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# BEST AND BRIGHTEST 2024



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# Success depends on showing up, being vulnerable, and learning from mistakes

One of this year's 40 Under Forty honorees fesses up to a mistake, a real whopper, a \$500 million mistake.

Mistakes are just how it is, we all make them. It's how things work.

But, \$500 million, that's a doozy.

Early in her professional life, Ashlee Voller was just getting her feet in a new financial position. She has a master's degree in business administration and two bachelor's degrees. She knows what she's doing.

That stunning half-billion-dollar error appeared in a budget report she had sent to her company's CEO for review.

But, here's the lesson, and it's a good one. Voller realized her mistake before the

CEO did. She called the CEO immediately and made it right.

"He said that fessing up to the mistake was 1,000 times better than hiding the mistake," Voller said. "...This lesson has taught me that to build integrity, we must own up to our actions and decisions."

For Paige Parker, director of marketing and business development at Advanced Care Hospital of Montana, being allowed to make mistakes was a gift.

At one of her first professional jobs she had a mentor.

"She took me under her wing and taught me so much, while also allowing me to make mistakes to learn from," Parker said.

That's the trick, learning from our

mistakes. Many of the professionals in this year's 40 Under Forty class cite their mistakes and what they learned from them. In some ways, mistakes teach us something we might not have learned any other way.

Cipriana Southard, a registered nurse with Sound Physicians, views her failures as success.

"If we did not make mistakes we would never learn ways to improve processes to make things even better," she said.

"It took Thomas Edison 1,000 attempts before he was successful at creating the light bulb."

There is another common thread running through the responses from this year's class – an admiration for the teachings of leadership scholar Brené

Brown. At least six honorees mentioned her by name as an important influence.

Maybe it's because Brown has this to say about mistakes:

"There is no shame in making mistakes. And, no matter how much it might feel like it is, failure is not the end of the world. The fact that you had the courage to show up and be vulnerable is far more indicative of your character than your failure could ever be."

**Editor's note:** Because of space limitations, many of the insightful and informative responses from the winners were shortened for our print edition. The honorees' full responses appear with their profiles online at [billingsgazette.com](http://billingsgazette.com).

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## PAUL ADAM

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** Gerstner Adam Law, PLLC - Owner/Attorney

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** JD - University of Montana School of Law

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** My childhood dream of running heavy machinery at the landfill.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** As a dad of three young boys, raising a family has been

# TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR WORK

the most important calling in my life. My passions have naturally evolved with the interests of my kids which has led me to serving as president of Big Sky Little League and a den leader for their cub scout pack.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Work smarter, not harder." In many contexts, this is great advice, but not when it's used as an excuse to delay something that just needs to get done with good ol' fashioned hard work.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Work hard for every employer you have, take pride in your work, and try to leave every job on good terms. Building a broad resume and a wide network of personal and professional relationships early in life will open more doors and lead to more opportunities for success.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Of all the things I love about backpacking in Montana, one of my favorites is backcountry cooking. I have a few original campfire cooking recipes that I'm pretty proud of. My favorite is fried trout fingers with peach cobbler for dessert.

**How do you measure your own success?** As a lawyer and business owner, my success is measured not only in the satisfaction of my clients but also my employees. The money takes care of itself when my clients get the results they deserve, and my employees are happy to come to work.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** After I graduated from college, I knew I wanted to go to law school. Academics had always come easy for me, so I went through the motions of taking the LSAT and filling out my law school application. To my surprise, I didn't get accepted on my first try. The following year, I re-submitted basically the same application and thought for some reason that another year of work experience would be enough to get in. My application was denied again. The third year, I buckled down and retook the LSAT to improve my score, became a CASA volunteer, started my master's degree in public administration, and re-wrote all my application essays. I was accepted on my third try and learned a few humbling lessons along the way. Work hard for what you want, be

persistent, and don't be surprised when the results you get reflect the effort you put in.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Bluey" - season three.

**What is your favorite book?** I had a case in Meagher County a few years ago and I was explaining to my co-counsel, and mentor of mine, that I had never been to that part of Montana. As soon as I mispronounced Meagher, he stopped me and said we would get laughed out of the courtroom if anyone from there heard me call it "Meegrrr" County. Soon after, he gave me "The Immortal Irishman" by Timothy Egan as required reading. The life of Thomas Francis Meagher is truly inspiring, and this book is a must read before you ever step foot in Martinsdale, MT.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Many clients come to us in their most vulnerable moments and often under tragic circumstances. Showing clients that there is hope through the legal process, building a trusting relationship,

Please see **Adam**, Page 30



## TYLER AMUNDSON

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** Big Sky Senior Services, executive director

**Hometown:** Helena

**Education and/or Background:** I have a Master's in Divinity from

# NEVER ASSUME YOU KNOW IT ALL

Cliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, and a Bachelor's of Science in Communication Studies from Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Washington.

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** Start a church. I loved being a pastor and if I could launch a new kind of faith community that allowed for a good balance of service to the community, care of those in the community, and a positive balance in work/life. I think people in our communities are spiritually hungry and there is a need for faith/life balance in the world in which we live. For now though, I am so excited to help organizations achieve their goals of serving others.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Being a good husband and father are my biggest passions in life. I believe family is one of our highest callings. Whether, biological or adoptive we have to show up for the relationships that make us the people we are. Family can be

hard, and I do my best to show up to the people I have committed to supporting in who they are and who they will be.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Before you change anything, you have to get to know us." I heard this in one of the settings I led once, and it was so off. I believe anyone serious about an organization should show up and move into space. Moving in at minimum means making your role or space yours, so that people can feel comfortable and get to know what you are about. If an organization does not want you for at least some of who you are, then they don't really need you there and often times are so resistant to change that they won't be able to adapt to serve the world. All the good organizations I have served desire me to change something on day 1. Something was missing and it is why I was asked to be there. You don't change everything, but you need to change something.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** "Never base who you will be on what job title you desire." One of the first questions we ask people is "What do you do?" Whether, that is to size them up for the role or a curiosity about their passions it is a loaded question. Even more loaded, the response. Early in my career I would have banked everything on my title defining who I was for someone asking the question. Now, I tend to answer by saying something like, "I help seniors stay independent in their homes as long as possible." Job titles change and I think answering this question with the passion you are serving allows us to change with them. FYI my favorite answer to this now, "I am an exiled United Methodist pastor serving my community by helping the organizations I serve find solutions for people on the margins."

Please see **Amundson**, Page 29



## ANNA BUCKNER

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Billings Clinic, Quality Resources, Healthcare Data Analyst

**Hometown:** Dillon

**Education and/or Background:** B.S. Economics, Montana State University. M.A. Economics, M.P.H.,

# GO ABOVE AND BEYOND

University of Montana.

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** Working in healthcare quality, I can gather all the little pieces of information and put them together in a way that solves a problem and helps make something better. I think I would also like being an investigator or detective for the same reason. I like solving problems and making improvements.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Traveling with my husband, spending time with my family and pets, reading, and learning new ways to do things.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Practice makes perfect. It's always going to be a struggle if your goal is perfection. There are certain things you can change and other things that you can't. Putting your energy towards the things you can change and moving on from those that you can't is going to lead to more success.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** When you are starting on a career path you should

start with what you like but also be open to realizing that you may not yet know what you like. I had a few different majors in college because what I liked evolved and changed. You also have to understand that even if you have a job you love you are not going to like every single part of it. You have to find that balance between what you want to do and what you need to do.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Eating sweet cereal like Cocoa Puffs and Lucky Charms.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I have always wanted to be considered an expert in the field I'm working in. To me this means having the knowledge and confidence to answer questions and speak up when you need to. Being confident all the time is hard to do. I see this as an accomplishment that will always be a work in progress.

**How do you measure your own success?** By my ability to make progress on the goals I set for myself. Mostly this involves always checking in and seeing where I'm at. If I'm not making progress

maybe I need to reassess my goals and decide what is a priority. I think reassessing priorities is an important part of being successful because it allows you to focus and stay committed to what is important.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Not trying or not participating because of fear or embarrassment. I don't like the feeling of knowing I could have been good at something but I missed the opportunity because I didn't try.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Communication. Everyone has different perspectives and values that must be incorporated if you want to have meaningful communication. I'm always working to make sure I listen to others but also share what I need to in a way that can be understood.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"

**What is your favorite book?** Ruth Galloway series by Elly Griffiths

Please see **Buckner**, Page 31



## MATTHEW COLBY

**Age:** 33

**Company and Title:** Staff pharmacist: Pharmacy One at the Mental Health Center

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:**

# 'CLEAR EYES, FULL HEARTS, CAN'T LOSE'

Doctorate of Pharmacy from University of Montana

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I've always loved sports, so probably some form of sports journalism. I dabbled briefly with a friend of mine creating a podcast on the Dallas Cowboys.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My two kids take up the majority of my time. Noah (4) and I love to ride the Ferris Wheel at Scheels, go look at lawn mowers at Home Depot, and take trips to the recycling center. Quinn (8 months) and I love to play with anything that can be used as a drum. I captain a golf league at Peter Yeagen with a group of awesome guys. I'm also part of an co-ed kickball team in the city. Any other free time I'm watching football (Griz and Cowboys) at my dad's house.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Not sure I've ever truly received bad advice from another person. I have come to realization that grades are not the only thing that define your success, especially once you gradu-

ate. I prided myself on getting excellent grades. However, I found that working a job, volunteering, and socializing made me a more well-rounded individual and a better job applicant.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Failure is going to happen. It's a part of life. How you choose to respond to that failure and overcome it is what leads to true success.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I still love Pokemon. I was an avid collector of cards as a kid and still dabble in it from time to time with my son. I've logged countless miles walking and playing Pokemon Go.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Somewhere down the road I'd love to maybe teach pharmacy practice at a university. I loved my time in Missoula at the Doctorate of Pharmacy Program and had excellent professors that made a huge impact on my professional career. I'd like to give back to future pharmacists in the same capacity.

**How do you measure your own success?** I love being able to make a difference in my patients' lives. As a pharmacist, we are some of the most accessible healthcare professionals around. If I can help my patients achieve better health (through medications or other means) that is successful in my mind.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I was denied on final cutdown on my first attempt applying for pharmacy school. I learned that perseverance is one of the best qualities that any individual can have. I ended up retaking a couple classes, bolstering my resume, volunteering for Big Brothers Big Sisters, and learning that failure is just a stepping stone on the way to your future success.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Working at an independent pharmacy you have to wear a lot of hats. Some days it's tech support others it's medication therapy management.

Please see **Colby**, Page 30



## MADISON COLLINS

**Age:** 32

**Company and Title:** Montana State University Billings

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** I received both my Bachelor's and Doctoral degrees in Microbiology and Immunology from Montana State University

# ALWAYS EMBRACE A GROWTH MINDSET

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I believe that the investigative skills required for my work in the research lab align quite well with a career in forensic science. My fascination with true crime certainly doesn't hurt either.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Teaching at MSUB keeps my schedule pretty full, but I'm lucky to be able to conduct my staphylococcus aureus research simultaneously. I'm passionate about making microbiology understandable and accessible to everyone. Certainly, every human on this earth has had an experience with infectious diseases in their lifetime and it's interesting to bring real-life experiences into the conversation.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Conform to societal expectations and follow a traditional path without considering my own passions and interests. At one point, I was actively pursuing a career that involved an impressive salary, but it didn't align with my true calling. Following that advice would have led to a life of dissatisfaction and unfulfillment (and

constant airline travel-yuck). Embracing authenticity has not only brought me greater personal satisfaction but has also allowed me to contribute more meaningfully to the world around me.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Always embrace a growth mindset. Remember that failure is never a setback but is an essential part of the learning process. Don't be afraid to take risks and learn from your mistakes. Each challenge is an opportunity to grow stronger and more resilient. Surround yourself with positive influences, seek mentorship, and never underestimate the power of hard work and perseverance.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Coffee. Being a true Billingsite, City Brew coffee is a staple in my diet.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I very much enjoy traveling to conferences to present my work and network with other scientists in the field. My goal is to continue to travel the world in this manner. Europe is next on my radar.

**How do you measure your own**

**success?** I'm passionate about what I do and feel a sense of purpose, that, to me, is a significant marker of success. Secondly, I consider the positive impact I have on the lives of others. Whether through my work, relationships, or contributions to my community, making a difference in the lives of those around me is a fulfilling measure of success.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I think each apparent failure in life can be restructured as an event that you grow from. For example, during a trip to an international conference (see above), I left my presentation on my laptop and mistakenly left my laptop in the airport. That was the first and last time. Lesson learned.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Balancing teaching (laboratory courses especially), research, service and family commitments can feel as though I'm being pulled in many directions at the same time. I'm now consciously trying to carve out time to recharge and rejuvenate.

Please see **Collins**, Page 31



**A Huge Thank You from Paul Adam for Being Included in this Year's 40 Under Forty!**

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# DEFINE SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN WAY



## SHELBY RYANN DOLEZAL

**Age:** 30

**Company and Title:** Buckley Maxwell Dixon Dolezal PC, Shareholder

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** B.A. in Political Science, University of Montana; J.D., University of Notre Dame Law School

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would want to be a novelist. In my experience, to be an attorney is to be a writer, and I would not want to leave that aspect of my work behind.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** One of my biggest passions outside of work is animal advocacy. I am involved with organizations that advocate for greater legal protections for animals of all kinds. I also enjoy taking care of my rescue cats. Additionally, I find great purpose by giving back to the community through providing pro bono legal services and doing hands-on volunteer work.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "You can sleep when you're dead." I'm definitely glad that our culture is starting to prioritize self care more. No one is at their best or can serve others as well when they are exhausted or overwhelmed.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Define success in your own way and don't tie yourself to a traditional vision of success. Success could mean starting a business, but it could also mean finding a job that allows you to pursue non-work related passions and hobbies. Success could mean raising a family, but it could also mean traveling solo around the world.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Reality television.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** In the next few years, I would love to grow our law firm by hiring and mentoring a new attorney.

