

The Daily Home

presents

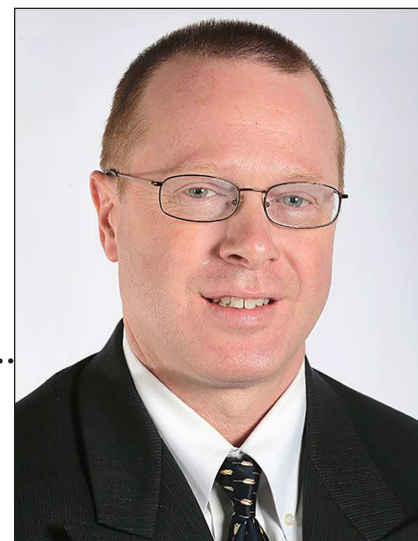
20

Making A

DIFFERENCE

**MEET SOME OF THE MOST DEDICATED & ACCOMPLISHED
LEADERS IN OUR COVERAGE AREA.**

20 Making A DIFFERENCE



Robert Jackson II

A note from Robert Jackson II, The Daily Home's Publisher

The Daily Home is proud to present 20 community leaders who bring out the best of who we are civically and culturally in Talladega and St. Clair counties. There are quite a few on our list who are well known commodities in the communities they serve, but you will also discover amazing individuals doing great things in our area who choose to fly below the radar.

I find the idea of leadership to be a fascinating one, with leaders being instilled with certain qualities that are both inherent and developed. These qualities include but are not limited to maximizing individuals' strengths, promoting efficiency in teamwork, empowering those around them in order to meet goals, showing no hesitation about rolling up one's sleeves and pitching in when necessary and, last but not least, playing a key role in protecting, preserving and taking care of their respective communities.

Inspiration, hard work, imagination, taking advantage of potential opportunities and good luck play significant roles in positioning the good leaders from the great. The community leaders featured in this publication have made the leap over that tremendous gap to become key players who impact each and every one of us on a daily basis. I salute these individuals and the countless others who unselfishly give of themselves to help make the communities they serve better ones in which to work, live and play.

The Daily Home

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Emily Wood Bowron

5 generations of making a difference and supporting the community

By Buddy Roberts



Emily Wood Bowron is a self-described happy, positive person who loves what she does.

As assistant vice president of strategic marketing for St. Clair County-based Red Diamond Coffee & Tea Company, she's the fifth generation of her family to have a hand in guiding the direction of the company, and she's pleased to use skills she developed while working in other cities for the benefit of the family business.

"Red Diamond started in 1906, and we are the second oldest coffee and tea company in the country that is still owned by the same family," Bowron said. "Most have either been bought or sold or gone public. We've been here 112 years,

and we're going to be here for another."

She joined the company in 2015, after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, spending time in Dallas and New York as an assistant buyer in Neiman Marcus' executive development program and working in communications for Aon Hewett in Manhattan.

"I wanted to find something I was passionate about, which is why I moved states and moved positions," she said. While still in New York, she learned during a conversation with her father Bill that Red Diamond was seeking a strategic marketing director. "Six months later, I was back, and I'm glad I could bring something with me that could make a difference. What I was looking for is exactly what I've ended up doing, which is really cool."

She enjoys the rewards and challenges of working in a family environment. "My dad always said it was an awesome experience working with his father, and it is for us, too. Obviously there is some pressure, but it's the kind that makes us become better."

Red Diamond's family atmosphere extends to the entire company, she said. "We are not one of those very corporate cultures. We are a family company where people care about you. We have amazing people who work here. We couldn't do anything without our awesome team. When we

get hold of good people, we hold onto them. Some of our team members have been with us 20, 30, 35 years. That's because we believe in investing in people and taking care of them, and we love hiring people from the local community to work here."

Involvement in the community is part of Red Diamond's heritage, according to Bowron.

"We love being a part of the community. We host fundraisers, and we support scholarships, first responders, youth sports and ACT preparation at Moody High School. It is important for us to be part of all of that."

Producing quality beverage products remains Red Diamond's goal, and Bowron is particularly excited about a new product released this month: Fitz Cold Brew Coffee. "It's our first ready-to-drink coffee product. It is awesome, and it's rolling into Target stores in all 50 states."

Named for the company's founder, Fitz is available in black, slightly sweet and dark chocolate flavors. The 12-ounce beverages are gluten-free and dairy-free.

"Getting to be involved in our products and company means everything to me," Bowron said. "To know that we have a whole company of people behind the products I grew up knowing about is a really cool thing."

"We love being a part of the community. It is important for us to be part of (it)."

Fred Casey

Pell City business owner believes in giving back to the community

By Sherry Kughn



Having spent a career with Mobile Oil in Saudi Arabia, Fred Casey “fell in love” with the Pell City area after visiting relatives in Talladega. Originally from Massachusetts, he and his wife, Tania, decided to make Pell City their home.

“It was terrific to find the lake here,” Casey said, referring to Logan Martin Lake.

As owner of The Tradesman Company in Pell City that builds boat houses, boat lifts, and floating piers, Casey believes in also giving back to the community. He has helped organize and stage the annual Logan Martin LakeFest and Boat Show, the largest in-water boat show in the Southeast. The streams of revenue from the show

have raised thousands of dollars for charities during the past 10 years.

Casey coordinates his efforts for LakeFest with the owners of the Woods Surfside Marina of Pell City and the Sylacauga Marina.

Also, Casey serves as a member of the board of Chapel of the Pines, a ministry of the First Methodist Church of Pell City overseen by the church’s minister, the Rev. Byron Vance. Each Sunday during May through September at Lakeside Park, worshipers from various denominations enjoy outdoor services; and, afterward, contribute their money. Visiting ministers deliver each sermon, and Sunday’s contributions are distributed to charitable programs, such as Feed the Schools. Free lunches are available to students one day a month, which allows all students equal access to the same food without regard to economic status.

“We are very proud of the leadership of this community,” Casey said. “They are just marvelous. We have a talented administration, city manager, and mayor who are capable and competent enough to guide the city in a way that is to be envied.”

Casey defines leadership as having “thoughtful direction.” City leaders should be able to look at the avenues of city funds and shepherd them well. For example, the current city manager has

negotiated several investments to benefit Pell City.

“We have a group of people who care about our city and strive to improve the infrastructure, education and elements that make a healthy city,” he said.

Casey credits two things for his desire to give back to the community, his solid family upbringing and living overseas for an extensive period of time.

“You get a greater appreciation for what we have,” he said. “I spent thirty years in Saudi Arabia as a construction manager while building refineries and heavy civil construction project, as well as commercial applications for the petroleum industry.”

As a business owner and a community leader, Casey hopes to continue looking to the future and pay attention to the change in demographics. He sees opportunity in the areas of on-the-water dining and growing the number of full-time residents on the lake.

“Such leadership,” he said, “will be appreciated by not only lake dwellers but also the entire city.”

“We have a group of people who care about our city and strive to improve the infrastructure, education and elements that make a healthy city.”

