’ve learned to start setting boundaries for myself (like not checking my work email on the weekend) and to start saying no before I’m stretched too thin. My husband and I enjoy cooking, and we prioritize sitting down at the table together for an hour or so most days of the week. We are also expecting our first child in late February, so life is about to become a little busier, and I know there will be a shift in priorities.

What do you do to relax?

To relax and clear my mind, I’ll

imbalance can impact overall health, I knew as a young adult that this would be important to me. While I am still a work in progress, I strive to be fully present — whether at home or at work. I also make it a point to prioritize time for myself by reading and exercising to allow myself to reset.

What do you do to relax?

I love watching reality TV, specifically BRAVO – it’s like an escape for me to turn my brain off! I also read a lot and exercise to mentally relax.

What book do you recommend?

I consider sharing book recommendations my love language! While reading is deeply personal and subjective, I always suggest The Couple Next Door by Shari Lapena to thriller lovers or those who are interested in the genre but not sure where to start — it’s the book that rekindled my love for reading as an adult and brought my mom and me even closer.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

It’s okay to not be perfect or be the best in the room. Just be yourself, stick to your morals and you will attract what’s best for you.

typically go on a walk outside around my house or on the Wabash River Trail. I also enjoy scrapbooking and cooking.

What book do you recommend?

It’s been a long time since I’ve been able to read a book; however, one book I do love is called “The Monday Memo.com.” I enjoy it mostly for nostalgia, but my high school swim coach would read one of the memos before practice every Monday and translate the author’s life observations and experiences to working hard in practice. It always got me in a great mindset before a hard workout and the week ahead. I’m also not too into personality tests and typing, but I do really like the Enneagram and learned a lot about myself and others with “The Road Back to You.”

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Honestly, I’m not sure what I would tell my high school self. While I’ve certainly changed since high school and become much more open-minded, I still have many of the same values and think similarly about my life and work. I feel the mistakes and choices I’ve made have taught me important life lessons.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell my high school self, “Little by little, you’ll get very far”—trust the process, stay patient, and keep faith in God’s greater plan. Success isn’t just about hard work; it’s about consistency, integrity, and serving others with humility. Your father’s wisdom will shape your leadership, and one day, you’ll see how his values became your own. Family will be your greatest success — far beyond any title or career achievement. Never stop learning, not just from books but from people, from listening, and from understanding deeply. Lead as a servant, stay humble, and when God calls, move without hesitation. Everything will fall into place, and you’ll be just fine.”

RIVERA

FROM PAGE A3

Huntington University’s occupational therapy and graduate programs. I aim to enhance student engagement and professional impact through continuous professional presentations, research, and leadership. Additionally, I continue to seek new opportunities to lead key events, refine marketing strategies, and establish new pipelines for sustainable revenue streams.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay current and relevant in my profession by actively engaging in research, professional organizations, and continuous education. I publish in peer-reviewed journals, present at conferences, and participate in leadership roles within the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and Indiana Occupational Therapy Association (IOTA). Attending conferences,

such as the AOTA Education Summit and Academic Leadership Council, keeps me informed on emerging trend

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Balancing my career, family, life, and community service requires faithfulness rather than perfect time management. I set boundaries to prioritize my wife, children, and well-being while remaining intentional in my work and service. Trusting in God’s timing, I adjust as seasons change, ensuring my commitments align with His purpose. Step by step, I move forward, focusing not on doing more but on serving with a faithful heart.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I prioritize time with my wife and children, whether it’s building forts in the living room or taking walks through the neighborhood. I also find

relaxation through physical activity, including exercise, playing church softball, and enjoying a round of leisure golf. These activities help me recharge, stay active, and create meaningful moments with my family.

What book do you recommend?

I would recommend “Never Split the Difference” by Chris Voss because it has helped me become a more active listener, communicator, and collaborator. I find techniques like mirroring, labeling, and tactical empathy particularly useful, and I apply them in my work with students, career advancement discussions, and contract negotiations when collaborating with organizations. I also use these techniques to mentor students on career negotiations, incorporating exercises and role-playing scenarios to help them practice and refine their skills. I’m always looking for more effective strategies to foster their growth.

Ashley Gilbert-Johnson

Age: 35

Rothberg
Law Firm

Attorney,
Partner



What is your education?

Bachelor's degree in English/Criminology, Valparaiso University
J.D., Valparaiso University School of Law

What community organizations are you involved in?

Allen County United Way, Resource Development Committee member
Parkview Hospital IRB, board member
Allen County Bar Association, civil litigation section executive committee member
Indiana State Bar Association, litigation council member
Metz Christian Church, member
Concord Volunteer Fire Department, auxiliary member

What are your hobbies?

Spending time with my family, crocheting, reading, camping, and hiking.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Northeast Indiana, so it is and always has been my home. After seven years in Northwest Indiana for college, I knew I wanted to come back to northeast Indiana to be near my family and friends.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the personal interactions with my clients and helping them get the best result possible. When you put in the work and get a good outcome, it makes for a good day.

What does success mean to you?

Success is setting goals for yourself, both big and small, and working hard to meet them every day. It may take time,

but if you keep showing up and doing your best, you will succeed.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a teacher because I loved to learn and I enjoyed sharing my knowledge with others and helping them succeed.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I grew up on a farm, so my first income came from helping my dad, but my first paycheck came from Pokagon State Park, where I worked with the Young Hoosier Conservation Corps performing various operational and maintenance tasks to help with park upkeep.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My husband has been my biggest supporter from Day One. From helping me study during college, to driving me to the bar exam, to being my biggest cheerleader, and listening to me practice oral arguments prior to hearings, he is always there to listen and give constructive criticism. I wouldn't be where I am without him.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment has been sitting first chair at Jury Trials and getting favorable outcomes for my clients. It is an exhausting endeavor, but seeing the result of many hours of hard work, including my client's gratitude, is fulfilling.

See GILBERT-JOHNSON, page B20



Congratulations to
Ashley
Gilbert-Johnson
on being named one
of the
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Elizabeth Hoffman

Age: 34

City of Fort
Wayne

Human
Resource
Director



What is your education?

I graduated from Snider High School, then completed a B.S in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Public Health from IPFW, MBA in HR Management from Indiana Tech, and I have finished all but a dissertation for a Ph.D. in Global Leadership from Indiana Tech. I am also a Certified HR Professional with SHRM.

What community organizations are you involved in?

I am on the board of the Northeast Indiana Human Resource Association. During my Ph.D. I have significantly cut back on my volunteer work, but I also support Amani Family Services, Humane Fort Wayne and Bring it, Push it, Own it.

What are your hobbies?

I am an avid reader. I also enjoy hiking, riding my bike and camping.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born here. However, I stay because of my connections to family and community. Growing up here, I built lifelong friendships and a strong support system that make Allen County my home. The familiar faces, local traditions, and shared history give me a sense of belonging I would not find anywhere else.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

Public service isn't for the faint of heart. It takes a special kind of person to run toward danger, like our public safety professionals, or to stay on call without much recognition, like those in animal care and control, public works, and city utilities. Working in human resources in the public sector gives me the chance to support these dedicated public servants by helping create a workplace where they feel valued, and have the resources they need to do their jobs safely.

What does success mean to you?

As an HR director success means creating a workplace where employees feel safe, healthy, and valued. It's about fostering a positive culture where people feel supported, and motivated to do their best work. Personally, success means having the opportunity to utilize my knowledge and experience to better our community, make my daughter proud, and have a balanced life.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A chemist, I wanted to be the person who designed scents for soap. I had multiple soap kits and my parents let me ruin many bottles of shampoo (thanks Mom!).

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I answered phones and folded pizza boxes at Papa Johns.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

First, I would say my family. My husband, Adam, has been my biggest supporter — celebrating every success and standing by me through every misstep. My best friend, Sara Bai, has had my back for 20 years, and honestly, I think she believes in me more than I believe in myself. My parents who taught me the value of hard work and perseverance.

Second, the employees of the City of New Haven. They put their trust in me and followed my lead, giving their all every day. They've always celebrated my wins as if they were their own — even now, when those wins have taken me away from working together.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I am the only person to be HR director for both the City of New Haven and the City of Fort Wayne. I am also the youngest person to have held either position. However, I do not believe my age when achieving goals is a personal accomplishment. If I had to pick something, it would be fully staffing Citilink in less than 9 months after multiple years of driver shortages or being appointed chief of staff of the City of New Haven after leading the organization through the pandemic.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

When I first began my career, I believed that everyone was looking out for my best interest, the way I was looking out for theirs. I learned the hard way that this was not necessarily true. These experiences taught me to be more selective about who I share information with and maintain better boundaries.

What are your current professional goals?

Right now, I just want to finish my PhD, but I always thought it would be cool to be governor.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay engaged in the HR field by attending Northeast Indiana Human Resource Association events and webinars, as well as keeping up with news from the Society for Human Resource Management and various HR and business journals. Given the unique responsibilities of managing HR for a

See HOFFMAN, page B19

What is your education?

Journalism News-Editorial, Digital Media and Sociology degrees from Ball State University and digital marketing certifications from Cornell University.

What community organizations are you involved in?

I am a proud board member of PBS Fort Wayne, which is celebrating its 50th year in 2025. I also serve on the marketing committee of the United Way of Allen County. I'm a member of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the Women's Fund of Greater Fort Wayne, and a former board member of WBOI, Northeast Indiana's NPR station. I'm also a 2019 graduate of the Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana (YLNi) Leadership Institute.

What are your hobbies?

I love to stay busy with both work and fun. I enjoy gardening. I have over 200 square feet of raised beds in the backyard of my home in the North Anthony neighborhood and love to make my outdoor space full of lush and green veggies and flowers. I also take that love for plants indoors where I have over 60 plants to care for in my home, including an 8-foot tall fiddle leaf fig that was gifted to me by former coworkers. You'll also find me at the gym, outside with my dog, Teddy, or enjoying live music.

Why are you in northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Elkhart, where my parents ran a towing company, and I cherish the time I spent in the country life of my hometown. After college, I knew I wanted to stay close to my family, and Fort Wayne seemed like the perfect place. I landed my first job here, and it didn't take long for me to fall in love with the city and its people. As a reporter in a new town, I had the unique opportunity to experience firsthand what makes Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana such a special community. The growth and opportunities in the community made it easy for me to invest my time and talents back into this place I now proudly call home. Northeast Indiana is full of opportunity and a great place to build a life and make a positive impact.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

It's about the people for me. Ever since I can remember, I've been connecting with others, asking a lot of questions, and telling unique stories. I love my profession because it allows me to connect with people, tell meaningful stories, and build relationships that make an impact. Whether through journalism, digital marketing, or public relations, my goal has always been to create a clear and compelling voice that resonates with audiences. As a journalist, I had the privilege of uncovering and sharing stories that highlight the heart of a community. Now, in marketing and PR, I enjoy helping brands craft their narratives in ways that foster trust and credibility. The most rewarding part of my work is seeing how strategic storytelling can shape perceptions, strengthen communities, and drive real results. Equally meaningful to me is the opportunity to mentor others and lead internship programs, helping the next generation find their voice and develop their skills. Seeing young professionals grow, gain confidence, and make their own impact is incredibly fulfilling, and I'm grateful to play a role in their journeys.

What does success mean to you?

To me, success isn't just about titles, awards, or achievements — it's about impact, growth, and fulfillment. It means using my skills to make a difference, whether by telling meaningful stories, helping brands find their voice, or building relationships that strengthen a community. Success is also about finding joy and being content with both work and life. It's knowing when to evolve, embracing change, and staying true to myself. Most importantly, it's about the people I uplift along the way and the

lasting impact I leave behind.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

It's not very whimsical, but as a child, I wanted to be a businesswoman. I was inspired by watching my mom run a business alongside my dad. Her leadership, especially as a woman navigating challenges and making things happen, left a lasting impression on me. I admired her confidence, her ability to make decisions, and the strength she showed in driving success. Seeing her lead with determination made me aspire to follow in her footsteps, leading with purpose.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from working with my parent's business when I was a young teenager. Every day after school and on Saturdays, I would go to my parent's towing company to answer phones, process payments and provide customer service. That's where I fell in love with serving and helping others. I loved working with my parents and making money to form my independence. I've always appreciated my parents teaching me the value of hard work, commitment, and consistency.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter has always been my family. They supported me as I decided to leave my hometown and be the first person in my family to pursue a college degree. Their support remained unwavering as I navigated career transitions — from journalism to economic development to agency life. Through every high and low, they have been my sounding board, offering perspective and encouragement. I often refer to the most important people in my life as my 'board of directors.' Today, that board includes not only my family but also the trusted colleagues I've come to rely on. Most importantly, I owe where I am today to the strong, smart, and supportive women who have guided me in my career and life.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Each phase of life and my career brings something I can be uniquely proud of, and each moment builds upon the next. When I was at the News-Sentinel, I was proud to have earned a Society of Professionals (SPJ) award for my writing. When I was at the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, I was amongst the team that helped to secure regional economic development funding that is still transforming our communities. Now at Ferguson, I have the opportunity to support clients in recognizing and honoring historic achievements for their brands and companies. Awards are great, and seeing the results of months or even years of hard work is fulfilling. But what truly makes me feel accomplished and grateful is the positive impact on the community.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my greatest mistakes was hesitating to take risks early in my career, out of fear of failure, and trying to fit into spaces where I didn't truly belong. I often played it safe or prioritized blending in, even when I knew deep down that a situation or environment wasn't the right fit. Over time, I learned that growth comes from stepping outside my comfort zone, embracing challenges, and recognizing when something no longer serves me. I've come to realize that mistakes and changes are essential to personal and professional growth and that I have the power to create change when needed. This journey has made me more confident, resilient, and adaptable.