**How do you measure your own success?** On a professional level, I measure success by whether I am meeting the needs of my law partners and our clients. On a personal level, I measure success by whether I am spending my time and energy on pursuits and people that contribute to my happiness and well-being.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I've had many more recent failures, but one that always comes to mind is the violin. I tried and failed miserably at playing the violin in school. Because the violin didn't come easily or naturally to me, I gave up on it after only a year. I've always regretted not continuing. From that, I learned that the truest failure is giving up on something that you want. And, eventually, I learned that you don't have to be good at something to enjoy it. Even if I was never going to be the next Nicola Benedetti, there's merit in playing for the love of it.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The most challenging part of my job is managing multiple clients' projects and timelines at the same time. However, I am very fortunate that I work with a great team who are always willing to lend a helping hand when needed.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Yellowjackets"

Please see **Ryann Dolezal**, Page 30

# PUSH YOUR LIMITS



## BRANDON DUFFEY

**Age:** 36

**Company and Title:** Great West Engineering

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's of Science in Civil Engineering, Montana State University

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I really enjoy construction and building things, so I would likely be in the trades building houses.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Being outdoors, hunting and fishing, and most importantly, my family.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I think it is important to remember that what works for one person might not work for another, so it's crucial to critically evaluate any advice you receive.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Never give up. Continue to push your limits and comfort zone and always continue to learn and better yourself.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Ice cream, more specifically Tillamook Monster Cookie ice cream and Snickers ice cream bars.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I am new into the Business Unit Manager role so I would say leading

and growing the group and helping those in my group grow into their positions as project managers and engineers.

**How do you measure your own success?** I see this question in two different ways. First, success in my projects I would measure by how happy the client is with the final product. Personally, I would say I would measure it by my happiness and fulfillment in life.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I can't think of any specific failure. I think it is important to grow and learn from your failures but have a short memory. You have to move forward and cannot dwell on them.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Managing an overwhelming workload. Trying to keep projects moving forward, meeting client schedules and workloads, while maintaining a work-life balance for myself and employees is difficult.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** My wife and I enjoy watching home renovation shows. The most current show has been "Fixer to Fabulous."

**What is your favorite book?** Honestly can't say I have a favorite book. The most recent book I have read for professional development was Brene' Browns' "Dare to Lead." If we are talking about children's books, any of the Little Blue Truck books are my favorite to read to my kids.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Having grown up in a small town in Montana, the most fulfilling aspect of my profession is being able to help rural communities to improve critical infrastructure. A big portion of what we do revolves around getting grant funding for these communities because without it these projects would not be possible.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I am very fortunate to be surrounded by great mentors in my company. I am not sure I can limit it to one person as all of my peers are mentors to me, but I would say my top three are Bill, Chad, and Karl (in alphabetical order).

Please see **Duffey**, Page 30



## LUCAS FORCELLA

**Age:** 37

**Company and Title:** I am commercial and tax attorney in the Billings office of Crowley Fleck.

**Hometown:** Morris, Minnesota

**Education and/or Background:**

After graduating from the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota, I commissioned as a counterintelligence and intelligence officer in the United States Marine Corps. I left active duty in 2015 and am currently a Major in the Marine Corps Reserve. I attended law school at the University of North Carolina, before moving with my family to our home in Billings.

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would either return to active service with the Marines or return to a prior job guiding wilderness adventures for youth and young adults.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I am the proud husband of Laura, and a father to three young boys: Vince; Andy; and Nathan, each of whom keeps me busy and fills my life with meaning. Aside from family, I enjoy volunteering with the Wise Wonders Science and Discovery Museum and the Boy Scouts of America, each of which help local kids grow, learn and develop in a way that aids both the participants and our community. Additionally, I am passionate about the great outdoors, and my free time — when it occurs — is spent there.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Take a shortcut when you can." I do not suggest that anyone should make things harder than necessary. Anything worth doing, however, is worth doing to the best of your ability. Sometimes, this means

## PER FIDE ET FORTITUDINE, DURABO

putting in extra effort or "going the extra mile," even if you might be able to finish faster by taking a shortcut.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** "Your word is your bond." The idea of a "bond" is that when someone makes a commitment, they place a certain amount of money aside which will be forfeit if they fail in their commitment. If you can make your word your bond, it means that those around you know that they can trust you without fail. Throughout your life, there will be countless points where you will be trusted to do what you say you will do. The ability of others to rely upon you is of inestimable value.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Woodworking, especially using hand-powered tools, is a time-consuming hobby, but one that brings me no small amount of satisfaction. Making time for wood-shop projects always comes at the expense of other pursuits or family time, so it ends up being a guilty pleasure, but I love the projects when completed. That, and a nice bourbon.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I hope to continue to find and succeed in challenging, rewarding roles which serve our community, state, and nation.

**How do you measure your own success?** Success is setting, meeting, and exceeding my own goals, and how effectively I can positively impact those with whom and for whom I serve.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** The difference between being determined and stubborn is a fine line. I have used bull-headed, "my way or the highway" tactics only to abjectly fail at my goal. In retrospect, a more measured approach can more successful, in part because it allows for time, perspective, and the ability to listen to others' input.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The legal arena, much like military intelligence, is an environment characterized by very little in the way of "black and white" answers and a lot of "grey." Judging which decision is best requires time, thought, patience, and fortitude.

Please see **Forcella**, Page 35

## Celebrating our very own 40 Under Forty

### Megan Skiff

*Director, Risk Management and Patient Safety*

### Crystal Williams

*Clinical Supervisor, NICU  
HELP Flight Nurse, NICU team*

### Cipriana Southard

*Clinical Performance Nurse,  
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# DO SOMETHING THAT IS CHALLENGING



## BLAKE FUHRIMAN

**Age:** 33

**Company and Title:** Veterans Navigation Network, Executive Director

**Hometown:** Lander, Wyoming

**Education and/or Background:** United States Army Ranger from 2009-2013, S.E.R.E. Instructor 2015-2018,

Senior Director of Operations Support at RiverStone Health 2023, Bachelor's in Global Business Administration, Founded and served as Chairman of Veterans Navigation Network.

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would find another business to start and find some other way to help people. Having the opportunity to do both is something I have always gravitated towards, and I have had an entrepreneurial spirit, even from a young age. Getting to help people with a business that I started (with a ton of help from others) has been incredibly fulfilling.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I love hunting and fishing, and really anything in the outdoors. Getting others in the outdoors is something else that I could easily find myself getting into, especially getting the next generation out to enjoy it. I look forward to when all my kids are old enough to start camping!

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** While in the military going through Ranger School,

advice was given to put Tabasco sauce into your eyes to stay awake... I don't think that any explanation is needed on why that might be the worst advice received...

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Don't quit. You can fail all day long, but as long as you are trying, and keep on going and fighting the good fight, whatever that is for you, you will be successful. With that being said, you should be doing something that is challenging enough that quitting just might cross your mind. If you feel yourself settling and doing the same thing day in and day out, shake things up and find something that challenges you to that point of discomfort. People tend to grow, and learn the most about themselves when they are uncomfortable.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Having a cigar and whisky, with good company, is something I wish I did far more often, and I guess does feel like a guilty pleasure, when there is so much to do.

**What is one professional**

**accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I want to grow Veterans Navigation Network into a standard part of separation from the military, so that we get ahead of the many challenges that veterans face, before they even become challenges.

**How do you measure your own success?** I had a coworker who said success for the day was accomplishing one good thing. At the time I thought it was kind of cheesy, but honestly, it is very true. If we can do one good thing every day, we will change the world for the better. What is more successful than that?

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Failing Ranger School the first time I went (I went a couple of times and finally passed) was one of the most challenging things that I ever faced, knowing that I would have to do it all over again, or quit. It is one of the most challenging things the military has to offer, and the thought of doing it over

Please see Fuhriman, Page 33

# BE BOLD



## TIFFANI GALLANT

**Age:** 35

**Company and Title:** A&E Design, creative writer

**Hometown:** Laurel

**Education and/or Background:** 2019, Master's of Professional Studies in Public Relations & Corporate

Communication, Georgetown University; 2017, Bachelor of Science in Public Relations, Montana State University Billings; 2015, Associate of Science in General Studies, City College at MSU Billings

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** It's impossible to imagine my life without writing, and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to write professionally. Fortunately, my lifelong love of literature and the written word can be applied to a broad spectrum of careers. However, pursuing an education in public relations, where storytelling is integral to success, was a natural fit. If I couldn't write, I'd hope to cultivate a love of the craft for future generations by teaching.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Brand development is an element of public relations I am especially called toward. It is both challenging and rewarding to assist a business with identifying its unique qualities, its audience and how to connect with them, and strategies to set itself apart from competitors. Curating

everything from a name and tagline to voice and tone also involves a level of writing skill and creativity — an added bonus for me!

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I was once told to give each professional position three years of commitment. The well-meaning logic behind the advice centered around sticktoitiveness, resume development, security, and denying the stereotypical "job-hopping" behavior of my generation. Fortunately, I learned staying in a position that is a bad fit — either personally or for the employer — is often more harmful than helpful for everyone involved.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** My advice to a teenager is to define success for themselves, as it is a highly subjective and nuanced idea. If young professionals enter their careers pursuing someone else's definition of success, they will inevitably feel demotivated and unfulfilled. Instead, I suggest specifying what you believe personal and professional success looks like, setting realistic goals

to attain it, and allowing the definition to evolve alongside experience.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Writing and work can be so cerebral that I sometimes find comfort in turning off my brain. This usually involves B-movie horror films, true crime, or bad reality dating shows accompanied by plain popcorn and Dr. Pepper.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Although it is in progress, I want to complete my book and attempt to get published as an author. My goal is to have a working manuscript finished in 2024.

**How do you measure your own success?** My definition and, therefore, measurement of success has matured and refined over time. Professionally, maintaining a work-life balance that allows for ample focus on wellness and family is critical today. I've traded a search for titles and experience for meaningful work at a company that values me at my best.

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# SUCCESS IS MEASURED BY SELF-WORTH



## KELSI GAMBILL

**Age:** 36

**Company and Title:** Billings Chamber of Commerce, PR & Communications Manager

**Hometown:** Forsyth

**Education and/or Background:** Master's degree in Public Relations from

MSU Billings, Bachelor's degree in Agriculture Education from MSU, Associates degree in Agriculture Communications from Northwest College

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would be a paid spokesperson for agriculture and mental health, to combat the stigmas through education and conversations.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Faith, family, agriculture, and wellness are my passions in life and fall in that order of importance.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Someone close to me said "just suck it up and deal with it." This wasn't a viable solution nor practical as my mental health and overall wellbeing needed an intervention. Needless to say, we both learned an immense amount through my resulting mental health journey and pursuit of wellness.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Success is measured by inward self-worth, not by worldly standards, as success comes

from knowing in WHOM you belong.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Having a cocktail even when it's not the best option for my health and wellbeing.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

To continue relentlessly pursuing my passions and serve as Montana Cattle Women President, earn my IOM certification, and find daily satisfaction in each job I am fortunate to fulfill.

**How do you measure your own success?** Being a perfectionist, it's a pretty high set of standards that I hold myself to. I seek to do and be the best that I can in all that I do – fully present whether I'm working, volunteering, or spending time with loved ones. It doesn't hurt to have a complete checklist at the end of the day either!

**What failure have you learned the most from?** A failure I've learned the most from is expecting a job to fulfill all of my needs. With this failure, I learned the importance of pursuing passions outside of work and not to put all of my eggs in one basket – especially when that

basket is one's profession. Get up, dust yourself off, and keep moving forward.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Leaving work at the office and unplugging.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Grey's Anatomy"

**What is your favorite book?**

Anything by Brene Brown as she inspires me personally and professionally.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Getting to combine my educational degrees, experience, and passions at a job I love pouring myself into.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I've been blessed with many mentors and guides in my life who have shaped me into the person I am today. The most influential I would have to say are my parents, small business owners and entrepreneurs, who instilled in me a strong belief and value system with a family first motto and plenty of love and inspiration!

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## HEATHER GNERER

**Age:** 34

**Company and Title:** Stockman Bank - AVP Customer Service Manager/ Operations Officer

**Hometown:** Laurel

**Education and/or Background:** Associates degree of Applied Science in

# EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON

Business Administration

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I wish I had the talent to become a cosmetologist or an esthetician. It would be amazing to be able to help people boost their self confidence and help them feel good about themselves.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I love to cook and bake, and from what I'm told I'm pretty good at it! I also love to garden in the summer and make my own salsa and other canned goods.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "If you want something done right you have to do it yourself." A good leader can build a great team and work together to succeed. If you feel that you have to do everything yourself to ensure that it gets done right, then you aren't setting your team up for success.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** If you want to succeed you need to be willing to work hard for what you want. There's no greater satisfaction than knowing an accomplishment was made from all the

hard work you put into it.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Donuts...definitely donuts.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would really love to boost my business development resume. Right now I'm also focusing on growing within my company and ongoing education.

**How do you measure your own success?** When I've been able to help multiple people throughout the day while also prioritizing my own to-do list. I absolutely love to be able to cross things off my lists!

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Lack of communication. Communication is SO important in order to have a successful relationship with both your employees and customers.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Trying to be in six branches at once. I wish there was enough time in the day to be able to spend more one-on-one time with all of my employees.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** I'm not much of a

binge-watcher as I know myself too well and I'll get sucked in so bad that I won't get anything else accomplished until the series is over. Unless it's something relatively short I stay away!

**What is your favorite book?** Too hard to name just one as reading is my absolute favorite hobby (I've read almost 100 books this year) but Harry Potter will always have my heart.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** When one of my employees gets a kudos from a customer or colleague - I absolutely love seeing and hearing those comments because that means myself and the supervisors below me that I coach are doing a good job.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I've had many great mentors over the years, one of the most recent being Rhonda Moore who has helped coach me through all of the changes in the last decade, and who was lucky enough to recently retire!

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## RYAN GOMENDI

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Strategic Retirement Plans, Financial Advisor

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Master's of Accountancy, AIF®, CFP®, CKA®

# HAVE A SOLID FOUNDATION OF FAITH

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would be utilizing my ministry background and serving others in some financial capacity.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My faith and my family are a huge priority in my life. There are many parts of those areas that I find passion in life.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** The worst advice I've received is that your number one priority in life should always be YOURSELF above all else. I don't find that to be true. I have seen a lot of good come from focusing on others while still making sure I pay attention to my own physical and mental health. There has to be a balance in those two areas.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Have a solid foundation of faith and know who you are outside of accomplishments/gifts/appearance. Learn how to work hard and enjoy the moment. Life goes by fast.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I love to travel.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I hope to continue to build a great team at Strategic Retirement Plans with my business partner so we can care for more clients and positively influence how people interact with their money.

**How do you measure your own success?** By my family's health and relationships.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I wish I had a better attitude during my college basketball career. I had injuries that I constantly battled, and I wish I had worked through that more positively.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Not being in control of the U.S. stock market/economy.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Suits" with my wife and the Harry Potter movies with my son, Grayson.

**What is your favorite book?** The Bible

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Helping people with complex financial

situations have greater peace and understanding of how to interact with their money, especially in retirement.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My parents  
**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Run the right race.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Learn how to care for people at a high level and work hard.

**How do you view failure and success?** When measuring my success, I ask myself, "Am I being authentic in who I am with the people I interact with? Have I done everything I can within my talents and means to help them?"

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Fly fishing with my dad, skiing and wake surfing with my boys, coffee time with my bride!