George Culver

Leadership, hard work and vision at the Historic Ritz Theatre

By Sherry Kughn



The executive director of the Historic Ritz Theatre, George Culver, defines leadership as having vision for the future and having courage when facing problems. Add in hard work, passion, a belief in the power of “one,” and community commitment, and you have the reasons for Culver’s success.

“A positive attitude together with a can-do spirit absolutely does influence others around us,” he said, “which is what collectively makes things happen for the better for everyone.”

More than 20 years ago, this Munford native helped create a sustainable effort to bring the performing or “lively” arts to Talladega, which is

near his hometown, the place that he credits for his understanding of how a community cares for its people. He applies that same level of care to help The Ritz Theatre be a place where others can come together.

The homegrown “boy” in Culver’s soul once purchased a scout hat and scarf, in order to be like older scouts. His goal failed, but he recognized a need in his community and worked to help create a cub-scout group. Decades later, the homegrown “man” saw a need for his community and helped create The Ritz.

Culver attended and graduated from the University of Alabama. During those years, he studied Shakespeare in Oxford, England, once served as an intern in the U.S. Senate and, after graduation, obtained a master’s degree in business administration from the Wharton School of Management at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Achievements followed Culver’s studies. He worked at several ad agencies while living in New York City. He managed the subscriber-acquisition department of Showtime Cable Network, created the directorship position of Development & Public Affairs for the renowned Actor’s Studio, produced the documentary “OK Heart” for PBS, and commissioned and produced the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway play “I Don’t Want to Be

Zelda Anymore.”

Culver returned home to Talladega because of his sister’s terminal illness, and he took a job as an adjunct professor of marketing at Talladega College as he assumed the leadership role at The Ritz.

A cancer survivor himself (with almost five years cancer-free), he cherishes the opportunity to serve in his current position. Since 1998, a multitude of nationally known professionals in the field of the lively arts have performed onstage in Talladega, and he is proud that the effort “has proven itself to be an indispensable asset for our community.”

More than 350,000 attendees have visited The Ritz; more than \$200,000 has been raised in support of local charities through collaborations with nonprofits; and, soon, more than 100,000 students will have attended—at no cost to students—professional, curriculum-based arts education initiatives at The Ritz, thanks to its partnerships with local boards of education.

“Lots and lots of people have contributed their time and money to help make all these achievements happen, for which I am especially grateful,” Culver said.

“Leadership for me means an instinctive vision for what the future can be, paired with a dogged persistence to pursue that vision, no matter the obstacles.”

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Marianne Garrett

Making a difference in the lives of students and their families

By Buddy Roberts



Marianne Garrett wanted to be a teacher for the specific purpose of making a difference in the lives of others.

“I wanted to be the person who helped shape and mold the lives of future leaders,” she said. “I have the desire to plant that seed of knowledge which later blooms into a successful future for somebody’s child.”

As the guidance counselor at Winterboro School (from which she graduated in 1990), Garrett works to “assist, empower and inspire all students in becoming college and career ready. My role is to guide students and parents

in the areas of academic achievement, improving behaviors, social and emotional development and making sure all students have a career pathway in order to become productive citizens in society.”

A significant way in which she had made a difference in the lives of her students is helping high school seniors obtain college scholarships.

“As a school counselor, I have worked with parents and students as a team in obtaining over \$10 million in free money to further their education,” she said. “Scholarships are extremely important for our students and their families. Any amount of scholarship funds is greatly appreciated to offset the cost of college. This is less money coming out of our parents’ pockets and more money they can use toward other family necessities.”

Helping students obtain scholarships was one of the first goals she set for herself upon becoming a guidance counselor.

“I set a goal early on to expose my students to everything I did not know when I was in high school. I wanted to find ways to help our students attend college at little to no cost. Each year, I seek to make sure over half of the graduating class has some form of scholarship assistance to attend college if they so desire. It breaks my heart to

hear a parent say they really would like for their child to attend college but they do not have the money. When I hear that statement, it gives me motivation to help even more.”

An Alpine resident and self-described “small-town Christian country girl” who likes driving fast cars and motorcycles, Garrett holds four degrees (in social work, guidance and counseling, elementary education and teacher leadership) from Jacksonville State University.

“I have over 19 years in education. I started off as a Student Therapeutic Education Program counselor for grades K-6, which led me to serve as a school interventionist for approximately two years. Afterwards, I started teaching in April of 2004 and became a school counselor in 2007.”

She still enjoys being in the classroom as much as possible.

“Sometimes I miss those days where I can stand in front of a class and teach. Now I have opportunities to teach whole group guidance lessons and have genuine engagement with students. I truly enjoy interacting with families and children because I know if we work as a team, we are going to have productive citizens in our society.”

“It breaks my heart to hear a parent say they really would like for their child to attend college but they do not have the money. When I hear that statement, it gives me motivation to help even more.”



TALLADEGA'S HISTORIC RITZ THEATRE

"The Executive Board of the Historic Talladega Ritz Theatre is so very proud of George Culver and his accomplishments. He constantly strives to not only bring quality entertainment to our community, but also to further educate our children in arts education. This year, we will surpass having 100,000 schoolchildren from this county come through our doors to watch curriculum-relevant plays and shows.

George has recently overseen the renovation of the adjoining Otts Building, the interior of the theatre and he spearheaded the campaign to raise money to install new, beautiful seating.

We salute you, George, and all that you have done and continue to do for our area."

2018 Historic Ritz Theatre Board of Directors

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Todd Green

Creating an environment of corporate giving

By Amanda E.H. Pritchard



When you meet Todd Green, you know he's blessed with the gift of the giving spirit.

Giving back is in his nature.

"It's so important to give to others," he said. "It's built in my spiritual foundation and is permeated in everything I do."

As the president of North American operations for WKW Automotive in Pell City, Green enjoys having the opportunity to involve the company in community outreach.

"I learned long ago when I worked at a Japanese supplier in Birmingham the importance of respect for workers, people and community," he said.

"This shift from one culture to the other greatly influenced me. I refocused and started thinking about the value each employee is adding and how I wanted to support what's important to them."

Green looks forward to November when WKW will celebrate Veterans' Day by hosting a luncheon for its veterans. "The Pell City High School ROTC Color Guard comes in to play Taps, and it's a special event for our veterans," he said proudly.

"WKW is a part of the fabric of the community. We're always interested in how we can be a good corporate citizen."

Green and the company also support local education initiatives. "We have a great partnership with Jefferson State Community College. They're training our next production team members through apprenticeships where they're learning to become advance machine operators. The program offers students a hands-on experience where they attend school part of the day and work the rest of the day."

Emphasis on education is not only important to WKW in Pell City but it stems from its main headquarters in Wuppertal, Germany. When the Pell City Library opened its new location, WKW donated children's books from Germany and sponsored the children's corner area.

Starting this school year off right, WKW

organized a school supply drive and donated supplies to Iola Roberts Elementary School in Pell City and R.L. Young Elementary School in Talladega.

