

Achievers under 40

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- DIXIE AGOSTINO, 2014 CLASS OF ACHIEVERS UNDER 40

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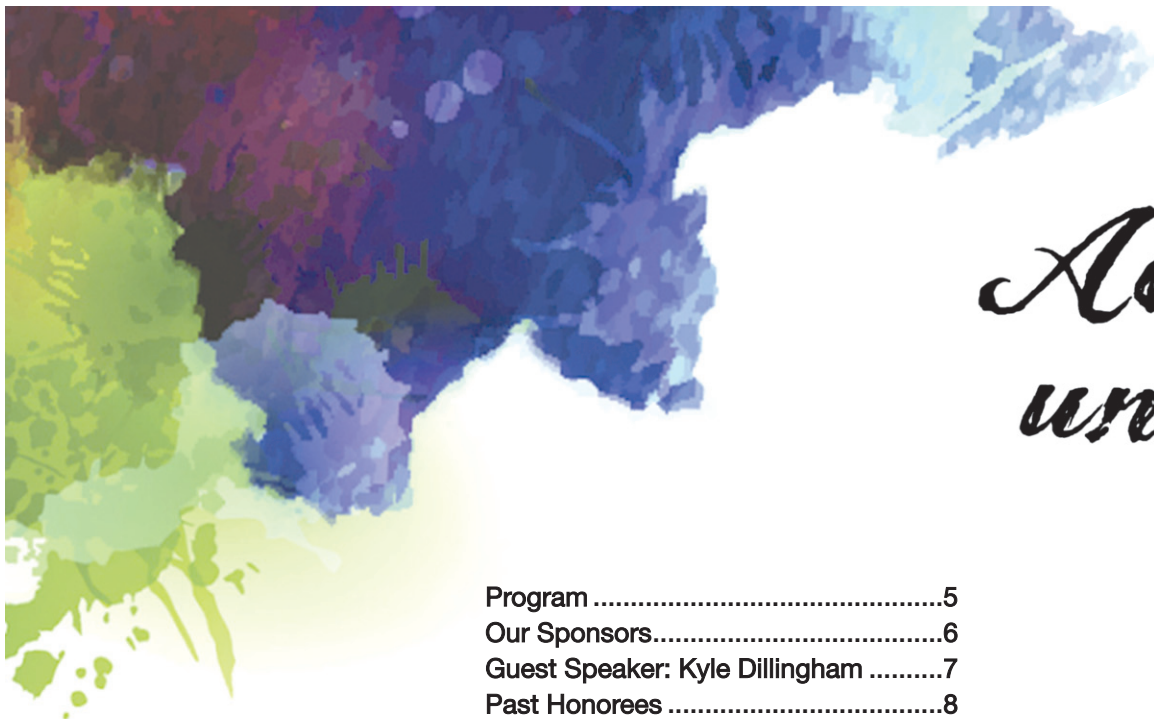


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the event – #AU40



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THE JOURNAL RECORD *Achievers* *under* 40



Despite their young age, our 2014 Achievers Under 40 honorees have already accomplished much and contributed significantly to their professions, communities and state. Congratulations to *The Journal Record* Achievers Under 40 – Class XI, and thanks for all you do for Oklahoma. Please continue your involvement as leaders and build networks with each other to create ways to make Oklahoma an even better place to live. Edward de Bono, a renowned expert on creative thinking, so aptly said,

"There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns." Please stay committed – keep moving Oklahoma forward.

Mary Mélon

Mary Mélon, President & Publisher,
The Journal Record Publishing Co.

THE JOURNAL RECORD

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Program

Luncheon – 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, May 22, 2014
The Skirvin Hilton Hotel
Oklahoma City

Emcees
Mary Mélon
President & Publisher
The Journal Record Publishing Co.

Sunny Cearley
Director of Sales
& Community Relations
The Journal Record Publishing Co.

Welcome
Todd Lamb
Lieutenant Governor
The State of Oklahoma

Guest Speaker
Kyle Dillingham
World-renowned Fiddler and
University of Central Oklahoma
Musical Ambassador in Residence

Special Presentation
Russell Evans
Executive Director, Steven C. Agee Economic
Research and Policy Institute,
Oklahoma City University
Meinders School of Business

**Presentation of Class XI,
Achievers Under 40**
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Patti Morgan
Partner
Eide Bailly

Jenny Love Meyer
Vice President of Communications
Love's Travel Stops

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Guest Speaker: Kyle Dillingham

Self-employed musician

Kyle Dillingham LLC and Language and Lyrics

Musical ambassador in residence, University of Central Oklahoma

2013 Achievers Under 40 honoree

*K*yle Dillingham, who started playing the violin when he was 9, said he knew he wanted to pursue a career in music since he was in junior high school.

While still in high school, the Enid native was featured twice on the Grand Ole Opry. Despite attractive offers to stay in Nashville, Dillingham said he has always felt that he could better serve Oklahoma by investing his talents into the growing music and entertainment industry in his home state.

"My decision to pursue a career in the music industry followed my desire to share my music with others," Dillingham said. "Music naturally brings people together through a shared experience and can therefore be a powerful tool for building relationships. Consequently, this quality about music makes it an extremely powerful tool for growing business as well. It's quirky, but effective!"

Dillingham earned his bachelor's degree in instrumental music performance from Oklahoma City University, where he later served three years as ambassador. He received an Oklahoma Governor's Arts Award in 2009, and he is an Oklahoma creativity ambassador and the musical ambassador in residence at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Dillingham has performed in 35 countries, including for the king of Malaysia and the

princess of Thailand. A frequent visitor to Washington, D.C., he has performed for the Japanese, Thai and Saudi Arabian ambassadors, just to name a few. Last year, Dillingham's band, Horseshoe Road, was chosen by the U.S. State Department to tour as a part of its American Music Abroad program to Korea, Burma, Russia and Taiwan, where Dillingham was featured as soloist with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra. This year the U.S. Embassy in Liberia has requested Horseshoe Road to represent America through a performance for its Fourth of July celebration in Monrovia.

Collaborating with Edmond composer, Callen Clarke, Dillingham has premiered eight new works with symphony orchestras in the last six years. He also has been soloist with the Amici New York Orchestra, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Enid Symphony Orchestra, OCU Orchestra, UCO Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra as well as the Oklahoma Community Orchestra.

Kyle Dillingham and Horseshoe Road perform every second Thursday of the month at the Paramount Theater in Oklahoma City's Historic Film Row. Dillingham and Horseshoe Road were named *Slice* magazine's 2014 Best Performing Artist and Best Local Band, respectively.

Past Honorees

2004

Tawn Albright
Debbie Anglin
Leslie Batchelor
Tim Berney
David Box
Patrick Boylan
Shelley Cadamy
John Carey
Rob Cherry
Coleman Clark
Heath Clinton
Taylor Currie
Nick Demos
Douglas Fellrath
Shawna Funderburk
Jennifer Grigsby
Christine Henderson
Mark Inman
Jeremie Kubicek
Tammy McCuen
Shawna McWaters-Khalousi
Daniel Medley
Mike Moradi
Matthew Myers
Shannon Nance
Kim Neese
Mark Nichols
Ashley Perkins
Helen Rambo
Jim Roth
Adam Seaman
Sarah Sears
Tiffany Sewell-Howard
Sean Simpson
Renzi Stone
Carey Sue Vega
Sam Vinall
Tom Wagner
Lauren White

2005

Steve Allen
David Bozalis
Michael Brown
Kevin Calvey
Chip Carter
Shannon Cowden-Webb
Scott Davis
Dee Dee Dixon Rund
Ted Elston
Tricia Everest
Danielle Ezell
Tim Fleming
Trevor Francis
Jennifer Garner
Roy Georgia
Gary Gregory
Grant Humphreys
Alise Isbell
Lorrie Jacobs
Michael LaBrie
Mickie Lara
David Lewis
Cher Lucewicz
Tracy Markum
Michael Murphy
Adrienne Nobles
John Parsons
Piyush Patel
Sandip Patel
J.W. Peters
John Pinard
Paula Porter
Mike Shelton
Spencer Stone
Lealon Taylor
Bryan Timberlake
Ricardo Vega
Jennifer Wheeler
Annette White-Klososky

2006

James Boggs
Martin Bonick
Dan Boren
Jesse Boudiette
Jerry Butler
Kati Christ
Glenn Coffee
Adam Cohen
Jake Dollarhide
Joe Dorman
Marnie Ducato
Shane Fernandez
Leigh Goodson
Risha Grant
Sean Griffin
Brett Hamm
Darcie Henderson
Joe Hodges
Peter Hodges
Taylor Keen
Joe Kelley
Vi Le
Jason Little
Jay Martin
Jessica Martinez-Brooks
Rachel McClintock Franklin
James Milton
Barry Murphy Jr.
Andrea Myers
David Odom
Armand Paliotta
Sally Ray
David Reid
Josh Roby
Chip Sears
Kayte Spillman
Tom Walker
Tina Wells
Christi Woodworth

2007

Daniel Adams
Jeff Beasley
Shane Brown
Rebecca Bryant
Vickie Buchanan
Lester Claravall
Julie Cohen
David Cry
Jody Davis-Bergman
DeeDee DeVore
Whitney English
Jay Eshelman
Kyle Essmiller
Brian Fitzsimmons
Pam Gutel
Kathryn Hall
Molly Helm
JJ Hurley
Eric Johnson
Mike Knopp
Laura Kriegel
Stacy Kymes
David Le
Gavin Manes
Michelle Martin-Coyne
Louisa McCune-Elmore
Joy McGill
Rick Nagel
Kevin Ratliff
Sam Sims
Burt Smith
Mark Smith
Mason Sommer
Amanda Spencer
Allison Starke
Dave Tedford
Jeremy Tubb
Anne Vermillion
Larry Wilhelm

2008

Stacy Acord
Dr. Donald Armstrong
Darryl Baskin
Julie Boyd
Philip Busey
Lee Camargo-Quinn
Christopher Camp
Bryan Carroll
Christine Cave
Jerald Dawkins
Ephanie DeBey
John Donaghue
Jeff Dorris
Elizabeth Downing
Lara Foley
Liz Hunt
Molly Jarvis
Joy Jenkins
Brent Kisling
Sarah Kuhn
Jeremy Lively
Tony LoPresto
Marcie Mack
Christine Martin
Derek Martin
Kelley McGuire
Tiffany Monhollon
Paul Nosak
Anastasia Pittman
Lisa Reed
Briana Ross
Robert Ruiz
Ricardo Sasaki
Paige Shelton
Douglas Sorocco
Joe St. John
Nancy Thomason
Evan Walter
Karen Youngblood
Ruth Zaldivar

Past Honorees

2009

Erin Gillogly Brewer
Judi Brown-Startzman
Adam Childers
Stacy Coleman
Rachael Collins
Christy Counts
John Dale
David Elder
Megan Elliott
Mike Fina
Erin Stone Fong
D. Mitchell Garrett
Jacqueline Geiger
Garyl Geist
Anil Gollahalli
Kelley Grace
David Greer
Matthew Guillory
Sheri Guyse
Leslie Hicks
Houston Hunt
Bernard Jones
Todd Krout
Luke Martin
Angie Mock
Dr. Scott Newman
Charlie Price
Elizabeth Prykryl
Robert Raasch
Christina Rehkop
James Schelnick
Amy Scott
Lindsay Sherrer
Ryan Stafford
Sheila Stinson
Tara Street
W. Brian Thomas
Matt Thompson
Brian Wall
Michael Willis
Alison Wolf

2010

Amy Aldridge Sanford
Edwin Amaya
Carey Baker
Lance Baker
Thad Balkman
Thamara Barthelus
James Bertsch
Anthony Blatt
Chris Cardoni
Allyson Carson
Lori Dickinson
Kristina Dover
Meredith Edmison
Erin Engleke
Joshua Fahrenbruck
Scott Freeny
Maria Gonzalez
Noel Groves
Mandy Hayes-Chandler
David Holt
Darius Jackson
Mike Jackson
Mautra Jones
Michelle Keylon
Jami Longacre
Scott Martin
Malek Massad
Malana Means
Erin Merryweather
Max Myers
Christina Oden
Brian Puckett
Dawn Rahme
Jason Ramsey
Katrina Shaklee
Clay Slaton
Eric Weisgarber
Stephen Willoughby
Michelle Witt

2011

M. Blayne Arthur
Leah Ashlock
A. Gabriel "Gabe" Bass
Emily M. Boecking
Jason Boesch
Leslie Buford
G.T. Bynum
Carla S. Covey
D. Casey Davis
Jay Doyle
Robyn L. Elliott-Scribner
Stephen Ellis
Chris Evans
Brian W. Ferrell
Scott Fischer
Aaron A. Fulkerson
Bryan L. Gonterman
Todd D. Goodman
Nathaniel Harding
Shawn D. Hime
Behfar Jahanshahi
Julia Kirt
Wesley S. Knight
Dana L. Kuehn
Kyle D. Lankford
Ursula Lundberg
Giannina Marin
Desmond T. Mason
Amy Mitchell
Stacey A. Ninness
Myron L. Pope
Chris Rickman
Armando J. Rosell
Kimber L. Shoop
Jerrod Shouse
Shawna K. Simpson
Kari Snider
Zach Weldon
Mary Kate Wilson

