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101 N. Robinson Ave., Ste. 101,
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
(405) 235-3100
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Publisher & Editor

Ted Streuli

Advertising Director

Sarah Barrow

Events Manager

Brittany Attaway

Special Publications Editor

Jessica Mitchell

Copy Editor/Web Editor

Ron Clay

Writers

Heide Brandes

Lenzy Krehbiel-Burton

Jessica Mitchell

Advertising Account Managers

Vicki Madden

Kent Perkins

Wendy Duncan

Graphic Designer

Tabitha Wilson

PROGRAM

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The Journal Record Publishing Co.

Sarah Barrow

Director of Advertising
The Journal Record Publishing Co.

Brittany Attaway

Events Manager
The Journal Record Publishing Co.

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ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTATION

Chuck Garrett

Executive Vice President
Cherokee Nation Businesses

GUEST SPEAKER

Daniel Molina, M.D.

2016 Achievers Under 40 Honoree
Oklahoma City Indian Clinic

PRESENTATION OF CLASS XIV, ACHIEVERS UNDER 40

Jenny Love Meyer

Love's Travel Stops and Country Stores

Bob Lane

Director
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#Achievers UNDER40

The Journal Record's Achievers Under 40 program recognizes Oklahoma's rising stars under the age of 40. These young leaders are the newest generation of decision makers, setting the Oklahoma Standard in business and industry. They are contributing significantly to their professions, communities and state. We congratulate this 14th class of Achievers Under 40 honorees and thank them for making Oklahoma an even better place to live.

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PARTNERS



BKD's Oklahoma presence includes approximately 125 professionals in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Enid. The Oklahoma offices have been recognized numerous times for their dedication to excellence, lifelong learning and community investment, including as a Journal Record Beacon Award honoree, Oklahoman Top Workplace, okc.BIZ Best of Business honoree and Tulsa Business Journal Best Place to Work in Tulsa. Recent workplace culture initiatives include a local employee engagement council and awards program recognizing commitment to BKD's values annually.

Local employees are engaged with various civic and professional associations, including chambers of commerce, the Oklahoma Business Ethics Consortium and the Oklahoma Society of CPAs. They participate with a number of industry

organizations, including the Oklahoma Bankers Association and Oklahoma Healthcare Financial Management Association.

The Oklahoma offices invest considerably in local nonprofit missions, whether volunteering, fundraising or serving on committees and boards. Local team members, along with BKD Foundation, have contributed to numerous not-for-profits over the years.

BKD is a national, full-service CPA & advisory firm with 35 offices in 16 states offering audit, tax and consulting services to the health care, financial services, government, nonprofit and commercial industries. The firm's approximately 2,600 partners and employees serve clients in all 50 states and internationally.



The Chickasaw Nation is economically strong, culturally vibrant and full of energetic people dedicated to the preservation of family, community and heritage.

The Chickasaw Nation has been under the leadership of Gov. Bill Anoatubby since 1987.

The tribal government is a democratic republic modeled after the federal government of the United States. Registered voters elect a governor and lieutenant governor, 13 members to the tribal Legislature and three justices on the tribal Supreme Court.

The structure of the government encourages and supports infrastructure for strong business ventures and an advanced tribal economy. Monies generated in business are divided between investments for further diversification of enterprises and support

of tribal government operations, programs and services for Chickasaw citizens.

The Chickasaw Nation is one of Oklahoma's largest employers and operates more than 100 businesses.

The Nation has more than 64,000 citizens worldwide. Jurisdictional territory includes more than 7,648 square miles of south-central Oklahoma, encompassing all or parts of 13 Oklahoma counties.

The mission of the Chickasaw Nation is "to enhance the overall quality of life of the Chickasaw people." To accomplish this mission, the Nation provides a wide variety of programs and services, including health care, education, housing, aging, youth and more.

PARTNERS



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ENTERTAINMENT SPONSOR



Cherokee Nation Businesses is the wholly owned corporate arm of the Cherokee Nation, the largest tribal nation in the United States. The Cherokee Nation covers all or part of 14 counties in northeast Oklahoma, and its 350,000 citizens are spread across the globe.

The tribe and its businesses directly employ more than 11,000 people and support another 6,700 jobs. A recent economic impact study showed the Cherokee Nation has a \$2.03 billion impact on northeast Oklahoma and supported \$785 million in wages.

CNB owns companies in the gaming, hospitality, information technology, health care, personnel services, distribution, manufacturing, telecommunications, environmental services,

and security and defense industries. Its primary clients include the federal government and business sectors that support federal contracting. CNB employs people in more than 40 states and overseas.

The mission of CNB is to grow the economy of Cherokee Nation and Oklahoma through diversification, while creating jobs for Cherokee Nation citizens. All of CNB's profits are either reinvested into job creation or tribal services.

This strategy has helped the Cherokee Nation employ a record number of people, provide more services than ever for its citizens and establish strong, lasting partnerships with the state of Oklahoma.



SPEAKER

Daniel Molina, M.D.

After earning his bachelor's degree with honors from the University of New Mexico, Daniel Molina went on to obtain his medical degree from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland. He joined the staff of the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic in 2009 and has continued to take on increasing responsibilities with the organization. Today as chief medical officer, Molina is responsible for the health outcomes of nearly 20,000 patients as he leads a team of more than 100 clinicians and support staff.

Molina's servant leadership was recognized nationally by the director of the Indian Health Service with the Customer Service Award. He has received numerous other honors throughout his career, including most recently being named Oklahoma Primary

Care Association Clinician of the Year in 2015.

Outside of work, Molina finds time to devote to several charitable organizations, including the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, American Diabetes Association, Cavett Kids Foundation and Colter's Toybox. He combined his love for endurance racing with his desire to give back by teaming up with the Go Mitch Go Foundation. He completed his first Ironman triathlon in Arizona in 2014 and raised nearly \$14,000 in the process to help the foundation in its effort to find a cure for childhood cancers.

Molina is married to Jasmine Gaddy, who is an Oklahoma City rheumatologist.

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LINDSAY LAFEVERS ARCHER, J.D.

Senior Attorney

Oklahoma Corporation Commission

As senior attorney for the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, Lindsay LaFevers Archer excels in the areas of contract drafting and procurement, legislative tracking, rule drafting, litigation support, research and other areas that are critical to the agency.

She also became a certified procurement officer, agency liaison to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission and was the commission rules liaison for the 2016 and 2017 agency rulemakings. Because of her efforts, she was also awarded the “It Takes a Village Award” for outstanding service and assistance to the OCC’s Public Utility Division and the people of Oklahoma.

“One of the things that I appreciate the most about Lindsay is her ability to tackle challenges that might seem daunting to others with eagerness and positivity,” said Tim Rhodes, director of administration for the Corporation Commission.

While in law school in 2005, Archer served as a law clerk for the city of Chicago Department of Buildings, where she gained experience in investigating porch collapses, researching building code violations, drafting internal agency policies and working with city alderpersons to develop ordinances regarding buildings.

“My work with the city of Chicago really triggered my desire to work in the government sector and led me down the path to the position I have today with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission,” said Archer, who is originally from Tishomingo and is a member of the Chickasaw Nation.

While in college, Archer was a member of Class I of the University of Oklahoma’s National Education for Women’s Leadership program and served as president of Oklahoma City University’s Women in Law chapter. When the Oklahoma Women’s Coalition was founded she helped launch the nonprofit, and she now serves as a founding board member and vice president of the Oklahoma Single Parents’ Scholarship Program.

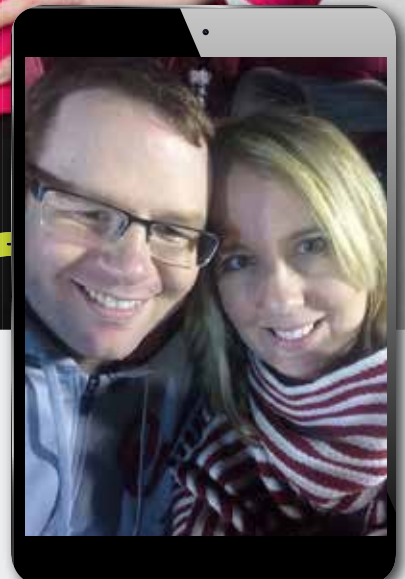
“Her success reflects her intellect, her positive and enthusiastic nature, her willingness to go the extra mile and her natural leadership ability,” said Jean Warner, co-founder of N.E.W. Leadership, Oklahoma Women’s Coalition and Oklahoma Single Parents’ Scholarship Program.

She and her husband, Daniel, have two children – Jack and Quinn.

Raising her children and sharing with others what she has learned, Archer said, is her greatest personal accomplishment.

Her 4-year-old son, Jack, has been diagnosed with a developmental delay and attends Special Care Inc., a school for Oklahoma children of all abilities.

“Being an advocate for my child and learning how best to meet his needs has really opened my eyes to a world I knew nothing about,” she said.



Age **35**

BLAIRE ATKINSON

Senior Associate Vice President of Development Services
Oklahoma State University Foundation



Age **35**

Blaire Atkinson's fingerprints are all over Stillwater. As the senior associate vice president of development services for the Oklahoma State University Foundation, Atkinson is responsible for providing strategic direction and oversight to the organization's marketing and communications, donor relations and special event functions that support fundraising initiatives for scholarships, programs, faculty, capital projects, and other needs at Oklahoma State University.

During the course of Atkinson's six years there, the foundation's Branding Success fundraising campaign hit its \$1 billion goal almost 15 months ahead of schedule and wrapped up in December 2014 with more than 100,000 donors contributing \$1.2 billion. During her tenure, the foundation was also been recognized as a Best Nonprofit in 2016 and a Best Place to Work in Oklahoma in 2012.

Her volunteer efforts off campus have left an equally indelible mark on the Stillwater community.

As a former co-chair of Stillwater Relay for Life and the OSU Foundation United Way, along with volunteering at the Wondertorium – a local hands-on children's museum – and serving on the board of directors for a Stillwater-area youth football league, Atkinson also works to improve the lives of children and teenagers facing a difficult home life.

Since 2014, she has served on the board of Payne County Youth Services, and she currently serves as the board chair. Payne County Youth Services is a 45-year-old private nonprofit that offers individual, family, crisis intervention and group counseling for both mental health and substance abuse issues, as well as the only emergency youth shelter in the Stillwater area. Serving about 250 teenagers annually, Payne County Youth Services does not charge for its services, which puts the onus on board members to fundraise to help keep the facility's doors open.

"Blaire has a servant's heart, an incredible attitude and she is making a tremendous impact in our state," OSU Foundation CEO and President Kirk Jewell wrote.

Atkinson originally hails from Vici, Oklahoma, and is a member of Leadership Oklahoma's Class 30. She is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and received the OSU Foundation's Jewell Award for Excellence in 2012. She is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. She and her husband, Matt, have three children – Wyatt, Westin and Morgan.

LORENZO AZAR BANKS, J.D.

Partner/Attorney

Banks, Gilbert, Gillett PLLC

When compared to those of his peers in the Oklahoma Bar Association, Lorenzo Banks' resume is missing one thing.

He has never been an associate at someone else's law firm.

A 2011 graduate of the Oklahoma City University School of Law, Banks launched his own practice right out of school, the Minority Report Law Office.

Currently a partner with Banks, Gilbert and Gillett, the Tulsa native regularly takes pro bono cases from clients unable to qualify for a public defender and who would otherwise have to represent themselves. The pro bono work comes on top of his full-time caseload of civil, criminal and family law cases.