Recently, it hosted a first Safety and Wellness Fair where the focus was on the health of its employees and the community. Not only does WKW focus on employee health, it's also environmentally conscious. Because being environmentally sound is important to the company, it recently attained ISO 14001 certification. This certification means WKW properly manages the immediate and long-term environmental impacts of its products and services.

Honored to have a meaningful career that allows him to share his giving spirit, Green says he is "beyond grateful" to be part of the community.

"As one of the largest employers in St. Clair County (with over 400 employees), it means a lot that our company is known for its giving."

*"WKW is a part of the fabric of the community.
We're always interested in how we can be a good corporate citizen."*

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Hiliary Hardwick

Relationships are important for veterans home director

By Amanda E.H. Pritchard



Creating comfort, a sense of familiarity and a true feeling of home is all in a day's work for Hiliary Hardwick, director of the Colonel Robert L. Howard State Veterans Home in Pell City.

Making a house a home for its veteran residents is what she and the staff strive to develop with every resident. "We're not just admitting a veteran," she said. "We're admitting a family."

Cultivating relationships and generating an "at-home" environment is what Hardwick has worked hard to achieve during the past six years. She began her career at the veterans home in 2012 as admissions director, then became director in 2015.

Graduating from Jacksonville State University with a nursing degree, Hardwick went on to attain a graduate degree in healthcare administration from the University of Alabama.

As director with the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, she has the honor of developing a community connection between the veterans home and the city of Pell City.

"Through community outreach for the facility, we're able to tell our story at speaking engagements through organizations like Rotary and Kiwanis, just to name a few. The veterans home is also a member of Pell City Chamber of Commerce."

The home offers its residents the opportunity to be a thriving part of the community. "Veterans Day week is a big deal," Hardwick said. "Veterans go to Pell City High School and speak at other schools. Community members also stop by to drop off cards and talk with our residents one-on-one to thank them for their service."

Forming partnerships with the Center for Education and Performing Arts has afforded veteran residents the opportunity to take part in plays, concerts and other performing arts. They've also taken field trips to Chattanooga for a river boat cruise and to visit the Tennessee Aquarium. Local marinas sponsor fishing trips on Logan

Martin Lake, and the veterans enjoy regular visits to Pell City shops and restaurants.

"I love my job and working with these veterans," Hardwick said. "I strive every day to make a difference in someone's life. Building these relationships is very rewarding."

She's excited about community interaction opportunities during the holidays. From 5-7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 30, the veterans home invites trick-or-treaters to stop by 7054 Veterans Parkway for snacks and games. On Veterans Day, as many as 40 residents will participate in the Birmingham Veterans Day Parade. Then during Christmas, the home will host its first Christmas Bazaar featuring handmade items produced by residents. All proceeds from will go towards the Veterans Activity Fund.

Hardwick's goal is to make sure a strong bond between the resident veterans and the community continues.

"It truly is a home here," she said, "That is our goal—to provide a home that provides our residents with quality care and quality of life."

"I love my job and working with these veterans. I strive every day to make a difference in someone's life. Building these relationships is very rewarding."

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Elmer Harris

Retired APC CEO believes in leadership, vision and making things happen

By Sherry Kughn



Elmer Harris owned a lake home on Logan Martin Lake in Pell City during his tenure as CEO of Alabama Power Company.

When he retired, he and his wife Glenda chose to make the lake their permanent home.

That move was good for not only the Harris but also for Pell City, especially the Rotary Club.

When he moved his membership from the Birmingham Rotary Club to Pell City, he realized the local club had an underfunded foundation and spent money from fundraisers as soon as it was raised. He remembered how, when he was at Alabama Power, he had organized an endowment

foundation that has done “a world of good” for charities throughout the state since the 1990s.

“We helped just about any charity, and we were happy to do so,” Harris said.

Rotarians in Pell City had always worked hard, and they continue to help charities, but now, thanks to Harris and other hard-working Rotarians, the Pell City members have raised their first half-million dollars. Now, the endowment goal is 2 million with an additional goal to engage the leadership of commissions and councils of both Pell City and St. Clair County, the business community, and other civic and charity organizations to “focus on bigger projects with maximum coordination,” according to Harris.

“Once we accomplish this goal, we will have better collective focus and better vision,” he said.

His effort reflects his definition of leadership, which he said means a person must step out, develop a vision of where to go, and make things happen.

“One must have vision, the ability to make things happen, and the stamina to stay with the goal,” Harris said. “It doesn’t do that by itself.”

One example of his determination is how Mercedes Benz came to Alabama. When the German company announced it would develop its first plant outside of Germany, there were 200 sites vying for the business. One day, former Gov.

Jim Folsom called Harris and the ADO director, Billy Joe Camp, and asked if Alabama should join in with the others. Harris and Camp thought state and local leaders should not only compete but also change the law that disallowed incentives offered to large companies to locate in Alabama.

“I knew somebody had to be in charge on the day-to-day decisions to get this accomplished, somebody besides the governor,” Harris said.

Camp agreed to be that person, and he and the governor had to work hard to make the project happen. The initial Mercedes investment was \$600,000, and the current investment is about \$8 billion – huge growth for the good of Alabama.

Harris is a family man with eight grandchildren. He loves to spend time with them and help their growth in life. One of his grandsons, Austin, a senior at Hoover High School, developed a brain tumor two years ago. The support of family, the medical staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital, where Austin’s 10-hour operation occurred, and the officials at Auburn University who accepted him into the engineering program, allowed him to overcome the trauma and be in remission.

“From the time of the operation until a few months ago,” Harris said, “Austin is a positive person, and a real example to others.”

“One must have vision, the ability to make things happen and the stamina to stay with the goal.”



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ENROLL NOW!



Lee Holmes & Robb Peoples

Six decades of being in business and sharing with the community

By Denise Sinclair



The minute you step through the door, Lee Holmes is there to say, “Hello, how can I help you?”

The business owner loves his work and his community. He and his brothers, Ray Holmes and Robb Peoples, own and operate Sylacauga Marine and ATV Inc., a local watercraft dealership that has garnered statewide, national and international recognition.

Lee Holmes said he and his brothers purchased what was then Bob’s Sports Center from their father, Bob Holmes, in 2006.

This year, the family has been in business for 60 years. “My family has been here for a long time and all in the same spot with a number of different names. They changed the name to Sylacauga Marine to represent the community they served. I think this one is going to stick,” Lee Holmes said.

“We are a perennial top 10 dealer in America and number one or two in Nitro boat sales and top ten in Tracker sales all over the world,” he added, noting that Sylacauga Marine’s sales staff takes pride in being knowledgeable, professional and courteous.

“We believe that service after the sale keeps customer satisfaction high. Our company policy is based on that fact,” he said.

Sylacauga Marine offers a full line of services ranging from tune-ups to complete rebuilds for Polaris, Mercury, Johnson, Evinrude, BassTracker, SunTracker, Tahoe, Nitro and Southern Star and all other major brands of outboards, ATVs and watercraft.