2012

Frank Alberson
Chad Alexander
Chris Anoatubby
Brian Blundell
Jeb Boatman
Aaron Brownlee
Jay Calhoun
William Clark
Jay Corwin
Somerlyn Cothran
Jill Daugherty
Linette Dawson
Julianna Deligans
Vanessa Dutton
Amber England
Wes Glinnsman
Patrick Grace
Jorge Hernandez
Diana Rogers Jaeger
Emily Lang
T.J. Liles-Tims
Randy Macon
Andrew "Drew" Mildren
Kristi Pempin
Ryan Posey
Kyle Powell
Mikhael Reed
Frank Sewell
T.W. Shannon
Andy Sherrer
Rachel Shortt
Greg Smith
Scott Stidham
Malachi Sturlin
Mike Thompson
Evan Vincent
Terri White
Jed Winters
John Woods

2013

Bob Ault
Scott Biggs
Ryan Blanton
Bryan Blew
Tabbi Burwell
Bob Cole
Jason Constable
Jesse Cowan
Krystal Crockett
Cornell Cross II
Lewis Cunningham
Kristin Deason
Kyle Dillingham
Meghan Donnelly
Kim Fairchild
Kent Gardner
Kimberly Garrett
Shad Glass
Siro Gutierrez III
Mandy Hansen
Eric Holquin
Rachel Hutchings
Angie Johnson
Michelle Tilley Johnson
Cordell Jordan
Samantha Kahoe
Darin Kent
Rohit Keshava
Brian Maughan
Che Miller, M.D.
Matt Pollock
Nick Probst
Cassie Reese
Melissa Richey
Charles Rohla
Lee Anne Stone
Amy Wisian
Amy Brooks Young
Shagah Zakerion



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We Commend This Year's Recipients!

Congratulations to the "Achievers Under 40" recipients, whose leadership and passion are felt by our businesses and our community. Thank you for your hard work and dedication—we look forward to following your lead now, and in the coming years.

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Dixie Agostino

**CEO, owner, chief talent officer
Switchgear Search & Recruiting
Birth date: December 1978**

Dixie Agostino may have grown up in Tulsa, but her personal mantra comes from a Spanish proverb: A life lived in fear is a life half-lived.

Her personal belief in that philosophy and a desire to embrace challenge at every level have spurred Agostino to success as owner and CEO of Switchgear Search & Recruiting. The Tulsa-based company specializes in placing employees skilled in engineering, accounting, finance and information technology. It boasts a growing list of high-profile clients, mostly in the energy industry.

"I consider us to be matchmakers in the corporate world," she said. "Switchgear technically is a product, but it also describes a mind-set and a change of focus."

Agostino has come a long way since 2010, when she started as a one-woman show in a 300-square-foot office. Today Switchgear is a thriving company with 10 employees, new headquarters and offices in Tulsa and Houston. Under her guidance, the business has doubled in size every year, and plans are in place to expand into Oklahoma City and Denver.

"So many times in our lives an idea will pop up, seemingly out of nowhere, that scares us," she said. "An idea to start our own business, go on

an adventure, do something different. I want to grab that idea, even if it is a little crazy, and run with it. The fact that there are people on my team who believe in me and my vision enough to do the same, to stake their professional and financial futures here, is the biggest compliment I could receive."

Switchgear got its unusual name one day while Agostino was driving on the highway with her husband, Anthony.

"We were in fourth gear," she said. "My husband yelled 'Switch gears!,' and I knew we had our name."

Another key focus is giving back to the community, through employee group projects and Agostino's individual work with entities such as the Tulsa Mayor's Commission for the Status of Women.

Above all, Agostino said she will never settle for the status quo.

"I never want to ignore that still, small voice that is my true self," she said. "Switchgear was created based on that voice and those ideas, and it has been one of the most amazing adventures of my life. By pushing our dreams farther than we think we can, and by going that extra mile even when we think we can't, I believe we discover strength we didn't know we had."

Achievers
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Leadership Oklahoma is PROUD to recognize these former Achievers Under 40!

Chad Alexander - Class XXV
Chris Anoatubby - Class XXIV
Dan Boren - Class XVII
Jesse Boudiette - Class XXVI
Aaron Brownlee - Class XVII
G.T. Bynum - Class XXIV
Jay Calhoun - Class XXV
Kevin Calvey - Class XV
Allyson Carson - Class XXIII
Heath Clinton - Class XXI
Glenn Coffee - Class XIII
Adam Cohen - Class XXII
Jason Constable - Class XXIV
Somerlyn Cothran - Class XVII
Christy Counts - Class XXVI
Jill Daugherty - Class XXV
D. Casey Davis - Class XXIV
Joe Dorman - Class XVIII

Robyn Elliott-Scribner - Class XVIII
Stephen Ellis - Class XXIV
Kyle Essmiller - Class XXII
Shane Fernandez - Class XXVII
Aaron Fulkerson - Class XXIII
Garyl Geist - Class XXIII
Anil Gollahalli - Class XXIII
Bryan Gonterman - Class XXIII
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Lee Anne Stone - Class XXVII
Renzi Stone - Class XVIII
Mike Thompson - Class XXV
Tom Walker - Class XVIII
Terri White - Class XIX
Lauren White Branch - Class XXVII
Mary Kate Wilson - Class XXIV
Jed Winters - Class XXV
John Woods - Class XXVI

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Luis Aguilera

**Director of manufacturing
GEFCO Inc.**

Birth date: June 1980

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
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*I*f anyone serves as an example of the American dream come true, it's Luis Aguilera. He's come an incredibly long way from his early days when, as a 14-year-old in Aguascalientes, Mexico, his father's illness forced him to become the family breadwinner. In the 20 years since, Aguilera has achieved success in several diverse careers, ranging from high school math and physics teacher to university public relations director to his present position as director of manufacturing for Enid's GEFCO Inc.

The triple burden of school, family responsibilities and multiple jobs would have made a lesser person give up, especially a young boy. Instead it honed Aguilera's determination to succeed.

"I was tempted to quit several times, and I thought also that life was not fair," he said. "But with time and extraordinary friends and teachers, I learned that by accepting fully and totally my reality and God's will for me, I was going to be happy and successful. I discovered that it was not just about me, but my loved ones and the people around me."

Before his illness, Aguilera's father was a professional soccer player who made sure all his children learned the value of sports as a way to help keep

the mind, body and spirit balanced and healthy. Aguilera inherited both of his parents' love of athletics and education in spades, which led him to a soccer championship, competing in Ironman Triathlons, and a black belt and gold medals in kung fu. He also excelled as a scholar; one of his top successes was winning MIT's physics and mathematics tournament in 1996. The accolades continued as he received a Dale Carnegie Institute highest achievement award in 2013.

Aguilera moved to the United States in 2011 to serve as general manager for Garfield Equipment, and he joined the GEFCO team in 2012. He's been instrumental in boosting the company's production flow by 207 percent, while at the same time reducing costs.

"I love making things efficient, managing resources wisely and producing continuous improvement," he said. "I agree with Albert Einstein, who once said 'There is a driving force more powerful than steam, electricity and atomic energy – the will.'"

"My purpose in life is to serve, and I firmly believe that everything we do has a direction and intention coming from who we are," Aguilera said. "Unity of life, magnanimity and humility are our keystones for success."



Congratulations

Melissa Barnett

for being named to Achievers
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and your accomplishments.



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Luxury Living on a Smaller Scale

Melissa Barnett

Sales and operations manager
AllenStyle Homes
Birth date: June 1975

*I*t's a long way from a degree in sign language to managing an elite realty and custom home company. Melissa Barnett, however, believes her unusual career path is one she was destined to travel, and her professional track record confirms that she made the right choice.

That path started at age 13, when Barnett began volunteering for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. She quickly became hooked on helping others and developed an interest in sign language after witnessing a deaf woman's efforts to communicate.

Yet it's as a Realtor that Barnett found her niche. During her first year as sales and operations manager for Oklahoma City's AllenStyle homes, she nearly tripled its sales.

In a field where closing the deal is often the only goal, Barnett takes a different approach.

"I'm successful in this position because I love people, and they can sense that I'm not trying to 'sell' them anything," she said. "I love to help by answering questions, learn about them as people and try to improve their lives in some way."

Barnett's determination and drive are highly visible. She was the first person in her family to attend college and earned her associate degree of science at Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City and, later, a

bachelor's degree in mass communications from Oklahoma City University.

After joining the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, Barnett threw herself into selling chamber memberships, advertising and sponsorships. She raised nearly \$31,000, an amount unheard of for a new member. The end result was that the chamber created a Rookie of the Year award based on her achievements. That success led to her role as chairman of both the education and sponsorship campaign committees for the Central Oklahoma Home Builder's Association. She and her daughter, Kaitlyn, also foster dogs through the Central Oklahoma Humane Society.

"I thought that was something that would make a difference in our community," she said. "They definitely bring joy to us, and we are happy to be a part of passing that joy along to the new adoptive families."

Her biggest satisfaction, however, comes from helping other single mothers buy their own home.

"I use my knowledge to empower them to know they don't have to have a spouse to achieve the American dream," Barnett said. "I love helping these women change the course of their lives in this small way. Many times I believe in them more than they believe in themselves."



Carie Antosek Benton

Achievers
under **40**

Executive director
State Association for Veteran Empowerment
Birth date: January 1976

Veterans returning from overseas all too often struggle with mental, emotional and physical issues that can make transitioning back into civilian life difficult. Finding support, even with all the awareness we have today, can be daunting.

As executive director of the State Association for Veteran Empowerment (SAVE), Carie Antosek Benton provides a clear vision for helping those who have served in the armed forces. Through education, finding local community resources, employment opportunities, or helping them cope with conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder, Benton works to improve the lives of families, friends, and neighbors who have sacrificed for the rest of us.

A helper by nature, Benton became interested in working with veterans while obtaining her master's degree at the University of Oklahoma. She sees her current job as a tangible way to provide meaningful assistance to combat veterans in need.

"I think of the ripple effect created by tossing a pebble into a pond; the ripple of helping one veteran extends outward, in turn helping the veteran's family, and all those around them. Imagine that impact," Benton said.

Working with veterans is a significant career shift for Benton, who initially was a pioneer in the real estate technological field. In 2000, she and a business partner co-founded

Vi360.com, which offered website technology to real estate agents, including the then state-of-the-art concept of virtual tours of houses for sale. Within three years the company had 47 distributorships along with its Realtor clients, which kept Benton busy traveling across the country.

Living in 10 cities and six states made it difficult, but after 12 years she completed an undergraduate degree in marketing.

"I was determined to finish, no matter what. Through that experience, and from my failures and successes, I learned who I am and the ways I'm best equipped to contribute," she said.

Beyond work and school, one of Benton's particular causes is Great Circle, where she mentors teenage girls in foster and residential care. "We are highly selective in our recruitment of volunteers," said Great Circle Director Judy Hillyer. "Carie is part of a small group of women who really excel in this role."

Benton is now focused on two goals – expanding the SAVE program and adding to her academic credentials. She's applying to doctorate programs, and while she hasn't decided on a specific degree yet, she said it will probably be psychology.

"People, and what makes them tick, fascinate me," she said.



Michael Boecking

Vice president, credit risk manager

Kirkpatrick Bank

Birth date: November 1979

*I*t's no secret that children in foster care or awaiting adoption have a tough time and often go without emotional support and needed items like shoes and clothing.

In recent years, these children have had their path smoothed a bit, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Michael Boecking. He and his wife, Cindy, are co-leaders of the Chosen OKC adoption and foster care ministry at Crossings Community Church.

"These are children who face significant adversity through no fault of their own," Boecking said. "Statistics will tell you that most are doomed to repeat the cycles of abuse and neglect. Our goal for Chosen is to raise awareness and recruit more loving foster/adoptive families to provide the stability that these children need."

His involvement became even more personal after adopting two sons.

"It was a great opportunity for us to be part of the solution, and we feel so blessed to be the parents of these two amazing little boys," he said.

Boecking's successful philanthropic efforts are equally matched by his professional abilities. He has played an integral role in developing Kirkpatrick Bank's new credit risk department, and he

created a series of analytical tools that allows the bank to evaluate a company's financials on an individual level. He's also developed models that monitor the loan portfolio's risk on a macro level, incorporating such elements as risk rating monitoring, problem loan trends, concentration risk and portfolio stress testing.

Despite his young age, Boecking also is a leader in the community. He has served on the board for the national Risk Management Association's Oklahoma chapter and held a number of key positions with United Way and Freedom School OKC. He currently serves on the board of Citizens Caring for Children and Edmond Public Schools Foundation.