In addition to starting his own law firm, Banks also works part-time as the assistant director of admissions and director of diversity initiatives for OCU's law school. Under his leadership, OCU's law school earned the Oklahoma Bar Association's Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Award in 2014 and has received national recognition for its efforts to recruit and retain a student body that reflects a wide range of racial, ethnic, academic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

"He goes out of his way to encourage our students and show them that he believes in them," OCU associate dean of admissions Laurie Jones wrote. "For example, when at the courthouse on a matter for one of his clients, Lorenzo will scan the courtrooms and hallways for any OCU law students and will make a point of stopping by to chat with them, show them around and introduce them to the courthouse staff. This generosity of spirit and with his time is probably one of the most striking characteristics of Lorenzo: He is always looking for ways to make a situation better, to help people achieve their full potential and to make the world a more just, compassionate and civil place.

"He is shaping the next generation of lawyers in ways that will improve the quality of justice in Oklahoma."

A regular volunteer on the free legal clinic circuit, Banks serves on the board of the Oklahoma Criminal Defense Lawyers Association and is a member of the Oklahoma City chapter of the Association of Black Lawyers. He is also a graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma and regularly volunteers at the school's charity events.



Age **35**

NINA BARKER

Program Manager

Federal Aviation Administration



Age **36**

Nina Barker has her wings – and then some.

A program manager with the Federal Aviation Administration, Barker earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering from the University of Miami. While in undergraduate school, Barker participated in the National Science Foundation's Research for Undergraduates Program at the University of Oklahoma, which eventually led her to come to Norman to pursue a doctorate in industrial engineering. Components of her doctoral thesis formed the necessary integrative basis and algorithms for subsequent OU engineering students to use in their research.

Barker has worked her way up the ranks at the Federal Aviation Administration over the last 12 years. In 2009, she earned the Pathfinder award for her team's efforts to lay some of the groundwork to automate the FAA's supply chain. The project included developing the necessary software and processes, plus overseeing the installation of the applicable equipment.

Her current project has her overseeing efforts to modernize the scheduling system for air traffic controllers nationwide. Upon completion, Barker's team will be responsible for the updated system's rollout across more than 300 facilities.

"Nina is known for her tenacious ability to tackle work challenges that are extremely difficult, analyze and deconstruct the tasks to accomplish achievable results and engage the workforce along the way," former co-worker Jo Tarrh wrote. "I have not been able to give her a task that she was not able to complete."

When she is not on the clock, Barker regularly gives back to her community. Along with frequently participating as a mentor in OU's Industrial Engineering Leadership Program, the Delta Delta Delta alumna is an active member of the FAA Project Management Mentor Program, and the FAA Technical Women's Organization.

Under her leadership, the local chapter of the Technical Women's Organization grew significantly and launched an after-school STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program, providing hands-on science enrichment activities for local elementary school students and encouragement for young girls considering pursuing a career in more technical fields.

She also volunteers with the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps, the state's only medical and public health volunteer program. Established by the federal government in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the OMRC provides supplemental support for ongoing emergency response teams and systems during times of crisis, such as the aftermath of a natural disaster.



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CHASE BEASLEY

Corporate & Government Relations Oklahoma

American Airlines



Age **29**

Go to a Tulsa's Young Professionals event and chances are good that you'll run into Chase Beasley.

By day, the University of Oklahoma graduate is American Airlines' head of corporate and government relations for the state of Oklahoma, representing one of Tulsa's largest employers on public policy and community issues pending before city, county and state governments.

"I wake up every day excited to go to work and try and make a difference for my company and my city," Beasley said.

Off the clock, he is the leader of the Government Relations Crew for Tulsa's Young Professionals, which means planning and coordinating events aimed at addressing issues that affect young professionals and the future growth of Tulsa while engaging more 20- and 30-somethings in the political process.

Now in its third year with Beasley as a leader or co-leader, the Government Relations Crew has maintained an active social media presence as part of its efforts to educate younger voters on candidates and issues at the local, state and national level. Those efforts dovetail with a voter registration drive the crew sponsored during the 2016 election cycle that helped spur a record turnout among young voters in the Tulsa area.

That same enthusiasm spilled over into the 2017 edition of YPdayOK, the young professionals day at the Oklahoma Capitol. Hosted in conjunction with similar organizations in Claremore and other communities, more than 100 young professionals went to the Capitol in Oklahoma City to share their concerns with state legislators about Oklahoma's future.

When not volunteering with Tulsa's Young Professionals, Beasley can also be found at events hosted by the Rotary Club of Tulsa, the League of Women Voters or the Federalist Society. A former oil and gas landman, he is also a member of the Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce's Board of Advisors, a board member of the Union Schools Education Foundation, and a board intern with Leadership Tulsa.

"He selflessly dedicates his time, energy and passions to making a genuine impact in his community and not for recognition or praise, but simply because he cares," wrote Shagah Zakerion, former executive director of Tulsa's Young Professionals and a 2013 Achievers Under 40 honoree. "Anybody that knows Chase is drawn to his infectious personality, optimism and ability to bring people of all backgrounds together. His contagious love for Tulsa is evident in the countless ways he serves the community at large. I look forward to watching his continued success in the years to come."

GABRIEL BIRD, DDS

Owner/Operator, Dentist

Gabriel Bird, DDS. Dentistry

When they're not in someone's mouth, dentist Gabriel Bird has his fingers on the pulse of Norman.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma's College of Dentistry, Bird has been in private practice for a decade, taking on an office that was previously occupied by one of his professors.

Despite juggling the demands of a growing family, a private practice and his own real estate development company, Bird has made it a priority to be an active member of the Norman community.

Along with his professional memberships with the American Dental Association and its state and local-level affiliates, Bird is on the board for the Norman Arts Council, serving as chairman of its programs committee and co-chair of its annual fundraiser, The ONE Event.

Since Bird joined in 2015, the council has extended its programming on multiple levels. In response to continued cuts in state aid dollars, the council has grown its arts education scholarship program for Norman Public Schools to provide more opportunities for area children. It has also expanded its 2nd Friday Art Walk and launched the Secret Artists Series.

A member of the local chamber of commerce since 2012, he is the co-chairman of its Tomorrow's Leaders program, which targets sophomores at Norman's two high schools who have demonstrated leadership potential and works with them to further develop those skills.

On the philanthropy front, Bird is an annual sponsor of the Norman Fall Fest, the Norman Arts Council's ONE Event and the Citizens Advisory Board's annual coaches luncheon fundraiser, which helps provide financial support for the approximately 750 children in the Cleveland County Welfare System.

He also contributes time to ACC Health's Military Health Readiness Program, providing on-location dental services annually for active-duty and reserve military personnel.

As a four-time "Readers' Choice" award winner from the Norman Transcript, his devotion to both his practice and his community has not gone unnoticed by his patients.

"Gabriel recognizes the positive impact a committed, energetic person can have on the community," former Gov. David Walters wrote. "I have always found Gabriel to be wise beyond his years and am proud to now see him as Dr. Bird, a talented dentist, successful business owner and real estate developer. More importantly, he has become an effective leader as demonstrated by his involvement in local politics, mentoring of high schoolers, art advocacy and real estate development."

He and his wife, Erica, have one daughter, Emmerson, and another child on the way.



Age **37**

MELISSA BOWERS

Chief Financial Officer

Rick Scott Construction Inc.



Age **30**

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women hold less than 9 percent of all jobs in the construction industry and 26 percent of the leadership roles in the banking and finance sector.

Melissa Bowers can say she has done both.

Originally from Atlanta, Bowers is currently the chief financial officer for Rick Scott Construction, a general contracting firm with offices in Ponca City and Tulsa.

Prior to joining the construction industry, Bowers spent more than four years with Eastman National Bank as a credit risk officer. After years of building a sound risk analysis process, she became the first woman named to the 120-year-old bank's loan committee.

The chairwoman of the Ponca City Business Council and an alumna of Leadership Ponca City, Bowers also serves on the board of the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce and as the fundraising treasurer of the Marland Estate Foundation.

She is a founding member of Ponca Young Employees and the Key Executive group for Vistage Worldwide, a peer-to-peer corporate mentoring for business owners and executives of small to midsize businesses.

Her previous volunteer efforts include stints on the boards of the Ponca City Red Cross, Child Development Center, and Ponca City Friends of Education, plus time as a tutor with Loveworks, a Norman-based nonprofit that primarily targets middle school students.

As one of her Leadership Oklahoma Class 30 colleagues pointed out in his nomination letter, Bowers' head-on approach has put her in high demand among local organizations and in the business arena.

"Anyone who meets Melissa is immediately impressed with her intelligence, wit and commitment to excellence in all things," James Bost wrote. "Melissa is not afraid of difficult decisions, but makes them with a strong regard for the impact that potential outcomes will have on others. She is a remarkable combination of a detailed analytical mind, a kind and empathetic heart and a spirit of high standards, ethics and values."

Bowers is a graduate of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia, a cum laude graduate of the University of Georgia and a magna cum laude graduate of Oklahoma State University. She and her husband, Garrett, have one son, HB.

"My drive and ambition is undoubtedly influenced by my parents," Bowers said. "Their examples of selflessness, humility, and extraordinary worth ethic truly set the bar for the person I strive to be each and every day to not only improve myself, but also to improve my community and the incredible state I've come to call home."

KARA BYRD

Executive Director

Imagine Durant

Kara Byrd just wants to make southeastern Oklahoma a better place.

Originally from Atoka, the Southeastern Oklahoma State University graduate has spent almost a decade in the public sector to help make that happen.

Shortly after completing undergraduate school, Byrd joined the state Department of Health's Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust and went to work in two counties with a higher rate of tobacco use than both the state and national average. By teaching advocacy and prevention strategies, she helped increase student involvement by 300 percent in Coal and Atoka counties and the number of local level tobacco-free policies by 200 percent.

Part of that success can be attributed to an initiative she created that eventually went statewide. The program, "Behind the Glamour," exposed the tobacco industry's marketing practices that target girls.

In 2015, Byrd left the Health Department to become the executive director of Imagine Durant, a community-based initiative that works to improve the community through dialogue, strategic planning and partnerships.

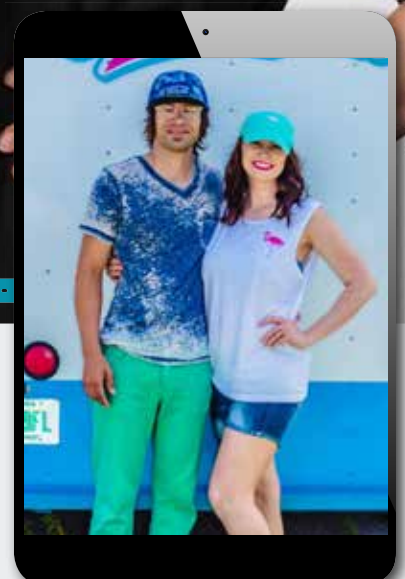
Under her leadership, the community is already seeing improved access to healthy food and recreation opportunities. The Magnolia Farmers Market, launched in June 2016, draws multiple vendors. In March, the Durant City Council approved new ordinances proposed by Byrd and Imagine Durant to allow food trucks to set up shop in town.

Additionally, Imagine Durant has launched a partnership with the National Park Service to create the Nowa Oka trail system. Upon completion, the system, whose name translates from Choctaw as "water walk," will connect the entire community through a series of walking, running and biking trails.

Her community involvement includes serving on the boards of Durant Young Professionals, Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival and United Way. She is also involved with the Bryan County Turning Point Coalition, Durant Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Class of 2016 and First United Bank's LEAD Program, and was a 2016 NextGen 30 Under 30 honoree.