Holmes points out that the business’s service staff is professional and highly trained to take care of each customer.

Ray Holmes serves as the business’ CFO. Peoples is in charge of financing, and Lee Holmes is the day-to-day operations manager. “I talk to

people like you. I also handle promotions. Our business has raised a lot of money locally for The Arc, some \$20,000. We helped start LakeFest in Pell City along with William Davis, Jerry Woods and Fred Casey.”

He said he spent his life around the business, starting in his early teens sweeping floors.

The family believes its outstanding employees help make their business one of the best. These employees include Tyler Martin, Jennifer Dunaway, Brandon Davis and Brian Murchison.

“My brothers and I still run this business as if it was a small business. As owners we are here for you. We see everything that goes on,” he said. “We were raised here. We do what we do for our community and for us. The better we do as a business, the more we can share with the community. It’s always been that way.”

“The better we do as a business, the more we can share with the community.”

Steve Hurst

Longtime legislator believes in cooperation, communication and credibility

By Chris Norwood



State Rep. Steve Hurst has been a public servant representing the interests of Talladega County since the mid-1980s, first as a county commissioner and then, for the last two decades, as a member of the state House of Representatives. He is unopposed in this election cycle and will be going back to Montgomery next year.

“I was appointed to the county commission in 1985 and served until 1994,” he said. “I took four years off and then ran for the legislature in 1998 for the first time. So it’ll be 20 years at the end of this term. But even before I was appointed, I had in the back of my mind that I would run for the legislature at some point. I have always had

a desire to help other people. I’m not better than anyone else, but I have always believed in trying to help however I can. God put me on this earth for that one reason, and as long as I still have all my faculties, I am going to continue.”

The legislator says the one thing that he has worked hard to do is cultivate a reputation for saying what he means in Montgomery. “I like to think you could ask anyone in Montgomery if Steve Hurst’s word is good, and I believe they will tell you it is. Your credibility is the most important thing.”

Hurst tends to focus on legislation that he is interested in, ask questions, take notes and visit the Legislative Reference Service before making a decision and going forward with it, he said. “I don’t just try and pass a lot of bills just to pass them,” he said. “If someone else’s bill comes through, a lot of times I will go and talk with the sponsor and see about putting in an amendment that will be particularly helpful to my constituents. I just want to see the process work, I don’t necessarily have to introduce it myself. I’m just as proud either way, as long as it helps the people who elected me.”

Hurst says he has a good working relationship with the other members of the delegation for Talladega County, as well as Clay and Calhoun counties, which also are parts of his district. “I

work with Ron Johnson and Rep. Barbara Boyd or any of our senators for Talladega County, and the same is true for Clay and Calhoun.”

“You know, people say the legislature is a part-time job. We’re in session for three and a half months out of the year, but when we’re not in session, we’re meeting with constituents, going to the legislative reference service, meeting with the speaker. My district covers three counties, where I represent 46,000 people. Just visiting all the cities, all the police departments, all the fire departments, all the mayors, all the schools is a full-time job in itself. But I love what I do, and I’m always available to talk to people. Even if it’s not an issue that has to do with the legislature, I’ll stop and hear people’s concerns.

“My granddad said to me when I was young that you should listen to people who are mad at you. You can’t put out a fire without going to the fire. About 90 percent of the time, they’re mad because of a communication problem that can be cleared up. The other 10 percent of the time, they’ll feel better once they tell you what they’re mad about.”

“I have always had a desire to help other people. I’m not better than anyone else, but I have always believed in trying to help however I can.”

Joe Kelly

St. Clair County resident loves his work with economic development

By Gary Hanner



Joe Kelly has lived in Moody the past 22 years. He is president of TCI-Sales, a manufacturer's representative in the electrical equipment industry, a position he has held for 33 years.

Another role Kelly is proud to have taken on is being a member of the St. Clair County Economic Development Council's board of directors.

"I am the last one continuing to serve now who was on the original board 20 years ago," he said.

Kelly serves as president of the board, a position he has held the past two-to-three years and a position held in the past by Tommy Bowers and Lyman Lovejoy.

Kelly said he absolutely loves his role as president of the board of the EDC.

"It has been very rewarding to me personally," he said. "Not business wise, because in my business, it really is not a help to me. It makes me proud when I go throughout the different municipalities in the county and see what has been accomplished thanks to the EDC. The EDC has been so instrumental in the development in the industrial complex in Pell City, the commerce park in Moody and a number of other places in the county. We're really just getting started."

Kelly said the St. Clair County EDC has been important to this county.

"The EDC is receiving so much praise from across the state and even outside the state," he said. "Others want to know how this county, and the political structure of it, gets along with each other as well as they do. The EDC has been very successful in bringing in so much commercial development. Not many counties can say that."

Kelly said there are many officials from neighboring counties who visit and ask how the EDC has made St. Clair County what it is today.

"The EDC executive director Don Smith gets asked that a lot while attending meetings and conferences," Kelly said. "They all want to know how St. Clair does it. What's the structure? Is

there a secret ingredient?"

Kelly said Smith and assistant executive director Jason Roberts have been important and vital to the success of the EDC.

"We have been fortunate to have some very good executive directors," Kelly said. "It started with Ed Gardner Sr. He was in Montgomery and well connected. When we brought him on board, it was quite a feather in our cap. Especially for a brand new, upstart organization. We set our goals high then, and we've maintained high standards."

Kelly said the EDC has always maintained a five-year plan, and they work hard at accomplishing everything that has been placed on that plan.

"These goals on our five-year plans are always tracked and get discussed in our meetings," he said. "A very large percentage of these goals are met. Before this year ends, we have one of the last goals of the past five-year plan that is nearing completion. We are currently looking at starting a new five-year plan."

Kelly said one of the major goals on the next five-year plan is tourism.

"It makes me proud when I go throughout the different municipalities in the county and see what has been accomplished thanks to the EDC."

Joe Lee

Overseeing one of Alabama's safest cities

By Gary Hanner



In the past quarter-century, Joe Lee has seen a tremendous amount of growth in the city of Moody. In fact, Moody is the fastest growing municipality in St. Clair County.

Lee was elected in 1992 as a city councilman, a position he held for 11 years. In 2003, he became mayor, and has been for the past 15 years.

In 1992, the city had a budget of \$900,000 and a population of about 4,000. Lee said the budget today is \$18 million with a population that has grown to 15,000.

Moody was recently named the sixth safest city in the state of Alabama. Lee said that credit goes to the Moody Police Department and Chief

Thomas Hunt.

“Back in 1992, we had eight fulltime officers,” Lee said. “Today, we have 27 officers. I believe the police department deserves all the credit for us being one of the safest cities in the state. But then you look at the quality of growth that we’ve had and the type people we attract to the city of Moody with our subdivisions and what the city has to offer its citizens.”