In his private life, Boecking also is literally on the go. For the past several years he has been participating in races and obstacle runs. This past year he added cycling to the mix and began running, cycling and competing in duathlons.

"My grandfather would always tell us, 'If you're gonna be a bear, be a grizzly,' which means anything worth doing is worth doing with all your heart," he said. "That's why I apply an attitude of hard work, commitment and dedication to everything — my education, family and career."

Achievers
under 40



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Emily Bynum

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under 40

Human resources administrator
The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation Inc.
Birth date: July 1981

*P*utting the human touch into human resources is what Emily Bynum is all about, and she's had plenty of opportunity to hone her people skills as HR administrator for the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in Ardmore.

After joining the foundation staff in 2011, Bynum made it her first task to not only learn the names of every single one of its approximately 400 workers, but also study the cultural background of its international employees, who hail from roughly 25 countries.

"I also decided the best way to meet all my co-workers and learn more would be to involve myself in all the activities and opportunities," Bynum said. "My belief is that each encounter with people is an opportunity to benefit or learn from them."

Bynum said HR is a great fit for her.

"I am such a people person and love interacting with others," she said. "I love to serve, and this is a great way for me to serve others."

After being promoted to her current position in 2013, Bynum was involved in establishing the Noble Foundation's new employee team. The team is charged with finding and completing volunteer projects in Ardmore and its surrounding communities, while also

participating in engaging activities on the Noble Foundation campus. The initiative has been a huge success. Bynum leads a team of employees who volunteer with veterans through the Ardmore Veterans' Center.

"I feel like our veterans are a forgotten group, and they have sacrificed so much," she said. "If we can brighten their day, I'm all in."

Going forward, Bynum said she is looking forward to expanding the foundation's employee development programs and reaching out to more people in the Ardmore area through its Noble in the Community initiative.

"In today's world of social media, committed friendships with people who make a point to be physically present in others' lives is becoming rare," said Mary Kate Wilson, the Noble Foundation's director of philanthropy, engagement and project management. "Emily is just that – a committed, honest, physically present force who gives much more than she takes."

Outside the workplace, Bynum also embraces challenge. She is involved in many community projects and in 2011 completed her first marathon. "It was a moment in my life I honestly did not ever think would happen," she said. "I am thankful I persevered and pushed myself to accomplish it."



Kelley Compton

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under 40

Co-founder, vice president, director of operations
Project Hope Worldwide
Birth date: September 1980

As a former Miss Oklahoma and top 10 Miss America finalist, Kelley Compton has had a unique opportunity to change lives for the better, and she is doing so not only across the state of Oklahoma, but around the world as well.

It started with presentations on behalf of the America Cares for Children initiative, where as a motivational speaker she gave presentations to more than 350 schools and 50,000 students. From there Compton, a former high school athlete, became instrumental in promoting healthy lifestyles for children across the state. She helped create and promote many state, school-based and private wellness programs. Among them are the Oklahoma State Health Department's Walk this Weigh campaign and partnerships between the department and companies like Wal-Mart.

Compton's influence further increased when she lobbied Oklahoma's congressional leaders on behalf of children's health and served as a member of the state's Task Force to Study Overweight Children.

Compton said she didn't find her life's mission, however, until 2008, when she traveled with a small group to Uganda.

"I was in a place that the United Nations had said at the time was the

worst place for a child to live in the entire world," she said. "Because of the AIDS epidemic and the war that ransacked the nation, there are nearly 3 million orphans. As a woman born in the West and given every opportunity, I couldn't walk away."

Once back in the United States, Compton and two of her fellow travelers quickly founded Project Hope Worldwide. Its mission is to provide holistic care to the most vulnerable children, specifically orphans, providing them true opportunity for transformation. Compton's leadership has turned the nonprofit, now in its fifth year and headquartered in Owasso, into a huge success, with more than \$2 million in assets, locations in four countries and a long-term plan to establish programs on every continent. Her fundraising success is in no small part due to her skill with finances – she holds bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting from Oklahoma City University's Meinders School of Business.

"Some people think big, but big thinking doesn't get things done," said Ryan Underwood, CEO of Tri Leadership Resources. "Kelley Compton is that rare leader who can think and act big – and she inspires the rest of us to bring our skills and resources to join her."



Adam Croom

Achievers
under 40

**Director of digital courses
University of Oklahoma
Birth date: August 1987**

Adam Croom was exposed to cutting-edge technology at an early age, thanks to his grandfather, who was among the first generation to study computer programming, and his father, who also built computers. So it's no surprise that Croom became a tech wizard himself, culminating in his current position as director of digital courses for the University of Oklahoma.

"We were always the first family in the neighborhood to adopt new technology, whether that was Internet access or CD burners," he said. "Starting when I was 11, I would design websites for trivial interests I had. The Web became my creative outlet."

Croom turned that creative outlet into a highly successful career at OU, where he's also an adjunct journalism instructor. To date he's created two major programs that have put the university at the forefront of Internet technology, while at the same time showcasing Oklahoma's educators, entrepreneurs and other leaders.

His first brainchild is TEDxOU. TED (Technology/Entertainment/Design) is an annual conference with free, short videos that connect professionals in all disciplines. That was followed by the launch of Janux, an interactive platform offering approximately 20

open, and freely accessible, courses to anyone around the world. He's particularly proud of Freedom.ou.edu, an online civic education platform he created as a joint project between OU and the Institute for the American Constitutional Heritage.

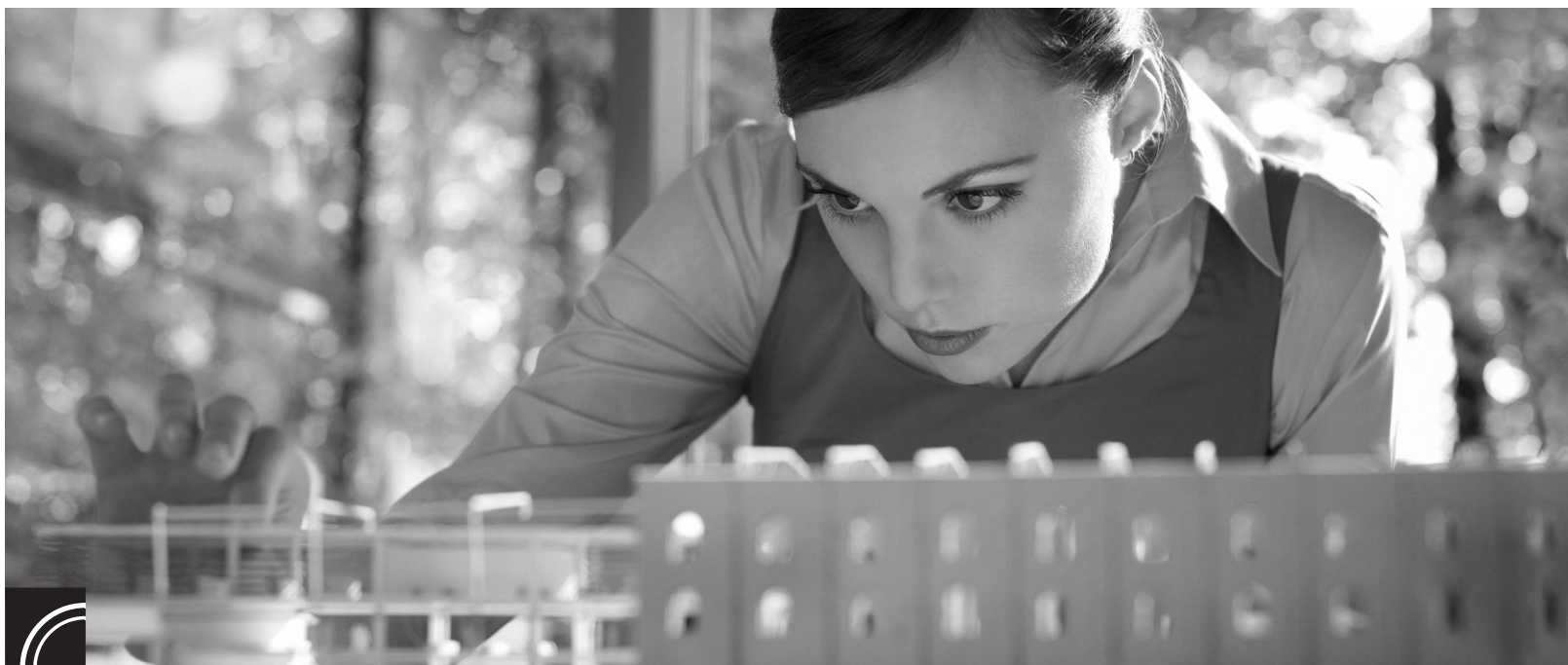
A naturally curious person, Croom said pursuing a career in journalism was a natural fit, and one that gave him a chance to continue developing his technological skills.

"While it's a discipline in and of itself, journalism is somewhat interdisciplinary, since you are constantly put in a position to learn a subject that you're unfamiliar with and in turn translate it for the public," he said. "This allowed me to explore a broad range of subjects."

The fact that his efforts allow thousands of people around the world to connect and learn, and thus have an influence themselves, is a huge source of satisfaction for Croom. He especially enjoys seeing the development of his students and young professionals. That's because in his opinion, there is no such thing as a "next" generation.

"That implies that you are 'next' and aren't allowed to create an impact until it's your turn," he said. "In truth, we are all collectively 'the generation,' and we all have roles to play now."





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Tim Doty

Corporate legal counsel
Love's Travel Stops
Birth date: June 1980

As the captain of his college baseball team, Tim Doty learned early not to rest on his laurels, and that the next pitch, swing and game were always right around the corner.

Given that experience and insight, it was natural for Doty to move into a leadership role in his professional career. He earned his law degree from the University of Oklahoma in 2006 and just three short years later became corporate legal counsel for the Love's Travel Stops chain. Love's has 318 stores operating in 39 states, and for the past five years Doty has been in charge of legal services provided to its accounting and taxation teams, plus its customer-facing units, which include operations, fleet sales, tire care, marketing and merchandising.

He's also spent much time of late expanding his role within the company by working with a team of Love's executives and directors to develop new services and business initiatives. The involvement with a wide variety of people and a wide range of legal issues is the job aspect he enjoys most.

"In bringing teams together to achieve success, I have learned that the key is to understand what's in it for each team member, from his or her view. You learn what makes them

tick and learn to work with it and with that person to help achieve the overall vision and goals," he said. "It's reassuring to know we are all rowing the same boat."

Amy Guzzy, Love's general counsel and director of legal services, calls Doty a double threat.

"He has a keen legal mind that easily spots issues and has the business acumen to analyze and consider resolutions that further our business initiatives," Guzzy said. "He is incapable of doing anything halfway."

Outside the office Doty remains a leader, volunteering as co-vice chairman for the Oklahoma Bar Association's professionalism committee and serving as an executive committee member for the United Way Emerging Leaders. He's also an active member and leader with Memorial Road Church of Christ.

As you would expect from a former Male Student Athlete of the Year award winner (at Kansas State University), Doty said he adheres to his father's philosophy of "Fight the good fight."

"Nothing is impossible," he said. "Because given genuine determination, resourcefulness and skill, we can conquer any challenge put in front of us."

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under **40**



Stacy Eads

CEO
Levant Technologies
Birth date: December 1979

*M*any successful people have favorite quotes, but Stacy Eads' mantra comes from a fortune cookie. Its message is simple – “Let reality be reality.”

It's an outlook that's particularly suited to Eads, who segued from a career in nonprofit public relations, manufacturing human resources and print journalism to her current position as CEO of Levant Technologies. The company designs websites and apps, and under Eads' leadership grew by a phenomenal 300 percent during her first year alone.

Once out of college, where Eads earned a double degree in journalism and philosophy and specialized in writing papers about Star Trek episodes, Eads began to boldly go wherever the career opportunities took her, including Citizens Caring for Children, Resource Manufacturing, The Edmond Sun and Edmond Outlook magazine, among others. The variety of industries, she said, has contributed enormously to her current success.

“Having the privilege to serve in a variety of backgrounds all influence my ability to relate to customers today,” Eads said. “When our team is building a new website or app for a local business, I can clearly see that business owner's goals, and the value of the project from their industry perspective.”

Eads took the reins of Levant in 2011. She supervises day-to-day operations for 450-plus clients' Web and app accounts and oversees six full-time staff members and eight part-time contractors. She spearheaded the development of the company's School Connect app, which was named among The Journal Record's Innovator of the Year honorees in 2012. The app now serves 300-plus school districts nationwide and has more than a quarter-million downloads.

Eads also shares her expertise through involvement with civic and business groups around the metro area. Most recently she became involved with Girl Tech, which mentors high school girls interested in a career in technology.

When things get too hectic, Eads simply glances at the fortune cookie posted on her refrigerator.