What are your current

Jaclyn Goldsborough

Age: 36

The Ferguson Agency

PR & Content Manager



professional goals?

My current professional goals are focused on continuing to grow as a leader in communications and public relations. I want to further hone my skills in crafting compelling narratives that resonate with audiences and help brands build lasting relationships. I'm also committed to expanding my impact by mentoring others and creating opportunities for other women. Alongside my career, I aim to stay actively involved in volunteering and giving back to the community, helping to make a positive difference where I can. Ultimately, my goal is to balance personal fulfillment with professional success, staying true to my values while contributing meaningfully to the communities I serve.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I remain current and relevant in my profession by always staying curious and eager to learn. I embrace new tools

and technologies, actively seeking out ways to enhance my skills. I attend training, workshops, and conferences to deepen my knowledge and stay ahead of industry trends. Connecting with others — whether through networking, collaborations, or conversations. I never shy away from asking questions and challenging myself to grow, which keeps me adaptable and in tune with changes in the field.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I don't pretend to have the balance thing all figured out, but as someone who values practicality and utility, I've found that putting everything on the calendar is key. My calendar pretty much rules my life! The trick is to include both work and play, making sure that all aspects of my life are represented. It gives me a clear roadmap of what I'm

See GOLDSBOROUGH, page B20



A powerhouse in PR & content.

An advocate for clients.

And now, a FW Forty under 40.

Congratulations, Jaclyn Goldsborough!

Thomas Ludwiski

Age: 37

Barrett
McNagny

Partner



What is your education?

Bishop Dwenger High School
B.S. in Accounting, Indiana University
Kelley School of Business
J.D., Indiana University McKinney
School of Law

What community organizations are you involved in?

I am on the board of directors and am the treasurer of the Fort Wayne Down- town Improvement District, and I enjoy coaching youth sports.

What are your hobbies?

I love hiking (especially at our national parks), running, cooking, and reading.

Why are you in northeast Indiana?

My wife and I both grew up in Fort Wayne and have always wanted to raise our children near our families. The prog- ress Fort Wayne has made, especially in the downtown area, has made that decision well worth it.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I like being able to solve problems and find solutions, and I enjoy working with others who are driven and hardworking. There are very few boring days — rarely do they go exactly as planned, and every one is a new adventure.

What does success mean to you?

On the professional side, it means helping clients find solutions and achieve their goals. On the family side, it means providing for my family and raising kind, well-rounded children who know their parents love them.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

It was never just one thing: professional basketball player, roller coaster designer,

See LUDWISKI, page B20

Nicole Kurut

Age: 34

Catholic
Charities of
the Diocese of
Fort Wayne -
South Bend

Marketing
Manager



What is your education?

Bishop Dwenger High School
Purdue University, West Lafayette |
Bachelor of Arts in Communications

What community organizations are you involved in?

Previously, I was involved with the Emerging Leaders Alliance, YLNI, as well as a board member at the Euell Wilson Center.

Currently, I am involved at my chil- dren's school and our church. At work, I am part of many collaborations that aid in removing barriers for the most vulnerable in northeast Indiana.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading, gardening, and cooking.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Fort Wayne. After attending college at Purdue, I moved to Indianapolis for a few years. My husband and I decided to move back in 2015, when many of the down- town expansion projects were being announced. I got involved with the NEIRP's Emerging Leaders Alliance because I was invested in making Fort Wayne a place where people wanted to stay.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

For nearly a decade, I worked in for-profit public relations and marketing. I worked with many small businesses and tech startups, which was very exciting. At some point, I realized how underserved nonprofits were. I craved a profession that combined my marketing skills, my faith, and core belief in serving others, which led me to Catholic Charities.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me is setting a goal, no matter how small, and achieving it through pure effort. It is a founda- tional philosophy that can be multi- plied throughout your profession and if executed, pays dividends.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I don't think I even knew what marketing was as a child, even though my mom worked in marketing. I know I never envisioned working in social services. I wish more people put an emphasis on becoming a social worker — they are the real heroes!

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first job in high school was working in the food industry. I made sandwiches at a new restaurant. It wasn't glamorous, but I learned so many lessons about customer service and built important social skills.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I was in college when the Lean In movement began, and it gave me a different perspective of leadership. From short conversations to meaningful rela- tionships, I have been lucky to have many inspirational females along my career path, guiding me to finding my voice. It takes a village to raise a professional, and I am so thankful to all — both male and female - that have strengthened me along my journey.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

In 2021, we watched as Kabul fell to the Taliban. Overnight, our agency switched to crisis mode as the public responded to the needs of our new clients. Ever thankful for the coworkers that surrounded me, the weeks leading up to refugee families arriving were full of crisis communication, interviews, public presentations and countless phone calls. I learned many lessons during that time, but when the first Afghan refugee families began moving into their homes, I felt very proud to work for this organization and the community that supports us.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Slow down and proofread, because you can't do it all on your own. As a marketing professional, we are often asked to multitask countless duties. After making countless typos, I realized I have to ask for help because I can't do it all on my own.

What are your current professional goals?

I want to continue honing my public relations skills to greater benefit the vulnerable communities in northeast Indiana. Eventually, I would like to get an MBA with a focus in nonprofit business.

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?


Using my network of other marketing and nonprofit professionals has been key. Nonprofit work differs from for-profit marketing, so having others I can test local ideas on or ask about trends has been great.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Balancing the various responsibilities of life is difficult. Often, you have to contradictorily stand back to see the large picture, while also take it one day at a time. Eventually, it becomes easier to see what is important to expend time on and your goals naturally adjust.

See KURUT, page B19

Barrett McNagny congratulates Thomas Ludwiski on being named to Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 Class of 2025.



A business attorney with Barrett McNagny, Tom Ludwiski focuses on mergers, acquisitions, and investment structuring. He assists clients in the financial services and manufacturing industries with tax structuring, negotiations, drafting, and due diligence.

Congratulations to Tom and to all of the 2025 *Forty Under 40* recipients!

150 Years

1876 - 2026

BarrettMcNagny

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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What is your education?

Homestead High School (2007)
Bachelor of Science in Business,
Bachelors of Science in Education
and Minor in Special Education from
University of Saint Francis (2012)
Certified Financial Planner Designa-
tion (CFP Board of Standards)
Chartered Financial Consultant,
Chartered Life Underwriter, Wealth
Management Certified Professional,
Retirement Income Certified Profes-
sional Designations (American College
of Financial Services)

What community organizations
are you involved in?

Currently: University of Saint Francis
(Director of Student Affairs), DADcamp

What are your hobbies?

Smoking Meat (BBQ), cooking,
entertaining, coaching/supporting my
kids, staying active and working out,
volunteering at our kids school

Why are you in Northeast
Indiana?

It is the BEST place to raise our
family! It is all I have ever known.

What is it about your profession
that you enjoy and why?

I have the opportunity to work with
the best team and we all get to interact
and develop relationships with the most
amazing people everyday. I always say
my favorite day of the week is Monday
because I truly get to do what I love
each day!

What does success mean to you?

To me, success is fostering a team
environment where individuals feel
valued, motivated and empowered to
achieve their best. Success is not about
just hitting goals, it is about developing
people, igniting passion, and ensuring
that the firm thrives both professionally
and personally. By accomplishing this
our clients will be served in the best
possible way for generations to come.

As a child, what did you want to
be when you grew up?

A meteorologist

Where did your first paycheck
come from and what was your
job then?

I worked for a local home builder/
construction company in middle school
and helped with site prep, cleanup, etc.

Who was your biggest supporter
who helped you advance in your
career?

My wife, Natalie, was and still is my
biggest cheerleader. She has been the
barbecue sauce to my brisket and has
allowed me to live out my dreams. She
is an amazing wife, mother and my best
friend. None of the success we have had
would have been possible without her
sacrifice and support.

What has been your biggest
accomplishment thus far in your
career?

Being recognized by Forbes as a Top
Next-Gen Advisor in 2023 and 2024
as well as Summit Financial Group
being named by Forbes as a Top Wealth
Management Team in 2023 and 2024.

What has been your greatest
mistake thus far and what
lessons did you learn from it?

Not delegating soon enough and
trying to be in control of too many
things. The phrase “Who not How”
has been central to this shift in my life
and our firm as it relates to roles and
responsibilities. Simply put, “WHO” can
I empower to take over my deficiencies
and enjoy accomplishing them and stop
thinking “HOW” I can get them done on
my own. The outcome will be the 20%
of my efficient bandwidth will now turn
into hopefully 80-100%.

What are your current
professional goals?

As I have progressed in my career

Jonathan Lehman

Age: 36

Summit
Financial
Group

Partner,
Private
Wealth
Advisor



my ability to lead others has become
a critical component to our success.
Continuing to build my leadership
skills, emotional intelligence (EQ), and
communication skills is vital. As we
continue to grow and scale, continuing
to attract talented people to our team
is always top of mind. I like the saying,
“If you want to go fast go alone. If you
want to go far, go together.”

How do you remain current/
relevant in your profession?

Maintaining regular communication
with other professionals (CPAs, Attor-
neys, other advisors). Being involved
in industry organizations. Industry
designations, higher ED, continued
education.

How do you balance your career,
family, life and community
service?

A big goal for me in 2024, going into
2025, was adding “margin” into my day.

More structure, built in breaks, time to
strategize, Jon keeping his sanity, sched-
uled working out times.

What do you do to relax?

Working out, spending time w/
friends and family, BBQ/Smoking Meat,
attempting to golf, going to movies at
the movie theater.

What book do you recommend?

“10x IS Easier than 2X” by Dan
Sullivan
“Parenting” by Andy and Sandra
Stanley

Based on what you know now,
what would you tell your high
school self?

You cannot be ALL things to ALL
people. Just be yourself and you will
attract the right people. Be available to
people, BUT know it is okay to say no
sometimes. You cannot be everywhere
at once.

Congratulations
Partner & Private Wealth Advisor,
Jonathan Lehman,
for being named to
FW Business Weekly's 2024
40 Under 40 list!

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Jonathan Lehman
CFP®, CLU®, ChFC®, WMCP®, RICP®

Casey Weade

Age: 38

Howard Bailey Financial

Founder & CEO



What is your education?

Finance graduate of Stetson University; Also obtained the following designations: CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ (CFP®), Retirement Income Certified Professional® (RICP®), Chartered Life Underwriter® (CLU®), Chartered Financial Consultant® (ChFC®); Licensed in life, accident, and health insurance, and Long-Term Care Certified

What community organizations are you involved in?

Financial Planning Association

What are your hobbies?

Golfing, hunting, cooking, traveling, spending time with family and friends

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born in Syracuse, Indiana, and after college, I found my way back to Fort Wayne. Over the years, my family and I have lived in Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina, but no matter where we've been, Fort Wayne has always felt like home. The cost of living, safety, excellent schools, thriving business community, and access to great restaurants and shopping all make this a wonderful place to live. But more than anything, what truly sets Northeast Indiana apart is its people. Of all the places we've lived and visited, nowhere else compares to the kindness, integrity, and sense of community we've found right here at home.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

What I love most about my profession is the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in people's lives. Financial planning isn't just about numbers — it's about helping individuals and families align their wealth with their values, goals, and purpose. I'm passionate about turning what can feel like a complex, transactional process into a deeply personal journey, empowering people to make confident decisions that bring both financial security and fulfillment. For me, success isn't just measured in financial outcomes, but in the lasting peace of mind and possibilities we create together.

What does success mean to you?