Moody was designated the sixth safest city in Alabama by the National Council for Home Safety and Security (NCHSS), a trade organization aimed at increasing education and public knowledge and supporting legislative initiatives related to home security, home safety, child safety and senior safety.

Helena, Vestavia Hills, Mountain Brook, Alabaster and Daphne were the top 5 safest cities, according to the NCHSS. Other local cities in the top 50 are Pell City (19th), Oxford (30th), Leeds (35th), Talladega (43rd) and Sylacauga (44th).

Moody’s population was recorded as 12,823 in 2016. According to the NCHSS, the city averages 3.37 violent crimes and 17.31 property crimes per 1,000 residents.

Besides an environment of safety, the city’s parks and recreation department attracts many people to Moody, according to the mayor. Recently, a new splash pad, new civic center and a

new library have been built.

“We have done a lot in the past few years to offer a better quality of life,” Lee said. “We feel if we have our kids in our parks, we’re keeping them out of trouble.”

In 2003, the Moody Miracle League opened for special-needs individuals from all across the state.

Lee said this project was all done through volunteer help and donations.

“There was not a penny owed on the Miracle League once it was completed,” he said. “It still thrives today, and has over 150 players who participate.”

Hunt has been police chief the past six years and says the credit for being one of the safest cities in the state goes to the residents.

“We have great people who live in Moody,” Hunt said. “They support and respect the mayor and police department. They respect authority and human life.”

“I believe the police department deserves all the credit for us being one of the safest cities in the state.”

Candace Lindsey

Leadership: Bringing people together to achieve a common goal

By Sherry Kughn



Candace Lindsey is the business office manager for Alabama Power Company's Anniston office. She also serves on the board of the St. Clair County Economic Development Council, a group that strives to improve the quality of life for local residents by creating jobs and increasing wealth. Lindsey is grateful for this opportunity to serve.

A Centre native, she attended Cherokee County High School and received a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and a master's degree from Troy University. Afterward, she received career opportunities with Alabama Power and eventually moved to St. Clair County where she resides. She began working in the

Birmingham Business Call Center, later in Gadsden as the business office supervisor, and then in the Ashville business office before taking her current job.

Lindsey has served as a Loaned Executive for United Way, which she enjoyed.

"This opportunity allowed me to raise money for United Way, which provides funding for various local nonprofits," she said.

Lindsey defines leadership as the "ability to bring people together to achieve a common goal. A leader can be formal or informal and does not have to hold a leadership title."

Also, she believes good leaders must have the ability to inspire, have good communication skills, be confident, practice accountability, and develop the courage to be decisive.

Gaining real-life experiences is important for youngsters, and Lindsey trusts that parents, educators, and community members set a good example for children. Also, mentoring programs and job-shadowing opportunities give children opportunities to develop leadership skills.

"I believe that job shadowing programs are a great opportunity," she said. "Job shadowing and mentoring will improve skills of young professionals. These unique training experiences will address developmental needs and prepare youth for leadership positions in the community."

Lindsey has had the privilege of learning from

various mentors who have challenged her way of thinking, provided career advice, and offered critical feedback.

"Mentors have been extremely important at every stage of my education and career. These individuals have helped me avoid career mistakes and helped to develop me into the leader I am today," she said.

Lindsey believes it is important for leaders to continuously seek open and honest feedback from those working around them.

Her earliest examples of leadership were her parents, community and church leaders, and teachers.

"As a child, I understood and respected the decisions made by my parents," she said. "I valued the leadership qualities my pastor displayed in my childhood church and appreciated the impact educators could have on so many lives."

Lindsey believes her work with the EDC will have long-lasting impact on St. Clair's residents and said, "The St. Clair County EDC is strategic and well planned out to ensure the continued success of our community."

She and her husband, Christopher, have a son, Luke, and are expecting their second child, a daughter, this winter.

She enjoys do-it-yourself projects, decorating her home, and traveling.

"Mentors have been extremely important at every stage of my education and career. These individuals have helped me avoid career mistakes and helped to develop me into the leader I am today."

Doug Marshall

Helping children and families through love and education

By Amanda E.H. Pritchard



Doug Marshall's road to the Presbyterian Home for Children in Talladega has been navigated by a driven leader focused on extending a hand up to at-risk children and their families.

"We have 150 years of experience serving children across Alabama where the faith community and the business community intersect together for the benefit of children," he said.

Since 1868, the Presbyterian Home for Children has "served children, young adults, and families throughout Alabama who seek healing and hope for their troubled lives." Working to continue the legacy of love, Marshall's goal as a respected leader from the corporate and nonprofit landscapes of Alabama is to help keep families together.

At an early age, he was taught to respect all people by celebrating diversity and championing overcoming adversity. Growing up in Meridian, Mississippi, Marshall's parents were public school teachers who loved education and impacting the lives of children. That love left a lasting impression that positively impacted his life.

"I have an incredible father who helped coach Meridian High School to state championships in basketball and football. I'm proud to follow in his footsteps working with young people."

In his role as president and CEO of the Presbyterian Home, Marshall believes "I have an incredible opportunity to be a father to the fatherless and show children that people do keep their promises. I don't miss birthday parties. I show our children unconditional love. It's important that they know I'm different because they can believe in and trust me."

Marshall considers it a privilege to offer children one of the greatest gifts—education.

"Ascension Leadership Academy is a learning experience for kindergarten through 12th grade students where we provide individual direction where they are challenged in a creative learning environment. We are fully accredited by AdvancED. We have an incredible partnership with DHR where we're able to help children who may have been severely abused and/or neglected receive therapeutic treatment with a highly qualified team of professionals to begin their own healing process and reclaim their self-esteem."

Honored to have the opportunity to provide a path of hope for children and their families, Marshall says one of the greatest moments he witnesses is when youngsters' eyes begin to sparkle again.

During his days at Meridian High School, Marshall graduated as part of the largest senior class in the school's history. Of 751 students, he was number 10 in his class, so he understands the importance of maintaining that sparkle and turning it into ambition. "Education is such an integral part of the path to hope and independence."

Educating residents of the Presbyterian Home for Children helps Marshall attain the goal of helping children and their families create a successful sustainable lifestyle.

"The average age of a homeless person is six years old. We provide them a secure dwelling, surround them with love and support and develop consistency in their lives."

Marshall said seeing families establish their own success is the greatest reward his team can receive. "These families are working towards independence. It's important for them to know everything we do is wrapped up in love."

"Education is such an integral part of the path to hope and independence."

Lacy Mills

Bridge Builders Club director appreciates diversity

By Laura Nation-Atchison



Lacy Mills isn't just a fan of Boys and Girls Clubs of America. She's a product of the national organization that has served youth for more than 150 years.

Mills serves as the director of Bridge Builders Boys and Girls Clubs of Pell City, and she couldn't be happier about it.

She became director for the club in 2012, and her enthusiasm continues for the organization that she first became part of at age 13.

"I joined the counselor-in-training program first and became a counselor at 16," Mills said.