Additionally, Byrd previously owned a successful photography company that specialized in high school seniors, weddings and headshots. She studied in New York with fashion photographer Lara Jade and has been featured in various magazines for her work with model, actress and dancer Lilyan Cole.

"I've yet to find something Kara won't tackle with energy and enthusiasm," nominator Lenzie Knight wrote. "She continues to impress me with her dedication to the improvement of our community; her drive and abilities make Oklahoma a better place to be."



Age **31**

AMANDA CLINTON

Vice President of Communications

Cherokee Nation Businesses



Age **38**

The bright lights of the big city suit Amanda Clinton just fine.

Originally from the unincorporated Mayes County community of Rose, Clinton has spent almost 20 years in a decidedly more urban environment.

After stints with KTKA in Topeka, Kansas, and KTUL in Tulsa, Clinton went to work for Cherokee Nation Businesses' communication department in 2005 and has not looked back.

In addition to being a spokeswoman for both the country's largest federally recognized tribe and its business arm, Clinton has played a key role in telling her tribe's story on television on its own terms.

Since her promotion to vice president of communications for Cherokee Nation Businesses in 2014, Clinton pushed her department to launch Osiyo, Voices of the Cherokee People, a monthly 30-minute news magazine that highlights tribal citizens across northeastern Oklahoma and even those as far away as Puerto Rico.

Within seven months, Clinton and her staff developed the show's creative concept and editorial standards, found a production team and host, and got the show's first episode on the air. Competing against programming from five other states, the show's first season won a Heartland Emmy for Best Cultural Documentary, plus five national awards from the Native American Journalists Association. Currently in its third season, the program is now regularly broadcast in four states and in more than 20 select cable markets.

Her team has also expanded the Cherokee Nation's online presence through an aggressive social media campaign and the rollout of Anadisgoi, a web-based news kiosk with press releases, pictures and videos highlighting both Cherokee Nation and its business arm.

"Whether it is communicating to our employees or coordinating media relations on behalf of the Cherokee Nation, Ms. Clinton is a true asset in managing and facilitating communications," Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker wrote. "Under her leadership, her team has created an award winning online newsroom, a quarterly magazine called Anadisgoi and maintains one of the best social media presences in Oklahoma."

A two-time graduate of Oklahoma State University, Clinton also moonlights as a part-time adjunct professor at her alma mater's Tulsa campus and previously served on the board of directors of the Oklahoma State University Alumni Association's Tulsa chapter, the organization's largest branch.

She also serves on the boards of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Tulsa Press Club. She is also a member of the Native American Journalists Association, Public Relations Society of America and Women in Communications.

Congratulations, Amanda Clinton.

Cherokee Nation Businesses celebrates your
being named one of The Journal Record's
2017 Achievers Under 40.



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EFFIE CRAVEN

State Advocacy and Public Policy Director
Oklahoma Food Banks



Age **29**

If Effie Craven had her way, no Oklahoman would go to bed hungry.

The state advocacy and public policy director for the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, Craven has spent the last two years working both sides of the aisle at the state Capitol to find more allies in the fight against food insecurity.

“She is very committed to the mission of the food banks and is adept at persuading others to take action on behalf of the hungry,” wrote Eileen Bradshaw, executive director of the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. “Her conviction is contagious.

“Since she took over our advocacy work, we really strengthened our efforts and broadened our coalition.”

With more than 652,000 Oklahomans at risk of going hungry on any given day, Craven’s commitment has paid off for the Oklahoma Food Banks. During the 2017 legislative session, several anti-hunger measures received bipartisan support in both the state House of Representatives and state Senate, including House Bill 1875, which allows schools to donate excess food left over from school meals to children on-site and protects schools from liability as long as standard food safety practices are followed. The measure provides an additional avenue for schools to maximize the resources available for hungry children, rather than throwing excess food in the trash.

Craven’s efforts are also getting the Oklahoma Food Banks some attention within the nonprofit world. Since 2015, the organizations were tapped for Feeding America’s Advocacy Hall of Fame.

A graduate of Oklahoma State University, the University of Arizona and the University of Oklahoma, Craven has spent her entire professional career in the public sector, trying to improve the world around her. Before joining the Oklahoma Food Banks, she spent three years with the American Lung Association as a healthy air campaign coordinator. While pursuing her master’s in public health at the University of Arizona, she worked to educate area children on nutrition and health at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tucson.

Craven also serves on the boards of directors for the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and Let’s Fix This, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that works to create meaningful interaction between regular Oklahomans and elected officials while educating Oklahomans on law and public policy.

She is also the co-chair of the public policy committee for the Oklahoma Turning Point Council, a nonprofit that works to improve the state’s public health outcomes through community partnerships.

SHAWN DELLEGAR, J.D.

Intellectual Property Attorney

Crowe & Dunlevy PC

Shawn Dellegar knows his way around a patent or two. A Tulsa-based intellectual property attorney, Dellegar joined Crowe & Dunlevy as a director in August after almost 11 years with Head, Johnson & Kachigan.

Since 2006, Dellegar has represented clients before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. He also has experience in trademark proceedings before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board and in securing domain name transfers under the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy.

With an undergraduate background in management information systems and chemistry, Dellegar counsels businesses both big and small engaged in a variety of technical fields, such as life sciences, food and agricultural sciences, petrochemical and geothermal energy, energy field and oil well service equipment, and dental and medical devices and procedures.

One of his first clients, Ray Hobbs, has stuck with Dellegar for more than a decade. A longtime pilot and the founder of Sky Sight Vision Inc., Hobbs developed specialty sunglasses for aviators to help combat glare contrast sensitivity. In order to get the product to market in both the United States and the European Union, Dellegar worked with Hobbs for 12 years on the patent process for both continents.

For Hobbs, Dellegar's patience and perseverance with the paperwork over the years were refreshing.

"Throughout this decade, Mr. Dellegar has led our company through the complex patent process and he has been responsive to all of our requests and thorough in preparing all of our communications and arguments to the U.S. and European patent offices," Hobbs wrote.

"We are impressed with his ability to quickly delve into the technical aspects of mitigating glare, which is an important aspect of our eyewear patents. His strong technical abilities and dedication to his clients' successes differentiate him from others in his profession."

Outside of the office, Dellegar mentors intellectual property law students at his alma mater, the University of Tulsa, and serves on the TU College of Law Alumni Association's board of directors. He is a member of the American Intellectual Property Law Association, the International Trademark Association and the International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property.

In addition to participating on the Oklahoma Bar Association's Intellectual Property Law Section's board of directors, he is also a mentor for would-be entrepreneurs at The Forge, a small business incubator and startup hub sponsored by the Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce.

In his spare time, Dellegar volunteers as the president of the nonprofit foundation that supports the elementary school his daughter, Meredith, attends.



Age **39**

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AARON DILLARD

President

First Priority Bank

Aaron Dillard began his banking career at the tender age of 10, earning his pay by cleaning up trash from the lawn of a bank his father co-owned. From that humble position, Dillard went on to work in a variety of positions in the banking industry before being named president of First Priority Bank in 2017.

Dillard, who joined the First Priority Bank team two years ago, has taken the community institution from being unranked for the number of U.S. Small Business Administration-backed loans to ranked second in the state in 2016. His efforts earned him the SBA Oklahoma District 2016 Rising Star Lender.

“I’m very proud that Aaron had the foresight to see the need for a niche bank in today’s environment, and he continues to mold First Priority Bank of Tulsa into a true community bank,” said Gene Dillard, chairman and CEO. “I have 42 years in banking experience, but I have yet to see anyone with more drive, commitment to his employees and clients, and dedication than Aaron.”

Dillard’s commitment to First Priority Bank has earned the respect of other board members as well.

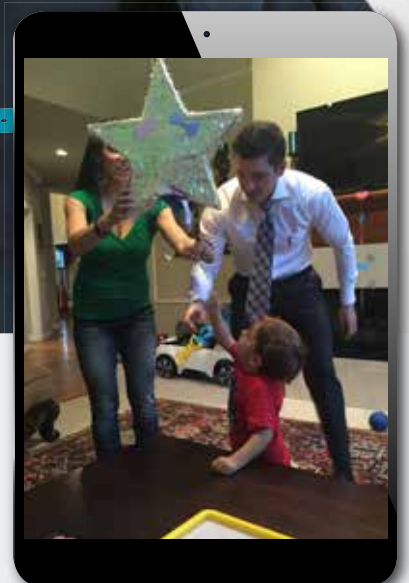
“Aaron joined the organization and his performance has been absolutely outstanding,” said Doug Harris, board member. “I find him to be of excellent moral character and a very productive employee.”

Dillard himself credits his father and Jesus Christ as the two most important influences in his life.

“My dad has always been my professional role model with his opportunity to climb the ladder in banking, but all the while, sticking to his ethics and morals,” Dillard said. “My personal role model is Jesus Christ. He was the perfect man, perfect father of many children and perfect leader. I can’t think of a better influencer in my life.”

In addition to his professional accolades, Dillard has committed to a work-life balance. Although he remains the largest producer in terms of lending at First Priority Bank in Tulsa, he is a dedicated husband to Mariam and father to Aryston and Kash.

“My most significant professional accomplishment is my promotion to president of the bank,” Dillard said. “My dad has always been a huge influence in my life, and I’ve looked up to him as the bank president for many years. Being able to lead and influence a bank like my dad is my biggest professional accomplishment.”



Age **35**

MISTY ENGELBRECHT

Director

Rose State College Downtown Innovation Station



A first-generation college graduate, Misty Engelbrecht attributes much of her success to establishing a solid work ethic at a young age.

At 14, she began working at a convenience store near Lake Texoma; she has worked ever since.

Today, as director of Rose State College's Downtown Innovation Station, Engelbrecht shares her love of learning as a continuing education professional.

"If there is a single extraordinary aspect of Ms. Engelbrecht's persona, it is her quest, her true devotion, to engage current and prospective students into a rewarding adult continuing education experience," said Stan Greil, vice president for workforce development at Rose State. "Viewed and appreciated as a consummate and dutiful member of the continuing education team, her loyalty and mission focus is a model for many."

Engelbrecht joined the Rose State College team in 2005 as a support staff member. She advanced from support staff to professional staff member, faculty member and to her current position as director of the RSC@OKC Innovation Station.

In recognition of her efforts, she received an Excellence in Teaching Award and acknowledgement from her peers as a recipient of the Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFT) award.

Engelbrecht is working on her doctorate degree in educational leadership and policy studies at the University of Oklahoma.

In the pursuit of personal academic excellence, Engelbrecht was selected for both the Oklahoma Women in Higher Education Dr. Debbie Blanke Scholarship award and the Memorial Scholarship award from the Association of Continuing Higher Education organization.

"Misty believes inherently in the power of education to improve the quality of life for all and works continuously toward connecting educational training opportunities to today's workforce," said Jeanie Webb, president of RSC. "I can only add that she is one of the brightest and most passionate persons I have had the honor of working with. Misty truly personifies the spirit of 'achievement.'"

Engelbrecht is one of two certified Lego Serious Play Master facilitators in Oklahoma.

"I believe in the power of influence, dedication, and commitment. There will always be adversity or fear, but the way you deal with it is a choice," Engelbrecht said. "Instead of waiting for things to get better, easier, or less complicated, just dive right in and take action. Be open to learning. There's something to be gained from every interaction, you just have to pay attention and be curious."

She and her husband, Sean, have one son, 6-year-old Carter.

Age **35**

RANYA FORGOTSON-O'CONNOR

Director

The Curbside Chronicle

On any given night in Oklahoma City, nearly 1,500 people experience homelessness.

The weight of that number feels especially real when you can put names and faces to it, and for Ranya Forgotson-O'Connor, those names were heavy. To make a difference in the lives of those living on the streets, Forgotson-O'Connor co-founded *The Curbside Chronicle* with her now-husband, Whitley O'Connor, in 2013.