“For a person with my intense drive, this simplistic statement can make the fast world stop spinning and your mind open from its fear of yesterday or what will be tomorrow,” Eads said. “In this quote, there's a tiny space in time where you can breathe deeply and savor the moment. I find myself reaching a level of success today that I want to savor this moment, with my wonderfully supportive husband by my side.”

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under **40**



Vahid Farzaneh

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under 40

Owner

Freestyle Marketing + Films

Birth date: December 1983

Vahid Farzaneh loves the realm of film and digital marketing. Soon after graduating from college, with help from his family, he created his own company, Freestyle Productions in Moore.

"We help local businesses and their clients find each other throughout the world of digital marketing," Farzaneh said. "I love making films and helping the local film community grow in Oklahoma."

Farzaneh received his bachelor's degree in film and media studies from the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

Prior to starting his own business, he worked as a superintendent, new home sales consultant and office support staff member at Norman-based Home Creations, which was founded by his father and uncle, 1970s immigrants from Iran.

"Vahid is an amazingly enterprising young man," said Rob Garibay, business coach and owner of Action Coach in Oklahoma City. "Once out of college, Vahid could have gone to work for his father's home-building company, Home Creations. Instead, Vahid started his own video and movie production company that has been very successful and has now added marketing services to their value proposition."

Farzaneh has also been active in real estate investment for over 10 years. "My real estate investments

started in 2004 while I was a film student at OU," Farzaneh said. "I feel accomplished, and it is now something of a safety net for Sarah and me, along with our future kiddos."

A film he helped produce, *The Rounder Comes to Town*, won best Oklahoma short film at the deadCENTER Film Festival in 2010 and at the Trail Dance Film Festival in 2011. Farzaneh has also co-produced many other films, including the feature films *The Posthuman Project* and *Hollis*.

Video production may be his passion, but Farzaneh considers his wife to be the real prize.

"I know this might be a little bit cheesy, but my biggest personal accomplishment would be marrying my wife, Sarah," he said. "She's an outstanding woman that challenges me every day to make the world a better place."

Farzaneh also serves as a cabinet member and volunteers for the Center for Children and Families.

He said his parents and family are the reason he is successful. "One of my important influencers are my parents and family. Our family has helped with many nonprofit organizations. They created an Iranian studies program at OU," Farzaneh said. "My goals are to accomplish more humanitarian efforts than my previous generation did. I have some big shoes to fill."



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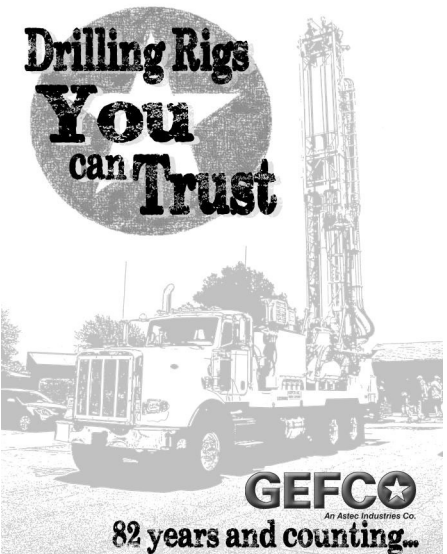
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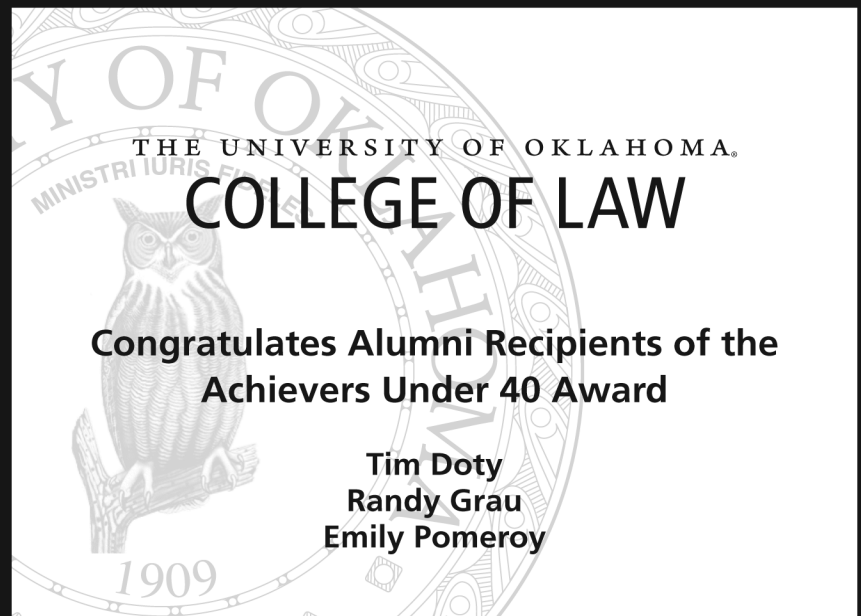
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Alexander Galeano

Construction director
1st Oklahoma Construction
Birth date: January 1976

A career in construction seemed natural since Alexander Galeano has always enjoyed building up his community.

A native of Colombia, Galeano moved to North America in 2007. He first settled in Canada and then made his way to the U.S in 2010.

"I moved to North America without second-language skills and started educating myself from scratch," Galeano said. "The challenge of a new start, along with all the problems I had to overcome before I could even work on my field, are the main accomplishment as a professional."

After coming to the U.S., Galeano earned a degree in renewable and sustainable energy with an emphasis in construction at Oklahoma State University, as well as a certification as an engineering and geology technician from Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Oklahoma City.

Prior to assuming the role as construction director at 1st Oklahoma Construction, Galeano worked as manager and CEO at Home Improvers General Contractors and at Efficaz Property Management.

"Alex typifies what has made this country great. As an immigrant from Colombia, Alex has excelled in everything he has pursued, from education to work performance," said

Rob Garibay, licensed business coach and owner at Action Coach in Norman.

Ali Farzaneh, president of 1st Oklahoma Construction, said Galeano is a valued administrator and helped develop one of the company's main projects, Expeditor 1st. The cloud-based project management software earned the company recognition in this year's Journal Record's Innovator of the Year program.

"His tremendous abilities never ceased to amaze me," Farzaneh said.

Galeano researched the marketplace for a tool that would meet his company's criteria and decided that the best option was to create one, Garibay said.

"Alex is a problem solver and quickly realized that a comprehensive software management tool would enable both him and Ali to bring in more home-building projects on time and on budget," Garibay said.

Galeano's community involvement includes volunteering his time and skills at Habitat for Humanity as a builder. He also helps out at the Edmond Animal Shelter.

Galeano said his family motivates him to excel in life. He and his wife, Patricia Gallego, have an 18-year-old daughter, Kamila.

"My family is the main driver in life and, every day, I try to be a better person," he said.



Karen Gardner

Owner
Roses Inc. Green Country LLC
Birth date: March 1990

*S*ometimes you have to stop and smell the roses, which is why Karen Gardner opened Roses Inc. Green Country LLC, a full-service rose nursery, in Broken Arrow.

Gardner started with the intention of bringing more attention to the rose industry and grew her business at 22 years old. Within the first few months, she increased her Rose District clientele by 30 percent. Gardner runs the business with her fiancé, Stuart Barrett.

"One of my more personal professional achievements was pitching the importance of achieving a rose tourism industry by integrating quality, specialty rosebushes into Broken Arrow's Rose District," she said.

"I made my point by presenting nursery-grown, cut bouquets to an all-male team of very talented landscape architects and city engineers. Not only did I receive the position as the streetscape designer of the Rose District, but Roses Inc. also was awarded the purchase order, installation and maintenance of the city center's more than 200 rosebushes," Gardner said.

Gardner also has designed a more than 140-page rose catalog, created an online store and integrated a social media platform.

Not only did she attend New York University's undergraduate program for fine art, she also has received an international baccalaureate diploma from International Bilingual School of

Provence in France; and completed course certifications from the World School Sigtuna Humanistiska Läroverket in Sweden, and from Cambridge University in England for biomedical ethics and world religions, respectively.

One of her most recent educational endeavors is the Launch Entrepreneurial Program at Tulsa Community College. Launch is a business incubation and education program designed to train and mentor new and aspiring business leaders.

"I immediately recognized Gardner's vision, talent, training and mission," said former Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce Kathy Taylor. "In one year, through Karen's leadership, she has managed to land impressive contracts with the city of Broken Arrow's Rose District and the city of Tulsa."

While Gardner's accomplishments may stand out, she says she doesn't do it for the recognition.

"Every day I wake up, I thank God for the opportunities he has presented to me," Gardner said. "Borrowing generously from Bill Pollard's The Soul of the Firm, it is my intention to honor God in all that I do, aid others in personal and professional development, pursue excellence and grow profitably. I believe it is important to maintain humility and a willingness to both serve and learn in order to be a worthwhile leader."



Emily Garman

**Chief operating officer
Oklahoma Media Group
Birth date: July 1978**

Emily Garman loves to help people and animals, and she has devoted her life to helping others.

For 15 years, she has served with numerous animal welfare organizations in the Oklahoma City metro, including serving as a board member for Volunteers for Animal Welfare and The Bella Foundation SPCA, and helping found the SPOT Clinic, a low-cost spay/neuter and vaccination clinic for pets of Oklahoma residents.

"I was part of the original group of volunteers that eventually became the Central Oklahoma Humane Society, an organization that is leading the effort to end the needless euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals in this city," Garman said.

She also set up a website to reunite pets that were displaced after the Moore tornado last year.

"The evening of the Moore tornadoes I, like everyone else, was watching TV and thinking how I could best be of help," Garman said. "How could my skills be of most use to those affected by the storms? I was able to quickly reach out to key contacts and set up a website clearinghouse for pets lost and found in the storms in Moore, Shawnee, Okla., and other communities affected."

Oklahoma's four-legged friends aren't the only beneficiaries of Garman's service. She also helps at-

risk adolescents at Teen emPower! Inc.

"Emily works tirelessly to make the world a better place. Because she believes in our mission to prevent adolescents from engaging in high-risk behaviors through youth development strategies that promote a healthy and successful transition into adulthood, Emily has donated countless hours to our cause," said Kathy Harms, Teen emPower! Inc. executive director.

Garman received her bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications with an anthropology minor at the University of Oklahoma.

She owns and serves as chief operating officer at Oklahoma Media Group. She previously worked as a marketing manager at Foundation Surgery Affiliates in Oklahoma City and was creative director at the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce in Redondo Beach, Calif.

Garman serves on the board of the Young Nonprofit Professional Network of Oklahoma City.

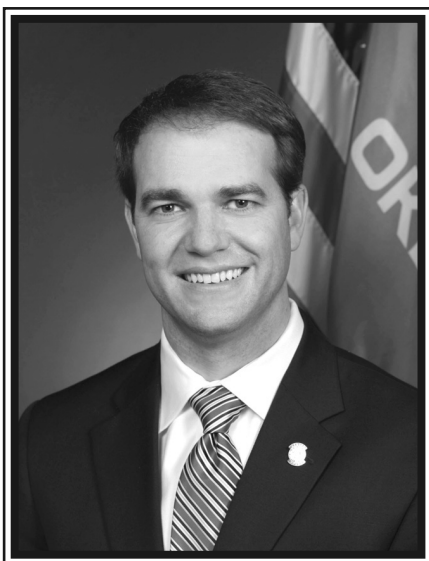
Several organizations have recognized Garman for her professional and community accomplishments. She received numerous ADDY Awards from the Oklahoma City Ad Club, the Volunteer of the Year Award at the Central Oklahoma Humane Society and the Oklahoma Alliance for Animals Advocate in Action Award.

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Randy Grau

Achievers
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**State representative, Oklahoma House of Representatives
Attorney, Cheek & Falcone PLLC
Birth date: December 1975**

State Rep. Randy Grau, R-Edmond, is known for going the extra mile for others. In fact, he has climbed one of the world's tallest mountains to do just that.

"In 2009, I traveled to Tanzania and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in order to raise money for a Rwandan school," Grau said.

This is only one example of Grau's strong commitment to children. As a volunteer for Oklahoma Lawyers for Children, Grau represented two sisters in the termination of the parental rights of both their mother and father. He also served as guardian ad litem for one of the girls regarding an auto accident in which she had been involved.

"I continued to represent the girls for several years through the process of being adopted by their aunt and uncle," Grau said. "Both girls are thriving, and one is about to graduate from college."

Grau, who is serving his second term as a state representative, said his personal faith, commitment to family and drive to enhance his community was the catalyst to run for office.

"My family and faith always taught me that we are all blessed to be a blessing. In other words, we are to use any of the talents, skills or resources we have in order to help others," he said.

Grau said he uses this motivation

to help him bring more accountability to the government as the assistant majority floor leader and vice chairman of the Appropriations and Budget Subcommittee for Higher Education. The governor has signed more than 30 of his proposed bills into law, including the Oklahoma Regional Jail Act.