After graduating from Moody High School,

and the University of West Alabama (where she majored in elementary education), the position of Pell City director became available, and she knew it was meant to be.

"It really was perfect timing."

For the past six years, Mills has operated and developed the Pell City club's programs, which average about 200 youngsters ages 6-18 in its after-school programs during the academic year and even more during the summer.

The diversity of the Boys and Girls Club is Mills' favorite part of the organization, "That's what I really love about it, the way it reaches out to youths in such a large age group with so many applications. We are reaching into so many areas and always developing new programs for our members."

This academic year, thanks to a grant provided by Chapel in the Pines, the club will receive a driving simulator, Mills said.

It will incorporate basic driving situations while addressing contemporary issues such as texting and driving, mobile telephone use and many other potential hazards.

The Boys and Girls Club enjoys outstanding support from local officials and organizations, Mills said.

"The city is one of our biggest supporters. We

receive so much help from the city."

Inside the city-owned club headquarters on 19th Street (the former National Guard Armory), there's a regulation-sized basketball court that is easily used for all kinds of games and events, a large learning center and art room, another large room fitted with video screens and game selections and a teen area that includes table top games and an adjacent pool table area with couches and chairs.

"We try and create areas for all ages to use," Mills said.

Her father, Terry Isbell, was also a big believer in Boys and Girls Clubs and worked at the club while coaching football and basketball at Pell City High School.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America got its start in 1860 when three Hartford, Connecticut, women formed the first chapter as a positive alternative to unsupervised gatherings in the streets of the city.

The organization became Boys and Girls Clubs of America in 1990, and in 2010, there were more than 4,000 individual clubs.

The Pell City club is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Its telephone number is 205-814-0405.

"What I really love about it (is) the way it reaches out to youths in such a large age group with so many applications."

Brad Mooney

Pulling together and going above and beyond as a team

By Kelli Tipton



Brad Mooney has worked for Alabama Power in various capacities for 38 years. He currently serves as the St. Clair business office manager where he oversees seven employees.

Mooney has been in this role for almost a year, and he is “thrilled” to have the opportunity to serve the company and the residents of St. Clair County and that his involvement in workforce development allows him the opportunity to make a positive difference in the community.

“Workforce development is the best way to impact the economy and the lives of the people in St. Clair County. I get the chance to help people make a better living and provide more for their families with a job that pays more than minimum wage,” he said.

As a company, Alabama Power is known for its efforts to make a difference in the community.

“We sponsor the local Boy Scouts and some other organizations, and the company sponsors my memberships in the Rotary Club. We are a member of the chamber of commerce, and we encourage civic participation by our employees. We allow them to go and support the community in different ways. They also attend workforce development meetings and help judge robotics competitions.”

Mooney recently attended and completed Leadership St. Clair County, a series of classes that taught him and other participants about the inner workings of local government, law enforcement, education, industry and other entities of St. Clair County.

He describes his leadership style as “very hands-on.”

“I am a servant leader. I don’t ask my employees

to do anything that I wouldn’t do or wouldn’t help them do if they needed the help,” he said.

“Leaders eat last. That’s a military saying that means if you take care of your people, they will take care of you. I have an office in Ashville too, and I can’t be in both places at the same time, and everybody in both offices will pull together as a team and go above and beyond to make sure every detail is taken care of.

“And we like to have fun. We spend a lot of time at the office every day. Of course we have an important job to do, but I don’t want to run the type of office that people dread coming to,” he said.

Mooney is thankful for the opportunity to live and work in St. Clair County and to make positive contributions to the communities in the county.

“I am extremely blessed to work and live here. Pell City is a great community, and Alabama Power is a great company to work for. I love my job.”

“Leaders eat last. That’s a military saying that means if you take care of your people, they will take care of you.”

Randall Richardson

Pell City lawyer well-known for his work in the community

By David Atchison



Randall Richardson considers opening a law practice in Pell City one of the best decisions he ever made.

Richardson said he initially met Bill Pruitt, his law partner, at the St. Clair County Courthouse while the judge went through the court docket for the day. The two attorneys ended up striking up a friendship in the courtroom.

They eventually began talking about opening up a practice together and in 2011, the two men did just that.

“It seems to be working out well,” Richardson said.

Richardson likes the small-town feel that Pell City offers. He actually grew up in a small town

and was raised on a farm in rural Walker County.

“I was bailing hay, fixing fences and chasing cattle,” he said.

Richardson realized early he wanted something different, an education, and after graduating from Walker High School, he headed to the big city of Birmingham in 1992, where he attended the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He majored in history and criminal justice.

The logical next step was law school, Richardson said.

His wife’s career in interior design was taking off in Birmingham, so he commuted back and forth to Tuscaloosa to attend law school at the University of Alabama.

Instead of practicing law in Birmingham, Richardson decided to head east to Pell City.

It was a good fit.

“Clearly, it was a good decision for me,” said Richardson who is well known in the city, not only because of his job but because of his involvement within the community.

Five years ago, Richardson and Pruitt kicked off the first Fall Frenzy event at Lakeside Park to help raise money for the Pell City School System and its many student organizations.

“It’s generated a good bit of revenue,” Richardson said. Fall Frenzy has donated to schools almost \$140,000 in the past five years. “Basically, everyone who participates gets a piece of the pie.”

He said the idea came from all the many school organizations trying to raise money for their individual groups throughout the year. The lawyers thought, why not just have one big fundraiser for all the schools, school groups and sports teams?

He remembers the first Fall Frenzy. It was held in November, right when a cold snap hit the area.

“We really didn’t know what we were doing,” Richardson said. “We were just a couple of lawyers. We really didn’t know how well it would do. It took on a life of its own.”

Despite the cold weather, the first Fall Frenzy was a huge success.

The event is now held the second Saturday of October, and the weather has been more cooperative since.

The family-friendly, “school-type carnival” with the entire community participating, has continued to grow and prosper, raising needed funds for the many school groups throughout the Pell City School System.

“Between the school groups and local vendors, we probably have about 100 booths this year,” Richardson said.

The event also features a 5K run, carnival rides and games, live entertainment and more.

“We just ask that everything is family-friendly and inclusive,” Richardson said. “The school board has been behind us from the start. It’s been a win-win for everyone.”

“Basically, everyone who participates gets a piece of the pie.”

Kevin Smith

Hometown ties are motivation for making a difference

By Kelli Tipton



Kevin Smith is making a difference in his hometown of Talladega by buying and remodeling historic buildings on the town's courthouse square, transforming it into a more attractive, productive and entertaining setting.

Some of these buildings now house new businesses that allow people to learn new skills and make new products to sell, and some will become venues for events and entertainment.

Smith is a graduate of Talladega High School's class of 1993 and is CEO of Training Wheel, an industry leader in healthcare information technology, consulting, training and support, located in Ft. Myers, Florida.

On his frequent visits home to Talladega, he noticed the conditions of the buildings on the square, and that his family would generally go out of town to shop and eat dinner.