To me, success is about living a life

of purpose — one where I continually pursue a better understanding of my God-given gifts and use them to make a meaningful impact on others. True success isn't just about what I achieve, but about how I help people overcome challenges, reach their goals, and become the best versions of themselves. I believe a life well-lived is one that embraces the full spectrum of experiences — the highs and lows, the victories and setbacks — because each moment adds depth and color to our journey. Success is found in the relationships I build, the people I help, and the personal growth I experience along the way. If, at the end of my life, I can look back and see that I've made a difference in the lives of others while continually evolving into a better version of myself, then I will have truly succeeded.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I dreamed of becoming a professional golfer. As I got older and went to college, that dream evolved into becoming a professional physical trainer for elite athletes. Ultimately, I discovered a natural gift for business, leadership, and finance. Rather than chasing a specific career, I chose to lean into my strengths — using them to help others in the most meaningful and impactful way possible.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first real paycheck came from Tippecanoe Lake Country Club, where I worked as a bag boy for a few years. That job taught me valuable lessons about hard work, building relationships, and the importance of great leadership. I was fortunate to learn firsthand from my boss, Todd Firestone, whose example showed me what true leadership looks like.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My father, Ron Weade, was my greatest supporter and mentor. From a young age, he taught me the fundamentals of running a business, but more importantly, he instilled in me the values that truly matter — building relationships, earning trust, staying humble, and always remaining curious. His guidance shaped not just my career, but the way I

approach life and leadership.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Looking back, it is REALLY difficult to pinpoint one accomplishment that stands out among the rest as they are all so meaningful in their own way and at that point in my career. Publishing Job Optional as a Wall Street Journal best-seller was an incredible moment — not just for the achievement itself, but for the opportunity to share my philosophy on financial freedom with a wider audience. Purchasing our first office building and putting up our sign on Jefferson Boulevard was another defining moment. It symbolized everything we had built — a permanent home for our team and a place where we could serve our clients with greater purpose. That same spirit of growth and impact has continued with the acquisition of our first advisory firm, the opening of our Carmel office this year, and the honor of becoming the Official Wealth Management Partner for Notre Dame. Each of these milestones reflects not just expansion, but a deeper ability to serve more people, build stronger relationships, and further our mission. Beyond these achievements, my greatest accomplishment is the legacy I hope to leave in this profession: integrating life coaching with financial planning. It's not just about creating financial plans — it's about helping people find clarity in their purpose and continually elevating meaning in their lives. That vision drives everything I do, and seeing it come to life has been the most rewarding part of my journey.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Earlier in my career, I made the mistake of viewing success as a scorecard — believing that professional fulfillment came from checking all the boxes, hitting business milestones, and achieving financial goals. But over time, I realized that true success isn't just about reaching targets; it's about using my skills and calling to create a meaningful, lasting impact on the lives of others — both our clients and our team. That shift in perspective led to the development of Howard Bailey's Retire With Purpose framework, where financial planning goes beyond numbers to align with each client's values, purpose, and unique goals—helping them build a fulfilling life, not just a retirement strategy. It also inspired the creation of our coaching programs, designed to support people in all aspects of their lives, both financially and personally. This journey taught me that fulfillment isn't found in achieving success for its own sake, but in using success as a tool to serve, guide, and elevate others.

What are your current professional goals?

While I have clear professional goals—growing our business, expanding into new locations, strengthening our coaching programs, and building a virtual community for those seeking deeper connection and support — I no longer see success as a destination. My vision extends beyond numbers or milestones; it's about expanding our impact, from working with clients in 38 states to all 50, and continuously finding new ways to serve and inspire others. That said, what drives me every day isn't a finish line or a specific

achievement — it's the process. I wake up each morning with one simple goal: to grow, to help others grow, and to make a meaningful impact. That's what keeps me moving forward, and that's what success looks like to me.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Our industry is becoming increasingly impersonal, and I believe this trend will only accelerate as technology continues to reshape both financial services and society as a whole. Many advisory firms will either resist change and become irrelevant or evolve into tech-driven platforms that lack the human touch. We remain relevant by doubling down on what will always be in demand — human connection. While we embrace technology to enhance efficiency and accessibility, we refuse to let it replace the personal relationships, trust, and deep understanding that define truly impactful financial planning. In a world that's becoming more automated, the firms that lead the future will be the ones that prioritize what is inherently human.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Balancing my career, family, life, and community service comes down to two key factors: a strong team and disciplined focus. I'm fortunate to have an incredible team that supports me by handling areas outside my Unique Ability, allowing me to dedicate my time and energy where I can make the greatest impact. I also rely on a structured routine and a disciplined schedule to ensure that I prioritize what matters most. By being intentional with my time, I'm able to fully engage in my work, be present with my family, and contribute to my community — without feeling pulled in too many directions. It's not about doing everything; it's about focusing on what is most meaningful. Maintaining a strong routine is key to keeping a healthy state of mind. Every day, I spend time in the Word, meditate, do a cold plunge, and work out — practices that keep me grounded, focused, and energized. Beyond my daily routine, I make it a priority to fully disconnect at least once a week. Whether it's a round of golf, a good hunt, or a great movie with my family, these moments allow me to step away, recharge, and be fully present in the things I enjoy most.

What book do you recommend?

"15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership"

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Even though the weight you feel today may seem immense — even unbearable at times — stay true to yourself. Focus on helping others, take one step forward at a time, and never dwell on the past. Your future is bigger than you can imagine. The challenges you face now are preparing you for the opportunities ahead—opportunities to grow, to lead, and to impact others in ways you can't yet see. That weight you feel? It won't go away, but it will evolve into something meaningful. It will be the weight of responsibility, purpose, and leadership — and over time, you'll learn to carry it with confidence.

Awards Reception

March 27 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

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Congratulations Casey

May your vision for
a purpose-filled future
continue to inspire others!

With Purpose,
Your Howard Bailey Team

Casey Weade
CFP®, CLU®, RICP®, CHFC®
Founder and CEO



Luke Morgan

Age: 34

Turnstone Center for Children and Adults with Disabilities

Chief Operating Officer



What is your education?

Hanover Senior High School (Hanover, PA)

Bachelor of Psychology and Criminal Justice from Grace College (Winona Lake, IN)

Master of Business Administration from Western Governor’s University (Millcreek, UT)

What community organizations are you involved in?

For the past four years I’ve served on the Board of Director for Anthony Wayne Rehabilitation Center (AWRC), which has numerous programs for people with disabilities including Camp Red Cedar. I have been Treasurer for the past three. I’m also involved at Avalon Church, whether that is participating in men’s bible studies or serving the local community through their “Reach the Fort” program.

What are your hobbies?

I really enjoy weightlifting. You’ll find me at the Jorgenson YMCA in the early morning hours most days. I also love to play sports, specifically golf. Watching golf, football (Notre Dame and the Baltimore Ravens) and baseball (Baltimore Orioles) with my kids or friends brings me a lot of joy. Additionally, I dabble clumsily at carpentry. I enjoy making and fixing things with my hands. I’ll occasionally play some video games. There are few things more satisfying than beating your kids at Mario Kart.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

My wife and I decided to move to Fort Wayne in 2018 to be closer to family and friends. We lived in Elkhart prior and it never felt like home. We’re not designed to be alone. We’re designed to be in community with others. In Fort Wayne we have found a community. We belong to a phenomenal church, have access to countless family-friendly activities, great

restaurants, and exciting sports teams (including Fort Wayne Roller Derby).

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

There is a lot to enjoy working at Turnstone Center. I love having variety in my work. Being able to innovate and create new processes and programs is also really fulfilling. Ultimately, working with a fun team and having a positive impact is the thing I enjoy the most.

What does success mean to you?

“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?” Matthew 16:26. First and foremost, to honor God in all I do and fulfill his will for my life. Currently, that means working to create sustainable systems that empower people with disabilities to reach their highest potential.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Professional baseball player

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first official paycheck was from being a paperboy for The Hanover Evening Sun, but I was being paid to shovel snow and do yard work well before that.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have had many supporters. It’s honestly very humbling to see how many people professionally and in my personal life have supported me. Of course, my wife, Felicia. Without her support I would not be able to do the work I do. My

See MORGAN, page B20



Turnstone congratulates Luke Morgan, a 40 Under 40 honoree!

Luke’s tireless dedication and passion for Turnstone’s mission has made a profound impact on Turnstone and the lives of those we serve. Thanks to his hard work, more people in our community have access to the services and resources they need to thrive.

Luke, this honor is a reflection of your impact and leadership. This recognition belongs to you and how much you are contributing to our bright future ahead.



Luke Morgan
| CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Turnstone.org | 3320 North Clinton St. Fort Wayne, IN | 260.483.2100

Kayla Stuart

Age: 37

Granite Ridge Builders

Vice President of Sales and Design



What is your education?

I graduated from Concordia Lutheran High School and earned my bachelor’s degree in interior design from Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW)

What community organizations are you involved in?

I actively contribute to Bless Portions and the Alzheimer’s Association, working with these organizations to share my passion for hope and working to make a difference in our community.

What are your hobbies?

I cherish creating lasting memories through making photo albums for my children. When I am not at work or my kids events, you will find me spending quality time at the lake or exploring new destinations and cultures through travel.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

This region is my home, I was born and raised here and am blessed to have my wonderful family nearby.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

In my role, I find immense satisfaction in guiding clients through what many initially perceive as an overwhelming building process. It is incredibly rewarding to see their confidence grow as we collaborate to see their vision come to fruition. What truly energizes me is helping people bring their dream homes to life during one of their largest and most important life investments, making the journey both exciting, informative, and manageable.

What does success mean to you?

Success is finding contentment in your achievements while maintaining the drive to reach for more. It’s about balancing satisfactions with continued growth.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I dreamed of becoming a Marine Biologist, I was fascinated by sea creatures and marine life. While a I may not be living out that childhood dream now, what most may not understand is how my two dreams have collided in their similarities. Marine Biologist study ecosystems and how different elements work together in harmony. I now create harmonious living spaces where every design element must function together perfectly. Just as ocean environments need balance to thrive, I focus on creating balanced, livable spaces that enhance people’s daily lives.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My career began at Granite Ridge Builders, where I literally grew up in the business. I started with the basic tasks like making copies and operating the book binding machine. My first official paid role was a Marketing Assistant.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My parents have been my greatest supporters. My father encouraged me to explore every facet of the business, demonstrating through example what dedication and hard work looked like. My mother involved me in all aspects of design and client interactions. At a young age I was able to experience working in design and working with important clients. She led by example. My mom valued and supported everything that I chose to pursue.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My proudest professional achievement is leading the design of our \$4 million model home, The Monaco, which we unveiled in November. This project allowed me to showcase both innovative design concepts and practical luxury living. I oversaw every aspect from the initial concept through completion-selecting each finish, curating custom features, and ensuring every detailed aligned with our vision of modern luxury. The Monaco stands as Granite Ridge’s most ambitious model home to date, featuring cutting-edge design elements such as an in-home speakeasy, golf simulator, and impressive outdoor living features. What made this achievement particularly meaningful was not just the scale of the project, by how it has elevated the standard for luxury homes in Northeast Indiana. It has inspired numerous clients to think bigger, more creative, and positioned Granite Ridge as a leader in the luxury home design for our region.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistake has been doubting myself in unfamiliar situations. I’ve learned to trust my instincts because they rarely lead me astray, and even if they do, each experience becomes an opportunity for growth.

What are your current professional goals?

My goal is to expand Choice Designs throughout Fort Wayne, making professionally designed homes accessible at reasonable prices. At Granite Ridge, I am focused on introducing innovative design trends through designing our upcoming model homes.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I invest heavily in ongoing education and research, regularly attending design trade centers in Dallas and Vegas, and participating in the International Builders Show.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community

See STUART, page B19

Luke White

Age: 33

Priority Medical

Founder, Managing Editor



What is your education?

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Trine University (formerly Tri-State)

What community organizations are you involved in?

Warsaw Community Church (former & continued peripheral)
Fellowship Mission
World Compassion Network
International House
Supporter/promoter for KEDCO (continued peripheral)
Volunteer/supporter/donor in Lakeland Christian Academy (continued)
Coach in Warsaw Little League (continued)
Coach in Kosciusko County Soccer League (former)
Coach in CCAC Soccer (former)
Volunteer/supporter for Kosciusko County Velocity (KCV) Club (former & continued peripheral)

What are your hobbies?

Coaching
Mountain biking & outdoor sports
Muscle cars

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

It's the only place in the world to have access to more than five generations of OrthoMedTech experience and talent!
It's difficult to outwork a Hoosier – we have the best workforce, we're economically aggressive, fast-growing, and risk-diverse. The state of Indiana and people are a sure bet!
Indiana is home – It's stable, it's reliable, it's steady, it's a great place to raise a family. We want to see our community thrive. Warsaw is our community. Indiana is our community. OrthoMedTech is our community.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

The purpose of my profession and so many that surround me or go before me is to improve quality of life for other people. The greatest satisfaction in life comes from serving others.
Plus, it's really difficult. I find satisfaction in accomplishing difficult things.

What does success mean to you?

I strongly correlate freedom of decision with success, for myself. But more broadly, success manifests in many ways:
Seeing people you have influence with doing what they only dream of.
Seeing the good and great companies with great cultures thrive & increase their influence.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Lee Iacocca or a firefighter

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

Pudge Egolf, an entrepreneur from

Rochester, Indiana. I was a groundskeeper for his housing development when I was 13.
I have a picture of that check and the first paper check we ever cashed at Priority Med!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I'm a product of many influences. My grandparents, parents, neighbors, the small farms, construction companies, businesses of rural Indiana, and last but not least: five generations of Orthopedics.
Specifically:
Mr. & Mrs. Harold & Kay Eller, North Manchester
Mr. & Mrs. Tom & Pat White, Roann
Mr. Larry Toy, Muncie
Mr. Rod Eller, LaGrange
Mr. Jeff Burns, Macy
Mr. Dennis McKee, Silver Lake
Mr. & Mrs. Tim & Donna Siver, Roann
Mr. Tim & Mr. Dan Metzger, Silver Lake
Mr. Rich Castaneda, Fort Wayne
Mr. Rick Bollinger, South Whitley
Mr. & Mrs. Mike & Peggy White, Roann

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

The formation of Priority Medical – OrthoMedTech Services

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Letting someone else define who and what I was. The Lord defines us all.

What are your current professional goals?