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** Grace; I have made plenty of mistakes in my lifetime and have been blessed by people offering me grace and kindness in those moments.



## ASHLEIGH GORDON

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** Sibanye Stillwater, Senior Production Geologist

**Hometown:** Clarkston, Washington

**Education and/or Background:** B.S. Earth Information Systems with a Minor in GIS, from Lewis Clark State College

# LEARN TO VALUE YOURSELF

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would love to open my own rock shop and host workshops and field trips for the community. I love showing people how to find rocks, minerals, and fossils and how to properly identify them.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My family loves to go fishing and camping. We spend as much time as we can exploring Montana, fishing from the bank or our boat, hiking, hunting, and rock hounding. We don't have a whole lot of winter hobbies, so we are going nonstop during the few months we have good weather in Montana.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I was told very early on in my career that I shouldn't plan on starting a family. Working in the mining industry is tough and metal prices fluctuate. I was told I would always be on the move and would never get to settle down in one place very long. I won't lie, there have been some tough times where I have had to work in another state, away from my family for weeks at a time. I also worked on a rotating schedule, so when I

was on night shift, I wouldn't see my son and husband but a few minutes before or after my shift.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Everyone defines success differently and I think it depends on your personal perspective. I had a supervisor that would always say, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." So, to become successful, make small goals that will help lead you to your ultimate goal and reach your definition of success.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I really enjoy collecting Christmas Lego sets and building them every year. I'm starting to run out of space to display my little Christmas village that I've created over the years. I'm also guilty for buying other fun sets and displaying them for different holidays and seasons. It's a fun little tradition and it's something I can pass on to my son and future grandchildren.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would like to be Chief Geologist someday, but I think for a more

shorter-term accomplishment, I would like to focus on getting my Professional Geologist license in Montana.

**How do you measure your own success?** As a geologist working in the mining industry, I feel that working in one mine for 10 years is a success. My family and I are happy and really enjoy living in Montana. My son started Kindergarten the first year we lived in Montana and is now a freshman in high school. I'm so happy we were able to stay in one place and not have to move to multiple places due to my job. As long as I am achieving the goals that I set for myself and learning something new along the way, I feel that I am being successful.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I started out working in exploration for a mining company in Idaho. After four years, metal prices tanked, and the company had to cut all exploration projects, and everyone was let go. At the time, I felt like I failed my family since I moved us away from our

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# SET ATTAINABLE GOALS, THEN GO



## JASON HAGADONE

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Altana Federal Credit Union – President/CEO

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's degree, Business Management, Rocky Mountain College

**If you couldn't do this, what would**

**you do instead?** If I could make a living coaching my son's flag football team, I'd be all over it. I enjoy the preparation of getting ready for practice and games. Watching a kid learn something in practice then successfully utilize it in a game is very rewarding. In the meantime, I'll keep trying to apply those same principles to my day job.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Traveling. Sunshine. A beach. My kids playing in the ocean. Not much can beat that.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I'm sure I've gotten terrible advice, but I try not to focus on the negative. If the advice didn't work, learn from it, change course, and keep moving forward.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Show up on time, be accountable, and work hard. Working hard and admitting when you're wrong goes a long way. We can teach you a skill or technique, but being dependable and working hard are innate.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Chocolate chip cookies. If they need to

be made in our house, I'm making them.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Once the credit union has had enough of me, I'd like to be a consultant for other credit unions across the region. As a CEO, I've navigated so many experiences and I'm sure other credit unions could use a partner to develop strategies to help their credit union grow. I've leveraged that kind of seasoned expertise in my role, and it's been invaluable.

**How do you measure your own success?** When our employees are fulfilled and engaged, our membership follows suit. That's success to me.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** All of them, and there's been plenty along the way! Failure is inevitable and necessary. If you're not failing, you're not growing.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The unknown! I can roll with the punches but the most rewarding part of my job is putting a plan in place and seeing the end results. When I'm able to give something my full attention – people, a project, a problem – without

the risk of interruption, I operate at my best. That said, being adaptable is something I've gotten better at in my time as CEO.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** I can proudly name every character in Paw Patrol. Does that count?

**What is your favorite book?** "Good to Great," by Jim Collins. I can usually find a new spin on an idea I overlooked or get reassurance we are doing the right things.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Collaborating with my team to accomplish our goals for the credit union brings me incredible satisfaction.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My wife, Ciara, and our two boys, Graham and Griffin. They provide unconditional love and support and add a lot of humor to my life. Nothing can brighten your day faster than a four-year-old telling you about their day and the adventures they had.

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# BE HUNGRY, HUMBLE AND TEACHABLE



## ADAM HAGEL

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** Stahly Engineering, Bridge Department Technical Lead

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** MSU Bozeman - Master's in Civil

Engineering (Structural Focus) and Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I love to teach and help people grow. If I had to do something other than engineering, it would likely involve both of those.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** The most important thing for me right now is to be there for my family as my children grow up. I also spend my time investing in youth at my local church.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Any advice that goes against who I fundamentally am as a person and my values has never worked. It might work for others, but I have never been successful trying to be someone that I am not.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** I would tell teenagers to work hard and do the right thing for the right reason. Even if you don't see immediate benefit or payoff when you do, keep doing it.

The perseverance and character that is built in the process will become the foundation necessary to maintain success once you get there.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I love watching football with my wife and kids during the weekend.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I always wanted to be part of a unique and large bridge project. Many children dream of being able to design the Golden Gate Bridge and I was no different.

**How do you measure your own success?** By how effective I am at what I am doing.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** It would be too long of a story to tell, so I will skip to what I learned. I discovered that how I react and handle myself, especially in tough circumstances, can drastically change the outcome of a situation.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Getting a group of unique individuals to 'catch the vision' of what

we are doing and why we are doing it.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "The Night Agent" on Netflix.

**What is your favorite book?** Without being cliché, the Bible. It has been the biggest source of wisdom and growth that has helped me to become who I am today.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** I get to see the projects that I design come to life and get built. It is fun being able to point out the projects that I have worked on to my family.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I couldn't pick just one person. I have had many colleagues, friends and family members who gave me great advice throughout my lifetime and believed in me more than I believed in myself.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Mile by mile, life's a trial. Yard by yard, life's hard. Inch by inch, life's a cinch.

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## ALLYN JORGENSEN

**Age:** 36

**Company and Title:** Cushing Terrell, Mechanical Engineer

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** MSU-Bozeman, Mechanical Engineering

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** Something to do with crafting - maybe my own crafting business or helping to finish other's abandoned projects.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Helping build a home for my family and inspiring young students to think about their career path and adulting financially earlier in life.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Do it the same way you did before." Every project is different, and every situation is different. You should use your gained knowledge to react more effectively and produce an even better product than before.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Adulting is hard. It's a little less hard if you have a good-paying job in which you find your purpose. Also take a writing class and a personal finance class. Those skills will help you in whatever path you choose.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Craft supplies. I have trouble getting rid of them because inevitably I do use them years down the road!

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Retirement? I don't know where my career path will take me between here and there, and I am enjoying that unknown. Right now, I love wearing all my different hats from designing my own projects to mentoring and teaching young engineers.

## TAKE INITIATIVE, OWNERSHIP

**How do you measure your own success?** Any small victory can be a success, and successes are life-long and ever-changing goals. If I've completed a task well, or even with difficulty, that's a success. If I've helped someone else, that's a success. If I'm home enjoying time with my family, that is a success.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Not really a failure because I learned from it, but taking too many credits (21 if memory serves) one semester at college was a learning experience. I ended up dropping dynamics mid-way and taking it during the summer to stay on track. I learned I need to be more realistic about my time and not be afraid to adjust the path forward.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** My job can be stressful at times. My husband has a theory that there is some force in the universe that pulls all project deadlines towards each other, and it's more often true than not. I am very fortunate to have a great team who help each other out and share the workload if it gets unmanageable.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Probably "Below Deck." Captain Sandy is a force, and I love watching her take control of her ship even when everything is going wrong. I was lucky enough to meet her at the Chamber of Commerce event last year, too!

**What is your favorite book?** "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass." Every time I read those books, I always find something new and intriguing.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Seeing a project built in real life is very rewarding. It is especially rewarding if there was a specific detail of how something was going to work together and then it turns out the same way you thought it would in real life as it did on paper. All of the design hours and coordination and thinking ahead about constructability all comes together for the final product to meet the clients' needs.

Please see **Jorgensen**, Page 34

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## WENDY JUNGBLUT

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** Personal Injury Attorney at The Advocates

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's of Arts in History from MSU-

# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Billings, Juris Doctorate from University of Montana School of Law

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I think teaching at the college level or law school would be really fun. I really enjoy finding creative ways to breakdown a complex subject or concept so that each person can understand it or learn in a way that fits their learning style.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I was the little girl who was obsessed with horses, and I still am! I compete in dressage and show jumping. Being a lawyer can be really stressful, so spending a few hours with my horse is how I decompress and find balance. It's also a really challenging sport because there's always something to work on and improve. Just holding your hands differently or shifting your legs can change the way your horse moves. I just love that connection and silent conversation between the horse and rider.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I was working as

a paralegal at a firm while attending undergrad, hoping to go to law school someday. I was chatting with an older female attorney, discussing what area of law I'd like to practice, and she gave me the worst advice. She said "you'll just do whatever pays the bills and you won't be able to wear such bright outfits either." While it's often true, many of us are strapped with massive student loan debt to pay off, but we can still be true to ourselves while we pay the bills. It's important to reflect on what makes you happy and look for opportunities to nurture that. I've been really lucky because I've been able to "try out" multiple areas of law so I can see what fits me best. Each move I've made has been better and better. And I'm not afraid to wear a pink suit to court!

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Don't be afraid of failure. I didn't figure that out until college when I had a professor point out that I wasn't trying and didn't believe in myself because of a pretty

simple thing: I was afraid to fail. It held me back from doing things sooner and it was a big hurdle I had to get over to believe I could become an attorney. Once I accepted that failure isn't the end, I started making my dreams come true. You're going to hit bumps in the road, you're going to have setbacks, but you learn more from your failures and it's far better than never trying at all.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Oatmeal chocolate chip cookies and Starbucks.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I'd love to teach either as a guest at a law school or a continuing education seminar.

**How do you measure your own success?** To me, there's no such thing as perfect; there's always room to improve. I've learned not to compare myself to others and just base my success on my own personal goals, whether it's in

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## THOMAS KEOGH

**Age:** 31

**Company and Title:** BARE Chiropractic Owner/Doctor of Chiropractic

**Hometown:** Toledo, Ohio

**Education and/or Background:** Doctorate of Chiropractic / Bachelor's of Science

# KEEP THE DESTINATION IN MIND

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** Growing up I wanted to be either a firefighter or an astronaut. Being a firefighter, a first responder, and keeping calm under any circumstance, still being able to help others. I was also fascinated by space, therefore being an astronaut.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Other passions and callings are giving back to the community and helping make Billings one of the healthiest communities in the United States. Another passion in my life is to be the best possible father to my son. Being a healthy role model to my family to encourage them to live an optimal life.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** The worst advice I have ever received was to stop, not to move forward, that it was not worth it. I received that advice in high school when I decided to go off to college. I was told I would be severely in debt by a college counselor and that going to college was a dumb decision because I wouldn't make it. I was deciding between staying in my hometown or moving an hour and a half

away to have a fresh start and pursue my passions in a new place.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Don't stop. Go. Keep your head down and keep moving. It is worth it. Enjoy the journey. Keep the destination in mind. Enjoy the process.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Friday night to unwind, playing Call of Duty with friends across the country.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** To open another BARE Chiropractic in Montana, where it is especially needed.

**How do you measure your own success?** By setting big goals and branch goals to achieve the big ones. Introspecting on past experiences and learning from those events. Also tracking statistics, vision casting, and reflecting.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Being in the wrong camp or spending too much time with the wrong people. Believing they were for me but they ended up being more out for themselves.

**What is the hardest part of your**

**job?** Being away from family as so much time is dedicated to the office being an owner, long hours working 80+ hours a week.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Game of Thrones"

**What is your favorite book?** "How to Win Friends and Influence People"

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Having the opportunity to help Billings and surrounding communities unlock the innate intelligence to heal naturally. To help people not only feel better but function better. It is very rewarding to help people heal from the pains they have had for decades.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** It is hard to choose just one, it is more of a mentorship of colleagues, friends, business owners, and community leaders. It is a collaborative effort, it is a collaboration between all of these individuals that inspire, drive, and encourage me to be my best self for others.

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## CONNOR LARSON

**Age:** 28

**Company and Title:** Colleen Black & Company P.C., Co-Owner & Certified Public Accountant

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Montana State University - Billings with

# EVERY SETBACK IS AN OPPORTUNITY

a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration with an Accounting Option

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would likely have stayed in management at City Brew. I truly enjoyed engaging with the Billings community and finding ways to make people's days a little brighter.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I am passionate about contributing to the improvement of my hometown. I envision a community with an enhanced quality of life, and equally important to me is my commitment to my family. Balancing my professional aspirations with a dedication to the betterment of my hometown and the well-being of my family is at the core of my life's passions and callings.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** One of the pieces of advice that I consider not particularly helpful is the notion that success is solely tied to attending college. Success is a multifaceted journey, and there are various paths one can take to achieve one's goals.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Wholeheartedly pursue what they love. Passion is a powerful driver, and when you find what you love, success often follows. Success is a personal journey and defining it on your own terms is a key ingredient in leading a fulfilling and rewarding life.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I have a not-so-secret love affair with a dynamic duo that keeps me buzzing — Red Bull and coffee!

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Working to obtain my Certified Financial Planner (CFP) certification. This milestone would represent a commitment to enhance my expertise in serving clients. Exciting endeavors on the horizon at CBCo - stay tuned!

**How do you measure your own success?** For me, success goes beyond individual achievements. It's about having confidence in yourself, being proud of the choices and decisions you have made and creating a positive impact on others.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Being turned away by an accounting firm early in my career due to perceived inexperience was a significant learning moment. This setback became a steppingstone towards subsequent successes, highlighting the importance of perseverance in professional development.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Navigating constant deadlines requires meticulous time management and a keen attention to detail. However, it is precisely within these tight timelines that the most rewarding moments unfold.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Young Sheldon."

**What is your favorite book?** "The Essential" by Vince Lombardi

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** The opportunity to make a meaningful impact by assisting countless small businesses and their families.