"We saw an opportunity to invest in the square. We felt that if we could acquire the corner buildings on the square, like the old Braswell Furniture building and the Standard Furniture building, and make improvements to those larger buildings, that people would take notice," he said. "From our perspective, it was the right thing to do, and the timing was right. The city had already started a building facade grant, and other grants for sidewalk improvements and such.

"In the beginning, my vision for Talladega was more of a maker's area where people could make and sell crafts. We wanted to provide places for them to do this and to bring people in from other towns," he said.

"We bought the old Braswell building and put some shops below. It is called Artisan's Alley, and a new business just opened there called Sew It Seams. It's basically a membership maker's space where people can come in and learn to sew and quilt and make items for sale," he said.

"We about to open another space called the Hackatory. It's a place for kids to come in and learn and experiment with robotics and 3-D printers and use their creativity and innovation in

that aspect."

According to Smith, the first floor of the building will be used as an event space. "We wanted a venue for events, so that when people leave these events, they can walk around the square and get a cup of coffee and visit other businesses along the way. Basically, we want to increase foot traffic on the square.

"Sometime next year, we will start remodeling another building that will have a brewery restaurant and a small boutique hotel upstairs. The name of that building will be Talladega Bottling Works, which was what it was called in 1901."

His plans call for using the old Standard Furniture building as an event space for Talladega's Mardi Gras and other events that are currently held outside the city due to seating capacity requirements.

Smith's ties to Talladega are his motivation to make it a better place to live and work, and his love for the history of the town is evident in his many undertakings. He recently purchased the old post office building on the square, and Boswell's Wings occupies it now. He has also purchased the Welch Coleman ballroom and the old Isbell Bank building with plans to improve them and make an entertainment district for the city.

"We saw an opportunity to invest in the square. It was the right thing to do, and the timing was right."

Frank Thomas

Bringing a personal touch to health care administration

By Laura Nation-Atchison



Frank Thomas is a native of Talladega, and, after working elsewhere in the profession of hospital administration and technological services for close to two decades, he's home again after accepting the position of CEO for Citizens Brookwood Baptist Health in Talladega.

Thomas began the position in August, leaving his prior post of interim CEO and chief operating officer for Shelby Baptist Medical Center. He has been with the Baptist Health System since 2005.

"I see people here often who I remember and know, and this is one of the things I really enjoy," he said. "I've met people who knew my family,

which is a very nice part of this for me."

Thomas likes to spend part of his time out and about in the hospital, stopping in for a chat with patients and hearing about their experiences at the facility and also learning the staff and personnel that keep the hospital services in operation.

The personal touch of being part of a smaller hospital in a more rural setting is a plus for Thomas.

"I hear a lot of positive comments about our staff and how they provide great care to our patients," he said. "This is one of the reasons I chose to come back to Talladega."

Thomas is attentive to the facility's ratings and high quality satisfaction scores, which are very encouraging, he said.

Thomas and his wife, Gloria, have kept a home in Talladega through the years, as Thomas worked in other locations with Baptist Health System. Gloria works in the central office for the Talladega City School System and was previously a classroom teacher for the school system.

Thomas received his bachelor's degree in medical technology from Auburn University and his masters of business administration from the University of Alabama. He is certified in healthcare emergency preparedness by the University of South Alabama and is a certified project management professional.

Thomas has spent his first three months at the Talladega facility taking in the operations of the hospital, while considering its future needs as well.

"You want to evaluate and understand the operations," he said.

Thomas has already identified the need for growth for the hospital, particularly in the area of more primary care physicians for the area's population.

The hospital has acquired additional property on North Street in Talladega for its primary physicians, and it's been remodeled for use. Thomas said a ribbon cutting will be held at the site in the near future.

The hospital is evaluating its development for an adult psychiatric unit with its future planning and already has a geriatric psychiatric area for patients.

Brookwood Baptist Health was formerly known as Brookwood Medical Center and Baptist Health System and is now unified to be the state's largest assembly of primary and specialty care physicians in healthcare for central Alabama residents.

The system includes 60 primary and specialty clinics with approximately 1,500 associated physicians in service.

Its online site includes assistance in locating physicians, specialty care services and service locations.

"I hear a lot of positive comments about our staff and how they provide great care to our patients."

Thank You For Putting Your  Into The Community

The Daily Home



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As President of the Historic Talladega Ritz Theatre Board, it is my pleasure to serve alongside such a wonderful Executive Director as George Culver. He leads the way enthusiastically as our small hometown theatre does BIG things.


Cindy Pennington

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Mayor of Moody
Joe Lee

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STEVE HURST
State Representative
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Facts about St. Clair County Alabama

- Moody is ranked as one of the top ten safest places to live in Alabama
- One of the fastest growing counties in Alabama
- Close proximity to Birmingham and Atlanta markets
- Home to accredited school systems, higher learning



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Ed Tyler

Rotarian and veteran appreciates the value of hard work, humility

By Sherry Kughn



Kentucky native Ed Tyler came south to complete a special project with his company, BellSouth. He liked what he saw so much that he stayed and made Pell City his home.

Tyler's work with the Rotary Club of Pell City has helped members relocate their meeting place from the civic center to the new municipal complex. Also, he and fellow Rotarians oversaw a project to carpet the floors, add curtains and purchase attractive linens, dishes and silverware.

"The club paid for a commercial dishwasher and other items that are in the kitchen area," Tyler said. "We have a state-of-the-art AV system that is operated wirelessly."

Tyler said others, including fellow member Elmer Harris, worked to obtain new furnishings for the room.

The entire project provided the city with an improved meeting place.

"Also, we are developing, through the generosity of Harris and others, a Rotary Club Foundation," Tyler said. "I co-chair that with him and am very proud of it since it is a work in progress. We have high hopes and expectations."

Having worked in communications, Tyler realizes the importance for good leaders to have vision and to communicate their vision to those they are attempting to lead. Effective leaders, he believes, must have an awareness or available resources, no matter the task before them. Humility is important, too, and Tyler is impressed with Harris's ability to give credit to everyone else but himself, a trait he believes all leaders should practice.

"The key is not to worry about who gets credit," he said.

Tyler credits his parents with teaching him about good work and leadership. His father, Brooks Tyler, was a civil engineer who supervised the construction projects of L&N Railroad. It was a responsible job that required him to be away from home often. His mother, Zelma, ran the family farm from 1954 to 1970, quite a feat, considering that the time period was when women rarely held leadership positions.

"By the time she had run it for three years," Tyler said, "it was one of the top three dairy farms in Kentucky."

During his early years, his job as a teen was to keep the farm equipment running and to bale hay and harvest the small grains necessary to

feed cattle. When he was an older teen, he grew green beans. The parents allowed the boys to keep profits from their projects, which taught them money-management skills.

Tyler is a veteran, having entered the U.S. Air Force to become an aviation cadet. However, the program was cancelled before he began, and the Air Force switched his area of interest to becoming an intelligence analyst. At some time afterward, the Department of Defense sought military personnel who might be interesting in training in the fields of radio and television. Tyler took up the offer and became a television director until he got out of service.