"His unopposed elections ... are a substantial indication of the esteem to which he is held in his home community," said Oklahoma County Commissioner Ray Vaughn. "While at a relatively young age, Randy has already garnered numerous awards and recognitions from not only his community but from the Oklahoma Bar Association as well as other organizations, both foreign and domestic."

As the first deputy county commissioner for District 3, Grau helped develop, negotiate and transition the former GM building to Tinker Air Force Base.

"Integrity and commitment are the two words that come to mind when I think of Grau," said John Morris Williams, executive director of the Oklahoma Bar Association. "As a lawyer, he is skilled and thoughtful. As a public servant, he is mindful of this charge and humble in meeting it."

He is married to Renee Grau, an Oklahoma City dermatologist. The couple have two children, Reagan and Roman.



Renee Grau, M.D.

**Medical director
Saints Dermatology Center of Excellence
Birth date: October 1975**

*M*anaging a full-time career while taking care of your family and giving back to the community can be tricky. But Renee Grau takes it all in stride.

Grau finds time to manage Saints Dermatology Center of Excellence, help patients with severe skin cancer at St. Charles Dermatology Free Clinic and rediscover motherhood during the class she teaches at Quail Springs Church of Christ – plus, take care of her two children, Reagan and Roman Grau.

“I am currently getting an advanced degree in my children and leading a class for mothers,” she said. “In doing so, I have discovered the absolute joy of raising my two sons. I truly love being a student of my children and have made it my goal to earn my next degree in Reagan and Roman Grau.”

Grau earned her bachelor’s degree in 1998 from the University of Oklahoma and her doctorate in dermatology in 2002 at OU’s School of Medicine, where she now also serves as an assistant professor in the dermatology department.

“My most significant professional accomplishment was the establishment of the St. Charles Free Dermatology Clinic in 2006,” Grau said. “Over the last eight years, we have been able to assist more than 1,600 patients, most of which had

significant skin cancer.”

Colleagues who have worked with Grau say her impressive career and philanthropy are matched only by her love of people.

“She somehow balances equally positive focus on patients, family and community with such grace and unmatched integrity,” said Janet Tremaine, associate director of Saints Medical Group. “She exemplifies human compassion and kindness and truly treats each person she encounters with the utmost respect and genuine compassion.”

Carlos Garcia, a dermatologist and president of the American Society for Mohs Surgery, calls Grau one of the nicest and most capable and productive people he knows.

“She does everything with a smile on her face and with seemingly endless optimism and enthusiasm,” Garcia said.

Grau attributes OU President David Boren with instilling in her the need to take the time to invest in others – both professionally and personally.

“The major personal philosophy I learned from David Boren is that what really matters is people and going above and beyond to help them,” Grau said. “Every person is incredibly important and has so much to contribute.”

Grau is married to Oklahoma state Rep. Randy Grau.



Achievers
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Elaine Hamm, Ph.D.

Director, Proof of Concept Center

i2E

Birth date: July 1980

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
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Some people go with their brain and choose a career path in which they excel. Others go with their gut and take a plunge into unrealistic waters.

Elaine Hamm said she never was good at science or math. Her tests results can attest to that.

"I started out as a piano performance major in college because all the signs pointed to success in music," Hamm said. "However, I love science. I was the geeky kid that played with a microscope and even now, I listen to science podcasts while on the treadmill."

Hamm specializes in microbiology and earned her bachelor's and doctoral degrees from the University of Oklahoma. She now advises biotech and pharmaceutical startup companies.

In 2013, Hamm designed and developed i2E's Proof of Concept Center, the nation's first statewide university technology-based center for evaluating the commercial market for cutting-edge technologies.

"Hamm distinguished herself by taking the POCC idea from concept to successful implementation in less than six months," said Scott Meacham, president and CEO of i2E. "She certainly fits the profile of achiever. In fact, I would classify her an overachiever."

Hamm considers the creation of

the statewide Oklahoma Proof of Concept Center as her most significant professional accomplishment.

"I designed and executed this innovative partnership that is the first of its kind in the state and in the nation," Hamm said. "In doing so, I am proud to have been a part of uniting typically competitive entities behind a strategy for comprehensive economic growth in Oklahoma. It is also incredibly rewarding to be able to help Oklahoma's scientists and entrepreneurs achieve success."

Hamm's work experience includes serving as technology and intellectual property consultant at TreMonti Consulting Services, director of OU's Office of Technology Development and senior protein chemist at Comentis.

In addition, Hamm serves on the Board of Advocates for the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Cancer Center.

"Over time, I have learned that being aspirational is a wonderful mechanism to achieve happiness both professionally and personally. I believe there are many paths to finding success and if we are too focused on specific goals and a life 'to-do list,' we might be less open to new and challenging opportunities," Hamm said of her life philosophy. "Therefore, my goals are to be happy, to spread laughter and to be intellectually fulfilled."



Congratulations Elaine!

2014 Achievers Under 40 Honoree



Elaine Hamm, Ph.D.

Venture Advisor &
Director, Proof of Concept Center

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A vertical advertisement for Kirkpatrick Bank Business Banking. It features a large, stylized 'K' made of concentric gray rectangles. To the right of the 'K', the text 'KIRKPATRICK BANK' is written in a serif font, with 'FDIC' in a smaller font to its left and 'Business Banking' in a smaller, italicized font to its right. Below this, the words 'PROUD CHAMPIONS OF OPPORTUNITY' are written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters. The entire advertisement is set against a dark background.

Nicole Hayes

**Manager of monitoring, compliance and outreach
Workforce Tulsa
Birth date: May 1984**

Achievers
under **40**
THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014

*M*ost business and community leaders know the challenges associated with any venture. Nicole Hayes faced similar hurdles but had one particular adversary to overcome before she could advance in life.

Hayes said her biggest accomplishment in life was overcoming a 12-year meth addiction with the help of the Women in Recovery program. Rather than let the addiction control her life, she chose to use it as motivation to help others.

"Never forget and always learn from the mistakes of your past," Hayes said, "but don't let them drive your future."

Hayes began working for Workforce Tulsa as an administrative assistant in 2010. Last year, she was named manager of monitoring, compliance and outreach for the economic development entity.

"She is a stable, driving force behind Workforce Tulsa," said Rachel D. Hutchings, Tulsa Area Workforce Investment board member. "She provides outreach to those that are incarcerated with the purpose of helping them become employed and a gainful citizen after their release. She has a true calling to assist people when the odds are against them to bring them to a point of self-sufficiency."

Hayes is pursuing her associate degree in business from Tulsa Community College and is expecting to

graduate in 2016.

Building strong communities through civic engagement is one of her primary goals in life.

She has formed a nonprofit for graduates of the Women in Recovery program. The Circle of Life Board is a program through which graduates of the Women in Recovery program come together to create fun and healthy family events to ensure the continued connection with recovery and peer support. In addition, she is involved with the Association of Reentry Professionals, Temporary Assistance for Needing Families, United Way's Women's Leadership Council, Habitat for Humanity, Wings of Freedom Program and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Run.

"Because of her recovery experience, she has a worldview that allows her to be grateful for what she has and is driven to pay it forward," said Shelley Cadamy, Workforce Tulsa executive director.

"She is a moral compass. She stands up for those who have been wronged and not afraid to shake things up (in a good way) to get things done," Cadamy said. "She displays excellent leadership abilities with a realistic approach to all situations, professional and personal. She is an out-of-the-box thinker who endures against all foreboding to obtain a positive result."



Kian Kamas

Achievers
under 40

**Director of government affairs-health care
Tulsa Regional Chamber
Birth date: October 1985**

Children often dream of traveling to far and distant lands. Kian Kamas, who grew up in the rural Oklahoma town of Okarche, made that dream a reality when she grabbed the man of her dreams and flew to Scotland.

"After graduating with my undergraduate degree (from the University of Oklahoma), I was lucky enough to receive a scholarship through Rotary International to complete my post-grad work at the University of Edinburgh," Kamas said. "A week-and-a-half before moving to Scotland, I married my boyfriend of five years and we packed our bags and jetted away."

As a student of political science and government administration, Kamas said the new journey was only natural and it allowed her to see America from the perspective of another country. Through it, Kamas said she gained a new sense of self-confidence and began building the skills she would need for a successful professional career – optimism, resilience and tenacity.

Kamas began her career as a policy research and development analyst for the city of Owasso before joining the Tulsa Regional Chamber in September 2011 as government affairs

manager. Today she is director of government affairs-health care for the chamber. She has served as chairman of the chamber's United Way and diversity and inclusion task forces.

"Kian is on everyone's go-to list when a critical initiative requires guaranteed success," said Matt Pivarnik, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Tulsa Regional Chamber.

"Kian is a person of exemplary character who handles all of her responsibilities in a very professional manner," said Owasso City Manager Warren Lehr. "But one of her key strengths is her ability to interact easily with all people in a friendly, welcoming fashion."

"I think my personal philosophy has been influenced by my upbringing in a small, rural town. I hold tightly to a strong work ethic and the belief that honesty in all situations will serve you the best," said Kamas, who began working at the age of 15 as an office assistant at the local rural electric cooperative. "I learned the value of earning and saving my own money, time management and personal responsibility. Each of these values has stayed with me to-date and makes me the successful young professional I am today."



Rachel Kanady

**Vice president of agency development
NFP Maschino, Hudelson & Associates
Birth date: April 1977**

Rachel Kanady has one motto when it comes to her career goals: “Professional commitment to continuous improvement – taking a vision from conception to implementation.”

As a wife, stepmother and executive at her job, Kanady said she believes it's important to remember the people she serves.

“My personal philosophy is one based on the fundamental attributes of faith, character, wisdom, dedication, loyalty, passion and love,” Kanady said. “When spending time at work, with family, organizations or friends, my full attention is devoted to the people around me at that time.”

Kanady has a master of human relations degree in organizational development and a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Oklahoma. She also received an associate degree in psychology from Oklahoma City Community College.

She began her career as a field office manager at Scott Guernsey Solutions LLC and later worked in human resources for Pinnacle Healthcare Group, Kerr-McGee Chemical and Tronox LLC before joining Holmes Murphy & Associates. In 2011, Kanady assumed her current role as vice president of agency development at NFP Maschino, Hudelson & Associates in Oklahoma City.

“Over the years, Rachel has demonstrated that she is an exceptional communicator and a gifted manager,”

said David Maschino, partner at NFP Maschino, Hudelson & Associates. “She is a highly dedicated professional who knows how to motivate her staff to strive for excellence.”

While a strong work ethic and professional commitment are the driving forces behind her career success, Kanady said her greatest accomplishment is at home.

“Raising Kyle has been my most significant personal achievement because it is without a doubt the most important and rewarding experience of my life. I have been able to take everything my parents taught me and offer those experiences for Kyle,” she said.

Kanady's community involvement includes volunteering with the Junior Achievement of Oklahoma and supporting Stage 4 Life, United Way, Speck Home for Boys and the American Cancer Society.

“Kanady was so inspired by the Junior Achievement curriculum she received in high school that she decided to reach out to JA and become a volunteer,” said Shannon Beeler, president of Junior Achievement of Oklahoma. “Even though Rachel was one of the youngest board members, she proved to be a real leader, thinking strategically and participating in making difficult decisions while holding the mission of the organization in the forefront at all times.”

She is married to Fred “Chip” Kanady III.



Sara Kaplan

Achievers
under 40
THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014

**Co-owner, Native Roots Market
Business Development Specialist, University of Central Oklahoma
Small Business Development Center
Birth date: December 1980**

At 26, Sara Kaplan was focused on a different path than most of her peers from graduate school. While most other geologists went to work in the oil industry, Kaplan set out to pursue entrepreneurship.

Kaplan teamed up with her husband and parents to open Native Roots Market, a local grocery store that focuses on Oklahoma and organic products.

"Our society faces a lot of crises in today's world: environmental, health, economic. And it probably sounds crazy, but I think if you fix the farming system in this country you can begin to alleviate problems in all three of those areas. Agriculture is the root of civilization, after all," Kaplan said. "Obviously, it's not that simple. Just imagine what it would do for Oklahoma's economy if just 10 percent of our food dollars went to local farms. It would dramatically change our local economy."

Native Roots, which opened in Norman in 2007, was relocated to the Deep Deuce district in Oklahoma City in 2012.

Kaplan's success in running a small business led to her accepting a full-time position in November as a business development specialist with the University of Central Oklahoma Small Business Development Center.

"I get to work with small business

owners every day to start, grow and succeed in business," Kaplan said. "It's the perfect job for me!"

Susan Urbach, regional director at the UCO SBDC, said Kaplan's strong business acumen is far beyond her age.

"Her work with Native Roots Market alone means a boon and redevelopment in the Deep Deuce area, and now there is an opportunity every day to help others in central Oklahoma build their businesses," Urbach said. "Her advice is sound, and coupled with her own vast knowledge and experience, as well as tools and support from the other UCO center staff, her mark on business development will be felt through the families of business owners, their employees and the community at large."