Build Priority Medical into the space-defining OrthoMedTech service provider.
Build a space-defining family of OrthoMedTech businesses.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Define the space and set the standard.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Prioritize instead of balance. Honor the swing of the pendulum of focus. Integrate what I can.

What do you do to relax?

Sleep. Read. Hike.

What book do you recommend?

"Leadership & Self-deception by Arbing Institute"
"With" by Skye Jethani

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Focus on what you're good at. Do what comes to you. Bet on your vision the way you see it. Take big risks early.

Brandon Foster

Age: 39

Irwin Elementary

Principal



What is your education?

Doctorate, Harvard University

What community organizations are you involved in?

Foster Brilliance – I speak to justice-impacted individuals about how they can turn their lives around.

What are your hobbies?

Basketball and watching documentaries

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was raised here, and I love everything about Indiana. My family resides here, and it is where I feel most impactful. Living in other places has allowed me to appreciate being home and see it with new eyes. I also felt compelled to return and inspire students who look like me while showing others what is possible when we hold high expectations for ourselves and others.

What is it about your profession

Congratulations,

Brandon Foster,

on being named to the Forty Under 40!

Brandon has been a dedicated advocate for students, families, and communities, using education and inspiration as powerful levers for change. His commitment to unlocking potential and creating lasting impact continues to shape a brighter future for all.

Well deserved, Brandon!



IRWIN | STEM MAGNET SCHOOL

3501 S. Anthony Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46806

Adam James

Age: 39

Design Collaborative

CEO



What is your education?

High School: Lakeland High School
Undergraduate: Ball State University
Graduate School: Clemson University

What community organizations are you involved in?

NEI - Regional Opportunities Council (ROC)
Riley Children's Hospital – Fort Wayne Philanthropy Committee
Junior Achievement – Board Member

What are your hobbies?

Traveling, golfing and playing with my kids! Having a 4-5-year-old, most of my hobbies revolve around what they want to be playing.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Northeast Indiana, so I always felt like I would find myself back in this area, closer to family. After graduate school in South Carolina and living overseas for a brief stint, the opportunity came to move to Fort Wayne and I've been here ever since!

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

There's a new challenge every day. Each one of our projects is unique and comes with its own set of challenges to overcome. At the end of the day, the most exciting part of being an architect is listening to a client discuss their dream project and being part of a team to make it a reality. Seeing the client when their project is complete and they can move in and being able to know you had a part in making it a reality is a fantastic feeling!

What does success mean to you?

For me, being successful is doing everything in my power to meet my goals & aspirations. Whether that is in my design work or my own personal goals, being relentless towards that success is important.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I'm sure like most kids I wanted to be anything from a professional basketball player to a fireman and everything in between – it just depended on the day.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I think my first actual paycheck was working for a golf course from my hometown in Lagrange. I was a cart boy and did various things around the course to help with maintenance on the golf course.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I've been fortunate to have so many people cheering me on in my life. My family has always been there to support me, have given me the pep talks when things were challenging, and have been there to celebrate when great things happen. I have had great mentors in our community go out of there way to help me, taking their own time to ensure I succeed – I will always be thankful for them!

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I'd probably be remised if I didn't say becoming CEO officially this year. I never planned or had that position on my radar, I've always been passionate about learning and growing every day, specifically as it related to design and

See JAMES, page B19

Will Zeller

Age: 27

City Ford & Chevy

Sales and Leasing Agent



What is your education?

Bachelor degree from the University of Saint Francis

What community organizations are you involved in?

Wildwood Racquet Club
Empowered Beach Volleyball Club
Lions Loyal Member

What are your hobbies?

Season ticket holder for the Detroit Lions
Avid golf and tennis player
Friday night beach volleyball with 5 of my closest friends

Why are you in northeast Indiana?

I went to the University of Saint Francis and played baseball there. This place just felt like home ever since I arrived on campus. It has provided a terrific opportunity for me my whole career and I can't imagine living anywhere else.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I love that I am able to help people in so many ways. Every single day is different and provides a new challenge so it really keeps me on my toes.

What does success mean to you?

What success means to me is if you're able to go home with a simile on your face everyday, you're doing the right thing in life.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a professional baseball player

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first job was working the gas dock at the clear lake marina

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My wife has been there for me no matter what. I had a career shift at the very beginning and she never wavered. She has always stood by my side and believed in me since day 1 and I am so grateful for her.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Winning the readers choice award for best used car salesman and 2nd place for best new car salesman.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake was having a one track mind on what career I wanted coming out of college. I needed to let life take its course and trust God in the process. Once I did that, things started to get a lot easier.

What are your current professional goals?

I would love to be the general manager of a dealership some day.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I try to stay up to date on the latest model of cars from every brand and also follow the market closely. I have a lot of people I follow on X that give fantastic insight on what to look out for in the coming months.

How do you balance your career,

See ZELLER, page B19

HARD WORK.
GREAT LEADERSHIP.
AND A LOT OF FUN ALONG THE WAY.

Congratulations to Adam James on being named to the 40 Under 40 Class of 2025—from all of us at DC!



DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

People-first places.



Congratulations
WILL ZELLER

2025
FORTY UNDER 40
AWARD WINNER

Your dedication, leadership, and impact in this industry has set you apart! This is well-deserved recognition and a testament to your hard work and success!

FROM THE TEAM AT





Ken P. Wilson Sr.

Age: 38

Industrial Contracting & Engineering

Vice President of Construction



What is your education?

Bishop Dwenger High School, Class of 2005 — where I proudly served as Student Body President, a title that mostly meant I got to talk on the PA system and take partial credit for school spirit.

Trine University, Class of 2009 — where I traded in morning announcements for real-world problem-solving and somehow managed to graduate without a formal degree in “winging it.”

What community organizations are you involved in?

Angola Area Chamber of Commerce
Steuben County Industrial Guild
St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church
– Watchmen

What are your hobbies?

Spending time with my family (whether they like it or not), watching Notre Dame Football (and emotionally recovering from it), and traveling on Disney Cruise Lines with my children. When I’m not working, you’ll usually find me watching all of my kids play youth sports, where I serve as their biggest fan, occasional coach, and full-time chauffeur.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Northeast Indiana is home. Fort Wayne is where my father, Ken W. Wilson, married his next door neighbor, Patricia Wilson (Seculoff), and started their journey together. It’s also where my wife, Ashley, is from, where we met, and where we continue to send our kids to school. Now, I reside in Angola, continuing the family legacy. Plus, let’s be honest leaving was never really an option... I’m pretty sure my parents still have my location tracked.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

There’s nothing better than seeing a project go from an idea on paper to a fully finished structure, except maybe watching people admire it and thinking, “Yep, we built that.”

What does success mean to you?

Success means not being the guy who runs the family business into the ground. As a second-generation leader, I see it as my job to take what’s been built, keep it growing, and make sure the next generation isn’t left saying, “Well... he tried.” If I can hand things off someday and they’re excited to take over instead of looking for an exit strategy, I’d say I did something right.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I had big dreams, first, a Disney animator, then a veterinarian, and at one point, I was fully convinced my true calling was to be the public address announcer for the Barbie Spectacular. Clearly, I was aiming for a career filled

with creativity, animals, and a touch of over-the-top showmanship. Instead, I ended up in construction... which, to be fair, still involves a lot of creativity, the occasional wild animal on a job site, and plenty of big announcements.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from working in construction with JICI. I started as a “shop boy” for the summer, where my dad, insisted I wear long-sleeve coveralls to keep my clothes clean. Spoiler alert: I still got covered in dirt, sweat, and nearly passed out from heatstroke. But I guess it was his way of making sure I learned the business and a little bit of humility along the way.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Hands down, my dad, Ken W. Wilson. He’s been my biggest supporter, mentor, and the guy who makes sure I learn the business from the ground up, sometimes the hard way. His work ethic has shaped not just my career but the way I approach everything in life. He showed me that success comes from doing the work, doing it right, and always taking care of the people around you. But mostly because he keeps me in check and makes sure I don’t get too confident.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I could talk about growing TEAM JICI, expanding ProFab into a nationally recognized fabrication company, or building a business that provides jobs and opportunities for so many people, but let’s be real, none of that holds a candle to my actual greatest accomplishment: marrying Ashley Wilson (Dillon).

She’s so far out of my league it’s almost comical, a former D1 volleyball player, Bishop Dwenger’s first Glass Spike Award recipient, top 10 in her class both in high school and college, the perfect mix of beauty and brains. Somehow, I convinced her to marry me, and bar none, that is the greatest achievement of my life.

(Not the answer you were looking for, but honestly, nothing else compares.)

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Bitcoin. I could not have screwed that up more, specifically by taking financial advice from a guy who got his financial advice from TikTok. Lesson learned: if your investment strategy starts with “Bro, trust me”, it’s probably not a good one.

See WILSON, page B19

Brandon Anderson

Age: 39

Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum

Executive Director & CEO



What is your education?

Marian High School, Mishawaka, Indiana
Savannah College of Art & Design, Savannah, Georgia
BFA Historic Preservation & Architectural History
University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma
MA Museum Studies

What community organizations are you involved in?

DeKalb County Visitor’s Bureau
Auburn Main Street
Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival

What are your hobbies?

I am very fortunate to be able to travel across the country both as a hobby and for work and see beautiful historic sites, museums, automotive events, and experience the local food and culture of the area that I am visiting.

Since I am also an autophile and due to my work, I get to drive and experience some amazing vehicles on my many trips and explore the area on mostly two-lane roads motoring usually in a 1920s – 1930s classic car.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I came to northeast Indiana from South Bend in 2018 when I accepted my job at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum. Living in the historic area of Auburn in my 1912 American Craftsman home is an absolute dream.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

Museums are very unique and multi-faceted treasures full of artifacts, history, stories, and connections. They are also a business with unique challenges and adherence to strong ethics, principles,

and operating procedures. Running a museum is different every day and that’s what keeps me on my toes and excited for what the future holds.

What does success mean to you?

My personal meaning of success has been ingrained in me by my parents, and that is to work hard, have pride in everything you do, be a good person, contribute to society, make a difference, take personal ownership in everything you do, and lead with passion. These are guiding principles in which I try to lead my life.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

When I was in elementary school I originally wanted to be a teacher.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from the Center for History in South Bend when I was 16 and my job at the time was to give guided tours of the Oliver Mansion, work the visitor services desk, and sell items in the museum store. After working at 3 museums full-time in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina, I came back in 2013 to be the Deputy Executive Director of the Center for History.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

In my life I have had some excellent supporters and cheerleaders along the way, especially my parents and their dedication to seeing me achieve my educational and career goals. I have also been taken under the wing of some dedicated and talented museum

See ANDERSON, page B19

Congratulations Brandon J. Anderson

Executive Director & CEO





Nicolle Campbell

Age: 38

Visit Fort Wayne

Director of Sales



What is your education?

I graduated from Purdue University of Fort Wayne in 2008 with a Bachelor’s of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management.

What community organizations are you involved in?

Northeast Indiana Hospitality Association, PFW Hospitality Advisory Board

What are your hobbies?

I love playing golf. I have played golf since I was 6 years old, thanks to my dad and there is nothing better than being out on a beautiful golf course in the summertime. I also enjoy the competitive game nights at home with our three children, Rory, Kaiden, and Lyla. I am always down for a long scenic bike ride that may involve stopping at local breweries. I love discovering new podcasts, attending concerts whenever I get the chance and reading.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Decatur, Indiana. After high school, I attended Purdue Fort Wayne University in Fort Wayne where I played on the women’s golf team and met my husband. After graduation, I secured a job in my field in Fort Wayne. The job took me to Indianapolis and after three years, my husband and I were excited to return to Fort Wayne to be closer to family and embrace the city’s growth and change that was happening. I am fortunate to have had many opportunities in the hospitality industry here, which have allowed me to grow and advance in my career. Similarly, my husband has had great success operating and owning The Medicine Chest Pharmacy for the past eight years. Fort Wayne is home for us, and we are

grateful for the opportunities this city has provided, enabling us to do what we love while raising our family in a community we value.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

What I love most about my role as Director of Sales at Visit Fort Wayne — and my years in the hospitality industry — is the variety and excitement that each day brings. No two days are ever the same, and a big part of my job is connecting with people, which is something I truly enjoy. I get to share just how amazing our city and community are, encouraging others to bring their events here and experience it firsthand. I thrive in an industry that is constantly evolving and growing, which gives me the opportunity to grow alongside it. Relationship-building is at the heart of what I do, and the collaboration with our partners and peers makes the work even more rewarding. I also appreciate the friendly competition with other destinations, especially when we secure an event that was considering a larger destination but ultimately recognizes the value and charm we offer here in Fort Wayne and Allen County.

What does success mean to you?