The Curbside Chronicle is Oklahoma's first and only street paper, providing homeless and low-income individuals with a voice and a legitimate source of income. The monthly publication serves as an employment opportunity for people experiencing homelessness and a positive alternative to panhandling in the community. In addition to providing a source of income, The Curbside Chronicle works with its vendors to break down barriers to traditional employment and develop time management, money management, and social skills.

"*The Curbside Chronicle* means the world to me," Forgotson-O'Connor said.

While *The Curbside Chronicle* is a new concept in the Midwest, there are over 130 street papers like Curbside around the world. Street papers are sold entirely by homeless and low-income individuals, who are able to use this employment as a steppingstone out of homelessness. In 2016, 20 vendors transitioned out of homelessness and back into housing with *The Curbside Chronicle*.

"It is important to remember that we, as a community, can end homelessness one person at a time. And for each of the individuals we help end homelessness for, it's truly life-changing for everyone involved," she said. "I can't describe what it was like helping our first vendor move into housing with *Curbside* – a feeling of knowing that all the time and work put into this endeavor had a tangible difference. And even though it was just one person at that time, it was enough – even if we had stopped there."

"You have honestly never met anyone quite like Ranya," said Dan Straughan, executive director for the Homeless Alliance. "She is absolutely committed to Oklahoma City. She has accomplished more at 25 than most of us will in a lifetime. Watching her leadership and vision; imagining and starting and sustaining the *Curbside Chronicle*, you can't help but be impressed by her drive, creativity and commitment."

However, according to Forgotson-O'Connor, Oklahoma City's support is the key to success.

"I'm thankful for a community that makes this impact possible on a regular basis. Without the support from the community, without people buying thousands of magazines a month, none of this would be possible," Forgotson-O'Connor said.



Age **25**

JARED GARNER

Principal/Owner

Garner Insurance



As an individual with military and retail background, taking the leap to become a business owner was intimidating, but after just two years at Family Insurance, Jared Garner chose to build his own agency from the ground up.

"In just five short years, I have grown my agency leaps and bounds, and we are on the rise to reach my goals quicker than I ever expected," said Garner, principal and owner of Norman-based Garner Insurance. "When I opened the doors, it was just me running the agency. Now I have five employees and will be adding more by the end of 2017. I am proud of the growth of my agency and hope to continue to build the legacy for my children."

Since its inception, Garner Insurance has received several accolades. The business has earned the Norman Transcript Readers' Choice, Top 5 Best Local Insurance Agent and Agency 2014; OKC Biz Best of Business: Best Commercial Insurance Agencies or Brokers Winner 2016; and Norman Transcript Readers' Choice, Top 5 Best Local Insurance Agent and Agency 2017, to name a few.

"I have had the pleasure of working closely with Jared as his coach and trainer since soon after he launched his business. His business has experienced tremendous growth and is becoming one of the most well-respected insurance agencies in the state of Oklahoma," said Rennie Cook, owner of The Triumph Team.

"Jared prides himself in serving his clients by educating them and empowering them to make insurance decisions that best serve their needs. His clients are loyal and 'raving fans' of his agency."

Success isn't new to Garner, who earned his Combat Infantry Badge by the age of 19 and was one of the youngest in his Army unit.

"That alone forced me to grow on a personal level more than any other experience in my life thus far. I credit my leadership abilities to my experience in the military," Garner said. "My deployment from January 2003 to October 2003 truly shaped the person I am today. I rose through the ranks quickly due to my hard work ethic and abilities to lead."

Garner started as a Private E1 and ended his career as a Sergeant E5. He climbed the ranks in less than four years, which is more than two years faster than the national average.

Garner and his wife, Ashley, have two children – Hayden, 7, and Hadley, 5.

Age **34**

KATELYN GLEASON-DOCKERY

Donor Relations Executive

Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma

Katelyn Gleason-Dockery joined the Girl Scouts Western of Oklahoma as a donor relations executive nearly three years ago.

By engaging in strategic planning and utilizing resources and connections, Gleason-Dockery has used her ability to think outside the box to achieve the desired goals during that time.

“I am very proud to not only accomplish the goal, but to also have a hand in providing girls with leadership experience, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) experience, antibullying and relationship building skills, as well as many other experiences that are fun and inspire the girls to make the world a better place,” she said.

Gleason-Dockery, whose parents stressed the importance of hard work and goal setting, was the first member of her family to complete a college degree.

“My personal philosophy is both a macro- and micro-level approach to my personal and professional life,” she said. “I set goals that relate to the larger picture and what will make the most impact, but I also set smaller goals that focus on the people around me.”

When she joined the Community Program teams, she created a strategic team plan that achieved more than the original goals set with six months to spare.

“Through her commitment to excellence, Katelyn is making a difference in the lives of not only our underserved population, but she is also making a difference in schools by offering our anti-bullying, STEM, and financial literacy programs to entire schools,” said Barbara Mitchell, CEO of Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma.

“Katelyn has shown a determination and commitment to our Oklahoma Juvenile Authority program for incarcerated girls, Mitchell said. “She never misses their weekly meeting time and offers programs that can have an impact on their future decisions.”

In her service, she has earned the 2016 Office of Juvenile Affairs/Excellence in Volunteering and the 2016 Girl Scouts Western Oklahoma EPIC Award. Gleason-Dockery’s goal is to always make the world a better place, or at least have an impact.

“I have found that you have to acknowledge the areas in your own life that need addressing before you extend a hand to anyone else,” she said. “You need to be in the right mindset and change anything that may be holding you back to truly be available for others.”



Age **31**

JOSHUA GORE, M.D.

Medical Doctor and Founder

Revitalize LLC



Age **34**

Joshua Gore, a medical doctor and founder of Revitalize LLC, knows that dehydration in athletes or the pain of hangovers can strongly affect performance and health.

Revitalize is a health and wellness center specializing in IV hydration therapy and methionine inositol choline injections, also referred to as lipo injections. The Norman-based business caters to not only those suffering the ill effects of a fun night on the town, but also to athletes looking to improve performance.

The on-site service offers professional health care providers that travel to administer IV fluids, IV multivitamins and IV medications for hangover cures and to restore the athletes' body fluids and electrolyte levels.

But for Gore, personal success comes from overcoming the limitations of the mind.

"I believe our thoughts can either be our greatest asset or greatest obstacle," he said. "I chose to believe that anything I put my mind to, I can achieve. To that effect, I have been able to earn a college scholarship, win numerous personal and team awards and continuously drive myself to be a better doctor and a better man."

Gore also continues to work as an anesthesiologist at Dean McGee Eye Surgery Center.

"My professional accomplishment isn't measured to me in a single experience, but in the everyday interaction I have with my patients and by ensuring they have the greatest care possible," he said.

Gore's dedication to community has earned the respect of others in the industry as well.

"Joshua is also an active leader in the medical profession where he is currently employed. His passion is contagious and is making a positive difference in lives each and every day," said Jason Henderson, senior manager for Stryker Orthopaedics.

Gore worked diligently to establish himself as an entrepreneur. He started Revitalize to promote health and well-being in the metro area, but also worked for the Dean McGee Eye Surgery Center before starting his business.

"He is a consummate professional – honest, dependable and incredibly caring to everyone he encounters," said Mahmoud Khaimi, an ophthalmologist with Dean McGee Eye Surgery Center. "Dr. Gore puts his skill set to work in order to provide excellent treatment to each and every patient."

In addition, Gore is devoted to his wife, Sara, and son, Noah.

"I want to be the shining light and guiding force to them as my father was to our family," he said.

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JOEL HAASER

Director

BKD CPAs & Advisors



Age **39**

When Joel Haaser was given the opportunity to transfer from BKD CPAs and Advisors' Fort Smith office to the Tulsa office, the decision was a challenging one.

He had grown up in Fort Smith, attended college there and started his career with BKD in Arkansas, even working on the city of Fort Smith's audit. But while it was not a simple or comfortable decision, Haaser and his family chose to relocate to Tulsa to take advantage of the growth and leadership opportunities.

"It repositioned me for healthy and constructive challenge, leadership opportunities and areas of expertise I have a gift and passion for," he said. "Through this transition, I have further developed my abilities for relationship building with co-workers, clients and others in the community, as well as my versatility in the types and sizes of clients and engagements I serve. I have been able to prove to myself and others that through patience, vision and determination, I can step into a new environment and take personal responsibility for a new set of expectations."

Since Haaser's move, the BKD Tulsa office has evolved into a strong, successful team through intentional execution of strategic growth plans. As a coleader of the government and nonprofit team of BKD's Oklahoma offices and leader of the firm-wide tribal government and gaming practice, Haaser has seen yearover-year growth through the recent additions of several large clients.

Haaser is also active in community activities and serves as a board member for the Lindsey House, a Tulsa charitable organization offering long-term shelter and support to homeless mothers.

"Joel has been a member of the Lindsey House board for over two years and is very active in the organization. He generously donates his time to impact the lives of the families that the Lindsey House program serves, by serving on board committees, attending special events and contributing financially," said Tiffany Egdorf, president and CEO of Lindsey House.

"Perhaps more important than the things mentioned above, Joel understands the mission of the Lindsey House program and is passionate about empowering the women we serve to regain and maintain their self-sufficiency."

Haaser's work with Lindsey House earned him the Star Award as a Leadership Tulsa Paragon Awards nominee.

"While I certainly appreciate being honored, it means much more to know that the recognition has created a platform to shed light on Lindsey House," Haaser said.

Haaser and his wife, Jenni, have two children – Jonah and Emory.

JAMES HELM

Public Relations Coordinator

Dale Rogers Training Center

As public relations coordinator for Dale Rogers Training Center, James Helm took steps to understand web accessibility and implemented these changes to DRTC's various websites and materials to help those the center serves be able to navigate the web.

"So many people have barriers to navigating the web," Helm said. "As part of our agency's mission of providing jobs and training for people with disabilities, we owe it to those we serve to deliver a web experience they can enjoy, and access relevant information."

After leaving a job in broadcasting in 2014, Helm joined Dale Rogers Training Center in 2015. He embraced the mission and put his experience and knowledge to work, positively promoting people with disabilities.

As a member of the public relations department, Helm also manages the agency's website as well as all social media.

"James has significantly upgraded the website to a user-friendly platform, but more importantly he implemented the accessibility tool for the site and ensured closed captioning for all videos," said Theresa Flannery, community relations and compliance director for the agency. "His commitment to accessibility has led James to seek certification so that our online presence and print materials are accessible."

Dale Rogers Training Center's Facebook page and blog positively highlight people with disabilities and provide important resources and information related to the field. Because of Helm's work, the agency's social media are building networks in Oklahoma and beyond focused on the skills and abilities of people with disabilities.

By switching fields, Helm said he needed to become an expert not only in public relations, but also in the services DRTC provides. In the ever-changing world of disability services, he constantly explores new ways to grow professionally by learning about funding, how people with disabilities access materials online and how to best reach the public.

"It is my goal to convey the importance of inclusion in the workplace. The individuals served at DRTC are talented people and deserve to be recognized for their contributions and afforded opportunities in the community," Helm said.

Michael T. Jones, public relations and marketing manager for DRTC, said Helm often reaches out to his co-workers and offers his expertise.

"At least 10 times a week, James connects with business, education and nonprofit leaders across the metro area promoting best business practices within our communications industry," Jones said.

Helm and his wife, Carrie, have two sons, Lucas and David.