While Kaplan's husband, Matt Runkle, manages the day-to-day operations of the store, she still does payroll, marketing and other paperwork tasks — mostly in the wee hours of the morning and some evenings and weekends.

In addition to her professional duties, Kaplan makes sure she finds time for community involvement. She serves on the Urban Neighbors Oklahoma City Board and the Norman Public Arts Board. She also is a member of the Oklahoma Arts Council Grants Panel.

The couple have a 2-year-old daughter, Stella.



Asa Leveaux

CEO
Leveaux Group Inc.
Birth date: June 1983

*A*s a man thinketh, so is he.” This quote by James Allen sums up Asa Leveaux’s philosophy on life.

Whether it’s commanding a unit in Afghanistan or serving as a personal coach or motivational speaker, Leveaux strives to help others become the master of their mind and reach their full potential.

Leveaux, a native Oklahoman, joined the Army after graduating from high school. His leadership abilities and dedication helped him climb the military ranks to captain. From 2012 to 2013, he and his unit spent nine months in Afghanistan. The fact that every soldier came back alive, Leveaux said, is his greatest professional accomplishment.

“CPT Leveaux is passionate about each mission he receives and for the soldiers he leads,” said Lt. Col. Renea Timko, with the U.S. Army’s 3rd Battalion, 378th Regiment, 95th Training Division in Norman.

“Mentoring his soldiers to be the best-trained, best-prepared and most resilient soldiers in the Army enabled one member of his unit to win the Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year competition for the battalion.”

For his military service, Leveaux has received distinguished awards such as the Army Commendation Medal and the Bronze Star. He worked

in various positions with companies like Northrop Grumman and SAIC that contract with the federal government, before starting his own business in 2012. Leveaux Group Inc., a privately held holding company, offers professional training and coaching.

Leveaux stresses the importance of finding bliss in one’s life and spends countless hours assisting others do the same, either through his books, consultations or speeches.

“Based on knowing who I am and the infinite power that I am tapping into, my goals are to live a blissful existence conceived by enlightened thought and achieved through love, passion and wealth.”

Leveaux has an associate degree in liberal studies from Rose State College and received a bachelor’s in administrative leadership from OU in 2012.

“I have worked with many political and community leaders over the past several years, and Asa Leveaux stands head and shoulders over most, not only in demonstrated initiative, intelligence and creativity, but also in his ability to function as a productive member of a team,” said Kevin Cox, former Oklahoma legislator. “His intellect is matched by his ability to communicate clearly, and to project an open, friendly persona to others regardless of their level of expertise.”



Chelsea Levo

**Economic development director
City of Owasso
Birth date: September 1975**

*N*othing beats the opportunity to make your neighbor's day, every day.

That is why Chelsea Levo said she loves her job as the economic development director for the city of Owasso.

"Being called to serve mankind may leave your pockets bare, but it never leaves your heart empty," said Levo, who also serves as public information officer.

"I could talk about the specific growth factors in the community, but those are just flashy highlights. She said. "The real accomplishments are daily. They measure anywhere from having breakfast with a local restaurant owner about how the city can promote his business; to helping neighborhoods pick up trash in their entryways on the weekend; to getting a large incentive approved to successfully recruit a large company providing thousands of quality jobs to the area."

Levo joined the staff of the city of Owasso in 2008 after working in military and government affairs with chambers of commerce in Tulsa as well as Kentucky and Tennessee.

"I wake up every day with passion for helping my community and I go to bed every night with excitement for tomorrow," Levo said. "I am wealthy with joy from the gift to serve."

Through her work with the city,

Levo serves on the board of the Owasso Chamber of Commerce. She also is a member of Rotary Club International, Tulsa's Young Professionals, Tulsa Regional Chamber's OneVOICE Task Force, International Economic Development Council and the Baily Medical Center Community Board.

Levo's community involvement includes service as president of the Owasso Education Foundation and board member of Owasso Community Resources. She also is active with the St. Henry Catholic Church in Owasso and the Owasso/Collinsville team for the American Cancer Society of Relay for Life.

Levo, who enjoys running and yoga, said she is always looking for the opportunity to learn.

"My goal is to constantly evolve, positively change and make a difference in this world to benefit others," she said.

State Sen. Rick Brinkley, R-Owasso, said he has seen the changes in the faces of those lives she's touched.

"Thousands of people have benefited from the work of Chelsea Levo; however, they will never know her name," Brinkley said. "That is the clear definition of a servant leader. Her heart is focused on bettering the lives of those whom she does not know and of people who will never know her name."



Linda Mares

**Development director
Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School
Birth date: June 1981**

Achievers
under **40**

Linda Mares believes that life is what you make of it. And, for her, that means making a difference.

Starting June 1, Mares will assume her position as development director for Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School.

"My goal is to help as many people who want to receive an education and spiritual development to become the best version of themselves," Mares said. "When these young people graduate, their values will stay with them as they enter the workforce and become leaders. I consider that to be continued community investment."

Mares most recently served as development director of Boys & Girls Clubs of Oklahoma County and revived the fundraising campaigns and increased awareness of the nonprofit that offers children a safe, positive place to spend their out-of-school time.

"There is a great need for youth development programs in south OKC and I was able to help secure funding to open the Cesar Chavez site, which launched the expansion campaign to open more clubs throughout Oklahoma County," she said.

Thanks to Mares' efforts, the club is in better financial position, said board member Mandi Briggs.

"A former club kid herself, Linda understands the importance of the Boys & Girls Clubs programming, the

benefits it brings to the community, and the need for sustainable funding to continue its impact in the future," Briggs said.

Mares' involvement with youth does not end with her day job. She serves on the advisory committee for the Junior League of Oklahoma City and teaches confirmation classes at St. Eugene's Catholic Church, where she also serves on the pastoral council.

"Her enthusiasm and skill at connecting with young people makes her an especially fine teacher," said the Rev. Joseph A. Jacobi, former pastor at St. Eugene's.

In addition, Mares is a member of the Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City's Mission Advancement Committee and the Oklahoma City Zeta Tau Alpha alumnae chapter.

Immediately prior to joining the staff of the Boys & Girls Clubs, Mares was media and marketing director for the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women. Before that, she was a news reporter for stations in Oklahoma City; Wichita, Kan.; and Abilene, Texas.

In 2004, she was named Child Protective Services Reporter of the Year by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Region 2.

"I can only hope," Mares said, "that my work as a journalist and in the nonprofit sector will have an important impact on society."



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FOR HER OUTSTANDING WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY

Andrea Mason

Studio owner

barre3

Birth date: October 1979

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under 40

Andrea Mason has a passion for healthy living. And as co-owner of four barre3 locations, she works hard to impart that hunger for a healthy life to others.

Mason and her husband, former Oklahoma State University and NBA basketball player Desmond Mason, own barre3 franchises in Oklahoma City and Edmond and will open another one in Tulsa in June. Barre3 offers exercise classes designed to transform the body to one of equal balance, strength and flexibility by combining ballet, yoga and Pilates.

"My passion for healthy living was instilled in me at an early age when I began playing soccer at the age of 4," said Mason, a former college soccer player at OSU and Seattle Pacific University. "Being active as a child, adolescent, teenager, young adult and adult now have made me realize that moving your body is not only healthy but healing too."

After taking barre3 classes while living in her native hometown of Portland, Ore., Andrea Mason knew she wanted to bring the new business concept back to a community the couple had fallen in love with. She is a certified barre3 instructor and was trained directly by

the founder and creator of barre3, Sadie Lincoln.

In addition to the barre3 franchises, Mason and Katie O'Brien founded udånder in January. Udånder is a Scandinavian spa concept that is set to open late this summer in Oklahoma City. Udånder means to exhale in Danish.

"Healthy living is important to me because inspiring others through healthy living will lead to a healthier community overall with less risk for disease and greater whole-body health," Mason said.

Mason attributes her success to running a business that she loves and working hard, but also making sure she fits in time for doing things that she loves to do like pick up her kids from school. She said a supportive family also is a major factor in that success. Mason and her husband have two children, Jada, 8, and Elijah, 4.

"Andrea and her husband, Desmond, are community leaders and give back to the community 365 days per year," said Mary Blankenship Pointer, senior vice president of business development for UMB Bank's Oklahoma region. "They love our community and chose to live in Oklahoma."



Skye McNiel

**State representative
Oklahoma House of Representatives
Birth date: July 1978**

Achievers
under 40
THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014

State Rep. Skye McNiel, R-Bristow, believes in being a problem solver.

"Regardless if it is in my role as a state legislator, small business owner, friend or mother," McNiel said, "I believe that being a part of the solution instead of being a part of the problem is important."

It's that attitude that led the small business owner from Bristow to run for office – to make a difference by helping to solve problems for other Oklahomans.

McNiel's work in the Legislature has earned her recognition as the Oklahoma Pork Council Outstanding Legislator and the Oklahoma Economic Development Council Legislative Advocate of the Year. She also has received the Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Meritorious Service Award, Oklahoma State School Board Association Legislative Award, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association Legislative Appreciation Award and the Oklahoma Association for Career and Technical Education Distinguished Service Award.

"I am most proud of using my elected office to truly help my constituents when they have no place else to turn. Oftentimes people call me as a last resort and I have the opportunity to impact their life in a positive significant way," McNiel said. "I was elected by my constituents

and don't take for granted that they trusted me with a job to leave their lives better than I found them."

McNiel earned her bachelor's degree in agricultural communications and animal science from Oklahoma State University in 2000. She began her career as a marketing coordinator with Community Bank before branching out into entrepreneurship by opening A Butterfly's Garden. Since she was raised around the family business in Bristow, running a small business was nothing new for her. McNiel has since closed the floral shop, but remains active with family-owned Mid America Stockyards.

"Oklahoma needs achievers like Skye McNiel who exemplify success, determination and accomplishment and who serve as a role model to a younger generation," said state Sen. Brian Bingman, R-Sapulpa.

McNiel and her husband, Pecos, have three daughters – Paikie Marie, 11; Jamison, 8; and Sami Steele, 2.

"As a mother of three girls, my most significant personal accomplishment is teaching my daughters that women can be successful, strong and independent as well as being a compassionate wife and mother," McNiel said. "Being a great mom and role model for my daughters are my goals every day."



Mike Milligan

**Chief financial officer
The Children's Center Inc.
Birth date: August 1982**

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under **40**

*M*ike Milligan loves his job as chief financial officer at The Children's Center in Bethany. Being able to serve the patients at the center, Milligan said, gives him a great sense of fulfillment.

"As a father of four young children myself, I have much compassion for the difficulties that the families at the center face," he said. "Before I started working at the center six years ago, I only had a vague idea of what these families and children go through on a daily basis. Being able to apply the skills that I have learned to help care for the patients is exciting and gratifying."

Among other things, Milligan is responsible for the day-to-day finances of the 120-bed hospital that serves children with complex medical and physical disabilities. The nonprofit has a \$28 million annual budget with 550 employees.

"Mike is not your stereotypical accountant," said Tom Richards, president of The Children's Center. "Apart from his analytical and brainy side, he is caring, compassionate and creative, and all of these character traits are evident in his work at The Children's Center."

A graduate of Bishop McGuinness

High School in Oklahoma City, Milligan earned his bachelor's degree in business administration and master's degree in accounting from the University of Notre Dame. He returned to Oklahoma and worked two years with KPMG LLP before joining the staff at The Children's Center.

"Mike has a commitment to Oklahoma. His work at The Children's Center has given him the knowledge to advocate for and understand the needs of children with disabilities and their families," Richards said. "Mike is brilliant at securing funding sources, so these children are given every opportunity to maximize their potential."

In addition to his work at The Children's Center, Milligan has volunteered his time to help coach for several area Catholic schools and leagues. He and his wife, Misty, have three daughters – Molly, Megan, and Madelyn – and one son, Michael.

Milligan attributed his strong work ethic and values to his parents and grandparents, who he said taught him firsthand how to be philanthropic.

"I treat others how they would like to be treated – with honesty, integrity, and compassion," he said. "I try to use my talents and skills to serve others."



Congratulations Kristie Mitchell



The YWCA OKC works to break the cycle and empower new beginnings for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We are proud that Kristie Mitchell is being recognized for her work in these areas. Her dedication to serving victims impacts their lives – and our community!

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Kristie Mitchell

**Chief programs officer
YWCA Oklahoma City
Birth date: January 1980**

Achievers
under **40**
THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014

Oklahoma native Kristie Mitchell has helped thousands of women and children through her work at the YWCA Oklahoma City. But it's those victims, Mitchell said, that have taught her so much about life.

"They have encouraged me to face adversity head-on and to stay involved," Mitchell said. "Because I have learned so much from their very personal and heart-wrenching experiences, I have been inspired to grow in my career as an advocate against domestic violence."

After earning her bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Oklahoma, Mitchell began working for the YWCA of Oklahoma City as a social services specialist in 2002. Her abilities enabled Mitchell to climb her way up the corporate ladder, while also obtaining her master's degree, and she was promoted to her current position as chief programs officer in 2012.