Success, to me, means many things. It’s about being persistent in my work and watching it come together. It’s seeing employees advance in their careers and witnessing their growth and success within the industry. Success is also securing an event through the bid process and seeing it happen, seeing attendees truly enjoy their time and experiences in our city. On a personal level, success has been overcoming the feeling of not being qualified enough for a position but taking the leap into that role and

leading a strong, successful team.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Growing up, I worked for several small businesses and loved how those jobs focused on building relationships and providing excellent customer service. It didn’t feel like work — it felt more like spending time with friends and family. I knew that for my career, I wanted to be involved in a business that offered a similar experience. I realized I could find that career in hospitality. Many paths in hospitality provide the opportunity to run a business as if it’s your own, create exceptional customer experiences, and build relationships with clients and customers

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I worked at Grey Goose Golf Course in Decatur, Indiana, as a cart attendant. My responsibilities included stocking the carts in the morning for early tee times, cleaning them after players finished, and collecting range balls on the driving range.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My husband has always been a strong source of support, consistently reminding me of my strengths and helping me build confidence in my roles. My children, while they may not know, are always supporting me in different ways like attending events we host or by being proud to say their mom works in the ‘big city.’ I’ve also been fortunate to have the encouragement and support of my current and previous managers, who have motivated me to take the next steps in my career — from a supervisor to manager to director and from operations to sales. Then the team at Visit Fort Wayne, we constantly support and lift each other up, all wanting one another to succeed along with our organization.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I was fortunate to be part of the opening team for both the Hampton Inn and Suites Downtown and The Bradley, which I consider a major accomplishment. I was entrusted with preselling two of the newest properties in downtown Fort Wayne and ensuring their success from the start. Also, while working for White Lodging Services, I was honored with the Chairman’s Club award for being in the top 10% of performers in the company in group sales. This achievement came in 2015, just two years into my sales career. Then, just last year, our Group Sales Team at Visit Fort Wayne had its best year yet, securing numerous marquee and large events for our city in the years ahead.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One thing I’ve realized about our industry is that mistakes are inevitable, but they also offer numerous opportunities to learn. Making an assumption, has probably been a mistake that even still to this day I may catch myself doing. What I’ve learned, and continue to learn, is to never assume. Instead, always ask more questions — there are never too many questions.

What are your current professional goals?

I’m excited to focus more on my

current role. While I felt confident and at my best in my hotel positions, I’ve found while this industry is similar there’s still so much for me to learn to achieve even greater success in my role. I’m eager to immerse myself further in this field and, in the coming years, hopefully reach the top of my game. A goal would be to have the opportunity to be invited to speak on panels or give presentations within our industry about our group sales success at Visit Fort Wayne.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I work in a specialized industry that evolves daily, so it’s crucial to stay informed not only about trends within our own industry but also about what’s happening in our clients’ industries. This helps me better understand their needs when they’re looking to host an event here. Through Visit Fort Wayne, I’m currently enrolled in a executive level certification program with Destination International, which has been invaluable in keeping me up to date on industry developments. Additionally, I make it a priority to participate in webinars, stay active on LinkedIn, and engage in local professional development opportunities.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I make it a point to review our schedule 1 to 2 months in advance to assess upcoming work commitments, as well as events for the children and family. From there, I manage everything week by week, coordinating with my husband, family, and work to ensure everything is covered. There are times when it feels overwhelming, but I’m fortunate to have a strong support system. With both my husband and my family living here in Fort Wayne, they’re always there to help, and I also appreciate the understanding and flexibility I receive in balancing my professional and personal commitments at Visit Fort Wayne.

What do you do to relax?

Getting outside in any way I can, it truly can relax me in moments. I also enjoy not listening to anything when driving and just allowing myself to be in my thoughts. Exercising is a great way that I mentally relax, being able to let go of thoughts and just focus on the work out. Getting together with friends is always a great way to relax and have a good time.

What book do you recommend?

I highly recommend “Atomic Habits” by James Clear. While I’m no expert in consistent habits, I realized a few years ago that I needed more structure as work ramped up and our children became involved in more activities. I was able to use insights from the book to establish small, manageable habits that have made a significant difference in my overall daily and weekly schedule.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell her to slow down, take a deep breath and embrace the journey ahead. In high school you are so eager to get to that next step, then the same in college and with your first job, that at times you forget to be present and take in all that is happening. Looking back, I wish I had taken the time to appreciate some of the pivotal moments in my career that, at the time, didn’t seem all that significant. I’d also encourage her to speak up, trust herself, and take more bold leaps, you know what you’re doing.

Congratulations to

Nicolle Campbell,

Visit Fort Wayne

Director of Sales,

on being selected as one of 2025’s Forty Under 40 award honorees!



From the staff and board at Visit Fort Wayne



What is your education?

Huntington North High School
St. Joseph's College – Bachelors of Accounting

What community organizations are you involved in?

Board of Trustees, Treasurer of Fort Wayne Rescue Mission
Member of American Institute of CPAs, Indiana CPA Society, Associated General Contractors of Indiana, Construction Industry CPAs/Consultants Association (CICPAC), and National Alliance of Auto Dealer Advisors, Northern Indiana Chapter of the Construction Financial Management Association, Building Contractors Association (BCA) of Northeast Indiana, BCA of North-east Indiana's Economic Development Committee, and New Car Dealers of Association of Fort Wayne
Coaching youth football at Norwell Community Schools

What are your hobbies?

Golf, Purdue Basketball. Spending time with family and friends at the lake or pool.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised here and love the small feel of the community.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

I really enjoy helping clients solve problems and finding unique solutions to help them grow their business. I'm also a numbers geek and love a great

spreadsheet.

What does success mean to you?

Success means being in a position to help and inspire others in the community.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Professional athlete (like most other 10-year-olds)

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

Helping my cousin with his drywall/ painting business in the summers during high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Amy Lehrman and Andrew Goodman, my current supervisors.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I would have to say being the Treasurer of the FW Rescue Mission. It has allowed me to use my talents to make an impact on the lives of those less fortunate in what I hope is a meaningful way.

What are your current professional goals?

Making partner at KSM

How do you remain current/

Seth Sailors

Age: 35

KSM CPA's & Advisors

Director



relevant in your profession?

Continuing Education. Attending Conferences and industry groups for the industries I work in.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

It's always a struggle but I Try to keep God first, family second and all the rest falls in to place once those 2 are aligned appropriately.

What do you do to relax?

Spend time with the friends or near water.

What book do you recommend?

"The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry" by John Mark Comer

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Keep going, it may not seem like it now, but it all works out in the end!

Awards Reception


March 27 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Ceruti's Summit Park II, 6601 Innovation Blvd.



Congratulations, Seth Sailors!

Your leadership, dedication, and impact extend far beyond the numbers. As a trusted advisor to your clients, a leader within our own ranks, and a champion of our community, you continue to make a difference every day. From all of us at Katz, Sapper & Miller, congratulations on being named to the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 class of 2025!



ksmcpa.com

Simone LeClear

Age: 36
**3Rivers
Federal
Credit Union**
**Assistant
Vice
President of
Marketing**



What is your education?

I am a North Side High School graduate (Class of 2006). After high school, I earned my bachelor's degree in Fine Arts (Visual Communications and Design) at IPFW. I also attended Ravenscroft Beauty College and am a licensed manicurist. Though it's been a minute since I've been behind a pedicure bowl, I still give one hell of a hand massage.

What community organizations are you involved in?

Currently, I am married into Community Harvest Food Bank. My husband, Adam Roby, serves as their Engagement Manager and I love to help support them however I can. I am also an active member of our local Allen County Democratic Party's communications committee where I help craft communications, visuals, and merchandise. I have also been privileged to work alongside PBS

Fort Wayne, Turnstone, Habitat for Humanity, and the Rescue Mission by providing marketing services.

What are your hobbies?

I am an avid fan of games, whether it be on a screen or table. My current obsession is Dungeons and Dragons, where I regularly play as a giant orc with an attitude problem with my husband and friends. This obsession has also led to taking up painting as a hobby--mainly for painting figurines and props for our games. While my great grandchildren may never be featured on Antiques Road Show with my work, it's fun, relaxing, and feeds my addiction when my friends are too busy to play with me.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I stayed in Northeast Indiana to be close to my family, but ultimately, it's the community that keeps me here. I

love Fort Wayne and it's been exciting to see its evolution. Also, I don't think I could handle bigger city traffic. Patience is still an area of growth for me.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

Everything about my job leads back to collaboration with others. My favorite part is getting to dive deep into someone else's story - understanding how they got here, what's important to them, what their goals are, and discovering ways that my team and I can help support and elevate that. Getting to design beautiful things is also a blast, too.

What does success mean to you?

As for most people, my definition of success has evolved over the years. When I was young, money was the root cause of most of our family's stress, so success to me was all about making as much money as possible. "Money can't buy happiness" doesn't mean a lot when you don't have hot water.

Now that I find myself a little more comfortable, I'm realizing that success to me is a quiet Sunday morning with my husband and a fat, sleepy cat curled up on my lap.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

President of the United States. If that didn't work out, movie star was a close second.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

The first job I had was a Sales Associate at Toys"R"Us. It was a fantastic first gig, even if it was over a very crazy holiday season. I keep a commemorative ZhuZhu Pet to remind me of my humble beginnings.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I'd love to recognize Todd Petelle and Melissa Shaw as major influencers for me. They've helped shape me, challenged me, and gave me many opportunities to learn and grow. DeAnna Vorndran has been an incredible mentor and friend, helping me hone my management and communication styles. My incredibly kind and patient husband who's been my biggest cheerleader, as well as my family. And lastly, probably my therapist.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

One of my proudest accomplishments has been helping create a better process for managing our many requests and campaigns through a self-service automated project management tool. It's helped us capture most of the information we need from our collaborators up front, which in turn allows us to spend less time doing the pre-work and more time doing the fun stuff like brainstorming and creating.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

It's hard to pinpoint my greatest mistake. NOT because I have never

made any. I've made plenty. It's difficult to pinpoint because I file them away as "lessons learned", none of which I regret because it's developed me into who I am today -- except probably that one time I got bangs right before going to on a tropical honeymoon. That was truly regrettable.

Because I feel like that answer is a bit of a cop out though, I'll share this one: One time I spelled the word "account" wrong on a promotional postcard that went out to 20K prospects. In big bold letters.

A few people reached out to us afterwards to ask why they should bank with us if we can't even spell the word "account" correctly. I suppose that's fair.

Anyway, that's how I learned that inDesign has a spellcheck feature.

What are your current professional goals?

I'm still just a little over a year into my role, so a big focus for me is navigating that, trying to figure out the best way I can support my team and organization in this newer position as well as coach and cultivate the amazing talent that I currently have working alongside me. I'm also always on the lookout for fresh and creative ways 3Rivers can bring more value to our members, keeping a pulse on their needs and growing expectations.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I attend conferences, online workshops, fill my social media newsfeeds with inspiring creators and credit union crushes, and I do a lot of free-lance to keep me sharp beyond the financial industry.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

With great difficulty.

What do you do to relax?

I love to read, paint, game, and on the tough days, force my cats to snuggle with me while my husband goes to the grocery store for ice cream.

What book do you recommend?

"Professional Troublemaker: The Fear-Fighter Manual" by Luvvie Ajayi Jones.

"A life well lived is not one where you made sure the rooms you were in didn't have friction. A life well lived isn't about plastering a fake smile on your face. A life well lived is not about how many people you did not upset. A life well lived is one where you commit to being kind. Where you connect your humanity to that of others, and it shows in the way you move through the world. And that's what we gotta do. We will ruffle feathers. We might be the villains in a few people's stories. We might even blow up a few bridges. But our worth is not based on how much we acquiesced to the people we knew. The goal is to betray ourselves less. So, be kind but take no (expletive)."

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Focus on yourself and stop trying to make everyone happy. Anti-depressants aren't a bad idea. Buy some stock in Amazon. And for the love of god, throw away that Nine Inch Nails T-shirt. It's starting to smell.



Simone LeClear
Assistant Vice
President of Marketing

3Rivers Congratulates
Simone LeClear
for being recognized as part of **Business Weekly's 2025 Forty Under 40.**

We're so proud of all your accomplishments and are excited to see what you continue to achieve in the future. 3Rivers is grateful to have you on our team!



**Remember to vote for
2026 Forty Under 40!**

What is your education?

West Noble High School, University of Notre Dame

What community organizations are you involved in?

Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. Board Member
Fort Wayne Public Art Commission
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy cooking, long-distance cycling, reading (mostly theology and political philosophy), watching movies, and making my home a beautiful place to live for my family.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born in Noble County and have always been attached to the area! I like the changing of the seasons, the ease of access to both nature and city amenities, and the short distances between here and bigger cities. I love my job, my friends, and my faith community and want to contribute to all of this as long as I can. I grew up in a small, rural area and always believed that you could dream big, have fun, and do good no matter where you were.

What is it about your profession that you enjoy and why?

For many people, art and museums can seem inaccessible to them or irrelevant to the community. Every day I meet people who feel they are unqualified or not educated enough to engage with art. I really enjoy finding a way to show them that this is not true, and that their own life experiences are qualification enough to enjoy the creative work of their fellow Americans. This has not changed in the 17 years I have been in the arts, and I feel I have been gifted with skills that help people see something in art that applies to their lives, no matter their circumstances.

What does success mean to you?