Age **34**

JASON R. HENDERSON

Senior Manager Mako Product Specialist, Midwest Region

Stryker Orthopaedics



Age **31**

Jason R. Henderson started his career with Stryker Orthopaedics at a young age and developed his professional skills while growing in the company.

In 2013, Stryker acquired Mako Surgical for \$1.7 billion, and Henderson found himself part of a new, vibrant company.

Henderson, senior manager Mako product specialist for the Midwest region, said his greatest professional accomplishment is being a part of what he calls the largest product launch in the history of the medical device world – the Mako Total Knee, a robotic joint replacement.

“The hard work and long hours we put in day in and day out allowed for such,” Henderson said. “I want to continue to grow my leadership capabilities and make a positive impact in the lives I deal with daily.”

Henderson shares his work ethic and enthusiasm with his co-workers and colleagues as well.

Outside of his career, Henderson is active as a volunteer and board member in Big Brothers Big Sisters and has been the co-chair of Taste of OKC for two years, the nonprofit organization’s annual gala.

“Jason has made this event bigger and better every year, far exceeding all expectations,” said C. Lauren Clark, associate general counsel of the Chickasaw Nation Department of Commerce and co-chair of Taste of OKC.

“Under Jason’s leadership, Big Brothers Big Sisters has raised more money through Taste of OKC than ever, and he continues to break records,” Clark said. “His success in planning and expanding Taste of OKC cannot be understated. It has been an honor to work alongside Jason as he has obtained such a remarkable achievement.”

In addition, Henderson was also a member of the LOYAL Class XI in 2016 and was the 2017 Man of the Year nominee for The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society-Oklahoma Chapter.

“Jason is a tremendous advocate not only for Big Brothers Big Sisters, but also on behalf of his city and state. He is deeply committed to his community and continues to showcase his leadership skills in the state of Oklahoma and beyond,” Clark said.

Henderson said his most significant personal accomplishment is growing up with a single mom who showed him the importance of hard work.

“I have been able to accomplish multiple college degrees and grow myself professionally in a Fortune 100 company as a young professional with her motivation and support,” he said. “I hope I am someone who individuals with similar upbringings can relate to. You indeed can do anything you set your mind to.”

ELIZABETH ISAAC, J.D.

Intellectual Property Attorney

Dunlap Coddling

As an intellectual property attorney at Dunlap Coddling, Elizabeth Isaac has earned the respect of her colleagues as an attorney, but she may be known more for her work on IgniteOKC, a networking event that connects people through a series of entertaining, rapid-fire presentations.

When she took over IgniteOKC in 2014, it was in need of some love, she said, so she spent several months rebuilding the organization and recruiting new members. After chairing the IgniteOKC event in May 2015, she realized the organization needed a structure for evolving and sustainable leadership. She developed board positions, committee chairs and expectations.

“Above all, I learned that it is imperative to leave an organization better than you found it,” Isaac said.

What started out as an annual event has grown into a bustling nonprofit organization with an active board, committees and a reach of more 3,000 people. As the first board chair, she was able to achieve much of the foundational structure that takes new organizations a few years to achieve.

“As the current board president, I am thankful for the groundwork that she laid out. I often joke that she did the hard work, but it is true,” said Regina Banks, IgniteOKC. “With very little help and no blueprint to follow, she made magic happen for IgniteOKC.”

Although Isaac moved on from IgniteOKC in an official capacity, she is still active in the efforts Dunlap Coddling has made in the community. In 2013, she spearheaded the firm’s participation in PARK(ing) Day by managing a team of volunteers who designed and implemented a hands-on mini science fair on Sheridan Avenue.

She also regularly volunteered at Premiere on Film Row.

“Without reservation, Elizabeth has been an integral part of Dunlap Coddling’s community-focused spirit and has led by example at every opportunity,” said Douglas Sorocco, director and shareholder at Dunlap Coddling.

After graduating from law school and while working full time as an attorney, Isaac returned to undergraduate school to further her education in biological sciences in order to sit for the patent bar. While working and serving as board chair for IgniteOKC, she studied for and passed the patent bar.

“I am the only attorney in my office thus far to have taken this nontraditional route. Fortunately, I work for a law firm committed to its attorneys’ growth and serving the community,” she said. “I would not be where I am today, but for Dunlap Coddling.”



Age **34**

AARON JAQUA

Tax Manager

Eide Bailly



After graduating from college, Aaron Jaqua joined Eide Bailly as a tax associate. Within four years, he was promoted to tax manager of the certified public accounting and business advisory firm.

Jaqua is seen as a leader in the office, teaching by example what it means to be a CPA by putting the interests of others first.

"In addition to passion, I have also witnessed Aaron's ability to solve seemingly complex problems with straightforward, common-sense answers," said Gregory P. Jones, partner in charge. "In this age of technology and complexity, being able to understand difficult problems and solving them with a common-sense approach is something not every CPA can do effectively. Aaron does so with ease."

Jaqua's efforts earned him the Eide Bailly Rising Star Award last year.

"For me, it was incredibly humbling to receive an award from individuals that didn't just see the best version of myself on paper, but have seen who I am day to day, including the victories, shortcomings and even failures," Jaqua said. "The reason this award means so much to me is that it not only recognizes what I've accomplished professionally, but also affirms how I've gone about doing so."

Jaqua also has managed to stay active in the community, serving on various boards and committees like the United Way's Allocation Committee and Norman Addiction and Information Counseling board.

Jaqua's dedication to his career and community continued through the midst of one of the worst times of his life.

In 2014, Jaqua found out his father was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. As the oldest of three siblings, he helped with providing care, driving, attending doctor appointments, handling financial matters and providing emotional, physical and spiritual support in addition to being a husband, father of a new baby and an employee navigating two tax seasons at work.

"Not only was the company I work for supportive during this time, but individuals also volunteered to provide meals and help me with my work while I was away from the office," Jaqua said. "Although losing my dad has been one of the most challenging experiences in my life, it has helped shape who I have become and who I hope to be: one who lives with no regrets and maintains perspective on what's really important in life."

He and his wife, Laurel, have three young children, Bennett and twins Willa and Zoe.

Age **34**

JEFF KRETCHMAR

Vice President, Operations

Prodigal LLC

Jeff Kretchmar grew from a new employee at Prodigal LLC to a leader in the Oklahoma City-based company in the span of a few years.

Today, as vice president of operations, Kretchmar leads every aspect of Prodigal's facilities and game-day operations for the OKC Energy professional soccer team, while at the same time overseeing the operations of multiple other community events the company puts on as well.

"In his current role as vice president of operations, he has the day-to-day task of working with many of our city leaders and officials to produce and manage our events and Energy FC soccer games at Taft Stadium," said Prodigal President Jeffrey Ewing. "He has a passion for Oklahoma City and understands the significance and benefit that our events and sports teams have for our city."

CEO and owner Bob Funk Jr. complimented Kretchmar's gift of leading from the front when times are difficult for his employees, while leading from the back when it is time to celebrate their successes.

"I have watched the positive effects Jeff has had on the many multiple large-scale community projects that our company is involved in, including running professional sports teams, concerts, parades and festivals," Funk said. "He has been integral in the success of each of these helping to guide and challenge the staff at Prodigal to continually make events bigger and better for our great city."

Kretchmar's efforts have earned him recognition as the Prodigal Employee of the Year in 2014 and 2015 as well as Operations Department Employee of the Year twice.

"I believe that my successes so far have been based on taking action, making decisions when needed with whatever information is available. I do not focus on personal goals in my career," Kretchmar said. "My focus is based on finding success for our company and the people around me. I believe in the people that I work with and know that it does not matter where an idea comes from, only that we embrace the idea and make it happen."

Kretchmar is a member of Leadership Oklahoma City Class 35.

In addition, he volunteers as a youth baseball coach and has served as a coordinator and board member for Moore Youth Baseball. He also is past board member of the Oklahoma chapter of March of Dimes.

Kretchmar and his wife, Lisa, have two children – Logan and Hudson.



Age **36**

DANIEL LECLAIRE

Director

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Gaming Commission



Age **34**

Daniel LeClaire said his greatest professional accomplishment has been successfully leading the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Gaming Commission through recent adversity.

"Over the past several years, my organization was faced with several unforeseen, traumatic events," LeClaire said. "The entire staff suffered through pain and disbelief, including myself. These events led to many opportunities to grow as a professional and an organization, leading to a greater self-awareness."

LeClaire joined the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in April 2006 as a patrolman for the CPN police department. He transferred to the CPN Gaming Commission as an investigator in 2009 and after several years was promoted to the investigation and compliance manager position. He became director of that department on May 1, 2014.

"I have had the pleasure of working with Daniel for over five years. I have the utmost respect for him and admire his desire to learn as much as possible and implement best practices," said Kelli D. Weaver, vice president of business development. "At work, he treats his team members as his peers and provides excellent leadership. I have learned that he is a deep thinker and analyzes how his actions may impact others."

In 2009, he received the Pottawatomie County district attorney's award for service and dedication to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. He was named CPN Most Professional Officer in 2008.

"Daniel is definitely one of the men in our organization who is making a difference in the workplace and the surrounding community," said Linda Capps, vice president of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Gaming Commission.

While LeClaire is committed to protecting the assets of his tribe and continually strives to represent his tribe in a respectful manner, he also wears many hats. He is a father of three and spends his time coaching them while also serving as a Switch youth leader at his church.

"Another hat Daniel wears is that of student," Weaver said. "It is important for him to further his education to be more knowledgeable in his job and in his role of serving his tribe."

LeClaire considers raising his children – Ava, 9; Liana, 6; Luke, 3 – as a single father to be his most significant accomplishment.

"This experience has taught me more than I ever could've envisioned about myself, but more importantly, my relationship with my children is stronger than it ever has been."

CONGRATULATIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CPN GAMING COMMISSION DANIEL LeCLAIRE

ON BEING NAMED ONE OF OKLAHOMA'S ACHIEVERS UNDER 40 HONOREES

Your leadership as a law enforcement officer and gaming commission director have guided your staff and tribe through challenges both great and small.

We admire your dedication as a father, tribal member and professional. We are thrilled to see you honored.

Gdo-wiges Daniel!



TAMI LOCH

Director of Advancement

Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame



Age **37**

Tami Loch, director of advancement for the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame, is known for her work on statewide and national events.

She works closely with ESPN on the College Football Awards Show. Loch also has been integral in the Jim Thorpe Award event, Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony and the Bright Path Youth Program – which includes the largest statewide drug-free initiative, Red Ribbon Week, and the Children’s Challenge, where Oklahoma City public school children compete in the spirit of Jim Thorpe.

In addition to being recognized as a professional in her field of fundraising, development and events, Loch is active in the community. She is president of the board of the Leadership Midwest City Alumni Association, a board member of the YMCA of Midwest City, president of the Oklahoma chapter of the National Football Foundation, Ward 6 representative for the Midwest City Police Community Advisory Board, a member of the Junior Service League of Midwest City and more.

Loch has participated in Leadership Oklahoma City LOYAL Class 7, Leadership Midwest City 2014, Bureau of Narcotics Citizens Academy Class I and the Midwest City Police Citizen’s Academy.

“She is a person of character and has a positive influence on all she works with,” said Eddie Griffin, president of the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame.

Loch helped revive Leadership Midwest City Alumni when she was approached to take over the Alumni program, a separate nonprofit from the leadership program. With the help of a few fellow classmates, she created a board and recruited a membership.

“It has brought the community together by providing networking opportunities each month while raising funds and donations for local charities in eastern Oklahoma County,” she said. “We have been honored to help out great organizations like the MidDel Food Pantry, the Midwest City Police, the Midwest City YMCA, Brides with Cancer, the Midwest City Animal Shelter, local school children, homeless high school students, the YWCA, Rose State College adult students, the MidDel Group Homes and many more.”