Please see Larson, Page 35



## Congratulations on being named 40 Under Forty!

### Adam Hagel, PE

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## CHAS LLEWELLYN

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Entre Technology Services

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Billings Senior High School and Some College

# WORK WITH CONVICTION

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** Archaeology, hands down! I love history. To be a part of it's discovery and preservation would be incredible.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Performance is the first love of my life. I learned my love of theatre after playing a witch doctor in my first performance in the Lewis and Clark Middle School production of "La-gooned!" Currently, I love performing great works with Yellowstone Repertory Theatre, letting loose with Projectile Comedy, immersing myself in a sketch comedy show, or working on a local film; I yearn to entertain.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Go with the flow." I am not a fan of that advice. Sure, have the same goal(s), but that does not mean you need to be at the mercy of others. Individualism is vital for progress and improvement. Your thoughts, experiences, and ideas are just as valuable as anyone's.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Experience as

many different things as you can. Take your time, keep learning, work with conviction, and listen to your happiness.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Spicy food. Specifically, spicy chicken wings. The spicier and hotter, the better! "Hot Ones" got nothing on me!

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** The IT Industry has one of the highest turnover rates. Setting a new standard to inspire other IT companies and their approach to their work environments would be a huge accomplishment. Employees in IT are not ones and zeros like the systems they work in.

**How do you measure your own success?** I feel like I have the heart of a teacher. Whether it's professionally in my IT career, or on Stage with Projectile Comedy, creating an environment and being a part of an individual's growth is hugely rewarding. Watching an individual experiencing their "Ah ha!" moment is like no other.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** To be cliché, all of them.

Failure without lessons is the greatest failure of all. And, trying to avoid failure is a fool's errand. Failure is inevitable and should be embraced. Resilience is a powerful ally.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Changing with the times. I do not mind change, but being proactive in a reactive industry can be challenging. However, it is one of the greatest rewards when accomplished.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Love Island Australia." I don't like reality TV, but for some reason Love Island Australia/UK gets me. Maybe it's the accents... maybe this should have been my guilty pleasure... maybe it's Maybelline

**What is your favorite book?** "Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers." I have too many guilty pleasures.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Building a great work culture and environment. My greatest fear is showing up

Please see **Llewellyn**, Page 32



## MARIO LOPEZ

**Age:** 35

**Company and Title:** Billings Symphony, Executive Director

**Hometown:** Born in Caracas, Venezuela – Raised in West Palm Beach, Florida

**Education and/or Background:**

# EVERYTHING ALWAYS SEEMS TO WORK OUT

Bachelor's degree in music performance from Lynn University and master's studies in music performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would be involved with an organization assisting children or families in need. I have been on the giving end many times and have witnessed the impact it has on people in dire situations. It does not take much to share a portion of your blessings with families that have nothing.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I have a passion for consulting and coaching. Everyone needs a champion and a mentor to guide them through different stages in their profession. I have been fortunate to have had multiple mentors make an impact in my life, so I have taken it upon myself to be a beacon of light for people seeking advice and guidance.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Time heals. This statement is passive as it is frequently

interpreted as "Wait, you will eventually feel better." Healing requires understanding the source, figuring out what remedy is required, and being consistent addressing the source to make certain it heals properly. If nothing is done to the wound, time will only make an infection grow.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Do not compare yourself to others. Everyone has a different end goal with unique obstacles. What success looks like for one person may be very different than what it looks like for you. Success can also be measured in many ways. The most important question you need to ask is, "Are my current plans and strategies getting me closer to reaching my goals?"

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Nutella!

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would love to be a consultant at some point in my career. I believe in the importance of having access to the performing arts. With my passion

and experience as a musician and administrator, I can provide strategies that will identify gaps, provide solutions, and keep the arts relevant.

**How do you measure your own success?** Being my hardest critic, acknowledging success has not always been easy. I used to have more of an "all-or-nothing" type of mindset, realizing that opportunities to feel proud or accomplished occurred very little. I understood that micro goals, even to the smallest degree, play an important role in staying motivated to continue the pursuit of the overall goal. Celebrating and acknowledging micro goals have allowed me to measure my road to success.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** In 2012, I went through a very hard time in my life due to an injury that ended my career as a performing musician. At the time, this translated as the biggest failure of my life; losing the ability to do what I love. I endured the next few years soul searching.

Please see **Lopez**, Page 32





## EMILY MARTINEZ

**Age:** 34

**Company and Title:** Woods Accounting Office Manager

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** High School Diploma

**If you couldn't do this, what would**

# WHEN NOTHING GOES RIGHT, GO LEFT

**you do instead?** I would have been a kindergarten teacher.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Family is my main passion. My kids are getting to the age where they are starting to get into activities, so that keeps my husband and me very busy. We also have a big extended family, and we are always getting together for BBQs, birthdays, dinner, game nights, etc.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** That my goals were not realistic. This was also motivational because not only did I meet my goals, I had gone further than I even expected.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Results happen over time and not overnight. Work hard stay, consistent, and be patient.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Facials or a massage.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** The sky is the limit, I want to continue to further my education and continue to excel in all aspects of the accounting world.

**How do you measure your own success?** By the things I have accomplished, and goals I have achieved.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I don't have any specific failure, but I have learned to value myself as a person. In today's society there is so much pressure to look, act, parent, or portray life in a certain way. I am learning to remove those expectations and accept that I am going to fail now and then.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Tax season. Not everyone receives great news, and it is hard as a person so see someone become instantly stressed, or cry.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Reba."

**What is your favorite book?** I don't get to read as much as I would like but I do like a good crime/murder mystery read.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** I love conversating with everyone, hearing their stories of what happened over the year, and what they have

planned next. Also watching businesses grow and become successful.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I have a few. My dad and grandpa, both taught me the value of hard work and dedication. They taught me that success is not measured by the amount of money you make, it is about giving it your all and respecting people along the way. And my boss Lisa. I have learned so much from her over the last six years. When I started with her, I knew nothing about the accounting field. She has guided me in every step of my career since.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** When nothing goes right, go left.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Don't measure your success by someone else's accomplishments. It takes time and effort to be successful. Each business is unique, do not be afraid to ask questions.

Please see **Martinez**, Page 35

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## CASEY MILLER

**Age:** 33

**Company and Title:** Century 21  
Hometown Brokers, Supervising Broker/  
Partner

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:**  
Bachelor's of Science in Business  
Marketing

# DON'T BE AFRAID TO WORK HARD

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I truly can't imagine doing anything else, the career and lifestyle I have is unmatched and incredibly rewarding, plus I get the opportunity to be a part of one of the biggest chapters in peoples lives and make lifelong friends along the way. But, if I had to choose, I always thought it would be fun to work in the marketing realm with a college or professional sports team.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Of course as a mom of two boys, my greatest passion is my family. Beyond that, I love music of any genre, pilates, and reading.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Someone once told me to never say sorry in this industry because it makes you look weaker to those you're working with. I realized quickly that it is okay to be genuine and apologize whenever you feel bad about something, even if the situation was out of your control, we're all human.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** It is OK to not

know what you want to do with your life, so take chances and make mistakes along the way, it gives you the chance to never stop learning.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Fiction books about mythical creatures, the "Real Housewives" franchise, and any salty snack.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** It may sound silly, but I'd love to get to the point where I am no longer scared of public speaking. I've come a long way, but it forever has been a fear I'd love to overcome.

**How do you measure your own success?** The ability to wake up and know that my children are healthy, I have a beautiful home, school and great friends. Along with knowing I am surrounded with amazing family, friends and coworkers who support me.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I don't know if it's a failure, because every failure is an opportunity to grow and learn, but certainly a lesson that has stuck with me is the value of surrounding yourself with like-minded

people and staying true to yourself instead of trying too hard to please others.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Delivering bad news to someone I'm working with. For example, it's never easy to lose out on a home when it's multiple offers or let someone know their deal is falling through. I've learned it's best to make the tough phone calls in the morning, and not to overthink problems in your head because everything is solvable.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Anything on Bravo, I'll be binge-watching it.

**What is your favorite book?** "7 Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by Taylor Jenkins Reid.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Helping my clients achieve their goal of home ownership is the greatest gift to me. Along with that, I have the amazing opportunity to train new and experienced agents daily and help

Please see Miller, Page 33



## MICHAEL NEZWORSKI

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** CM Tree  
Service

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:**  
Farmington High School, Urban

# DON'T HIDE FROM PROBLEMS

Forestry, Member ISA, TCIA

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I have always enjoyed cooking and entertaining, so some sort of culinary path would probably be where I would find myself. Many of my family members are excellent cooks, I thoroughly enjoy time with people in the kitchen.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Serving others has always been at the forefront of my life. I enjoy giving back to others, helping people fix problems, being active in my community to make it a better place. Raising my children to help others and not expect something in return, and being kind.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I was told multiple times to not pursue a self-employed career, especially after having children. Security in a good career was very comfortable, but I could not sit still and be mediocre. Failure is a possibility with any business venture, but it was a risk I felt was necessary.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Work. Hard. Do things other people are unwilling to do. Stop complaining about what you aren't getting, and start worrying about how to get what you want or where you want to go. The business world doesn't owe you anything.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Little Debbie. I have an addiction to snacks and sweets that cannot be curbed.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I want to be someone people can call on when they need help. Knowing that I can help build other young entrepreneurs and watch them grow into successful leaders would be amazing. Building a legacy that others can learn and grow from would be amazing.

**How do you measure your own success?** I try to measure success by how many people my family and team can help. I want to set other people up for success, not stand alone on a hill. Building others in time of need is my

vision of true success. Serving God in all facets of life. Giving glory to him for all of the blessings that I have been given.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I stayed in a position that challenged who I was as a person. I thought that my values would take hold, but I realized I was compromising my own ethics to fit the position. Working for the wrong person is a bad idea. If your values or morals are tested or challenged, you are in the wrong spot.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Telling people no. We try to provide solutions for our customers, friends, family, and the community every chance we get, but often we are stretched beyond our limits. I don't like to turn away a chance to help someone out of a tough spot, but sometimes it is necessary.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Ted Lasso." He has such a rich view on life I just can't get enough of it.

Please see Nezworski, Page 34



## HANNA NILES

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Billings Clinic, Quality Resources Coordinator

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's of Science Health Administration, Montana State University - Billings; Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I really love animals, so if I couldn't work in healthcare, my dream would be to have an animal rescue. I would love to spend my days helping animals to have a better life.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Being a mom and a wife. My family brings me so much happiness.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I think "fake it, til you make it" is honestly the worst advice that I have received. We grow when we are vulnerable and willing to admit that we don't know something. I have had the opportunity and pleasure of working with so many talented and intelligent people over the years and I am incredibly grateful that they have always been willing to help me learn and grow. So much of the healthcare knowledge I have, has come from asking questions and being open to learning from others.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** We all have different paths in life, therefore success looks different for everyone. Don't waste time comparing your success, to the success of others.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I love a glass (or two) of red wine...preferably Malbec.

## BE KIND

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would like to earn the Certified Professional in Patient Safety credential. I think it would compliment my CPHQ credential and help me to better understand another important aspect of healthcare.

**How do you measure your own success?** I am a total task list person, so success for me is when I can get through a day or a week and manage to get everything crossed off of my list of 'to-do's'. Life is hectic and we are always juggling so much, I really like to focus on the little wins and being able to cross things off of a list helps me with that.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** There are things in life that I wish I would have done differently, but I don't view them as failures. I learn something about myself or about life whenever something doesn't work out how I wanted it to. I naturally spend a lot (sometimes too much) of time reflecting on things and questioning if I could have done it better, which can be stressful in the moment, but I think it helps me to better handle things in the future.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** I have worked for Billings Clinic for 20 years now, 16 of those years have been in the Quality Resources department. Most people that have a passion for healthcare quality, do so because they want every patient and family member to have a positive experience, so anytime I see metrics that don't look ideal or read about a patient having a less than desirable outcome or experience, that is really hard. But at the same time, it is what drives me to help us to continue to improve, because I think that our patients and our community deserve the best care possible.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Young Sheldon," thanks to my children.

**What is your favorite book?** I probably don't read for fun as much as I should, but I used to enjoy reading Dan Brown books. A couple of years ago, a colleague gifted me the book "The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus" and as someone who loves Christmas, I enjoyed the whimsical spin it put on leadership principles.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Healthcare is complicated but anytime we are able to find ways to improve

Please see **Niles**, Page 38

# Congratulations!

## Kasodie West

Attorney

Kasodie West has been selected for the prestigious Billings Gazette 40 Under 40. Her dedication, leadership, and positive impact on our community have earned her this well-deserved honor. Kasodie, your commitment to excellence in the legal field and your tireless efforts in community service make you a true inspiration. We celebrate your achievements and look forward to witnessing the continued positive influence you bring to Billings and all of Montana.



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## PAIGE PARKER

**Age:** 34

**Company and Title:** Advanced Care Hospital of Montana

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** University of South Dakota - Healthcare Administration. City College at Montana

# PROGRESS HAPPENS THROUGH INQUIRY

State University Billings -RN. Capella University- BSN

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would own a little shop next to the beach so I could listen to the waves all day.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My family. I am fortunate to be married to an amazing man who puts up with all of my shenanigans. I am the mother of a 10 year old and 3 year old. They truly are the best thing that I have ever accomplished.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "That's not how we do it here." Growth and progress can only happen through inquiry and process improvement. Each industry is responsible for advancing best practices.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Success is less about what your desired outcome is, and more about how you get there. The lessons that you learn along the way will help to shape you for future successes.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Romance novels. My husband tells me that they are all the same.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** To keep growing my management and communication skills through continued education. A goal of mine this year is to set aside more time for my own personal growth while also helping my team to grow and develop.

**How do you measure your own success?** Success is measured by milestones and goals having been achieved. I am a list maker, so successfully checking goals off my list with quality outcomes is very fulfilling for me. Additionally, my success is tied to the success of my peers, as well as Advanced Care as a whole. When my partners are successful with quality outcomes for our patients and their families, I have succeeded as well.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I was hired as a Nursing Home Administrator right out of my first bachelor's program. Each day was a

challenge. At the time it was hard to see the value in each difficult situation. In hindsight, that position was preparing me for working with the public in any capacity. While in this position, a mentor said to me, "People taking care of people is one of the most imperfect situations we could come up with as a society." Through the years that statement has proven true for many challenging moments in my healthcare career.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Explaining to patients and their families the ins and outs of their insurance coverage. By the time patients come to our level of care, they have often been acutely ill for quite some time or have been recently involved in a life altering event. Often, they are emotionally exhausted, and the task of navigating insurance coverage is very daunting to them.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Pretty much anything Investigation Discovery

Please see **Parker**, Page 39



## ERIN RAINS

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Billings Clinic - Chief Medical Officer and Pulmonary/Critical Care Physician

**Hometown:** Philadelphia, PA

**Education and/or Background:** B.S. in Human Nutrition, Food Science, and Exercise from Virginia Tech. D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathy) from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

# FIND WHAT TRULY SPARKS JOY

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would likely be an artist.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Art is definitely a passion of mine. I love to paint, especially watercolors. I also love gardening, skiing, and spending time with my family (husband Luke, kids Silas (11), Gregg (6), Hayden (6))

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** It was not to move across the country for a job (and fortunately I didn't listen)

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Find what truly sparks joy and follow that passion. If you always strive to elevate those around you and follow your passion success will be inevitable.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Snuggling up in a snow storm with a good book.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would love to participate on a board of directors for a community

organization or as part of my national professional society.