Quite simply, success means always doing the right thing, in both small and big things. For me, the right thing is always what is just and what serves the needs of the people in your care. It's a complementary practice between making sacrifices for others while taking care of your own physical and spiritual health.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Growing up, I had to ride the bus for about an hour both to and from school. I loved my bus drivers and wanted to be just like them, so my first goal was to become a bus driver. Of course, I also wanted to be an artist, but to be practical, I thought I should become a doctor. I wanted to become an obstetrician because I wanted to deliver babies. I didn't do well in college-level science, so I was rightfully weeded out of the crop of students who would go the pre-med track.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I detasseled corn for my parents' friends who owned a huge farm. For anyone who doesn't know, this involves removing (by hand) the pollinating tassel from corn so different plants will crossbreed properly. This can only be done in July and August, and sometimes in 100+ acre fields.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

First, I'll say my Mom who never discouraged me from pursuing art, even though it was not clear how I would turn that in to a meaningful career. Many of the parents of my classmates at Notre Dame required them to earn a practical degree like business along with their art degree, but not my Mom, thankfully! Next, I'll say CEO Charles Shepard (who later became my husband) who put me in challenging situations early on that helped me toughen up and learn how to be an effective administrator.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I was the project lead on pursuing reaccreditation for the FWMoA through the American Alliance of Museums, the country's leading professional association for museums. The process only happens once every 15 years, and preparation took us almost 3 years. The accreditors look at everything: core documents, financials, programming, operations, and they conclude with a 2-day site visit examining every square inch of your museum. We were awarded accreditation as a result, a true badge of honor that shows all our partners that we operate at the highest professional standards for our field.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Thankfully I don't have any major career regrets, but any mistakes I make on a regular basis usually involve making assumptions about a person or speculating about a situation without effective communication. Admittedly, this retreat into avoiding a conversation comes from a lack of courage and the fear that the conversation won't go well. I've learned that 9 times out of 10, the conversation that you're afraid to have goes so much better than you think it will and is always better than making false assumptions.

What are your current professional goals?

Currently, I'm moving into a collections development role by building the museum's contemporary realist painting collection. This is what I studied in college, and while I've spent the last 17 years or so as a manager, I'm very excited about going back to what I loved then and exploring all the great paintings that are on the market today. In the last year, I've added 11 gorgeous paintings to the collection, including a masterpiece by the great American painter N.C Wyeth, that will be unveiled to the public in April for a show of realist art that I'm curating. The museum is also moving closer to another expansion that would allow us to show off many more of the 7,000 objects that we've added to

Amanda Shepard

Age: 39

Fort Wayne Museum of Art

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer



the collection in the last 20 years. We also want to offer a more immersive educational experience for schools and families. I'm very excited about being on the team that will make this project a reality!

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Even though museums are generally apolitical institutions, I pay a lot of attention to politics, because it can tell us a lot about culture and what's motivating people to do one thing or another. Understanding cultural motivations is important for relevance, even if we're not agenda-driven ourselves. A lot of our artistic decisions flow from the basic question we ask ourselves, "Will this have meaning for the average person?" At the same time, there are some things that don't change with the times, like beauty, excellence, and sincerity, and we stand by those values, too. We've welcomed a lot of new team members to the museum in the last 2 years, which has brought new thinking and ideas into our organization. I certainly value experience, but I try to remember that no one becomes wise without being inexperienced first. The key is to listen to newer staff and incorporate their ideas into proven processes. Relevance has very little to do with age — it's all about being able to make a well-reasoned argument for doing one thing or another and knowing how to act on it in today's culture.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I remind myself every day that being a daughter of God is at the center of my identity. Everything falls into place if that comes first. I start with prayer, asking God to help me

order my day, and then I discern what are the most pressing needs of the people around me while not neglecting my own needs. When I start to feel off kilter, I stop and reflect on what absolutely needs to be done right now, in this moment. Then I go on to the next thing. After I had my first child (within a year of joining FWMoA), I didn't know how I was going to do both. Obviously, my son came first, but I really loved being at the museum. With a lot of creativity, help from many people in my life, and limiting my evening and weekend engagements, I've been able to be the mother I want to be and contribute to the museum all these years. This means I'm often saying no to the networking event, the cocktail party, or the out of state conference.

What do you do to relax?

Nothing beats going to bed early! In the summer, I take long bike rides (30+ miles) and year-round, I walk and talk with my closest friend. On the weekends, I cook elaborate meals I don't have time to cook during the week. I also pray the rosary in silence most mornings with my coffee before the kids wake up.

What book do you recommend?

"Love Your Enemies: How Decent People Can Save America From the Culture of Contempt" by Arthur Brooks

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

As every parent tries to tell their children, I would tell my high school self that setbacks, disappointments, and failures are only temporary and can actually be viewed as gifts with the right attitude and spiritual disposition.

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Ceruti's Summit Park II

6601 Innovation Blvd.



FWMoA congratulates all the 2025 40 Under 40 recipients, especially our very own, VP & COO Amanda Shepard! Celebrate with us this Spring with this unique, fashion-forward exhibition and the first-ever Art of Fashion at FWMoA!



My PURSEonal Favorites: 300 Bags from the World's Largest Handbag Collection

April 19-July 20, 2025

May 5: The Art of Fashion at FWMoA | Doors 6:15PM, show 7PM
The first-ever fashion show at the museum featuring all local designers. Tickets go on sale March 24 at fwmoa.org/events
VIP: \$125 | Regular: \$75



FWMoA.ORG
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Tips to manage time more efficiently

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Busy days tend to be productive days. But when especially busy days are strung together, adults can begin to feel a little overwhelmed and may wonder if there's anything they can do to make hectic schedules more manageable.

Time management strategies can be an effective tool in busy adults' arsenals. Efficient time management can free up more minutes or hours in the day, which can ultimately afford adults more time to exhale and thus make each day seem a little less overwhelming. Time management may require a little trial and error before adults find a formula that works for them, but the following are some tips to improve personal efficiency each day.

- Identify tasks that can be tackled at night. A hectic start to a morning can set a bad precedent for the rest of the day. With that in mind, adults can identify tasks they can perform at night to ensure mornings are less hectic. Lay out clothes the night before to save the trouble of finding an outfit in the morning. Prepare the family's lunches and even breakfasts the night before so mornings go more smoothly.

- Exercise in the morning. A recent study from the World Health Organization published in the Lancet Global Health Journal found that 31 percent of adults don't get enough exercise. Lack of routine physical activity has been linked to a host of negative health outcomes, including an increased risk for conditions like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke. Adults who exercise at night may find that attempts to squeeze in early evening or nighttime workouts add to feelings of being overwhelmed brought on by busy schedules. Exercising in the morning can free up time for other tasks in the evening, and doing so can even make it easier to manage daily stress, as the Mayo Clinic reports that exercise in any form releases endorphins and helps to relieve stress.

- Minimize distractions. Distractions are arguably more prevalent than ever, as many adults feel nary a minute goes by without a smartphone notification and/or message from friends, family and coworkers. Minimizing those distractions and resolving to tackle one task at a time can improve efficiency and reduce stress. Turn off smartphone notifications from apps that are not vital to work and family. During the workday, prioritize



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Time management strategies can help busy adults efficiently manage each day and hopefully reduce instances when individuals feel overwhelmed.

tasks each day and block off hours on your schedule so time can be devoted exclusively to the most important jobs. If hours on a schedule are left open, coworkers may schedule meetings that can make it difficult to complete

necessary tasks.

- Adjust as necessary. Flexibility is a must when making an effort to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Each day presents its own unique and fluid challenges, so remaining flexible can

help busy adults overcome unforeseen obstacles. In addition, some time management strategies may not be effective for everyone nor useful every day, so it's best to recognize the need to adjust from time to time.

Women-owned businesses are thriving

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Women entrepreneurs are not to be underestimated. Data affirms that women-owned businesses are growing and thriving.

According to North One banking, women-owned firms account for more than 12 million businesses in the United States. In addition, the 2024 Wells Fargo Impact of Women-Owned Business Report, in partnership with Ventureneer, Core Women and Women Impacting Public Policy, found the number of women-owned business increased at a rate of 4.5 times between 2019 to 2023. Women-owned businesses are driving economic growth, and a deeper look at some of the numbers supports that

notion.

- The Women's Business Enterprise Council says there are 12.3 million women-owned businesses in the U.S., which comprises about 40% of the total number of businesses.
- Women-owned businesses bring in nearly \$2 trillion every year, says the National Women's Business Council.
- During the pandemic, women-owned businesses added 1.4 million jobs and \$579.6 billion in revenue to the economy, says Wells Fargo.
- World Bank indicates that roughly one-third of principal owners of all businesses are female.
- WBENC advises that 64% of new women-owned

businesses are started by women of color.

- Women's Business Enterprises Canada says more than 85% of buying decisions are influenced by women. The Canadian Minister of Small Business notes that women business ownership is growing. In 2023, approximately 18.4% of all businesses in Canada were majority owned by women, compared to 15.6% in 2017.
- According to Forbes, women-led tech companies achieve a 35% higher ROI. A Forbes study with First Round Capital, a venture capital firm, found female-founded businesses in their portfolio outperformed male-founded companies by more than 60%.

Employee appreciation ideas staff will love

It's not always easy for business owners to find the right ways to show employees how much they're appreciated. According to the O.C. Tanner Network, an employee recognition platform, 40 percent of employees say the recognition they receive at work feels like an empty gesture. This is compounded by the burnout that Deloitte says affects 77 percent of respondents. Employers may be missing the mark when it comes to developing techniques to help employees feel valued and satisfied. Improving employee morale can start with various techniques to help staff feel more appreciated. The

following are some ways employers can do just that.

- Send along a work perk. Employers can share a particular work benefit they have received with an employee. This may include a first-class upgrade for a flight or tickets to a hot sports game. Hard-to-get reservations at a trendy restaurant also can be passed on to a hard-working employee.
- Create a work trophy. Trophies often indicate victory in sports and other events, so employers can follow suit in the workplace. Create a trophy that is a recognized symbol of staff appreciation that is given to those who

have accomplished something good.

- Let employees choose their gifts. Put together a catalog of appreciation gifts and let employees choose their own rather than thinking you know what is best.
- Go public with appreciation. Let customers know how they are valued by taking to social media or signage in the office that shares tales of exceptional employees. Speak about what staff did and how much they are appreciated.
- Stay current with salary increases. One of the easiest ways to show employees they're appreciated is through periodic reviews and pay

increases. These increases can go beyond just the cost of living increases many companies provide.

- Go out for lunch. Take employees out individually or in small groups for lunch or dinner. Use this opportunity to get to know them better and engage in conversation regarding what they believe will benefit the company. Employees may feel more valued if their ideas are heard.
- Celebrate various milestones. As a company, you can celebrate milestones that are not necessarily work-related, such as when an employee has reached a certain wedding anniversary or if they have welcomed a child.

Financial tips for young professionals

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Young adults confront something of a juggling act once they begin their professional lives. For many, that challenge begins with landing and starting a first job, arranging a payment plan for student loans, finding a place to live, and determining savings and personal finance goals. Although entering the workforce and taking a big step toward financial independence can be exciting, it also comes with financial responsibility.

Setting a strong financial foundation as early as possible helps establish long-term financial security. These tips can help young professionals manage their money more effectively.

- Take a money management course. Young professionals may be tired of heading to class or making the grade at this point in life, but educating oneself about some of the basic rules of personal finance can help bridge knowledge gaps

in this arena. Many young adults have never been taught the basics of applying for credit and staying out of debt. If you've been riding your parents' financial coattails throughout school, now is the time to learn more, whether it's through an online course or reading up on the subject.

- Set SMART goals. The acronym SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound, and can serve as a roadmap to achieving various goals, including those related to money. Develop a clear plan for your money, which can make it easier to budget and achieve savings-related goals.
- Minimize debt. The Education Data Initiative says university graduates owe an average of \$28,244 on student loans after they leave school, with a monthly payment between \$200 and \$299. Some graduates have even more debt and higher payments. Managing debt is vital to anyone's finances.

Create a debt repayment plan at the earliest opportunity. With a "snowball" strategy, borrowers pay off their smallest debts first. Once a debt is paid off, the payment amount for that debt is then applied to the next smallest debt, gaining momentum with each payment. The "avalanche" approach involves paying off the debt with the highest interest rate first.

- Aim to pay with cash more often. Unless you can afford to pay off the balance in full every month, using credit cards a lot can contribute to debt accumulation. LendingTree says that, as of September 2024, the average APR on all new card offers was 24.92%. Buying items with cash or debit will reduce the likelihood of spending what you don't have, offers Investopedia.
- Set up an emergency fund. It might be challenging to set aside a lot of money right now when you have

an entry-level position and some debt. But setting aside as little as \$1,000 for unexpected life events separate from your own personal savings can shield you from issues that arise from unexpected expenses.

- Participate in employer benefit plans. Look for the various ways that your employer can help you save money. This may include participating in retirement plans (including those with employer contribution matches), health spending accounts, gym memberships, and additional opportunities.
- Start saving and investing now. According to SmartAsset, if you start investing \$150 a paycheck at age 25 and your investments have an average annualized return of 8%, after 40 years you'll have about \$1.1 million in your account. Investing the same at age 35 means cutting nearly half of that total simply by procrastinating.