Loch has associate and bachelor’s degrees in business from Rose State College and the University of Central Oklahoma.

“She is an accomplished fundraiser, having helped complete the capital campaign at the Oklahoma School for Science and Mathematics, which allowed them to build the second phase of the dormitory,” said Mary Blankenship Pointer, senior vice president of Republic Bank & Trust.

Loch is engaged to Jason Constable and has two children – Abbie and Xavier.



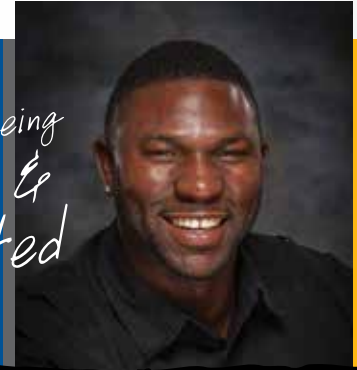
Congratulations to
Tami Loch
For being selected as an
Achiever Under 40
Class of 2017



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Executive Director,
Rainbow Fleet Childcare
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everything you do
to serve
Oklahoma kids.



ANDREW MARTINS

President
Carpentree Inc.



Age **35**

When Andrew Martins was named president of Carpentree Inc. last year, he made an immediate impact on the 40-year-old inspirational wall art and home décor company. He charged managers to take ownership of their respective departments and they implemented new, progressive ways of thinking.

“In the six short months I’ve worked under him, Andrew has impressed me with his enthusiasm, energy, strength of resolve and problem-solving skills,” said Kenton McCracken, graphic designer. “He’s always up for a challenge and sees problems not as obstacles, but as opportunities.”

Previously, Martins worked as sales and marketing manager for Sawyer Manufacturing Co. from 2012-2016. During his time at Sawyer, he was responsible for overall sales and marketing initiatives leading to increased sales and company awareness in the marketplace. This included developing, managing and implementing the main website and a complimentary website with e-commerce using international resources and managing a team of resources in Tulsa, United Kingdom and several overseas locations in order to accomplish tasks.

“My most significant professional accomplishment is the creation, execution and realization of the Sawyer Ambassador Program,” Martins said. “I started the Ambassador program in 2013 as a way to connect with customers and improve its products.”

The welding professionals who are part of this program are given free Sawyer equipment, marketing materials, exclusive rewards and full access to Sawyer support, resources and communication. Ambassadors are asked to use this equipment and provide honest feedback.

“Through the Ambassador program, Sawyer has not only received firsthand product feedback, but also several ideas for new products,” Martins said.

This program played a large part in Sawyer receiving the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Exporter of the Year award in 2015.

“Overall, having Drew working for me made me a better manager and person,” said Dave Hembree, president of Sawyer Manufacturing Co. “His ideas and different way of thinking challenged the status quo and made not only our company in a better position, but propelled us for growth and new business.”

Martins said he strives to grow in the four core areas of life: professionally, spiritually, socially, and physically.

He serves on the board of Tulsa Fab Lab and is active with the Rotary Club of Tulsa and Knights of Columbus. A student pilot, he enjoys traveling and has visited all seven continents. In addition, the avid runner has completed three marathons and countless half-marathons.

Martins and his wife, Jennifer, have two children – Vivian, 4, and Jacob, 2.

CYNTHIA NICHOLS, PH.D.

Associate Professor – School of Media & Strategic Communications
Oklahoma State University

Although Cynthia Nichols achieved tenure as an associate professor at Oklahoma State University before age 35, that feat is not what she considers her greatest accomplishment.

“Sure, I’ve accomplished a lot, but my biggest professional accomplishment is the impact I make on my students’ lives on a daily basis,” she said.

“I’ve been a professor at Oklahoma State University for seven years, and have had hundreds of students in my classes. Although I can’t connect with all of them, I know that there are many students whose lives I have changed. For me, using my Godgiven talents and abilities to help people see their own gifts and potential is the greatest thing I can do.”

To date, Nichols has published 15 journal articles and book chapters in her work as a professor. Additionally, she has a number of paper presentations and forthcoming works, and most of her works focus on social media and their intersection with advertising, public relations, politics and entertainment media.

She also is interested in STEM education initiatives and mediated messages to children and has won several national awards for her research. At Oklahoma State, she teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in the School of Media and Strategic Communications.

In her campaigns courses, Nichols has worked with a variety of nonprofit clients to provide communication campaigns that affect the community, including NewView Oklahoma, Goodwill of Oklahoma’s GoodGuides program, city of Stillwater, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, Prevent Blindness Oklahoma and the Oklahoma City Ballet.

“My most significant personal accomplishment is my work with the Oklahoma City Ballet and their Young Professionals/ Patrons Group, The Barre. This group is designed to connect young professionals in Oklahoma City with the Ballet and, hopefully, convert them into donors after they have established their careers,” Nichols said.

“The work and impact of the Oklahoma City Ballet has untold reach in the community. The Ballet has multiple programs designated to assist underprivileged kids – this is where my passion lies. You never know where the next great artist may be.”

Nichols has even used her marketing and PR expertise to help with market research to make OKC Ballet’s limited advertising dollars more effective.

“She is an invaluable asset to the community and we are grateful for the countless hours and limitless effort that she has expended for us,” said Amy Haley, marketing director for the Oklahoma City Ballet.



Age **36**

DEMETRIUS OFFICE

Chief Executive Officer

Makarios Developments LLC



Age **36**

As a performance coach who invests in enhancement of quality of life and business culture, Makarios Developments LLC CEO Demetrius Office says one of his most important contributions was working with a small 10-employee company.

“We collaborated efforts to address cultural differences and diversity and inclusion efforts. As a result, that employer has launched multiple product lines, expanded into several different markets, curtailed turnover, attracted new talent and saved \$400,000-plus in operational expenses,” said Office.

Enid-based Makarios Developments LLC is a consulting firm focused on serving the comprehensive needs of business in the full range of the business cycle. Office helped create the REACT (Reward, Engage, Act, Communicate, Teamwork) brand, a simple yet powerful program that aligns with Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

The intent behind REACT is to become aware of the importance of relationships and know the power behind teams.

“Our simple concepts reframe purpose and inject life into any process,” Office said. “Over the years, I have drawn strength from public figures like Brene Brown, Les Brown, Zig Ziglar, Jim Rohn, Anthony Robbins and Simon Sinek, just to name a few. These individuals embody the founding principles of relational behaviors.”

Office has earned respect from clients and the community as a professional, mentor, coach, leader and colleague.

“I believe he should be viewed first as an outstanding life advocate,” said Christy Baker, executive director of RSVP of Enid and North Central Oklahoma. “He is and has been a leader of those of us in the nonprofit sector profession and a leader for the profession of self-advocacy.”

Office is involved in numerous community programs and organizations, including as a member of the Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Greater Enid, chairman of the Salvation Army of Enid, current board member of RSVP, a student mentor for United Way and more.

“Demetrius is a man who cares about and serves his community and is always seeking ways to engage those needs,” said Ernie Hull, commanding officer for The Salvation Army of Enid. “He has become an active part of The Salvation Army’s emergency disaster response team and recently assisted us during the northwest Oklahoma wildfires, where he spent 16 to 17 hours a day serving first responders.”

“This young professional gives of himself with one simple goal – to make our community a better place to live and work,” said Hull.

He and his wife, Amber, together have four children – Mercedes, Austin, Elizabeth and Olivia.

AARON PECK

Vice President – Director of Operations

Guy Engineering Services Inc.

Aaron Peck, vice president/director of operations for Guy Engineering of Tulsa, has been building up the company's bridge inspection team over the last eight years.

Although he was reluctant at first to take the certification course for inspection, the company needed another certified bridge inspector.

"I then discovered how much I enjoy inspecting bridges – being out in the field and away from my desk and truly making transportation safer and easier for Oklahomans and travelers," Peck said.

"Once I obtained my PE (professional engineer license) in 2009, I became the primary team leader for bridge inspections at Guy."

At the time, the company had only two dedicated team leaders and a program manager, and they performed approximately 400 inspections a year of bridges on the county road system. Peck implemented several programs and control methods to increase the speed and accuracy for the field work as well as the office work.

As the company progressed, it increased its work capacity, and today, Guy Engineering has six team leaders with teams that are responsible for more than a thousand inspections per year with contracts that now include federal, state and county bridges. The inspection team's contracts made up approximately 10 percent of the company's revenue in 2016.

Being a part of something greater than himself has been a driving force for Peck.

"As an engineer, it is my responsibility to use my knowledge and skill to make the world better through my talents and gifts," Peck said. "I take it as an honor to all whose lives are impacted by my efforts, not just locally but all over the world."

Peck has served on mission teams visiting Costa Rica, Uganda and Bolivia. He was a member of Engineers Without Borders – USA and helped found Engineers in Action.

"Through EIA, Aaron's civil engineering skills have enhanced the lives of countless people in Bolivia by providing clean water, sanitation and irrigation," said John E. Blickensderfer, president of Guy Engineering.

In 2015, Peck was selected Young Engineer of the Year by the Oklahoma Society of Professional Engineers based on his education and collegiate achievements, professional and technical society activities, humanitarian activities, experience and more.

"As a dedicated and trusted member of the Guy family, Aaron consistently seeks to live out Guy's mission statement of 'Engineering safe and lasting infrastructure solutions for our communities,'" said Blickensderfer. "He is an asset to both our company and to the civil engineering profession."



Age **36**

ADAM PUGH

Senator

Oklahoma State Senate



Age **39**

State Sen. Adam Pugh is known as a principled man who is devoted to his family and country.

He served in the U.S. Air Force as an air battle manager and has flown combat support missions in multiple conflicts across Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East. After 9/11, Pugh even flew missions over the United States defending American airspace and high-priority areas.

In 2005, as a young captain in the U.S. Air Force, Pugh was chosen to attend Squadron Officers School at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. This program is offered in residence to those junior officers whom the Air Force is grooming for promotion and eventual command of a squadron. Toward the end of the monthslong course, attendees are ranked by their commanders and fellow captains according to both tangible and intangible measures. Not only did Pugh have the top test scores and top physical fitness scores, he was ranked as the top captain by his classmates, which resulted in him ranking first of nearly 400 captains.

"Though I did eventually separate from the Air Force because I was ready for a new challenge, I hold this award above others I received in my military career because of the recognition of my leadership abilities from my peers," Pugh said.

Today, Pugh serves as an Oklahoma state senator for District 41, which represents Edmond.

"I knew he would make a phenomenal colleague, so I volunteered to help in his campaign," said state Sen. Stephanie Bice. "I knew Adam would be dedicated to making Oklahoma the best place it could be."

In addition to serving in the Legislature, Pugh is an executive in the aerospace industry and is proud to continue serving the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen through the private sector.

He is also active in the community as an Edmond Mobile Meals volunteer, a Whiz Kids mentor, and a Little League baseball coach. He is involved with the United States Olympic Bobsled and Skeleton Federation, the International Myeloma Foundation, Oklahoma Young Republicans, Edmond Young Professionals, the Leadership Exchange Academy and more.

"Adam has and will continue to, regardless of given title, serve and lead in significant ways," said Mike Robins, executive director of Leadership Exchange Academy. "From the AWACS to a successful business executive to state senator, Adam Pugh has always put his country and his community first."

JASON REESE, J.D.

Partner

Edinger, Leonard & Blakley

Jason Reese said his major goals in life are based on concepts he adopted from the late J. Rufus Fears, a professor of classics at the University of Oklahoma, who introduced him to Stoicism.

Those goals, Reese said, include serving his family, city, state and church to the best of his ability.