"Kristie has not only affected thousands of lives through the direct services she has provided, but she has, in fact, impacted the field of domestic violence and sexual assault on a state level through her prolific work with law enforcement and the judiciary system," said Lesley Smith March, chief of the Oklahoma Attorney General Office's Victim Services Unit.

Since 2008, Mitchell has led the Oklahoma County Coordinated

Community Response Team, helping the multidisciplinary team identify systems issues that affect adult and child victims.

"Kristie is one of the most humble, sincere, intellectual, hardworking individuals I have ever known and manages to be a vibrant ray of hope in the midst of the most flooding ills facing humanity," said Jackie Miller, administrative law judge at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission and former board member of the YWCA. "Kristie exhibits an unprecedented commitment to adult and child victims of domestic violence and through personal work ethic and immeasurable individual efforts, helps to transform those victims into miraculous survivors of purpose and hope."

Mitchell said her greatest influence has been her mother, who had a heart for helping people anyway she could.

"And she was never afraid to speak up on behalf of others," Mitchell said. "I am simply a product of many caring and smart women who remind me to use my voice for others. I believe problems of today, like domestic violence, will only rise to the level our community is willing to accept."

It's that social conscience that she is committed to instill in her three daughters – Aariah, 8; and 4-year-old twins, Aiyana and Aliyah.





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Todd Pefferman

Partner
BKD CPAs & Advisors
Birth date: October 1975

Achievers
under **40**

From moving rubble to the curb and picking up belongings that were salvageable to providing tax advice to tornado victims, Todd Pefferman has been an ace in the hole.

When the Oklahoma Society of CPAs was looking for someone to help with presentations in February and March on the tax implications for natural disasters, Pefferman gladly stepped up to the plate.

Pefferman, the leader of BKD CPAs and Advisors' tax practice at its Oklahoma City office, has given presentations to more than 350 victims of the May 2013 tornadoes. The presentations helped provide information on what disaster relief was available per the tax code, how to treat insurance reimbursements, and what to do if they lost tax returns or documentation, among other tax preparation tips.

Not only does Pefferman have the ability to offer these victims professional advice, he also can provide them guidance based on his personal experience.

"It was important to me to be able to assist as many people as I could on this topic, having had to go through it myself," said Pefferman, who used to work in BKD's Joplin, Mo., office.

In early 2011, he took a position

to further his career with the firm's Oklahoma City office. He and his family were finishing up moving when the May 2011 tornado ripped through Joplin, directly damaging their house.

Todd J. Lisle, managing partner of BKD's Oklahoma offices, said Pefferman has been pivotal in the heightened level of success at the Oklahoma City office.

"(Pefferman) has accomplished this namely through personal ownership of the tax practice and lifting up the colleagues that work alongside him," Lisle said.

"He has fostered a close-knit, team-oriented and supportive culture within his practice and his team that permeates into the office as a whole."

Pefferman earned his accounting degree from Missouri Southern State University, where he also played on the golf team. His love of golf has helped him make numerous connections over the years and earned him a spot in the Joplin Golf Hall of Fame in 2012.

"I truly love playing golf. It has provided me so many opportunities to meet new people and develop relationships with so many of my closest friends," he said. "I'm thankful my dad was able to introduce me to the game at such an early age."

He and his wife, Nikki, have two daughters – Abigail and Olivia.



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Emily K. Pomeroy

Achievers
under 40

Senior attorney
Center for Economic Development Law
Birth date: August 1976

Through the legal arena, Emily K. Pomeroy has played a key role in the planning and preparation of such development projects as the 50-story Devon headquarters building, Core to Shore, the Midwest City Downtown Redevelopment Project and the renovation of the Shangri-La Hotel property on Grand Lake.

Pomeroy is a senior attorney for the Center for Economic Development Law, which is general counsel to the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority. She and Dan Batchelor, chairman of the firm, assisted the authority and the city of Oklahoma City in the real estate transactions and financing authorizations associated with the Devon development, including the creation of Increment District No. 8, which helps fund the Project 180 improvements downtown.

"To watch the stacks of paper turn in to the world-class Devon headquarters and the surrounding improvements is a professional accomplishment I am not sure can be topped," Pomeroy said. "It is exciting to have been a part of the team associated with a project that has so dramatically changed the shape of downtown Oklahoma City."

Pomeroy joined the Center for Economic Development Law in 2003 after graduating from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. She became an owner and principal of the firm in 2010.

"During Emily's 10-year

professional service focusing on public-private partnerships and a wide range of economic development activities to stimulate investment, create jobs, and reclaim blighted areas of communities, her service has been exceptionally effective and immensely valuable in making significant contributions to our Oklahoma communities," Batchelor said.

A native of Oklahoma City, Pomeroy earned her bachelor's degree from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, where she played Division I volleyball and was named Bucknell's Co-athlete of the Year in 1999.

Her contributions to the nonprofit world have included serving on the boards of Historical Preservation Inc. and Positively Paseo.

Pomeroy and her husband, Trent Hancock, have 2-year-old twins: Simone and Will.

"Her values are obvious: she believes in building and preserving community at its roots and is willing to do the necessary work – intellectual and manual – to support community development in our city," said Pam Fleischaker, author of *American Woman: Lost and Found in Oklahoma* and a friend of Pomeroy's. "Her family is her mainstay and she approaches the balancing act of marriage, family and career with humor and wisdom, rare for a young person."



Brett Price

**Senior vice president
Newmark Grubb Levy Strange Beffort
Birth date: December 1982**

Achievers
under **40**
THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014

Whether it's closing that big deal or riding a bike 100 miles in over 100-degree temperatures, Brett Price is determined to work hard.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Price began his career in real estate in 2005. Since then he has continued to hone his skills in the commercial real estate brokerage profession and achieved recognition as a top contributor in his firm. In 2013, Price was promoted to senior vice president of Newmark Grubb Levy Strange Beffort, which he considers his greatest professional accomplishment.

"Without an amazing mentor, Tim Strange, I not only would not still be in the business but I would not have achieved the professional success I have today," Price said.

In the last seven years, Price has closed more than \$150 million in transactions. He received the 2013 Industrial Sale of the Year award from the Commercial Real Estate Council of Oklahoma City and earned a spot as one of the top producers in Newmark Grubb Knight Frank, an international commercial real estate brokerage firm.

"In real estate, success can only be measured by the deals you close, and we have been successful closing many more deals with Mr. Price," said Richard

Tanenbaum, CEO of Gardner Tanenbaum Holdings. "Mr. Price continually demonstrates the skills, entrepreneurial mentality, professionalism and resourcefulness needed to overcome issues with complicated business transactions."

Price said working hard was a trait ingrained in him by his parents. His father was a successful small business owner and an avid cyclist who often proudly recalled his finish of the 100-mile Hotter-N-Hell race in Wichita Falls, Texas.

"Shortly after his death I purchased a bicycle with the hopes of one day completing the Hotter-N-Hell 100," Price said. "In August 2011, I completed my first Hotter-N-Hell 100. That day was particular hot and set a record temperature for the race when it topped 110 degrees. The medical staff called off the race early but luckily I was able to finish just before it was shut down. I will never forget that day."

Since then, Price has completed three more 100-mile rides, including the Hotter-N-Hell again in 2012.

In addition, Price finds time to volunteer as a big brother for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma.

He and his wife, Leighann, have one son, Nolan.



Katherine Richard

**Founder and CEO
Warwick Energy Group
Birth date: March 1982**

At 32, Katherine Richard is one of the youngest CEOs of oil and gas companies with more than \$500 million in assets.

Richard founded Oklahoma City-based Warwick Energy Group in 2010.

"I describe Oklahoma City as the Silicon Valley of the oil and gas industry and that's exactly what it is," Richard said. "This city is a mecca of oil and gas ingenuity. It is exceedingly supportive of oil-field entrepreneurship and this makes sense culturally since the major companies that dominate this city commercially have all been built over the past three decades by entrepreneurs."

Investment funds managed by Warwick Energy own interests in 5,000 wells in 13 states.

Richard said she is inspired by the support and inspiration of her mentors and the capabilities of her team led by Shilpa Abbitt, Doug Bellis, Max Germin, Jessica Tompkins and Bob Wagner. Plus, she loves her job.

"Spending weekends stuck in the nitty-gritty of vetting or debunking forecasts and investment theses doesn't bother me," she said. "In fact, I really can't think of anything else I'd rather do."

In addition to her duties with Warwick Energy, Richard has been an adviser to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines on

energy development and transparency since 2010. She also serves on the advisory council of MicroVest Capital Management, the first private micro-finance investment firm in the U.S.

Last year, she was elected to the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders class and this spring was one of Oil & Gas Investor's 20 Rising Stars in the Oil & Gas Industry Under 40.

Richard, a Harvard graduate, began her career at Goldman Sachs, working in private equity and natural resources investment banking in New York, London, Paris and Dallas. From 2007 to 2009, she ran oil and gas, metals and mining, and sovereign debt investing for Serengeti Asset Management. From 2009 to 2012, she invested in international oil and gas for MSD Capital.

She is a member of the Oklahoma Independent Producers Association and is active in the Central Oklahoma Humane Society.

In describing her perspective on running an oil and gas company, Richard referenced Oklahoma City Thunder player Thabo Sefolosha's tattoo that says "For the love of the game."

"Building a business in such a dynamic industry that has driven the U.S. natural gas renaissance is an awesome game," she said. "And it's all for the love of the game."

Achievers
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Congratulations Sara and Marco!



Sara Kaplan

*Business Development Specialist
UCO Small Business Development Center*



Marco Rodriguez

*Assistant Director, Education Abroad
UCO Office of Global Affairs*

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Marco Rodriguez

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Achievers
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Assistant director

University of Central Oklahoma's Centre for Global Competency

Birth date: November 1980

When Marco Rodriguez came from Venezuela to Oklahoma to fulfill his higher education goals at the University of Central Oklahoma, he was a struggling international student without much financial aid.

Despite financial obstacles, Rodriguez was able to earn his bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in international business. Today, Rodriguez has added a master's degree in adult education to his repertoire and is helping young students expand their horizons through a global competency program he helped establish.

UCO's Centre for Global Competency provides education abroad programs such as international internships and short-term study tour courses in more than 21 countries around the world.

"I knew that education abroad could impact young Oklahoman lives, as well as careers," said Rodriguez, who is the center's assistant director. "In turn, our community and state economy are impacted for the better. I believe that being exposed to global competencies gives our students a better chance to excel in what they do for their companies or organizations."

Rodriguez said the amount of UCO students studying abroad has doubled each semester since it was created in 2007.

"I have countless stories of

students coming back and immediately joining the workforce in Oklahoma because they are more prepared for the challenge," he said. "I am happy to say that we are helping our state to avoid losing these bright minds to another state."

Gayle Kearns, chief academic officer at the Academy of Contemporary Music at UCO, served as an adviser to Rodriguez during his graduate studies.

"He lives each day to better himself in order to better others, which is the mind-set it takes to work in higher education," Kearns said of Rodriguez. "Marco spends a considerable amount of time advising students to be more globally competent by experiencing an international experience through one of our many international study programs – changing lives through diversity is important to Marco."

In addition to his work at UCO, Rodriguez has volunteered many hours to nonprofits such as SixTwelve, a work/live space in the Paseo Arts District dedicated to creativity and sustainability, as well as the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, deadCenter Film Festival and the Oklahoma City Philharmonic.

"When I wake up every day, I challenge myself to do at least one act of kindness," Rodriguez said. "I know I won't change the world in a day, but it is my only hope that that person will pay it forward."



Congratulations Courtney Ruark-Thompson

Cherokee Nation Businesses congratulates you for being
among The Journal Record's Achievers Under 40 class of 2014.



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Courtney Ruark ~ Thompson

Achievers
under **40**

**Director of government relations
Cherokee Nation, Cherokee Nation Businesses
Birth date: March 1982**

When Courtney Ruark-Thompson's friend and mentor asked her to be a trainer for a Native American leadership program, she was hesitant at first. But after serious consideration, Ruark-Thompson decided it was time to jump out of her comfort zone.

Now, Ruark-Thompson shares her story as a survivor who suffers from periodic severe depression in hopes to erase the stigma associated with such diseases and bring about positive change.

"I married a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. We both knew we needed treatment, and were too afraid to talk about it or ask for help. For both of us, we almost waited too long. Thankfully, we both reached out for help and today, we are both healthy," Ruark-Thompson said. "Now, we're parents, and are fully aware that both depression and addiction can be hereditary, and concerned that our son might suffer from either or both. For him, and for everyone else in our community who fights these diseases, we need to share our stories so anyone can feel confident to openly seek treatment that saves lives – just as if they suffered from any other serious disease."