Tips to manage workday stress

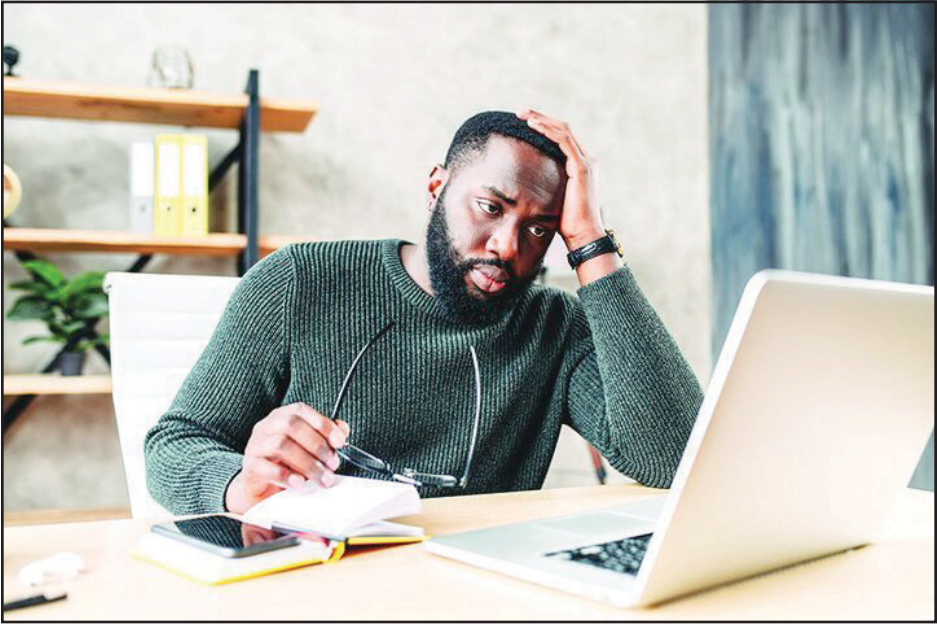
BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Work-related stress is a significant issue for millions of professionals. Recent research from the management system experts at Moodle found that 66% of American employees are experiencing a form of burnout in 2025. Stress also is an issue for professionals working north of the United States border, as data from Gallup indicates 49% of Canadian workers report feeling daily work-related stress.

Stress is sometimes considered a good thing, and medical professionals even note that acute stress can help to sharpen focus and compel some to fulfill their full professional potential. However, the Mayo Clinic reports chronic stress has been linked to a host of serious health problems, including anxiety, depression, digestive issues, and heart disease.

The American Institute of Stress notes that work-related stress is a major stressor for professionals. Embracing strategies to manage work-related stress can help professionals reduce their risk for the serious health conditions that can be brought on by chronic stress.

- Monitor your stressors. The American Psychological Association advises professionals to maintain a journal for a week or two in which they



Work is a significant source of stress for millions of professionals. Embracing healthy ways to combat work-related stress can benefit your personal and professional life.

document situations that are triggering stress. When documenting stressors, also jot down your responses, feelings and details about the environment, including the people around you, when stress kicked in. Keeping a journal can help identify the sources of stress and

determine if there are any patterns that trigger it.

- Embrace healthy responses to stress. The APA notes that exercise, yoga or any other form of physical activity are helpful and healthy responses to stress. Too often individuals lean into unhealthy

responses, such as drinking alcohol and/or eating unhealthy foods after a stressful workday. But the Cleveland Clinic notes that relying on alcohol as a coping mechanism for stress only exacerbates the feelings of depression and anxiety that stress can trigger.

- Establish boundaries between your professional and personal life. The APA notes that the digital era has led many professionals to feel pressured to be available around-the-clock. But work-life boundaries can be vital to combatting career-related stress. Turning off notifications from your work email account at the end of the workday can help to establish a work-life boundary. In addition, resist any temptation to check emails before going to bed, as doing so might trigger stress that makes it hard to fall asleep.
- Use your personal/vacation time. The 2024 Sorbet PTO (Paid Time Off) Report found that 62% of professionals did not use all of their PTO in 2023, which marked a 5% increase in unused PTO from the year prior. The APA notes that time off is linked to reduced stress as well as lower rates of heart disease, depression and anxiety. In addition, professionals may or may not be surprised to learn that time off has been linked to improved productivity.

Considerations for your second act

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Many people see their careers as one of their defining characteristics. Children are often asked what they want to be when they grow up, and as adults they will likely be asked "What do you do for a living?" more times than they can remember. Work is undoubtedly a major component of life for most people from the time they leave school to the day when they retire. And a growing number of adults value work so much that they pivot to second careers.

A phenomenon known as "unretirement" occurs when people who have previously retired return to the workforce. A 2010 paper published in the Journal of Human Resources found nearly 50% of retirees followed a nontraditional retirement path that involved partial retirement or unretirement. According to a recent Retirement Saving & Spending Study from T. Rowe Price, around 20% of retirees are working either full- or part-time, while 7% of study respondents are looking for employment. Some people return to work for financial reasons while others seek the social and emotional benefits employment can bring. But individuals mulling a return to work



A number of retirees ultimately explore second careers. Finding a match may be easier than one could have imagined.

or those currently working but trying to determine a second act should not feel beholden to previous career paths. A second trip around the employment block can involve an entirely different line of work. The following are some

things to look for in a second act.

- Flexibility: Choose a career path that enables you to set your own schedule or possibly work part-time if that is your preference. This way you can still reap some of the benefits of

retirement, including the flexibility to travel.

- Social interaction: Adults may lose daily opportunities to be social when they retire, which can compound feelings of isolation common among retirees. Consider a second career that lets you interact with a number of people and continue to build relationships and a good network.
- Personal passions: Reflect on what you might do for work if money were no object. This may help you narrow down new opportunities that are in line with your interests and passions. Find a job that utilizes your skills and experience and meshes with your interests. A former graphic artist, for example, may decide to teach design to young people.
- Nonprofit opportunities: Many retirees spent years in high-stress corporate environments where bottom lines may be more important than the bigger picture. Shifting to a career in the nonprofit sector can be a personally fulfilling job that utilizes skills learned in the corporate world.
- Consulting or contract work: If you're a retiree who loved your job, you might want to have a second career as a consultant or contractor in the same field.

Home office essentials

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

The global COVID-19 pandemic opened people's eyes to many things. One of the more lasting impressions was how the traditional workplace environment was not as essential as people once thought. Millions of people pivoted to remote work during the pandemic, and a significant percentage of those individuals continue to work from home.

Remote work is now common in many industries. According to an Upwork study, 22% of the American workforce will be remote by 2025. The Pew Research Center says around 22 million employed adults (ages 18 and over) in the United States work from home all the time, which is equal to about 14% of all employed adults. Statistics Canada said 18.7% of Canadian workers worked mostly from home in May 2024.

Homeowners are increasingly outfitting their homes with spaces that can accommodate working from home. Maximizing a home office with essentials comes down to some key components.

Superior PC or laptop

Chances are that it will be nearly impossible to get any work done without a computer. Most people have devices at home, but it's best to check with employers to see which kind of specifications would be needed in a machine to



Remote work continues to gain steam and home offices need to meet the demands of working from home.

run the types of applications that keep the business functioning. An older laptop or PC might need to be upgraded to a newer, more powerful model.

Reliable internet connection

Connectivity is vital when working from home. Remote workers must be accessible via email, and many companies rely on messaging applications or

VoIP (voice over internet protocol) telephone systems. Those who have been considering an upgrade to bandwidth and internet speed may want to take the plunge if they expect high volume of data uploads and downloads and constant connectivity. Experts advise a minimum of 100 Mbps download speed and 10 Mbps upload speed as a good starting point for remote work.

Ergonomic desk and chair

Remote workers can outfit a home office with furniture that's customized to their needs, rather than what would just be provided in a traditional office setting. One item to consider is a convertible desk, which can be raised or lowered to accommodate sitting or standing at a workstation. No home office is complete without a comfortable chair. Choose a chair with lumbar support and adjustability.

Laptop stand

A laptop stand can help a person avoid a condition called "tech neck," which the Mayo Clinic describes as being caused from poor posture while using technology. Instead of looking down at the laptop, the stand will raise the device to a proper eye level. Use a wireless keyboard and mouse to make it even more comfortable and convenient.

Noise-cancelling headphones

Many times a home office is tucked into whatever nook in the house is available. That may mean it is adjacent to a living room or the kitchen in the midst of the hustle and bustle. Things can get noisy, and a pair of quality noise-cancelling headphones can help mitigate ambient sounds.

3 tips to to update a resume to align with the modern job market

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

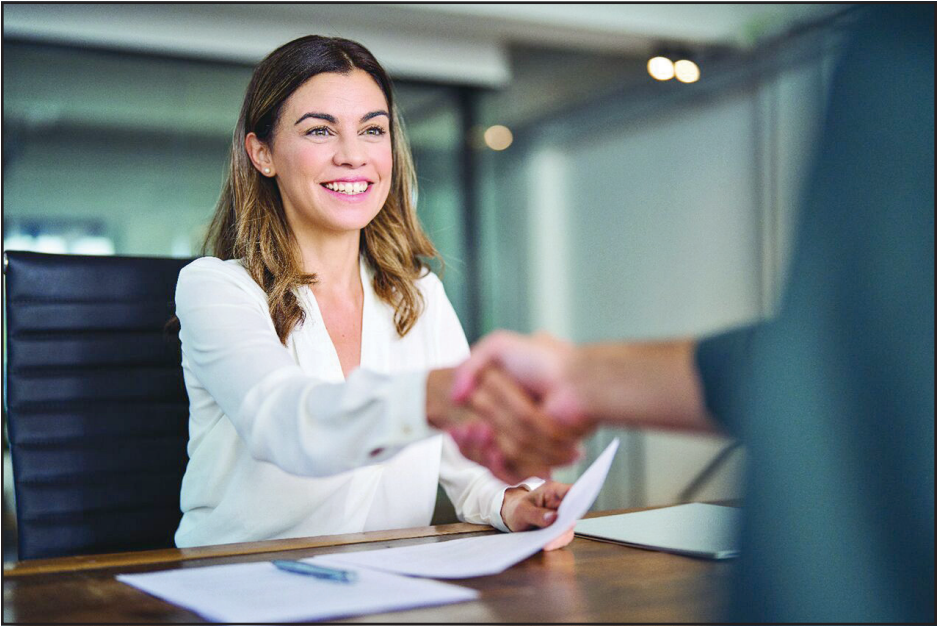
The job market can be unpredictable. Though reports on jobs suggest the market is now flooded with openings, working professionals looking to change careers or switch firms know the reality of modern job hunting is no walk in the park.

Reports indicate that there was an average of one opening for every two applicants on the professional social networking site LinkedIn at the onset of summer 2023. Professionals also are contending with a job market in which firms that hurried to hire applicants during the pandemic are now being more deliberate with their hiring process, sometimes interviewing candidates as many as six times before concluding the process. In addition, a 2023 survey from TIME/Harris Poll found that 52% of applicants with a bachelor's degree or higher completed an interview process without receiving a job offer.

There's no denying the difficulty professionals seeking new jobs face when they begin their search. Though there's no guarantee the right opportunity will come along quickly, professionals can update their resumes in three notable ways to increase the chances their applications are seen.

1. Write a new summary.

The professional resources experts at



Modern job seeking is time-consuming and often frustrating. Getting past the vetting process involves updating a resume so applicants can use the modern hiring process to their advantage.

Indeed recommend individuals write a new summary of their work history that reflects their qualifications for any job they intend to apply for. Consider past accomplishments, tasks and responsibilities that are applicable to each opening and emphasize those in the summary. For

example, individuals aspiring to move up to management level can emphasize past experiences in which they took on a supervisory role to complete a project.

2. Include important keywords.

The frustration many modern

professionals feel when looking for new opportunities may stem from how easy it can be to apply for a job but never hear back. Indeed notes that many hiring managers utilize applicant tracking system (ATS) software when considering applications. Such programs scan resumes for predetermined keywords, discarding applications that do not include them. Reading each listing carefully can shed light on which keywords to include, as the right terms tend to be right there in the job description. Indeed also advises mentioning the company's name and exact position title in the summary statement or career objective section.

3. Don't forget the person who will read your resume.

Though ATS software plays an integral role in modern hiring, eventually a human being will see the resume if it gets past the ATS portion of the vetting process. Before submitting a resume, read it several times to ensure it reflects your accomplishments, talents and aspirations and not just the keywords that will get the document seen by human eyeballs. Numerous resumes will get past the ATS software, so it's imperative that the resume illustrates a candidate's qualifications and talents.

Busy professionals can give back, too

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Volunteering one's time can be a beneficial undertaking. The Mayo Clinic reports research has shown that volunteering can improve physical and mental health and provide a sense of purpose, all the while teaching valuable skills. Unfortunately, many busy individuals lament that they simply do not have the time to volunteer.

Although charitable work requires an investment of time, busy professionals may find that there are plenty of opportunities to get involved that do not require making a sizable time commitment. Here is how to fit volunteering into your day no matter how busy you

might be.

- Start volunteer efforts at work. One way to incorporate charitable work into your week is to pioneer a program at your place of employment. This approach can increase interest in volunteerism among colleagues, and depending on your employers' flexibility, time spent volunteering may take place during working hours. This means you can still fulfill your non-work-related obligations when the workday ends.
- Volunteer remotely. If finding something that fits with your schedule is challenging, try searching for online opportunities, suggests My Selfless Act, an online platform for sharing stories of do-goodery. By volunteering remotely,

you can customize the time you volunteer to when you're available. You even can work with someone in another time zone.