**How do you measure your own success?** By the success of those around me. When the team is winning, I am winning.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** One of my most memorable failures comes from my childhood - I was not chosen for the varsity field hockey team in 8th grade - at the time that was a devastating blow for me. However, I was determined not to give up. Ultimately, I went on to play varsity field hockey as a goal keeper in high school, voted MVP and all-state my senior year.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Leading a team of ICU physicians through the COVID pandemic. There was so much that was unknown at the time, and leading through that experience while managing my own worries about the pandemic was challenging.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Billions"

**What is your favorite book?** "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil"

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Caring for patients and their families.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My associate program director from residency - Dr. Catherine Kuntz. She is a role model for female professionals and leads by example. She showed me I could have a family, competitive career as a specialist, and still maintain my sense of self and personal style.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Stars can't shine without darkness.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Starting a new business and achieving excellence requires passion, resilience, and perseverance.

**How do you view failure and success?** I view failure as a challenge

Please see **Rains**, Page 31



## ZACH SCHOPP

**Age:** 30

**Company and Title:** Seed of Life, Founder/CEO

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** B.S. in Psychology

# EVERY DAY IS A GIFT

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I'd continue looking for other entrepreneurial avenues. Other industries I'd look to would be construction and real estate.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I've really taken a liking to running and golfing. I run in the mornings to start my day and clear my head. Usually when running, I'm planning out my day, and I finish feeling great and ready to tackle things as they come. Golfing is how I unwind and relax after work or on the weekends.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** When I was starting my first company, I was told it was a risky investment and advised against it. I was told the cautionary tales of failed business rates, the demanding workload and stressful environments, etc. Luckily I went against that advice, made the leap, and have built the company to where it now stands, and have since helped start other successful companies.

**What advice would you give a**

**teenager about success?** If you want to become successful, your fear of a missed opportunity needs to outweigh the fear of failure. Dream big, take calculated risks, and execute.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I'm a sucker for chocolate. The leftover Halloween candy never stood a chance.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I've yet to expand business operations out of Montana. I'd like to get a national footprint going for the various brands or businesses I'm associated with.

**How do you measure your own success?** In happiness. Ultimately, if I'm happy with how things are going, I consider that to be a success.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I had identified a property that would be amazing real estate to operate out of. It wasn't on the market, and I had considered writing a letter or cold calling to inquire about it. I decided against it, got busy, and life went on. I

later found out that shortly after that, the property hit the market and I lost the deal. I learned that it's better to act now and get a hard 'no,' then to sit around and hope the universe brings it your way. I think that applies to all things in life. If you want something, go and get it.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** As a CEO in the cannabis industry, there's myriad challenges and difficulties that get thrown your way on a seemingly day to day basis. You're operating a business in a heavily regulated, heavily taxed industry. Banks are hesitant (at best) to work with you. Payment processors are regularly offline or shut down. Many insurance companies will look the other way, or won't even consider providing coverage. Property owners can be hesitant to house your business as a tenant. Regulations change every two years (at least, often more). The federal government doesn't allow your business to make deductions like a

Please see **Schopp**, Page 36

# CONGRATULATIONS, JASON, FOR BEING NAMED TOP 40 UNDER FORTY

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## MEGAN SKIFF CORWIN

**Age:** 35

**Company and Title:** Intermountain Health - Peaks Region Leader of Ambulatory Clinical Risk and Safety, and Director of Risk Management and Patient Safety at St. Vincent Healthcare

**Hometown:** Malta, MT

# YOU CAN HAVE ROOTS AND WINGS

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's in Radiologic Sciences from North Dakota State University

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** If I wasn't working in the patient safety space in healthcare, I would love to lead a Radiologic Technologist program to continue to grow and develop new professionals coming into this field for years to come. Imaging professionals are such an important piece of healthcare and ensuring they are prepared to enter into the workforce can make a huge difference for both the caregiver and patients.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My family is the primary focus of my life. I have three children, a wonderful husband, and a very supportive extended family. They really are my happy place and escape, and supporting my children in all their activities is one of my favorite things.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Just continue doing things the way they've always been done." This advice felt so counterintuitive to me, and I've learned through the years that you have to be looking ahead and for ways

to improve and be better in all aspects of your life.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** I would encourage every teenager to start getting involved now. The different activities and organizations that I was a part of growing up (school sports, 4-H, FCCLA, etc.) helped prepare me for my future as a professional and leader. Being exposed to a wide variety of environments and opportunities also helped me hone what I was passionate about so that I could make better decisions about my future.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I love baking shows, silly novels, and true crime.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Receiving my master's degree. I've recently enrolled to begin my MBA in 2024 and I cannot wait to get started.

**How do you measure your own success?** Professionally, I measure my success by whether I am improving and positively impacting others' lives and wellbeing. Personally, I feel I am successful when I am balancing work

and home, while being an engaged mother and wife. I truly believe that if I am present professionally and not for my children, that my priorities need another look and reset.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I kicked off an initiative early in my career that failed miserably because I hadn't yet built a trusting relationship with the other professionals I was working with. I learned from this that collaboration, mutual respect and trust between myself and those around me is key to moving forward positive change. This has driven me to invest in those that I am surrounded by, as we can't be successful without the input and talents of all involved.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The immense pressure of making healthcare safer for our patients and caregivers feels overwhelming at times, but when you see positive change and outcomes it is incredibly rewarding.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** The newest season of The "Great British Baking Show." I love the easy humor and bakers.

Please see **Skiff Corwin**, Page 37



## CIPRIANA SOUTHARD

**Age:** 36

**Company and Title:** Sound Physicians, Clinical Performance Nurse-Advanced

# BE A PERSON OF TRUST, NOT JUDGMENT

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Associate of Science, Registered Nurse

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would be a counselor. I strive to support people in any way I can, which is why I chose to go into the nursing profession. However, I enjoy learning about people's life stories and the challenges they are facing. Somewhat like nursing, counselors get the chance to listen, guide and see how others will prevail over life's obstacles. To assist and witness people overcome these challenges and know that I can play a part in bettering someone's life gives me great joy!

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Continuous learning is my calling. I am gluten for punishment! I enjoy learning as much as I can personally and professionally. I enjoy listening to audible books and learning about different types of people

through autobiographies or personal success stories. I also enjoy a good motivational and self-improvement book. I want to learn as much about myself and how others differ from myself which helps when it comes to being a great leader. I am also currently attending Aspen University's bridge program where I am getting ready to start my second of three years in the Master's of Science in Nursing program with a specialization in Administration and Management.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "You know what you need to do, you just have to apply yourself." I feel like that is bad advice because sometimes we just need to step back, remove ourselves and come back with a more clear mind. This advice is typically given when we are venting and talking situations out loud during the heat of the moment and can make irrational decisions we are indecisive about.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Most importantly, learn crisis coping skills! Everyone at some point faces challenges in life that we may not be aware of. So, be gentle to yourself and those around you. I believe if more life coping skills were taught from a younger age we would have less violence and more successful teens ready to face challenges that come with adulthood. Be a person of trust and not judgment, you will get farther in life by building strong relationships that will help support you through tough times. Never stop believing in yourself because there were many times I was told no or faced challenges of uncertainty, and still persevered to achieve numerous goals that many thought were unattainable. Keep learning, you never know when you might need to pull out random knowledge to help yourself or others!

Please see **Southard**, Page 36



## CEARA STEINER

**Age:** 38

**Company and Title:** Vance Thompson Vision, Optometrist - Cataract, Glaucoma, Cornea, Refractive Surgery Specialist

**Hometown:** Beach, N.D.

**Education and/or Background:** Undergraduate: University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, Doctorate: Pacific University, Forest Grove, OR

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** Home design/remodel or real estate investing

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** Home design/remodel

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Fatherly advice from my dad while playing pinochle: 'If ya ain't cheatin', ya ain't tryin.' Clearly bad advice for many reasons, but also a good reminder to take the high road... even in pinochle.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** You don't have to have it all figured out yet and "success" will likely look different a decade from now.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Shopping and coffee

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Gain confidence in public speaking and as an educator

**How do you measure your own success?** By finding my work/life balance

## FAITH > FEAR

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Difficult to pinpoint one, but lack of preparation seems to be the commonality in all situations where I've come up short.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The emotional aspect of managing patients with vision-threatening eye disease

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "The Crown," "The Good Wife"

**What is your favorite book?** Most recent favorite - "Greenlights" by Matthew McConaughey - audio version

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** There are few things more rewarding than restoring vision to patients, but the day-to-day personal interactions and one-on-one conversations are what I treasure the most. Patients generally arrive to us in a very vulnerable position and the trust they put in us with their most valuable sense is not something we (I) take lightly.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My grandparents

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Faith > Fear. Say what you mean, mean what you say, don't say it mean. Surround yourself with the dreamers and doers, the believers and thinkers, but most of all, surround yourself with those who see the greatness within you, even when you don't see it yourself. — Edmund Lee

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Take chances, challenge yourself and surround yourself with great people

**How do you view failure and success?** Take chances, challenge yourself and surround yourself with great people

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Fun - family time + a good water park. Relax - read a good book. Hobby - sporting events.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** The gift of grace in times when we need it most.



### 40 UNDER 40

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Patients generally arrive to us in a very vulnerable position and the trust they put in us with their most valuable sense is not something we (I) take lightly.



## DARCIE TEMPEL

**Age:** 33

**Company and Title:** Marketing & Sales Coordinator at MetraPark

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Master's in Business Administration

# WHAT WOULD DOLLY DO?

University of Montana, Expected Graduation Spring 2024. Bachelor's of Science in Marketing and Management University of Montana, 2014 Certificate in Entertainment Management University of Montana, 2014. Associate of Arts in Merchandise Marketing Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandise, San Diego, CA 2010

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would want to have my own business dedicated to assisting smaller venues and fairs to enhance their visibility, profitability, and overall success.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My greatest passion is ensuring I am the best wife and mom possible. I also enjoy fashion and love keeping up with the latest trends.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** The advice "Don't worry! You are young. You still have plenty of time" was probably the worst advice. While it may be well-intentioned, it fails to acknowledge that seizing opportunities, setting goals, and

making proactive choices are crucial regardless of age.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** To a teenager aspiring for success, I would emphasize the importance of relationships. Surround yourself with positive influences, seek mentorship, and don't hesitate to ask for guidance.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Buffalo Wild Wings - our family eats there almost once a week.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Being honored with one of the Billings Chamber's Business Excellence Awards. Whether in categories such as NextGen Exceptional Emerging Leader, Outstanding Business Person, Employer of the Year, or the Customer Service Excellence Award, the prospect of being selected for one of these accolades is a massive motivator for me.

**How do you measure your own success?** My personal gauge for measuring success is probably not the

traditional way to measure it, but I look at my achievements by observing the reactions and behaviors of those around me when a project is completed or a goal is met. How people respond and interact serves as an indicator of the impact and effectiveness of my work.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** The most impactful failure in my life happened when I was 16, when I was let go from my first job as a cashier at Scheels. I failed a secret shop evaluation due to my reserved demeanor during customer interactions. It wasn't because I was trying to be rude; I was just shy and afraid to speak to someone I didn't know. This setback became a pivotal learning experience, prompting me to recognize the importance of effective communication in any setting. Over the years, I've worked diligently to improve my communication skills and take on challenges that push me outside my comfort zone.

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## ASHLEE VOLLER

**Age:** 35

**Company and Title:** Sibanye-Stillwater, Environmental Systems Engineer

**Hometown:** Spring Creek, NV

**Education and/or Background:** Master's of Business Administration from University of Montana, Bachelor's of Business Administration in General

# STORIES DON'T MAKE THEMSELVES

Business and Bachelor's of Business Administration in Marketing from Boise State University

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** My life experience has afforded me experiences in many different industries, including ranching, hospitality/ event planning, and mining. I love the mining industry and what can be accomplished when responsible mining is achieved. If I couldn't work in mining, I would be interested in learning about a new industry to expand my knowledge base.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** The agriculture industry has always been a part of my life, as I grew up ranching throughout the western U.S. This lifestyle is one piece that helped me develop a very strong work ethic and values system.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I can't say that I have ever received any bad advice (there have been plenty of times that advice has been respectfully declined), however there have been times of guidance that created an even larger flame of motiva-

tion. There was one instance when I was looking to make an extreme change in positions with my employer, looking to explore a different part of the business. In an informal conversation, I was told that I did not have the technical skills of the department I was looking to join and that my lack of experience was causing some substantial doubt to this move. This was one of the specific instances that built great determination and drive to push through when a challenge is presented. The doubt that was presented didn't discourage my career change but fueled the need to succeed and persevere.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Keep learning. When you stop learning, you stop growing. This doesn't have to be in a classroom or from a textbook. Try new things, keep challenging yourself, learn from those around you, and you will learn that you can achieve things far beyond what you think your personal/professional capabilities are.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Hitting the snooze button at least three times.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would love to become board of directors member of a local non-profit. Giving back to our community is becoming a very strong passion of mine, but at the current time, there are so many things that touch my heart that some soul searching needs to happen, as there are only so many hours in a day.

**How do you measure your own success?** My own success is measured by the goals that I achieve, not in the number of goals, but the quality that the goals are accomplished. These goals aren't usually directed at achieving a specific position or status, but more around bettering processes, building teams, and optimizing opportunities. When goals are met, achievement is reached and happiness ensues, leading to the true feeling of success.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** First of all, in my eyes, failure is the point where we throw up our hands and stop working towards

Please see **Voller**, Page 39



# CALCULATE THE RISKS



## BRANDON WEGNER

Age: 35

Company and Title: Wegner Roofing & Solar

**Hometown:** Billings  
**Education and/or Background:** Billings Senior High graduate, Yellowstone Valley Bible Institute  
**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would be a financial advisor.  
**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** My church, my family, Young Life, and learning.  
**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Don't start your own business because of the uncertainty and the risk.  
**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** It's going to take more hard work than you think it's going to. You need to be more devoted to it than other people in the same space.  
**What's your guilty pleasure?** Bedtime snacking.  
**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to**

**achieve?** 1. Build a skyscraper. 2. Be involved in the creation of a subdivision.  
**How do you measure your own success?** I feel successful when I can influence other people around me to have good marriages and create financial freedom for themselves.  
**What failure have you learned the most from?** I had a bad business deal which taught me I need to have expectations in writing.  
**What is the hardest part of your job?** Taking the time for all of the people I care about.  
**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Gilmore Girls" with my wife.  
**What is your favorite book?** The Bible and any business book. One of my favorites is "The Total Money Makeover" by Dave Ramsey.  
**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Making sure people have a safe place to

live and making sure people don't get taken advantage of.  
**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** Dave Ramsey and Ed Mylett.  
**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Treat other people as you want to be treated. - Jesus  
**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Calculate the risks and then take the leap of faith.  
**How do you view failure and success?** It's not a failure if you can live to tell the tale and it's not success if you are doing it by yourself.  
**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I like to take my kids on adventures and travel with my wife.  
**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** My wife is my greatest gift because she is my best friend and my biggest fan.