Ruark-Thompson, a Cherokee citizen who remains an adjunct trainer for the Wellstone Action Native American Leadership Program, served

as the program's director for a year before assuming her current position as director of government relations for the Cherokee Nation and Cherokee Nation Businesses.

"She is a true leader in the Cherokee Nation and in Oklahoma," said Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker.

Ruark-Thompson earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Oklahoma.

She began her career as campaign manager for Cindy Rosenthal's successful bid for Norman City Council. Ruark-Thompson later worked with the Democratic National Committee and the Indigenous Democratic Network's List before joining the staff of U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn. It was in this position that Ruark-Thompson said she achieved her most significant professional accomplishment. Her hard work helped bring more than \$50 million in emergency funding to the Bureau of Indian Education Schools.

"Her work helped us shine a light on the need for tribal nations to have more control over how federal education dollars are spent in the education of their youth," McCollum said.

Ruark-Thompson said her greatest influences include her husband, Grant; her parents, Kim Glazier and Kirk Ruark; mentor Peggy Flanagan; and former teacher Richard Lemon.



Melissa Scaramucci

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under **40**

Owner

Local

Birth date: September 1975

Whether it's opening a restaurant, running a film festival or producing a movie, Melissa Scaramucci's creative spirit shines through.

As program director of deadCENTER, Scaramucci turned a near bankrupt film festival into a five-day event bringing international attention to Oklahoma's film industry.

"The way it has continued to explode makes my heart truly sing," Scaramucci said. "DeadCENTER is important to OKC and that's a fact of which I'm very, very proud."

The restaurant, called Local, that she started with her sisters, Heather Steele and Abby Clark, is transforming the industry.

"Melissa was on the cutting edge in Oklahoma in making her restaurant a destination for customers who value locally sourced and sustainable dining," said Jim Hopper, president and CEO of the Oklahoma Restaurant Association.

Local works directly with Oklahoma farmers to source most of the food for the restaurant.

"We use everything, and we make everything, including all of our sauces, soups and stocks," Scaramucci said.

Even the art in the Norman restaurant comes from local sources. Local has an art gallery and shop that

sells locally made art and boutique items. Her love of the arts is further seen through her service on the executive board of the Norman Arts Council and the associate board of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

"Melissa's contributions to the arts community in Oklahoma and her dedication to supporting locally crafted wares make her a true leader in the state and someone I am honored to work with on a day-to-day basis," said Erinn Gavaghan, executive director of the Norman Arts Council.

Entrepreneurship is nothing new for Scaramucci. From her father and in-laws to former employers, Scaramucci said entrepreneurs have been her mentors and provided inspiration since she began working.

"I had no illusions about how hard owning and operating my own business would be — it's been modeled for me my whole life," Scaramucci said. "But the joy of accomplishment is worth every hour, every setback, every dishwasher that no-shows a Sunday morning shift. I know, because I've been a witness to it, that owning your own business can be the path to the greatest force of good any one person can hope to achieve in a lifetime."

Scaramucci and her husband, Todd, have two daughters, Stella and Sofia.



Joshua Snavelly

Assistant dean for advancement and external relations
Oklahoma City University School of Law
Birth date: May 1983

Achievers
under 40

"To whom much is given, much will be required."

This phrase sums up the life philosophy of Joshua Snavelly, who said he comes from a long line of family members who have given themselves in service of their country, their church, and their community. Most notably were his two grandfathers – one serving in Gen. George Patton Jr.'s tank battalion and the other piloting landing craft in Europe during World War II.

Snavelly said hearing about this selfless service is what cultivated a sense of obligation for him to do the same.

"This obligation, this 'inheritance,' pushed me to make hard decisions and sacrifices," he said. "And it is those decisions, those sacrifices, that I believe are making a difference in my life and the lives of those around me."

As the assistant dean for advancement and external relations at Oklahoma City University's School of Law, Snavelly hopes to make a difference for not only the school's alumni but its current and future student population as well.

"I am currently engaged in the direction and execution of a \$23 million capital campaign to move our law school to a downtown location,"

Snavelly said. "This is the single most important and transformative event in the history of our law school, and I am fortunate to play a role in the vision, acquisition, and implementation of the overall project and campaign."

Valerie K. Couch, dean of OCU's School of Law, described Snavelly as a strategic thinker and pragmatic leader.

"He is able to hold fast to the larger vision amidst complex layers of details," Couch said. "He skillfully combines patience and restraint on the one hand with determination and action on the other. And his ability to secure and maintain the trust and cooperation of others has been remarkable."

Snavelly also serves as an adjunct law professor for national security law for his alma mater and was just named the national co-chair of the Homeland and National Security Law Committee for the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

He earned his juris doctor and master of business administration degrees from OCU and obtained a master of law degree in national security and foreign relations from George Washington University. He previously earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Central Oklahoma.



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Amanda Storck

Achievers
under 40

**Chief of administration, chief financial officer
Oklahoma Water Resources Board
Birth date: December 1977**

Amanda Storck's job at the Oklahoma Water Resources Board combines her love of spreadsheets with her passion for her home state.

For years, Storck was set on becoming an accountant when she grew up. But during her junior year in college, she discovered that was not her path in life after all. She switched her major to finance and pursued a career in banking before realizing that working on budget and policy issues for the state was more up her alley.

Storck was a budget analyst for Govs. Frank Keating and Brad Henry before being named director of policy and research budget for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department in 2005. There she played a large role in establishing an Oklahoma State Parks Fund designed to ensure that state parks have maintenance funds to keep them viable for current and future generations.

She later served as director of government relations for the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology and director of policy and communications for the office of the state's secretary of environment before assuming her current position in 2011.

"Amanda has repeatedly made strategic and tactical decisions at the OWRB that have helped create

efficiencies in the agency's operations," said J.D. Strong, OWRB executive director.

Outside of the OWRB, Storck can be found helping others get healthy.

"As a group exercise instructor at the Midtown YMCA, Devon and Chesapeake, I feel I can have an impact and influence people to take care of their bodies and lead healthy lifestyles," she said. "In 2012, I competed in my first short-distance triathlon and will continue my training to hopefully one day compete in an Ironman distance race."

In addition to participating in various charity races, Storck has volunteered for nonprofits such as the YMCA, OKC Beautiful and the United Way of Central Oklahoma, just to name a few.

"At her young age, Amanda has striven for excellence and exhibits the characteristics of a seasoned leader who makes integrity, communication, humor, professionalism, confidence, commitment, innovation, inspiration, and collaboration priorities in all she does," said Robb Gray, with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and former executive director for the Oklahoma State Tourism and Recreation Department. "I am confident that her work will in the long run make an impact on the state and on the lives of those she encounters."



Ryan Whitaker

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014
Achievers
under 40

Director of software development
NetSuite Inc.
Birth date: January 1978

Ryan Whitaker calls himself a “dreamer-finisher.”

“A dreamer or a visionary creates the big picture, and the finisher works out the ugly details toward completion,” said Whitaker. “To be successful in business, I think it’s imperative you be a dreamer-finisher. That’s becoming increasingly rare. Our competitors were tossed by the waves of distraction, where we finished the vision.”

With the development and ultimate sale of a successful technology company, Whitaker and his co-founders finished their vision.

Whitaker and his partners, Justin Cowan and Gary Saunders, founded Element Fusion in 1999 in borrowed warehouse space and focused on building websites for companies. The Oklahoma City company moved to its current office space off of Hefner Parkway the following year. But Whitaker knew that continued growth would mean a shift in thinking. His thinking was to broaden the company’s offerings to software.

“With software, an hour spent by our team would grow our bottom line exponentially rather than linearly, he said. “And, so it did.”

For the next five years, Element Fusion was listed among the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber’s Metro 50 list of fastest-growing companies in the area. The company also made

Inc. magazine’s 5000 list of the nation’s fastest-growing companies four consecutive years.

Element Fusion’s continued success brought dozens of acquisition and partnership offers from companies across the world. However, Whitaker said an offer from California-based NetSuite Inc. stood out from the rest.

“It was a match made in heaven, as our values were in perfect alignment,” he said.

NetSuite completed its acquisition of Element Fusion in 2013. Whitaker remains on board as director of software development.

Whitaker’s vision as a dreamer-finisher does not just apply to his professional life. In 2012, he and a group of friends set out for a mission trip to Nicaragua. Helping to bring more than 100 people to know Christ and delivering needed medical help to more than 700 in the remote villages, Whitaker said, is one of his proudest personal accomplishments.

“Ryan’s desire to be a positive influence not only to those in his workplace, but in his family, community and beyond has led him to continually evaluate his own actions as a leader and to strive for excellence in this area to the same extent he does for excellence in the operations of his business,” said J. Michael Bell, who has known Whitaker for more than a decade.



Paige Williams

**Director of tourism
Chickasaw Nation
Birth date: July 1985**

Achievers
under **40**
THE JOURNAL RECORD 2014

*P*aige Williams said her personal philosophy can be quantified in one word – conviction.

“My convictions guide me to be my best daily, pushing my limits while holding high expectations of myself and my outcomes,” Williams said. “My convictions are sometimes known, however, typically a feeling that pulls and pushes me towards goals and outcomes for unknown reasons.”

This conviction has helped the native Oklahoman accomplish many goals, including seeking her graduate degree immediately after college, traveling the world on her own personally and professionally and, as director of tourism of the Chickasaw Nation, building a department from scratch into one with more than 30 employees.

Williams graduated from Oklahoma State University in 2007 with a bachelor’s degree in hotel restaurant administration and earned her master’s degree in tourism administration from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., the following year.

She returned to Oklahoma to assume her current position with the Chickasaw Nation in 2008.

“My most significant professional accomplishment has been the development, integration and success of Chickasaw Country, the tourism brand representing the 7,600-plus square miles of the Chickasaw Nation,” Williams said.

Since the launch of the brand, website (www.chickasawcountry.com)

and integrated social media campaign, the project has won numerous national and international awards, including Best Website and Best Social Media Campaign in 2013 by the U.S. Travel Association.

“The professional success of Chickasaw Country has provided the Chickasaw Nation a comprehensive campaign reflecting the vast opportunities available within south-central Oklahoma. For a nation so committed to benefiting its citizens, I feel honored to be able to provide a piece of success in return,” she said.

In addition to her work with the tribe, Williams is active with several state and national tourism associations.

Serving the community is also important to her as she is a board member of Allied Arts, Leadership Oklahoma City and the Youth Leadership Exchange.

In addition, she serves on the board of trustees for Mount St. Mary Catholic High School.

“Her ability to diplomatically speak the truth for the purpose of progress is highlighted by her attitude of ‘it’s the right thing to do,’” said Talita DeNegri, principal of Mount St. Mary.

Williams said her parents instilled independence in her while she was still a young girl.

“This independence has allowed me the opportunity to grow and fail,” she said, “all the while learning how to pick myself up and carry on.”





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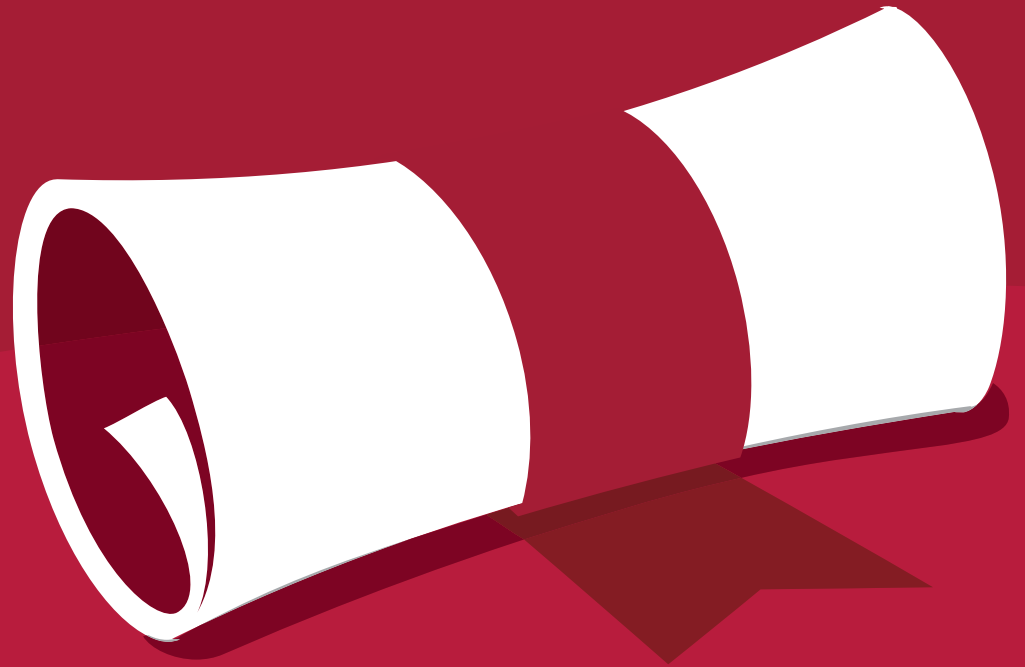
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