“Further, I learned from him the concept of ‘civic virtue’ – that is, the habits and disposition of gratitude to those who have come before you in a community and the obligations owed to future generations,” Reese said. “The core idea, as he taught it, is that a person of privilege and talents does not own those privileges and talents, but holds them in trust for the community. They must be cultivated for service, not for self.”

Reese adheres to this philosophy in all aspects of his life.

As an attorney at Edinger, Leonard & Blakley, his practice focuses on the areas of employment law and litigation, oil and gas, insurance law, business litigation and workers’ compensation.

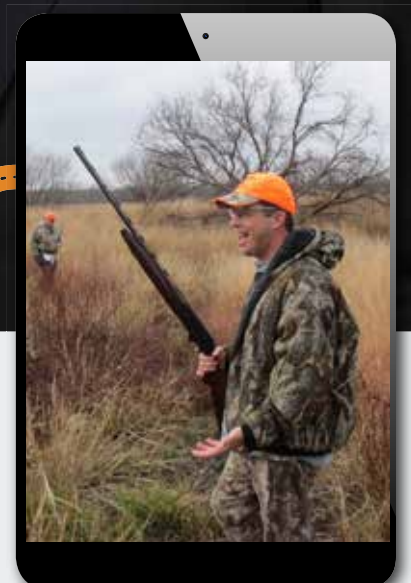
“The professional challenge for trial lawyers is a matter of perspective. If you become unhinged, you’ve lost the battle. As a lawyer, Jason represents the best we can hope for in our legal community,” said Robert D. Edinger, partner with Edinger, Leonard & Blakley. “In the heat of any legal dispute – and there are many heated moments in our practice – a sense of humor and self-deprecation is the cool breeze that sustains a professional atmosphere. Jason has that quality. It raises the level of discourse for all of us.”

In addition to his work at the law firm, Reese was appointed by the governor last year to serve on the Merit Protection Commission, which regulates state employees and hears appeals of employment complaints.

Reese earned his law degree from OU. He began his legal career as a staff attorney for the Oklahoma House of Representatives. He entered private practice in 2006, working for a couple of area law firms as well as running his own practice for a couple of years. In 2014, he joined Edinger, Leonard & Blakley.

Reese serves his community through his involvement as a board member of Cristo Rey Oklahoma City Catholic High School and the Quail Creek Homeowners Association. He also is a member of Oklahoma City Rotary Club 29, Downtown Club and Knights of Columbus.

Reese and his wife, Jessica, have four children – Patrick, Jack, Cecilia and Charlotte.



Age **38**

ASHLEIGH SORRELL ROSE

Director of Campaign Operations
United Way of Central Oklahoma



Age **32**

Ashleigh Sorrell Rose knew she wanted a career in the nonprofit field after she spent a summer interning at what is now called United Way of Central Oklahoma.

After earning her sociology degree from Oklahoma City University in 2007, she started her career as associate director of Project Transformation and was promoted to executive director the following year.

Rose later worked with the Oklahoma Brain Tumor Foundation before returning to United Way of Central Oklahoma – this time as director of research. In 2012, she was named director of United Way of Logan County before assuming her current role of director of campaign operations for the nonprofit organization.

“I am proud to play a part in leading the annual campaign efforts for an organization that is respected and recognized as leading the way in collaborative, effective change in our community,” Rose said. I work very hard to build trust and earn the respect of our volunteers, our donors, and our partner agencies, and I’ve been very fortunate to develop great relationships as a result.”

Debby Hampton, president and CEO of United Way of Central Oklahoma, is impressed with Rose’s intelligence, leadership skills and compassion.

“Among our own staff, Ashleigh is highly regarded for her wealth of knowledge and ability to accomplish assignments efficiently and effectively,” Hampton said. “She is just as adept at making campaign presentations to large audiences as she is at understanding the intricacies of donor software.”

Dave Hager, president and CEO of Devon Energy, has worked with Rose on United Way’s campaign cabinet since 2014.

“Ashleigh is very energetic, intelligent, enthusiastic and hardworking,” Hager said. “She also has that intangible quality we all want to see in people we work with – she ‘gets it.’”

Outside of United Way, Rose is dedicated to helping today’s youth improve our communities through Leadership Oklahoma City’s Youth Leadership Exchange. She serves on the group’s board and is heavily involved in its Youth in Action class.

Rose said she owes her personal philosophy to her dad, who always reminded her that people don’t have issues or problems, they have opportunities for growth.

“This mindset hasn’t always been easy to accept,” she said. “In fact, I’m still trying to figure out how Algebra was a growth opportunity. But reminding myself that every challenge will help me grow, whether I’m ready for it or not, has given me great perspective when I’ve most needed it.”

Rose and her husband, Andrew, have one daughter, 2-year-old Ella.

NITIN SAWHENY, M.D.

Regional Medical Director – Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico

TEAMHealth

At times in this day and age, medicine has become a business.

“I look forward to putting humanity and quality first and build teams who have this as their vision,” said Nitin Sawheny, TEAMHealth’s regional medical director for Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico.

Edmond native Sawheny began his career with Mercy Medical Center as a clinical hospitalist and later served in various roles with increasing responsibilities, serving as hospitalist medical director for four and a half years before leaving to join TEAMHealth as a regional medical director in August 2015.

“My present role has provided a great sense of gratification, not only for optimizing and providing the best patient care with my fellow physician partners, but also with developing a strong network of administrative contacts in some of the largest hospital systems in the United States,” Sawheny said.

Rex Van Meter, president of Integris Canadian Valley Hospital, has worked with Sawheny over the last year-and-a-half in transitioning his hospital’s inpatient hospital service from a local independent group to TEAMHealth.

“Dr. Sawheny is driven not by financial results but by providing quality outcomes for patients,” Van Meter said. “His passion of providing evidence-based medicine is shown through his educational offerings to his patients and to his team.”

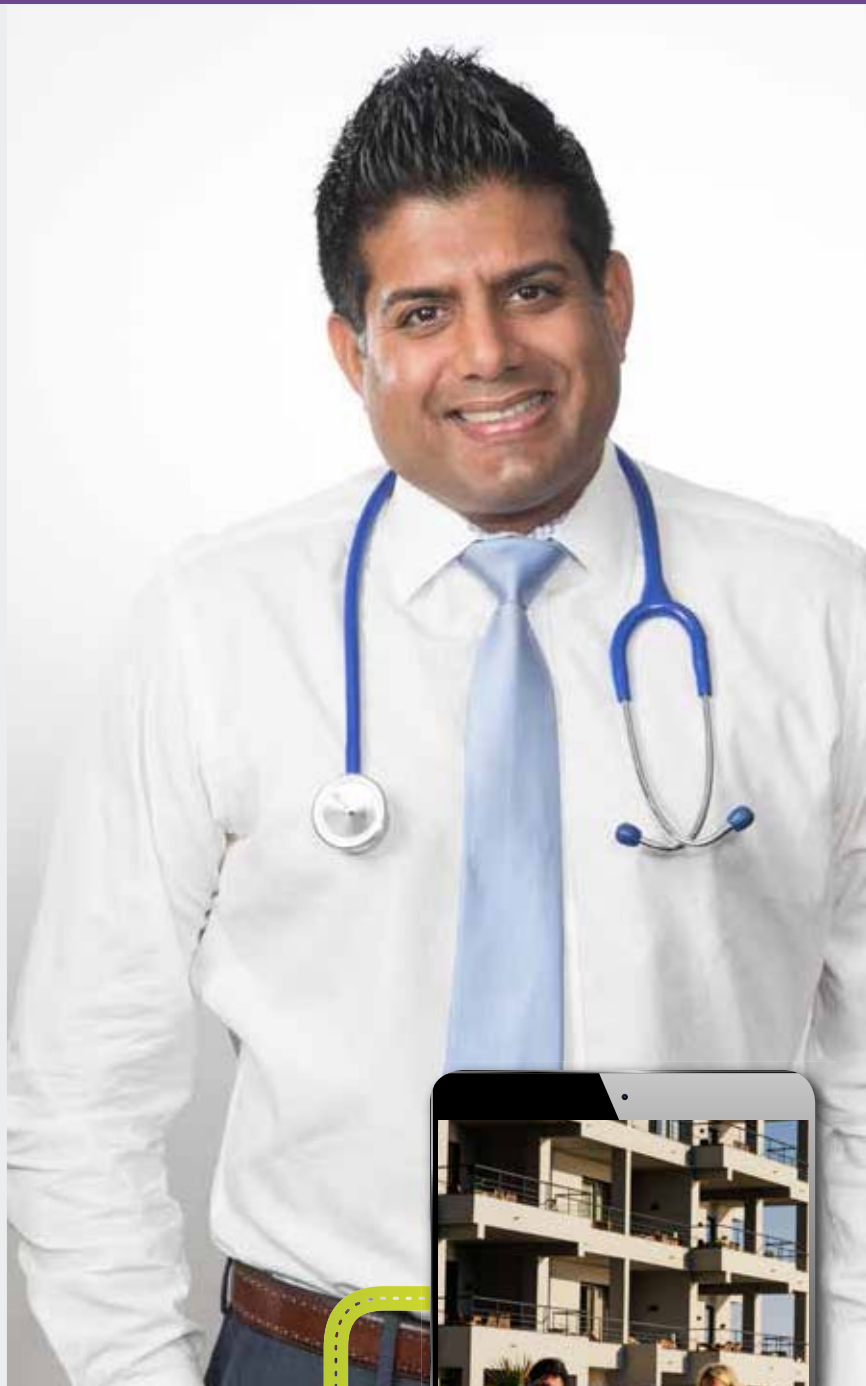
Rohit Uppal, president of TEAMHealth’s Acute Hospital Medicine, called Sawheny a leader in the field of hospital medicine.

“Dr. Sawheny demonstrates a healthy entrepreneurial spirit. In several of his contracts, he was a leader in the business development phase, the startup phase, and the maturation phase of the contract. In addition, he plays an important role in our company’s entrance into the telemedicine industry,” Uppal said.

“Dr. Sawheny has a high level of industry knowledge and is nothing short of an expert in our field. He possesses strong leadership and business management skills. Most importantly, he has a can-do attitude that allows him to achieve success in very challenging situations.”

He is married to Eva Sawheny, an Oklahoma City pulmonary critical care and sleep medicine physician at Oklahoma Heart Hospital-North. The couple has two daughters.

“Family is everything, Eva and I have worked hard to instill morals and values in our daughters,” he said. “We admire our parents for guiding us and hope we can help invigorate, motivate, and drive Kyra and Zoey to accomplish their dreams.”



Age **39**

KALA SHARP

Vice President, Controller – Natural Gas
Oneok Inc.



Age **39**

Kala Sharp's life philosophy is working together to make things better and to help others.

"This applies to my personal, professional and volunteer efforts," said Sharp, vice president and controller of natural gas for Oneok Partners. "When people with different ideas work together toward a common goal, the impact that they can have is profound."

Sharp began her career in public accounting as an auditor for Deloitte. The University of Tulsa graduate later went on to work for Fintube Technologies and Vintage Petroleum. In 2003, she joined Oneok Inc. as an accountant and has since held several positions of increasing responsibilities. Sharp, who is a certified public accountant, was named to her current position in 2014.

As the 2015 chair of the Oneok Women's Resource Group, Sharp played a major role in rebranding the organization from its predecessor group.

"We relaunched the Oneok Women's Resource Group to alleviate the perception that the group was only for current leaders as well as better align with our company's diversity and inclusion initiatives," Sharp said.

Hayley Rose, vice president, commercial for Oneok's natural gas pipelines segment, worked with Sharp in this effort and both today serve on the Women's Resource Group's advisory committee.