## CONGRATULATIONS PAIGE PARKER!

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**Paige Parker,**  
Director of Marketing and Business Development

At **Advanced Care Hospital of Montana**, we are a specialty hospital providing long-term acute care services to patients recovering from serious illness or injury. Often these individuals require additional critical care services for medically complex conditions such as trauma, infectious diseases, wound healing, cardiovascular disease, stroke, amputation and ventilator weaning. It's a privilege to be a vital part of the healthcare community and offer this specialized patient centered care to Billings and the surrounding communities.



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## KASODIE WEST

**Age:** 30

**Company and Title:** AVA Law Group- Associate Attorney

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** University of Montana School of Law (J.D) and University of Montana (bachelor's degree)

# DON'T FAKE IT

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** If the path of being an attorney wasn't available to me, I would be drawn towards a career that aligns with my passion for making a positive impact on the lives of vulnerable populations. Specifically, I envision myself starting or working for a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting children in foster care. The challenges faced by these young individuals are significant, and I am motivated to contribute my skills and energy to create a supportive environment that empowers them to overcome obstacles and realize their full potential.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I am passionate about two causes: helping animals and children. My career choices have given me the ability to help many children. I hope to become more involved with animal groups in our community as pets bring so much joy.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Fake it until you make it - this is common advice I have been guilty of giving... but don't fake it.

Actually try, do your best, learn as much as you can.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Ultimately, success is not just about achieving goals; it's about the personal development and resilience gained along the way. So, my advice would be to embrace failure, learn from it, and use it as a catalyst for becoming a better, more resilient person on the path to success.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** One guilty pleasure that I readily admit to is indulging in reality TV. It provides a light hearted escape from demanding days.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** To become a speaker at a trial school seminar. I want to be able to share the wealth of knowledge that I gain in my career with a younger generation.

**How do you measure your own success?** By the impact I can make in advocating for my clients and helping them achieve justice for the wrongs they have had to endure. Success, to me, is reflected in the positive changes I can bring to the lives of those I represent.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** My journey of law school felt like many failures. I did ultimately succeed at it and earn my J.D. but I felt like I was failing every single day. Law school is designed to make you feel that way and going through something like that teaches you a lot about yourself. I grew a thicker skin, and ended up surprising myself of how much I was actually capable of and what I could achieve.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The realization that, despite my best efforts and advocacy, there are situations where no amount of legal representation or financial compensation can truly make my clients' lives whole again. In the realm of law, my clients' encounter many personal hardships and injustices, and it's emotionally taxing to witness the lasting impact these experiences have on them.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Suits," and it is all it is hyped up to be.

Please see **West**, Page 38



## KATIE WHITMOYER

**Age:** 33

**Company and Title:** HR Manager, Wood's Powr-Grip; Co-Owner, Flex Family Health

**Hometown:** Laurel

# SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH

**Education and/or Background:** B.S. Nursing, Carroll College

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I have no idea! I guess I'm still trying to figure out what I want to "be" when I grow up. I have been blessed to have been able to experience a diverse background of jobs in my life up to this point, and really I've just found that I enjoy working with people, and being challenged.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I've really discovered a sincere and deep appreciation for exercise over the last few years. I was involved in athletics all growing up, but as an adult, it can be a lot more difficult to commit to taking care of your own self. I've really come to embrace the mentality that self-care is not selfish, or in other words, that it's "hard to pour from an empty cup." I also really enjoy taking advantage of opportunities to be a part of a mission that is more widespread than my own interests. I've been really

fortunate to have been asked to be a member of several boards, both formally and informally, and I always appreciate and enjoy being involved and learning from others who are involved and who are served. Also, obviously spending time with my family and friends is my number one passion.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** Lucky for me, I can't think of a single specific terrible piece of advice that I've been explicitly given. I've learned a lot from all of my experiences thus far, and part of growing and learning is deciphering what information is useful versus what is not. Having said that, however, I think there's always lessons to be learned from "bad information" as well.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** I know it is so easy to do in our digital world, but don't compare your success to the success of others. Focus on what YOU need- what fills your bucket, what you are good

at- and hone in on that. The success will follow as long as you're passionate and genuine about what you're doing. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions, or to try something that you hadn't envisioned before. There's a lot of unique opportunities in the world, and you never know what's going to "stick".

**What's your guilty pleasure?** A glass of wine or a good microbrew. Even better, is enjoying one of those at a local establishment. We are so fortunate to have so many great breweries and a great winery right here in Billings!

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Right now in my career, one accomplishment I'm working on is simply perfecting the art of balance. I view myself as an ambitious person, who is not afraid of taking on new roles and challenges. However, being heavily involved in two successful businesses,

Please see **Whitmoyer**, Page 38



## CRYSTAL WILLIAMS

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Intermountain Health/St. Vincent Healthcare - Registered Nurse

**Hometown:** Billings

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's of Science in Nursing

# BE READY TO WORK HARD

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would probably be in the beauty industry if nursing was no longer an option. I love making people feel beautiful and feel great about themselves!

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I'm really passionate about uplifting others and helping them see their full potential. I have worked hard to learn to be a "cheerleader" and see the best in other people, even when it's hard to do. I find that the more I can invest in and uplift others, the better they feel about themselves! Seeing others shine definitely fills my cup!

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "Stop worrying." Wow, no bit of advice has been less helpful or made me worry more! Worrying is a normal part of life and, for some of us, worrying is overwhelming but also a drive to be better.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Growth doesn't happen when you are in your comfort zone. Take time to do the hard

things, to ask the questions, to go out on a limb! You never know where you can go or what direction life will take you in if you stay in your comfort zone. The road to being successful isn't the same for everyone. You don't have to get it all right the first time. In fact, some of the most successful people have made big mistakes. It's really less about the mistake and more about how you use what you learned to do it differently next time! Learn to take feedback, gracefully, knowing that without feedback, you aren't given the chance to see perspectives of others. Being open to feedback means people will be more comfortable to be open and honest with you.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** I truly enjoy relaxing on the couch and watching all the reality TV shows and taking full advantage of the luxuries "Covid" afforded us...think having groceries and ice cream delivered far too often.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Eventually, I would like to go back to

school for my master's degree and become a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner.

**How do you measure your own success?** I am very hard on myself. It takes a lot for me to see myself as "successful." I generally feel successful when I can see the positive difference I've made in others. Whether that is a smile, a warmth in their heart, laughter, memories. I also define success largely on the success of my team. When we win as a team, I win too!

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Over the years I've worked in a leadership role at St. Vincent, I have had the opportunity to see how incredibly important personal relationships, trust, and communication are. All of these factors have a large effect on success as well. I have taken many classes and education sessions for leaders, but the most powerful class I learned from was how to have crucial conversations. The hard conversations, brought down from emotion to the

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# CONGRATS

*Kelsi*

The Billings Chamber is proud to congratulate Kelsi Gambill, PR & Communications Manager, for receiving the 2024 40 Under 40 award!

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# GRIT. GRACE. GRATITUDE



## MARK WINSLOW

**Age:** 39

**Company and Title:** Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Floberg Real Estate

**Hometown:** Katy, Texas

**Education and/or Background:** Bachelor's of Science in Chemistry and Ecology from Montana State University

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I have always talked about opening a restaurant and have actually drawn up a couple of different business plans. At the same time, I don't like being couped up inside, so not sure if that would work. I was a chemist and forensic scientist for a number of years, so I might do something in the sciences again.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I love to travel. My wife and I have started to introduce our three kids to it and look forward to the adventures to come. I also enjoy anything sports related or just being in the outdoors.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** I don't recall any specific advice that was bad really. I don't always take everyone's advice, but I know that any advice offered is with the intent to help and because that individual cares about your wellbeing. I tend to filter it through the lens of my situation and see if it applies or not.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** Success is what you make of it. There is no right or wrong way to define your success, but ultimately it

comes from happiness and enjoyment.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Vanilla ice cream with Reese's peanut butter cups mixed in that I steal from the kids' Halloween haul.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I am relatively new to the real estate scene after 12 years as a scientist with the state of Montana. I still have lots to learn and plenty of aspirations and milestones to meet. I do, however, want to take the time to thank Dan and Beth Smith for their continued support, encouragement, and leadership at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Floberg Real Estate and to all the agents that have provided insight and wisdom along my journey thus far. Thank you.

**How do you measure your own success?** Smiles and laughter. Success is when clients enjoy the home buying or selling process. We all know it can be a stressful and drawn-out process. If I can help alleviate stress by simplifying the process and maybe even interjecting some humor along the way, then I view it as a success.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** The hardest thing I have had to learn in this business is that my personality and the way I approach real estate and life in general does not always align with everyone. My science background lends itself to a more analytical and data driven approach to real estate which doesn't always appeal to everyone.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Trying to remain flexible on weekends and evenings when clients are generally free can become difficult with kids' activities and family life. I am still trying to figure out a good balance and setting boundaries especially on how late I will take phone calls.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Bluey." Kid shows are always on. I'm not complaining though, it's pretty funny.

**What is your favorite book?** "Endurance" by Alfred Lansing. It's the story of Ernest Shackleton and his expedition to Antarctica.

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# MINDSET IS EVERYTHING



## MOLLY WOLLNER

**Age:** 29

**Company and Title:** Adaptive Performance Center

**Hometown:** Mound, MN

**Education and/or Background:** I have my Bachelor's in Health and

Exercise Science from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and my Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Rocky Mountain College

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?** I would love the opportunity to do a job that allows me to travel, while also helping people. I have always wanted to volunteer for the Peace Corps, maybe that is what I would do?

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?** I have a lot of things that I care about and that bring me joy, the few that come to mind include, volunteering, hiking, reading, traveling, running, Pilates, and nutrition.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?** "If you ignore it, it will just go away." My mom always told me you can be part of the solution or part of the problem. Ignoring something does not change anything from happening - speaking up or making changes can make a difference.

**What advice would you give a teenager about success?** It is not cool,

not to try - the only person who suffers from your lack of effort is yourself.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Tru Fru White & Dark Chocolate Raspberries

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I would love the opportunity to help expand the field of OT and show the tremendous impact we can have in a multitude of settings beyond that of the traditional medical model. I would also love to continue to expand my professional network to be able to provide even more resources for veterans.

**How do you measure your own success?** By how many lives I am able to change for the better. Being able to help others regain and reclaim their sense of independence, is my "why" to what I am doing.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I would not say failure as much as rejection has taught me the most about myself. Initially I took rejection extremely hard both personally and professionally. The older I have

gotten, I am starting to use it as an opportunity for growth, which can be a lot easier said than done. For me, taking the time to reflect and see why things did not work out the way I hoped they would and seeing what I could have done better or differently.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Leaving work at work. I care a great deal about everyone I work with and often reflect on sessions, conversations, and interactions. I tend to worry about the people I work with when they have off days and want to do my absolute best to make them smile and help to make their day even the slightest bit better.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "Suits."

**What is your favorite book?** It's hard to choose just one! I would say right now it's "Don't Forget to Write" by Sara Goodman Confino, "101 Essays That Will Change The Way You Think" by Brianna Wiest, and anything by Brene Brown.

Please see **Wollner**, Page 39

# Amundson

From Page 3

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Video games, Zelda really, all because I can run around in an open world and there are not many consequences. Plus I get to fly, run and jump in a way I don't think I will get to in real life. Strangely, my runner up is fly fishing.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Honestly, I would like to work as a bus driver and/or a server at a restaurant at some point in my life. I know it sounds strange, but I was a bank teller early in life and I loved the feeling of accomplishment of doing transactions and then wrapping up with a balanced drawer at the end of the day. I want to work a couple jobs, at some point, that don't have ongoing deadlines, relationships, and systems to manage. However, I think I will save that

for my 4th or 5th career.

**How do you measure your own success?** If one life has breathed easier or has been made better because of the work I have done.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Total confession, I use "find and replace" on my computer to update documents before I change them. One time I officiated a funeral, and I had used find a replace on the name and the gendered pronouns. However, I did not check all the gender pronouns, so I had to on the fly change my script to insert the right pronouns. It was rough, but I learned that I am not a good proofreader from experiences like this. The lesson I took from this and other communication blunders is that it takes a team for an organization to communicate well. A team can proofread, consider how a message gets out, and that team is a great thing for a leader to rely on.

**What is your favorite book?** "Braving the Wilderness" by

Brene Brown. It is a great series of stories about how to live life fully and with integrity. The ways in which we should live our lives.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** The most rewarding aspect of my work is that lives breathe easier because of what our team does for seniors and their families. In the work my success is knowing that something I did empowered that team to do the work we set out to do. From simply making sure paychecks get to them to finding the training that helps the team member to understand the best way to connect and support a senior.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** This is not an easy answer for me because I have had so many great mentors and inspirations. I will take just a minute to name my first primary co-worker, Rev. Marianne Niesen, my mentor growing up, Marc Scow, and my partner in life and wife, Crystal

Amundson are the ones who have kept me close in the hardest challenges I have faced. They are my inspiration because they remind me that I am capable of so much more than even I can imagine.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "Nothing great was ever achieved with Enthusiasm." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Never assume you know it all or that there is something you can't learn. I have seen so many professionals become self-absorbed and fail to take opportunities to learn from the people they serve in their work with. Every person you meet has some understanding that you do not. Listen to them.

**How do you view failure and success?** Success to quote Ralph Waldo Emerson is to "laugh often and love much." Failure is an opportunity to learn about who we are and to grow into a part of ourselves that we

may not know needed growth.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love water. Water is a gift from God and I can't get enough of it. I swim every week, and I love getting out to mountain lakes for some fishing or paddle boarding (seated for me). Something about the ancient nature of water, knowing it has passed by so many stories and beings, and then the sound of it calls me back to the present moment. I can't get enough of that feeling.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** Why? A word, "Enthusiasm" it was gifted to be my a dear friend when I was coming into my own. If you break down the word it means the "spirit within." That word has been a blessing spoken to me in times of grief and in times of joy. The word also is a blessing that others in my life beside my friend have learned to share with me when I am struggling. I think everyone should be gifted a word that means the world to them and is a blessing to them.