- Prioritize volunteering. Sometimes not having enough time for charitable work comes down to simply poor time management. If you make volunteering a priority, you can likely find ways to streamline your workday and free up opportunities to get involved.
- Ask for help. Identify people who are supportive and can lend a helping hand so you can find time to volunteer. Delegate some of your tasks to free up time for philanthropic endeavors.
- Seek opportunities that require shorter time commitments. Plenty of

charities have volunteer opportunities that do not require a significant investment of time. Micro-events, or volunteer work that is set up in shifts, merit consideration.

- Look for easy registration. Signing up to volunteer should be easy. Let the sign-up be a tell as to how complicated an opportunity may be. Organizations that provide digital access or a quick sign-up process likely value volunteers' time.
- Groups looking to attract busy volunteers also should be mindful of keeping volunteer opportunities punctual and organized. If volunteers feel that their time is being wasted, they may be less likely to commit long-term.

ZELLER

FROM PAGE B10

family, life and community service?

I always try to involve as many of my family members and friends in what I am doing, no matter what it might be.

What do you do to relax?

I love to play with my dog, Winnie.

What book do you recommend?

“How to Win at the Sport of Business” by Mark Cuban

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Stop trying to force everything. You will love the life you’re going to have.

KURUT

FROM PAGE B4

What do you do to relax?

When is it warm outside, nothing is better than taking a walk outside or working in my garden. In the winter, I spend most of my time nose deep in a good book.

What book do you recommend?

I think the most impactful professional book I have read is “Strength Finders”. It’s a common book and quiz a lot of people take, but it gave me a much-need perspective. Early in my career, I struggled with not having certain skills my successful coworkers had. This book gave me permission to not be the best at everything and served as a reminder to focus on what I am good at, while leaning on my team members’ strengths.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

You have to put in the grunt work the first couple of years, but it will pay off! Building foundational skills is tedious, but if you put in the effort of showing up each day willing to do whatever is asked, God will put you on the right path for future success.

ANDERSON

FROM PAGE B11

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Curators, Executive Directors, and CEOs that have helped shepherd me along in my museum career.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I feel that my biggest accomplishment so far has been the work that I’ve done with the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum to preserve it for future generations by restoring our historic building, growing our reach and our audience, and adding significant objects to the permanent collection such as the first ever Duesenberg passenger vehicle to be sold to the public.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

their may be frustrations, there are better ways to handle those situations.

What are your current professional goals?

My current goals today are focused on our mission and vision of DC are coming to life every day. Keeping the team focused on what we get the opportunity to do every day with our work and making a difference in the community through our design work is a huge goal to see us succeed.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I participate in many of my profession’s organizations, as well as attending conferences focused in our Architecture & Engineering industry. Growth is important for our office, so we host lunch and learns frequently to continue

HOFFMAN

FROM PAGE B2

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

city with diverse career opportunities, I also stay informed on best practices in public works, engineering, planning, and recreation staffing. I do this through industry-specific publications, ensuring I remain up to date on employment trends and workforce strategies across multiple sectors.

My husband. I could not do half of what I do in a day without Adam’s support. He helps take care of our daughter and home so I can continue my education. He has pursued a career with hours that work better for our

STUART

FROM PAGE B8

What do you do to relax?

I am fortunate to have a wonderful supportive husband who shares life’s responsibilities. When I need support, he is there to help ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

What do you do to relax?

I find peace in cross-stitching while enjoying Hallmark movies. This quiet hobby offers a peaceful contrast to my dynamic career in design and construction. Sometimes the best ideas for home designs come during these peaceful moments of reflection and comfort.

What book do you recommend?

Harry Potter! The series remains my absolute favorite. I even designed a room dedicated to Harry Potter at one of our previous model homes, including a hidden Murphy Door!

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell my younger self: “Don’t rush through life’s stages - take the time to enjoy exactly where you are.”

What are your current professional goals?

Currently we are working on additional preservation and restoration of our National Historic Landmark building and actively fundraising to meet our goal. We are also continuing to expand our programming, outreach, exhibits, and events to continue to grow and sustain the museum for future generations.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

to see new products, understand new codes, and ensure we are always aware of what’s next in our industry.

What do you do to relax?

I wish I could say golf, that tends to be more frustrating than good. I love being by the water – whether that is

family so I can continue to work in the role that I love. He also reminds me to take care of myself, motivates me to do my best and encourages healthy habits.

I also believe in Nora Robert’s glass ball theory; life is composed of glass ball responsibilities and plastic ball responsibilities. If you break a glass ball, it will never be the same; a plastic ball will bounce. Understanding that my relationships, faith, and health cannot be dropped affords me the freedom to say no when I need to turn down an opportunity to protect what is most valuable.

What do you do to relax?

I relax by reading most of the time. I also enjoy hanging out with my family and dog outside or having brunch at Ophelia’s with my friends.

WILSON

FROM PAGE B11

What are your current professional goals?

Keep growing TEAM JICI – Making sure our companies continue to get better, not just bigger.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

As a licensed plumber, contractor, and real estate broker, I stay ahead by constantly learning, adapting to new industry trends, and, most importantly, surrounding myself with people smarter than me. As my partner in crime would say, “Putting aces in their places” ... and then I try to stay out of their way.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

Life hack: I work in a family business that makes a conscious effort to focus on and build our communities. So technically, I get to mix work, family, and community service all in one, efficient, right? Now if I could just figure out how to add more sleep into the equation...

What do you do to relax?

I spend time with my kids, Kenny Jr., who challenges me with his sharp mind, Andy, whose love for all sports keeps me in a never-ending season, and Lily, my little angel who has me wrapped around her finger (and takes full advantage of it). It may not always be “relaxing,” but I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

What book do you recommend?

I could recommend a book, but that would require me to actually read one, and let’s be honest, that’s not happening. I’ll stick to blueprints, emails, and the occasional menu.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Pick Spanish over Latin and French, it’ll actually be useful. Ease up on the gas pedal, speeding tickets get expensive fast. Appreciate your hair while it lasts, and don’t wait to grow the beard, it’s going to be legendary. But most importantly, to Senior Me: go talk to the tall freshman who’s friends with your little sister. Every second without her is a second wasted.

What do you do to relax?

I am honestly a homebody when given the opportunity. I enjoy relaxing with my two dogs, watching movies, trying new food and drink, visiting museums and historic sites, and sometimes just going for a drive on a nice day with some of my favorite music blasting through the speakers.

What book do you recommend?

One of my favorite books to recommend is “Empty Mansions: The Mysterious Life of Huguette Clark and the Spending of a Great American Fortune.”

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell myself to follow the path that has been laid and embrace the journey while never underestimating your potential to do great things.

FOSTER
FROM PAGE B9
come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Ponderosa, where I worked as a dish-washer at 14.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Fletcher Upshaw helped me from juvenile delinquency all through college and was the first to tell me that I could graduate. Drew Echelson took me under his wing and showed me how to lead at a high level to make systemic change.

What has been your biggest

accomplishment thus far in your career?

Becoming the principal of the same school that once denied me entrance. Now, I work to make a difference in the same school system that once wrote me off.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far, and what lessons did you learn from it?

My greatest mistake was believing that educators chisel David into the rock. I now realize that we chisel David out of the rock. Systems don't change people; people change systems. The system is designed to get the results it gets, so we must reshape it intentionally.

What are your current professional goals?

In Fiscal Year 2023/2024 we served well over 4,000 unique clients, which was our highest annual total to date, and we did so while diversifying our operating revenue streams to create a more sustainable Turnstone.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my career, but to be honest it is still something I wrestle with, I pursued professional success over my faith and my family. I'm learning that the best return on my time is the time I spend with my family and aligning my will with God's will. Everything else will fall into place.

What are your current professional goals?

Continue growing my skillset so I can lead my team and Turnstone well. Increase Turnstone's sustainability, increase

I aspire to become a superintendent to demonstrate that all students can learn. To quote one of my mentors, "Demography isn't destiny."

How do you remain current and relevant in your profession?

I plan to stay in education as long as I have the opportunity to make a difference and the support to do so.

How do you balance your career, family, life, and community service?

I haven't been good at this. When you are compelled by a higher purpose, balance is a luxury, and right now, I don't have it. However, I continue to strive for a better equilibrium.

our impact, and increase the quality of our impact.

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?

Making the time to connect with other professionals, attending industry conferences or training, and reading articles or books.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I don't think you can "balance" these four areas. There may be periods in which they balance but often some areas take precedence over others. I have priorities and I schedule my time based on the current priorities. There are some things only I can do. These become my main priorities. There are some things others are capable of doing so I delegate. Having a team of competent, engaged individuals who support each other makes it easier to

What do you do to relax?

I listen to music and clean up. I also enjoy good food and wine to unwind. Relaxation is something I struggle with, but I am working on improving it.

What book do you recommend?

"The Alchemist" – It is a beautiful book with multiple layers of meaning, and it allows me to relax and see life from different perspectives.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Continue to work hard. Demand that your guidance counselors tell you about college. Tell that principal who doubted you that you are going to make it. Dream even bigger.

prioritize each category.

What do you do to relax?

My mornings are an important component of my self-care. Having the early morning hours to exercise, read my Bible, pray, and enjoy some quiet is very relaxing. My hobbies, spending time with my family and friends, reading or listening to a good book, watching a sci-fi or fantasy movie, and sometimes (heavy emphasis on sometimes) doing a puzzle.

What book do you recommend?

"Made For People: Why We Drift Into Loneliness and How to Fight for a Life of Friendship" by Justin Whitmel Earley

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

You can't do it on your own. Let people help you. Invite people to help.

LUDWISKI
FROM PAGE B4
chef, and probably a dozen others.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then?

I stocked shelves at Gordon Food Service Marketplace during high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My wife Amanda. She is an amazing wife and mother to our four children. Her support at home has allowed me to advance in my career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your

career?

I can't point to any one thing, but every time we can help a client realize their goal, whether that is selling a business they've built, transferring it to the next generation, getting an important contract in place, or acquiring a new business, it is very rewarding. Whenever we finish a project like this for a client, I go home with a big smile on my face.

What has been your greatest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I've made too many to name. The best way to respond is to take responsibility, learn from it, move on, and don't let it happen again.

What are your current professional goals?

in the future.

What are your current professional goals?

My current goals are to continue fostering long-term relationships with my clients, while expanding my professional network.

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?

I try to keep current on recent case law, while participating in relevant Continuing Legal Education courses and being active in the legal community.

time outdoors. Camping, traveling, and live music are some of my favorite ways to unwind and recharge.

What book do you recommend?

I highly recommend "The Book of Joy" by Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It's an inspiring and profound conversation between two spiritual leaders, who share their wisdom on how to cultivate joy in the face of life's challenges. What I love about this book is its message that joy is not just an emotion, but a choice—a way

I want to be the best business attorney in Northeast Indiana, and I want to continue to help build a team of great young attorneys here at Barret McNagny.

How do you remain current/ relevant in your profession?

I love to learn. I am under no illusion that I do anything perfectly. If I come across a better way to do something, whether from another law firm, a journal article, etc., I don't hesitate to incorporate that into my practice. Not only does the law change, the market changes in the transactional world, and if you aren't paying attention to those changes you cannot be an effective attorney.

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

In the legal profession, we inevitably have periods of time where we are

How do you balance your career, family, life and community service?

I balance those things through a lot of time management and prioritization, including a very detailed calendar. If I know my daughter has a field trip, I have a volunteer event, or I want to meet with a friend for lunch, I block out time on my calendar. If I have a big project due for work, I block out time in a similar way. When I take days off, I do my best to unplug from work and relax. I also do my best to delegate tasks to others when possible to ensure that in work and life I can check things off my

of being that can be nurtured through compassion, gratitude, and the pursuit of meaning. It's a reminder that even in tough times, we have the power to find joy, and it offers practical insights on how to make joy a deeper part of our lives.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Looking back, I'd tell my high school self that things are going to change,

extremely busy, and it is usually outside our control. I try to take advantage of the lulls to spend more time with my family and recharge, and I never miss one of our kids' events.

What do you do to relax?

Going on a long run helps me recharge and clear my head.

What book do you recommend?

Two of my favorites are "One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel García Márquez and "The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Most of the things you are worried about now will not matter for long.

to do list.

What do you do to relax?

I love to crochet, read, or go for a walk. I can enjoy my time and clear my mind while doing each of these things.

What book do you recommend?

"The Last Song" by Nicholas Sparks

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Don't let anyone else's opinion of you hold you back.

and not everything will go according to plan—but that's actually part of the adventure. The unexpected twists and turns are where growth happens! Career paths aren't always linear, and communication and relationship-building skills are incredibly powerful. They'll open doors you haven't even imagined yet. Embrace the uncertainty, be open to new opportunities, and trust that the journey will take you exactly where you need to be, even if it doesn't look like what you expected.

GOLDSBOROUGH
FROM PAGE B3

able to handle while also ensuring I have things to look forward to. It's not perfect, but it helps me manage my time, stay focused on what matters most, and know when I need to adjust or ask for help.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I love taking care of my plants, flowers, and garden. I also enjoy going to the gym, reading, and spending