"I have seen her address very challenging situations with a mix of grace and diplomacy and be equally tenacious and tough when needed," Rose said. "She never is afraid to say what needs to be said, and her courage in leadership is unwavering."

Sharp also donates her time volunteering in leadership roles for several nonprofit organizations. She is the current Tulsa chair of the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women and serves on the boards of TU's Conference of Accountants, TU's Friends of Finance and Child Abuse Network.

"Kala is a genuine leader by nature," said Marnie Phelps, president of Child Abuse Network. "I often rely on Kala to help me tackle some of the more challenging tasks. Her attitude is always one of cooperation, respect and eagerness to help. She is always smiling, approachable and supportive."

In addition, she is a graduate of Leadership Tulsa and the American Institute of CPAs Leadership Academy. She was named TU's Collins College of Business Outstanding Alumna this year.

Sharp said her greatest personal accomplishment is her family. She is married to her high school sweetheart, Gary. The couple has two sons, Jae and Sam.

"Teaching (our sons) about life and learning alongside them has been our greatest pleasure," she said.

ASHLEY SMITH, J.D.

CEO

CrowdSeekr LLC

Edmond native Ashley Smith earned her marketing degree from Oklahoma Christian University before going on to obtain her law degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

She began her legal career working for an area law firm and later joined the team at QuiBids.com, an Oklahoma City-based online auction company. In 2015, she decided she wanted to take her career down a different path.

Smith resigned as general counsel of QuiBids to start a new company with Tim Strange, president of Newmark Grubb Levy Strange Beffort.

Smith and Strange teamed up to create CrowdSeekr.com, a directory and search engine for private real estate investments.

"Ashley has taken on the role of CEO and has guided our fledgling company with passion and a vision for the future of this enterprise," Strange said. "Under her direction, it is on its way to making a significant mark in the Oklahoma City business community as a tech startup."

Smith said her major goal is to continue to grow CrowdSeekr and make it the first place investors go when planning to make a commercial real estate investment.

"I am very proud of having the courage to give up full-time employment to become an entrepreneur, because entrepreneurship grows and enriches our economy," said Smith, who also continues to serve as legal adviser for QuiBids.

In addition to being a young business leader, Smith is committed to the growth and enhancement of her community.

She is a member of Leadership Oklahoma City LOYAL Class IX and has represented her class on the LOKC Alumni Board for the past two years. She is also a member of the Rotary Club of Oklahoma City and has recently been elected to serve on its board. In addition, she is a member of the Junior League of Oklahoma City, an annual volunteer for the Oklahoma City Festival of the Arts and a past board member of the YWCA of Oklahoma City.

"(Ashley) never stops learning and using her knowledge and expertise to help others," said Ginny Bass Carl, senior director of development and gift planning for the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

"She looks you straight in the eye and is fully attentive when you are conversing. Her mind is always at work processing, formulating, analyzing, planning and envisioning," Carl said. "She dreams big. She lives large."



Age **36**

CARISSA STEVENS

Owner and Designer

Scout Studios



Carissa Stevens was taught at a young age the importance of volunteerism and helping out wherever she could.

The native Oklahoman grew up in Singapore. During the Jakarta riots, Stevens said her family opened their home for months to other families from the Jakarta International School when they were evacuated.

"This fostered a sense of always 'doing the right thing' in me," she said.

Throughout high school, Stevens spent one semester each year in a different country doing humanitarian works as part of her course load.

"This philosophy has carried over throughout my life and is something that I will always be passionate about," she said.

After graduating from high school, Stevens returned to Oklahoma, where she graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a degree in journalism.

She worked for Devon Energy as a marketing communications specialist before joining Love's Country Stores and Travel Stops in 2012.

While working at Love's, Stevens started a small interior design firm on the side called Scout Studios. Her passion for creating beautiful spaces began with blogging about the renovation of her own 1920s craftsman-style bungalow. From there, her passion for design flourished. She recently resigned from her job at Love's to concentrate on her business full time.

"Building this project from the ground up, on my own, has been very fulfilling and given me a great sense of leadership and the affirmation that I can do anything that I put my mind to," Stevens said.

She continues her passion for helping others through her service as committee chairman of the Arts Council of Oklahoma City.

"When I say Carissa is a volunteer, that doesn't really do her justice," said Peter Dolese, executive director of the Arts Council of Oklahoma City. "She is an amazing volunteer! Setting up the arts festival is an arduous task to say the least, requiring our key volunteers to even get certified as forklift operators.

"Carissa was a breath of fresh air from the moment she walked into our office. She is extremely intelligent and self-motivated. There is no task too big or too small for her and she meets every challenge with grace and humor tempered with a high degree of proficiency."

Stevens also volunteers her time with Big Brothers Big Sisters, ONE OKC, Saint Anthony's Foundation, and the Plaza District Festival.

In addition, she is a member of Leadership Oklahoma City's Loyal Class XI.

Age **34**

LACEY TAYLOR

Account Executive

Resolute PR

While Lacey Taylor said she had experienced a great deal of success in her career, she was never able to capitalize on her strengths until she joined the Resolute PR team last year.

“Not only did the Resolute team and culture help define my strengths, they’ve allowed me to exercise them in a way that helps the company, and me, grow,” said Taylor, an account executive for the Tulsa-based public relations company. “While I gained invaluable experience in both the (information technology) and nonprofit industry, I was finally able to fuse my passion for community engagement and relational skills at Resolute PR.”

Taylor said her greatest personal accomplishment is gaining confidence in herself.

“Learning that the work I do and that who I am is good enough,” she said. “That may sound strange, and somewhat like the prologue to a self-help book, but it’s been a long journey for me to have that confidence. Every decision I made, it was for someone else, or based on what I thought was expected of me. Through my community engagement, my major influences – those who empowered me and my current job at Resolute PR, I’ve gained the confidence in all the hard work I’ve done the past six years.”

With that said, Taylor’s important influences are people who empower others, whose goal is to motivate those around them to make an impact on their own.

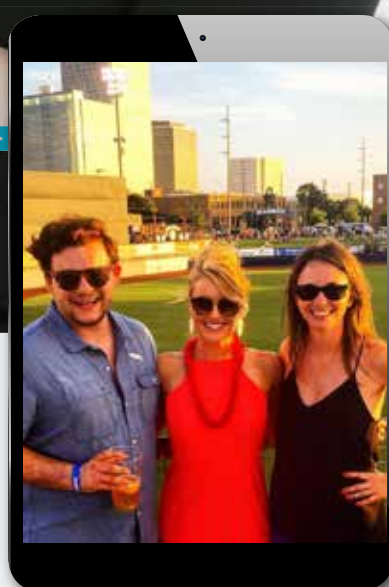
“Nicole Morgan, CEO of Resolute and my manager, is one of those people,” Taylor said. “No matter the client, no matter the project, she always ensures that her team is learning along the way.”

Taylor’s community involvement includes serving as chair of the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Tulsa Madam President event and board member of the TYPros Foundation, Tulsa Global Alliance and Association for Women in Communications – Tulsa chapter. She also is a member of the Salvation Army Women’s Auxiliary, Leadership Tulsa Class 55 and a current fellow in The Mine Fellowship 2016-2017 cohort.

“Lacey has an unwavering passion for Tulsa, for community growth and for finding ways to challenge the status quo,” said Shagah Zakerion, with Zakerion Strategies & Consulting.

Taylor said her personal philosophy and goals are always driven by her desire to make an impact – big or small.

“Whether my job impacts a client’s business, or my community engagement motivates one person to be confident in what they do,” she said, “it all matters.”



Age **31**

JACK WHEELER JR., J.D.

Vice President, Portfolio Manager, Senior Financial Adviser

Bank of America Merrill Lynch



Jack Wheeler Jr. said his personal philosophy partially stems from some advice his father gave him – “You can always make more money, but you can’t make more time, so focus on the things that will matter when you’re on your deathbed and not today.”

And that’s exactly what he has done.

After earning his bachelor’s degree in communications and master’s in business administration from the University of Central Oklahoma, Wheeler went on to obtain his juris doctorate from the University of Tulsa College of Law.

While in law school, Wheeler studied abroad and spent 12 months in Europe working with complex international business and securities legal issues in the European Union for organizations such as British Telecom and the World Trade Organization.

Wheeler joined the staff of Merrill Lynch in 2009 and today is vice president, portfolio manager and senior financial adviser at what is now called Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Prior to joining Merrill Lynch, Wheeler spent five years with Morgan Stanley.

“His professional approach to business client interaction is matched by both his worldly perspective and caring attitude,” said Reggie Johnson, senior vice president of UMB Bank. “I have been impressed with the evolution of Jack’s professional development as he now serves as a mentor and role model to younger associates.”

Volunteering is a big part of Wheeler’s life. He is chairman of the Merrill Lynch Volunteer Council and has been named among the top five volunteers for each of the last five years.

“Jack is a self-starter, generous, hard worker and will be a valuable citizen for our community for many years to come,” said Tony N. Shinn, market president for Bank of America, Oklahoma City.

Outside of work, he serves on the board of advisers for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, is an active member of the Oklahoma City Downtown Club and is vice president of his homeowners association. He also volunteers his time with local charities including the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, Feed the Children, The Food Bank, U R Special Ministries, The Urban League, Boy Scouts of America, The Alzheimer’s Association, Toys for Tots, the Oklahoma Historical Society and many others.

Wheeler also enjoys attending church, reading, traveling, swimming, sailing, getting his private aircraft pilot license, and most importantly, spending time with his family. He said the greatest influence in his life has been his wife, Lisa. The couple has two daughters – Elizabeth, 5, and Alexandra, 2.

Age **39**

CARRIE L. WILLIAMS

Executive Director

Rainbow Fleet Inc.

Since Carrie Williams became a mother, her entire perspective on life has changed. She said her sons, Noah and Benjamin, are the driving force behind every decision she makes.

“From returning to school to complete my bachelor’s degree at the University of Central Oklahoma, to changing my career path from corporate to not-for-profit, each choice I’ve made has been with their future in mind,” Williams said. “It is because of them that I am passionate about early childhood opportunities.”

After working as a restaurant manager for 10 years, Williams served as finance director for then-Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson’s campaign for governor. She later worked for Edmondson’s law firm before assuming her current role as executive director at Rainbow Fleet Inc., an Oklahoma City-based nonprofit child care resource and referral organization, in 2014.

“The need for quality child care is a reality for many working parents,” Williams said. “When we leave our kids at day care and head off to work, we want to leave them in a safe and nurturing environment. Training child care professionals to improve the quality of child care and helping parents find the right caregiver for their children is what we do at Rainbow Fleet. It is an important function and one that was in jeopardy.”

“Carrie began her service at Rainbow during a difficult time – the books were in some disarray and the organization was in danger of losing essential program grants,” Edmondson said. “Carrie set things back on an even course, successfully processed the grant applications, increased overall funding for the programs and has annually received the highest evaluations from her board. ... I truly believe she can take on any project and make it work.”

Paula K. Koos, executive director of Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association, has seen firsthand the difference Williams makes with Rainbow Fleet, which is a contract agency of OCCRRA.

“Carrie came into the agency with a can-do attitude and willingness to work hard,” Koos said. “Within a year, she had turned the agency around and repaired community perceptions of the management of the agency.”

In addition to her role with Rainbow Fleet, Williams serves on advisory committees of Smart Start Central Oklahoma, Rose State College’s Family Services and Child Development and Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City’s Early Care Education.

She also volunteers her time with Oklahoma City’s Family Justice Center, Sunbeam Family Services and Global Market benefiting Pambe Ghana.



Age **36**



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