Billings Clinic

Congratulations  
for being named to 40 Under Forty



**Anna Buckner**  
Healthcare Data Analyst III



**Hanna Niles**  
Coordinator - Quality Resources



**Erin Rains, DO**  
Pulmonary/Critical Care Physician  
Co-Chief Medical Officer (Hospital)



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## Adam

From Page 3

and then delivering a result they never thought possible is certainly the most rewarding aspect of my occupation.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I've been lucky to have some great professional mentors like former judge, Gregory Todd and Billings attorney, R. Russell Plath. However, the traits that I rely on most in my day-to-day practice

are the common sense and integrity that I learned from my parents.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love backpacking and backcountry flyfishing. When I'm stressed out and stretched thin, a multi-day trip into the backcountry can fill my cup for months at a time.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** I remember receiving a gas-powered go-cart in second grade. Really, this gift was more of a bribe from my parents for staying out of trouble at school.

Years later, my parents told me they thought bribing me was a huge parenting mistake and that my good behavior should have simply been expected. My sister and I had so many great memories (and close calls) with this go-cart, but more importantly, hearing my parents admit their parenting mistakes has shaped how I view myself as a dad. Parenting is hard and mistakes will be made. Love your kids with the best of intentions, admit to them when you're wrong, and by the grace of God they might just turn out to be ok.

## Ryann Dolezal

From Page 6

**What is your favorite book?** "Valley of the Dolls" by Jacqueline Susann

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Becoming a trusted advisor to my clients while helping them navigate employee benefit challenges.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** The four women I work with every day - Kristy Buckley, Adrienne Maxwell, Sarah Dixon, and Winnie Arthurs. They have taught me everything I know about employee benefits law and analyzing complex legal issues. But, more importantly, they have been a shining example of how to show care and compassion for colleagues and foster a true team.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Have a plan but be flexible.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Take it one step at a time. Starting a business or entering a new field can be overwhelming, so I recommend getting all of your thoughts and to-dos on paper and out of your head. Then, make a plan and focus on one task or idea at a time.

**How do you view failure and success?** I am naturally prone to take failures pretty hard. I try to remind myself that failure is a part of life and to learn what you can from a failure then move on. Having a bit of success here and there keeps me going. Even the "little successes" like crossing something off the to-do give me a boost which helps me make it

through the more challenging days.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I particularly enjoy reading, knitting, Zumba, and traveling. Sometimes, I think I love the planning and researching before a trip as much as taking the actual trip!

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** A love of reading from my parents. Our parents would read to my siblings and I every night as children. Hearing our parents read books like Little House on the Prairie and Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone ignited a love of reading in me and all of my siblings. I think late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said it best: "Reading is the key that opens doors to many good things in life. Reading shaped my dreams, and more reading helped me make my dreams come true."

## Duffey

From Page 6

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Continue to improve. I think sometimes I may not celebrate successes as much as some people would like, but I am always looking for ways to improve on what we are doing. Yes we had a successful project, but we could improve in these areas...

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Never give up! There will always be challenges, ups and downs, good days and bad days. Not everyone is on your side and want the best for you. Do your best to rid yourself of those people and find those that continue to push you and motivate

you to improve yourself.

**How do you view failure and success?** A lot of people have this answer, but failure and success are just opportunities for growth. Continue to improve yourself and figure out how to turn that failure into a success in the future.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I always joke that I have too many hobbies to do them all. Currently we are moving into ice fishing season and I am on a bowling team. Spring/summer brings cabin trips, golf, and fishing then leads into hunting in the fall. I also enjoy woodworking.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** The work ethic I received from my dad. I would say this is my greatest gift as it has allowed me to be successful in my life and career.

## Hagel

From Page 12

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Be hungry, humble and teachable.

**How do you view failure and success?** I believe failure should be embraced as an opportunity to learn. It is often a step that we take on the way to success.

**What do you do for fun/**

**relax/hobby?** Anything with my family. My kids love to fish, so my wife and I have learned to love fishing as well.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** By far, grace from people around me. I have been blessed to have many people who have allowed me to make mistakes and learn from them. Life is hard when you are trying to be perfect and the pressure to never make a mistake robs you of the opportunity to grow and change.

## Colby

From Page 4

Being flexible and open to whatever the day brings is important working for an independent. One day is not going to be the same as the other.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Ted Lasso. Watched all the episodes twice now. Wish they would continue making more seasons.

**What is your favorite book?** "Pet Sematary" by Stephen King. I'm a junkie for horror novels but my wife and I listened to this one on Audible together and I still have chills thinking about it.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** We do a lot of medication bubble packing for patients who are on large amounts of medications. Being able to consolidate them into a few packs and seeing the relief on their faces after we have alleviated the stress of 10-20 bottles is very rewarding. My work station is situated right next to the cash register and prescription pickup window. I get to talk to almost all of my patients and know many of them by first name. It's great to be able to see my patients, ask them about their lives, and help them through their questions.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My dad. He

was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when I was young. To this day, he is still one of the most positive and level headed individuals I've ever met. I call him daily to get advice, to vent, and to talk football.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose"- Coach Eric Taylor ("Friday Night Lights"). I know it's super cheesy but something about it resonates with me to this day. It speaks to the fact that if you give it your all, there really is no such thing as "losing." You might not always reach the desired outcome but there is always something to be learned along the way.

**What advice would you give**

**to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Say yes. I've found that if I'm willing to try new things and help out where I am asked, more opportunities for advancement have come my way.

**How do you view failure and success?** I don't think I have ever accepted failure. I view failure as an opportunity to improve. Failure is more of a learning opportunity on the path to ultimate success.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** My wife Kaity and I like trying new restaurants when we can find a sitter. Cork and Barrel is our most recent favorite and Walkers is a staple in our date nights. I like playing video

games in the evenings after my kids have gone to bed. I dabble in trying different whiskeys as well.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** My technicians that I work with are the best gift a pharmacist could ask for. Without my pharmacy techs I wouldn't be the pharmacist that I am today. They are the lifeblood of the pharmacy and keep the wheels spinning. They handle a multitude of different responsibilities with professionalism and empathy that astound me every day. I always joke with them that I'll miss them when we go home for the night or over the weekend but it's actually quite true. Not only are they great coworkers, they are also my friends.

## Collins

From Page 5

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** The original Unsolved Mysteries from the '90s.

**What is your favorite book?** Anything Stephen King. His writing is unparalleled.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Making

a positive impact on students. I tend to teach around 75 students a semester and I actively work to learn each student's name and a little about their lives. I enjoy connecting with each person and meeting so many impressive young people.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My PhD advisor, Dr. Jovanka Voyich (Montana State University), is a true inspiration. Her generosity and mentorship have helped me

to become the person that I am today. During my time working in her lab, I acquired a taste for quality music and developed a life-long comradery with my peers. We also had the best view and the most productive lab meetings on campus.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "Why give up? Why give in?"

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel**

**in a business or field?** Running a research lab is similar to maintaining a business. I would recommend that you focus your efforts on something you are genuinely passionate about and surround yourself with good people. When times inevitably get tough, your enthusiasm for the project and people will carry you through.

**How do you view failure and success?** We fail 99.9% of the time in research. It's just the

name of the game. During those occasional "wins" in the lab (and in life), we always celebrate!

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I always seem to raise more dogs than I probably need. Between my dog-ettes, gardening, and reading, I stay pretty busy.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** Life. Day after day I gain a deeper understanding of how short life is. Embrace it.

## Buckner

From Page 4

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** The people I work with. I am grateful to be surrounded by co-workers who are intelligent, professional and committed to the work they do. It makes me feel valued, supported, and excited to see what we can do next.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** In my career, I have had the opportunity to work with great leaders. It inspires me

when I work with leaders who are connected to their team members, understand the work they do and can help advance initiatives and make meaningful improvements.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** How you do something is how you do everything.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** You always have to do more than the minimum no matter what you are doing. Maybe you aren't currently in your dream job but if you find the areas where you can go above and beyond it will ultimately

help you get where you want to be.

**How do you view failure and success?** Both failure and success are opportunities to learn more about yourself and what you value.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to read, mostly for entertainment. I love to read mystery novels but manage to fit in an occasional biography or self-help book.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** Being taught how to deal with disappointment. Knowing how to move on when things don't go your way has helped me so much personally and professionally.

## Rains

From Page 20

or opportunity for the future. Success for me is always evolving - it's not one tangible achievement, but rather a state of being. Success is feeling valued and valuing those around you.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Skiing in the winter, being outdoors in the summer. All the arts and crafts for the shoulder seasons! I love to work outside in

the garden with my family, and I prefer to get my exercise through physical labor around our property rather than run on a treadmill.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** A dragonfly to symbolize the death of our daughter. It was the perfect token of remembrance, and I have passed that gift along to others in their times of grief. In so many ways it was and continues to be the most meaningful gift I ever received.

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# Gallant

From Page 8

**What failure have you learned the most from?** The act of failing in and of itself is a lesson. Through my failures, I continuously learn humility, compassion, resolve, when to give up, and when to dig in with renewed determination.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Balancing creative license and the many constraints surrounding writing (e.g., style, brand guidelines, word count, etc.) is a challenge. I enjoy meeting those difficulties for my company and its clients with fluidity, discipline, and a spirit of fun.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** It has been a while since I last binge-watched something. However, I am slowly working my way back through all 11 seasons of “The X-Files.”

**What is your favorite book?** Asking a writer about their favorite book is like asking a chef their favorite ingredient. I can't choose! I have read everything by the late Toni Morrison, and she is my favorite contemporary author.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Writing – objectively good and bad – is both a changing and permanent form of communication. Bad writing has its place in providing teachable moments for those looking to capture their thoughts and have them understood as intended. Good writing gives people a foundational framework to learn and develop within. The creative space outside and in between the two is critically important and infinitely rewarding. That's where a writer elevates the occupation from a skill to an art.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I consider myself lucky to have been inspired and mentored by many great writers over my career. Yet today, I am more driven by a reader – my four-year-old son. He is named after a literary protagonist,

and I devote significant time and attention to fostering his love of words. My hope is that he will one day read my writing and feel pride and connectedness to his mother, even long after I am gone.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Simply: Be bold.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Whether you hope to succeed in selling yourself as an entrepreneur or someone else as an employee, good writing and storytelling are foundational to both.

**How do you view failure and success?** Whether you hope to succeed in selling yourself as an entrepreneur or someone else as an employee, good writing and storytelling are foundational to both.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Getting outside is my favorite way to unwind. I can often be found (and find myself) taking a long-distance drive with music blaring on a road to nowhere. Enjoying the outdoors on a nearby nature walk or hiking into unfamiliar territory is both relaxing and energizing for me. And, of course, reading and writing are my greatest forms of personal exploration and inspiration.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** **Why?** There are no words that can adequately express my gratitude to my mother for nurturing my thirst for knowledge from a young age. She encouraged me to devour authors and encyclopedias, express my thoughts in journals, excel academically, and endeavor to understand the world around me. If you're reading: Thank you, mom.

I was once told to give each professional position three years of commitment. The well-meaning logic behind the advice centered around sticktoitiveness, resume development, security, and denying the stereotypical “job-hopping” behavior of my generation. Fortunately, I learned staying in a position that is a bad fit – either personally or for the employer – is often more harmful than helpful for everyone involved.

# Llewellyn

From Page 16

to work, and dreading to turn the door handle. Sure, we all have those days. But, to have that feeling every day is horrible. I strive to do the best I can to ensure our Team Members feel good about their day and their future.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** Jeff Walters was my boss when I first got into IT. He was great with setting expectations and holding people accountable, without creating a sense of fear or limitation. He showed me the line between getting things done, and having some fun in the process. Jeff set an example of great leadership without even knowing it. Or maybe he did. Nope, it's still Maybelline.

# Lopez

From Page 16

I understood the importance of finding a route that would provide a sense of purpose while matching my skill set. I now know that this “failure” was the biggest opportunity of my life. I took full advantage of the situation by conducting multiple self-reflections which helped me uncover strengths I was not aware I possessed. In 2012, I never imagined myself as an Executive Director of a symphony orchestra. This “failure” gave me the opportunity to grow. I am grateful I never gave up.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Making tough decisions while dealing with the pressures of leadership and unpredictability. No two days are the same. Leading an organization to success requires non-stop efforts, enjoying the victories while staying alert for the unexpected.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** I am consistently binge watching “The Office.” In my opinion, it is the most re-watchable show ever.

**What is your favorite book?** “Oh, the Places You'll Go!” by Dr. Seuss. This book is pure gold. It is brilliantly written for all ages. Oh, the Places You'll Go! has the power to provide self-reflection.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** “Yes, and...” An essential guideline of Improv performance, and it translates to all aspects of life. Accepting offers, and contributing to what's possible creates magic.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Learn to be comfortable with change. You may know a lot about something and are in business to share your expertise with the world, but you will quickly find yourself plateauing if you settle. Change is good, and can be the most fun part of your endeavors. Don't fight it, solve it.

**How do you view failure and success?** Failure and successes are, again, inevitable. They work hand in hand. Both are learning experiences and contribute to your overall wisdom.

The most amazing thing about this book is that you can receive different reflections during different seasons of your life, making it invaluable and useful for a lifetime.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** I am honored to be in a position where I can establish a vision, implement change, create opportunities, and enrich my community. I enjoy making connections and partnering with like-minded organizations and individuals. When people work together, the results are extraordinary.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I have had many great influences in my life, from family and friends to professors and colleagues. The three people that come to mind are Harry Spyker (middle school band teacher), Carolyn Destito (high school private teacher), and Randy Gardner (graduate horn professor). These mentors played a pivotal role in my musical career. They were all instrumental in providing tools needed to get me to the next stage of my career. Although they are very different people who provided specific skills, they all taught me skills above and beyond music. I was equipped with skills on how to be a successful individual.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to cook, watch documentaries, backpacking, flyfishing, fly tying (with a nice whiskey or bourbon), and writing (sketch comedy, one acts, and screenplays). I recently started playing football (a.k.a. soccer to you heathens) in the Billings Parks and Rec Soccer League and cannot wait for next season!

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** **Why?** My wife commissioned a graphic artist to draw a comic book page. On the page is my wife, our dog Merlin, and myself chilling at home. We get individual calls for help, and the last pane of the comic is us fighting a robotic monster as super heroes. This one gift hit every bone in my nerdish body. I have a copy of it in my office and at home. Thanks again, my love!

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Everything happens for a reason. I believe that you will receive what is meant for you to receive at the time you are meant to receive it. Sometimes we do not understand why life takes us along different paths, but everything always seems to work out.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Do not let your goals and ambition blind you from reality. Be realistic, do your research, set attainable goals, and be consistent.