One of his interests from his days as a veteran is rifle shooting. Even today, his hobbies include shooting precision rifles and pistols at the CMP Talladega Marksmanship Park, and he takes aerial photographs for various entities.

Tyler hopes that, one day, Alabama will have better infrastructure in the area of digital communications. He feels city and county leaders would do well to invest in improved equipment. In a related matter, he is the public information coordinator for Alabama, which means he works with the public information officer of each chapter of ham radio groups by giving them guidance and materials.

He credits his wife, Terry, who works at Regions Bank, for giving him the support he needs to serve others. The couple teaches Sunday school and is active in the Cropwell Baptist Church.

"The key is not to worry about who gets credit."

Dr. Vandrea Watts

Doctor of pharmacy returns to work at her alma mater and serve as a mentor

By Buddy Roberts



As a third-generation alumna, Dr. Vandrea Watts considers Talladega College to be part of her heritage.

“My mother, Carolyn Watts, earned a business degree from Talladega College, and my grandmother, Mary Yelling, earned a degree here and became a math teacher and social worker,” she said. “My dad and my brother went to Tennessee State University, which is another HBCU, so this is my legacy.”

Watts returned to her alma mater in February to assume duties as the college’s assistant director of institutional research and effectiveness and

quality enhancement plan director. She earned a chemistry degree as a member of Talladega College’s class of 2013 (before obtaining a doctorate of pharmacy at Hampton University in Virginia) and held the title of Miss Talladega College during her senior year.

“I did not want to leave my dorm,” she recalled. “I cried. Everybody seemed like family. Even now that I work here, it seems like my second home. Being an employee as opposed to a student is very different, but I enjoy it. Working with the professors who taught me is pretty neat.”

One of eight pharmacists in her family, Watts said she studied chemistry at Talladega College as a stepping stone to apply for pharmacy school, having made a commitment to herself at age 15 to become a pharmacist. Although she is not currently practicing, she’s glad to have had the opportunity to pursue another career path by filling a need at the college.

Her current role involves making sure each of the college’s departments is in compliance with its accreditation and developing a five-year plan – focusing on student success – for the entire college. She also serves as an advisor for chemistry students.

“I enjoy contributing to my alma mater in different ways,” Watts said. “I enjoy being able to work with students and see them succeed. Many of the students here are first-generation college

students, and I try to encourage them not to be at college just to get a degree. I ask them what their plan is. I had ask myself that same question when I was a student here. They need to have a plan. Actually, it’s good to have a Plan A, B, C and D. I try to be real with them, because I was in their place not that long ago. Not long ago, I got my first card from a student thanking me for helping them. I look at it every day when I come in. It reminds me of why I’m here.”

She says her “pride runs deep” in Talladega College, Alabama’s oldest private historically black liberal arts college and one of the country’s most recognized historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

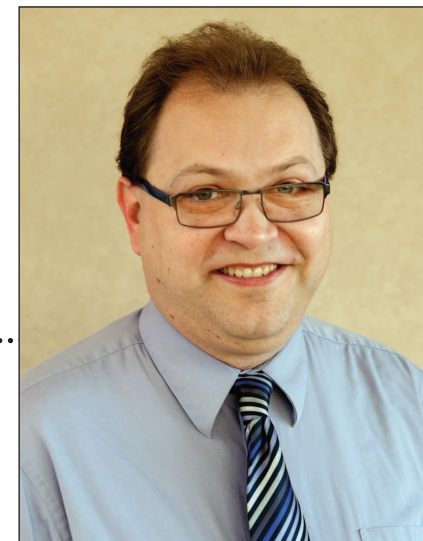
“To me, Talladega College is the community. Talladega College brings diversity, legacy and strong representation of academic excellence. It brings people here from all over the world. By being a HBCU, it helps people know where Talladega is and what it’s about. From the east coast to the west coast, people know where Talladega is in Alabama.

“I want it to be viewed as the Harvard of the South. So many great people have graduated from Talladega College, and they’re doing great things. We want to uphold that standard as we move forward.”

“Talladega College brings diversity, legacy and strong representation of academic excellence. It brings people here from all over the world.”

The Daily Home

Thank you for taking time to read
20 Making a Difference.



Buddy Roberts

Individuals who make a difference in their communities are individuals who stand out, especially these days.

It is too often that influence is used as a weapon that hurts and destroys rather than as a force for good and bringing people together. Negativity and cynicism frequently trump positive action.

But people who truly make a difference rise above that kind of mindset and behavior. They appreciate having the opportunity to influence others in a beneficial way, and they understand their responsibility to build up, encourage and elevate others.

It has been our privilege through this special publication of The Daily Home to recognize 20 individuals in our coverage area who impact their communities for the better. We thank them for graciously making time for us to interview them for these profiles, and we thank the many advertisers whose investment and support have made it possible to bring this special edition to you.

-Buddy Roberts, Special Projects Editor

20 Making A
DIFFERENCE

How can you make a difference?

Success has been defined as how much difference a person makes in the lives of others, and it has been said that the true value of making a difference is measured by good deeds rather than ego and material gain.

There are many benefits of giving beyond those enjoyed by those on the receiving end. Individuals who practice giving toward making a difference experience more happiness, wellbeing and self-esteem, as well as a greater sense of purpose. Companies that invest in their communities experience more loyalty, better morale and greater team-building toward common goals.

While it could be easy to feel overwhelmed by the complexities of the problems facing communities and families, or to feel that you lack the time or resources to give back, making a

difference in the lives of others doesn't necessarily mean a great outpouring of time or money.

Consider the following opportunities available to individuals and/or businesses.

- Send an encouraging note or message to someone experiencing a difficult time.
- Support local No Kid Hungry initiatives.
- Buy gift certificates from your grocery store and donate them to a local food bank.
- Donate cat and dog food to a local animal shelter.
- Register to be an organ donor.
- Offer your skills by becoming a mentor or tutor to someone who would benefit from your experience. Contact local schools to determine how you can help out.
- Volunteer with area hospitals. Similar to

school districts, many hospitals would struggle to meet their missions of providing compassionate care if not for the contributions of volunteers.

Medical centers may need volunteers to read to patients or simply keep them company.

- Sponsor local events and youth sports teams.
- Opportunities may exist to serve as assistant coaches for teams or even help tend to playing fields.
- Volunteer to do yard work or shovel snow at an elderly neighbor's house.
- Spend time with a senior citizen.
- Organize a food or clothing drive or other charitable event.

However it is done, giving back to one's community is a great way to use your talents toward fostering stronger towns and cities.

Col. Robert L. Howard State Veterans Home



Col. Robert L. Howard State Veterans Home consists of two health care facilities licensed by the Alabama Department of Public Health

- 174-bed skilled nursing facility
- 80-bed assisted living facility or domiciliary

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Derrick Williams

Director of Nursing:
Kimberley Spence

VA Home Director:
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