**How do you view failure and success?** Success is not linear. Failure is not planned. However, failure is what sometimes happens on the way to success. Failure is our biggest indicator of a wrong decision, allowing us to adjust our trajectory to success.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I enjoy traveling, going on road trips, and spending time with friends and family. I am also a foodie and a little bit of a coffee snob.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** **Why?** My family. I am a proud husband and father. No matter what happens, the most consistent thing in my life is my family. Everything I do is for the betterment of my wife and daughter, my greatest gifts.



## Fuhriman

From Page 8

again was gut wrenching. By overcoming that failure, and passing the course, I learned that I can overcome just about anything with the right mental fortitude.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** As proud as I am of Veterans Navigation Network (VNN), and the work we do to help veterans, I wish it did not have to exist. I wish that our Country was able to support Veterans after all they give to support us to the point that they didn't need services provided by non profits like VNN to supplement the care provided by the government and military. Unfortunately, that isn't the case, and our services are needed desperately.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** "The Vikings"

**What is your favorite book?** I like fantasy books, so I would have to say "The Saga of Recluce" series by L. E. Modesitt Jr.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Getting to help veterans young and old change their lives for the better. Seeing

them succeed is incredibly rewarding.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** Jason Santora was my team leader in the army. He was killed in Action on 4/23/2010. He taught me what servant leadership was, and I owe what my life is to this day to both his mentorship, and his sacrifice for our country.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "Rangers Lead the Way." This is a motto that was engrained in me during my time with the Ranger Battalion, and is something that still drives me to this day.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Be prepared to live, eat and breath whatever business you start. Whether you start your business or are trying to excel in a specific field, you have to immerse yourself in it... Dont be afraid to ask for help. Surround yourself who add value to what you are trying to achieve, whether that is employees, mentors, friends... Make sure it is a two way street, and add value to their lives as well... You will be better for it.

**How do you view fail-**

**ure and success?** Working in the quality improvement part of healthcare gave me a very different view on failure and success compared to what I learned in the military... Continuous Quality Improvement is my philosophy when it comes to failure and success... If you fail, now you know what not to do. Study the failure, make the needed changes, and try again... If you succeed, you can always make it better... Rinse and repeat.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** The most relaxing and fun thing that I can remember was hunting camp as a kid. Our whole family would get together, spend time together in the outdoors, and just be in each others company. We haven't had a hunting camp in years, but its something I look forward to recreating with my kids.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** Why? Time. The time that mentors in my life have given me is incredibly valuable. In fact, they will never get it back, and they can never get more of it. The fact that they believed in me enough to give it is humbling. We never know how much time we have left.

## Miller

From Page 18

them achieve their goals as an agent and watching them learn to become confident and successful is incredibly rewarding.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My friend Julie Seedhouse, a strong female in the business who's deeply invested in the community and an outstanding public speaker. She is one of the most confident, charismatic, and likable people I've ever had come into my life. I always joke that I want to be Julie when I grow up.

**Do you have a motto**

**that you live by?** If it's not going to matter in five years, don't spend more than five minutes being upset about it.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Don't be afraid to work hard, put in the time and effort it takes to start out because it will pay off as long as you're willing to go through the hard times in the beginning. And most importantly, don't be afraid to 'never stop learning'.

**How do you view failure and success?** I think continuing to work or do something that you don't love and not making

a change to become your best version of yourself is an oversight, while the willingness to change and evolve while being brave will help you feel accomplished.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I have a hard time ever saying no to a country concert, no matter how far I have to travel.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** Why? My husband surprised me with a trip to Nashville for our five-year wedding anniversary and gave me a beautiful ring I had my eye on for years. It was very sentimental and for me, anytime traveling is the best gift.

We are proud of all of your outstanding achievements.

# Congratulations Brandon!



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## Hagadone

From Page 12

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** If you put in the work the results will come.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Have a plan, consult with experts, set attainable goals, then go.

**How do you view failure and success?** I fail daily at work and in my personal life. How could that

meeting have gone better? Did I provide the right advice to my son about how to handle a situation at school? All we can do is be present in the moment, learn from the experience, and try to do better next time.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Golfing on a Sunday afternoon with our oldest (Graham) has started to become a Sunday tradition. Golf is a difficult game, and there's no team to hide behind if you make a mistake. It's been fun guiding him through the little nuances of the game to help

him be successful. I'm hoping this continues to become a tradition with our youngest, Griffin. My hope is to get our youngest (Griffin) excited about golf then the whole family can go.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** My wife, Ciara. She is a blessing to have as a partner and at my side as we navigate our crazy life with our two boys. She's also an incredibly savvy and well-respected business professional in Billings. Most people turn to her for advice, including me.

## Jorgensen

From Page 13

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My parents are my greatest inspiration. They have worked hard to give me the best life and support me in everything I do, and my priority is to give that same love and support to my daughter.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "If you can't control it, there's no use worrying about it." Easier said than done,

but it helps me to prioritize the things on which I can have an impact.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Take initiative and ownership of whatever task is set in front of you - it may lead you on an unexpected but rewarding path.

**How do you view failure and success?** It's only a failure if you didn't learn anything from it. I view a success as something you're proud of.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love all sorts of crafting, downhill skiing, reading, and fly-fishing. I also truly enjoy volunteering for outreach events that engage students in their career path and learning different skills, especially STEM-related events.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** I know it's cheesy, but my daughter is truly the greatest gift I've ever received. My husband and I are so fortunate to have a happy and healthy child.

## Nezworski

From Page 18

**What is your favorite book?** "Rocket Fuel" by Gino Wickman. It speaks about an entrepreneur and the challenges / successes that come with it. It helped me to understand who I was as a person and how to harness it to the full potential.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Building other people up. Helping people when they are in need. I love interacting with our customers, as well as our team. Seeing success in other people's lives is rewarding. Hearing that we exceeded customers expectations is awesome.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I have a group of mentors that have given me different tools to get to where I am today. Guys that have encouraged me to start on my own, how to fix problems, run a business, take care of employees and customers, work hard, and just to be a good person.

**Do you have a motto that**

**you live by?** "Just One More Tree." We joke that every problem can be solved with just one more tree being trimmed or removed. It gives us a reality check that life doesn't have to be overly complicated, and working hard can solve most situations.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Surround yourself with like minded people. Find a group of people that encourage you and spur you along. Don't be afraid to ask questions of people smarter than you. Be humble and own your mistakes. Don't hide from problems, tackle them and keep moving forward. When you find success, find people to bring with you. Success is way more fun with a group of people, not alone.

**How do you view failure and success?** Staying humble is huge to my view of success. Being a good father, husband, brother, son, leader, etc. If I have to sacrifice my morals and ethics, that is failure in my opinion. Setting a positive example of what life can look like is important to finding success every day.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I enjoy the outdoors. Riding dirt bike with my son, horses with my wife and daughter, just being outside in general. I actually find a lot of relaxation in cutting trees and seeing the finished beautiful difference!

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** My children. My son Collin made me a father. He has helped me to grow and learn that someone is always watching and listening, so I better pay attention to the life I am living and the values that are important. My daughter Mackenzie is my baby. She has shown me the "wrapped around her finger" cliché that everyone talks about. Her spirit is bold and fierce, and challenges me to be patient, firm, but also comforting all at the same time.

I try to measure success by how many people my family and team can help. I want to set other people up for success, not stand alone on a hill. Building others in time of need is my vision of true success. Serving God in all facets of life. Giving glory to him for all of the blessings that I have been given.

## Jungblut

From Page 14

business or in my personal life. It can be hard because I'm extremely competitive. I have four brothers and I absolutely love beating them at MarioKart, fantasy football, or on the golf course. But when it comes to most things, I measure my own success by asking myself if I can do it better and making sure I'm constantly improving.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** I have learned so much from my failures it's hard to pick just one! I was interning at a firm one summer during law school for an attorney who is now a judge. He gave me a tough research assignment and I completely bombed it. It was one of those moments where I questioned whether or not I could really be a lawyer. So, the next year in law school I picked the same subject for my capstone thesis. I learned that with hard work, time, and dedication, I can overcome my failures and make something positive out of them.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Compassion fatigue. I represent personal injury victims, so my clients are suffering physically, emotionally, and often financially. I'm an empath and I tend to absorb a lot of that trauma and bring it home. In some ways it helps to be an empath because I'm a good listener and I can determine what each client's unique needs are, but I also take on a lot of mental strain and get burnt out if I don't set solid boundaries while trying to meet those needs.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** I rarely get to binge anything with a baby and such a busy schedule. The new season of Fargo is definitely binge-worthy though.

**What is your favorite book?** The one I named my horse, Duncan, and mini horse, Eggburt, after: "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms" (also known as the tales of Dunk and Egg) by George R. R. Martin.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Helping my clients through the difficult legal process and getting a great outcome for them in the end is

so rewarding. Injuries can really upend people's lives so it's very gratifying to help get them back on track. I also set aside a little time to help bring families together through adoption. It is amazing to see these lucky kiddos and parents choose each other forever.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** It might sound cliché, but my mom is my biggest inspiration and mentor. She is an amazing person and mother who has been through so much and made me the person I am today. She has always believed in me and pushed me to be the best version of myself.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** When I was a tiny kiddo, I would try to argue with my very stubborn, German, father. He'd sit there quietly while I rambled on about some random unfairness that occurred that day or the next. When I was finally done making my plea he would succinctly say "well life isn't fair, get over it." I think the motto fits. Everyone has a different journey. It's not always fair, but we can either sit around and mope or get up and do something about it. I've overcome my own struggles to get where I am and now it's even more fitting because I get to stand up for my clients as a lawyer. (My father would also tell me that I was very good at arguing and should be a lawyer someday. Haha!)

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Start now - it's never too late. In a few years, you'll be glad you started when you did.

**How do you view failure and success?** Learn from your failures and don't quit. Success is personal - make your own goals and keep your eyes on them.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to spend time with my husband, our baby, and our collection of animals. When I'm not being a homebody, I like to get outside and ride my horse, golf, or hike our beautiful mountains.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** My baby girl, Ilka, is by far my greatest gift. She has brought so much joy to our lives, and we are beyond blessed.

## Forcella

From Page 7

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** “Chuck”

**What is your favorite book?** “The Odyssey,” by Homer.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Helping families maintain a legacy and helping Montana’s businesses succeed.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I have had the privilege of being mentored by innumerable family, friends, and colleagues. It is impossible to say which has been the “greatest,” but each has

left an indelible mark on my character and each has helped form me into the person I am.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** “Per fide et fortitudine, durabo.” By faith and fortitude, I endure.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Be clear about what you want to achieve, set tangible goals, and surround yourself with a team that can support you in meeting them.

**How do you view failure and success?** Failure and success are each opportunities. While successes are typically more pleasant

than failures, each has an important role in our learning, development, and growth.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I enjoy woodworking, hunting, reading, hiking, camping, and traveling.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** Years ago, I received a small, inexpensive novelty from an old friend, completely unexpectedly. Despite its small value, the gift was exceptional because it was something my friend knew I would enjoy and given without any occasion prompting it – it was given simply to acknowledge our friendship. It is among my most treasured items for this reason.

## Gnerer

From Page 10

I also look up to both of my grandmas. Both of them are and were amazing women and have taught me so many things such as “take the picture”, “recipe, what recipe?”... and of course “if it’s on sale, get it.”

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Everything happens for a reason. It’s helped me through a lot.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in**

**a business or field?**

I would tell them to surround themselves with people that are supportive and encouraging. A great support system is a super important tool for success.

**How do you view failure and success?**

To me they go hand in hand - you can’t have one without the other. As long as you don’t give up and keep trying, success can come from failure and failure can turn into success.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** My husband and I like to take our kids camping and fishing in the summer, and

in the winter we have a pond we can ice skate on. They love being outside so it’s been fun taking them places as they get older. I absolutely love to read - I could curl up in a chair and read an entire book in one day. I love being able to lose myself in a story, it’s the best form of relaxation for me.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received?**

**Why?** My two babies - Madison and Logan. No explanation needed when it comes to your own children, and I’m so grateful to be able to raise them with my husband in the great state of Montana.

## Keogh

From Page 14

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** “We never know how far reaching something we may think, say, or do today will affect the lives of millions tomorrow.” - Dr. B.J. Palmer

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a**

**business or field?** Dive into the community, especially if you are new to the area. Get to know the people. Say yes to opportunities that awaken that you believe can help you. Enjoy the process and the journey. Give back as much as possible.

**How do you view failure and success?** I do not believe there is failure, I believe there are lessons to be learned that lead to success.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Being outdoors, hiking, golfing, working out, cooking, and spending time with family.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** Having great parents. Parents that allowed me to pursue my dreams, that encouraged me from a young age to do this. Had an open dialogue relationship with them and instilled core values and principles to live by.

## Larson

From Page 15

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My greatest mentor and inspiration is my father.

His emphasis on the value of hard work and instilling in me the importance of ensuring the well-being and care of my family.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** “Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.”

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new busi-**

**ness or excel in a business or field?** Recognize that the success of others is not your failure; it’s an opportunity to learn and grow. Embrace collaboration and seek inspiration from those who have achieved success.

**How do you view failure and success?** I perceive failure as only occurring when one gives up. Every setback is an opportunity for learning and growth, a temporary challenge on the path to success. Success, in my view, is measured by the positive impact one creates on others.

**What do you do for**

**fun/relax/hobby?** I cherish spending quality time with my wife and kids, ideally on a beach in Florida listening to the sound of waves. Additionally, I find leisure in golfing with friends, combining camaraderie with the pleasure of the game.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** Love and unwavering support from my family and friends. Their constant encouragement and presence have been a source of strength, grounding me in times of challenge and amplifying the joy in moments of success.

## Martinez

From Page 17

**How do you view failure and success?** You cannot be successful without failing.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I like to craft or cook something new for my family.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** My family of course will always be number

one. And my dad designed me a mother’s ring, which has mine and my kids’ birthstones with our names engraved on it. He was so excited to get it for me, he talked about it for about a year. It is very special to me.



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## Gambill

From Page 9

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** “I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.” –Edward Everett Hale

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a**

**business or field?** Never give up. Rest as needed but keep pursuing what sets your heart on fire and don't let anyone extinguish your flame.

**How do you view failure and success?** Failure is a first attempt in learning; a phrase that I didn't learn until later in life but one that resonates strongly with me to this day. Success is knowing I have given my best, no matter what.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I'm a

workaholic who cherishes time with my nieces and nephew, outside of work and volunteerism.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** **Why?** I am saved by God's grace and healing power and a little help from ketamine. Through HIM I have a new lease on life, complete with a holistic approach and recipe for health and wellness. With help from an amazing medical team, I am over three years depression and anxiety free. Each day is a gift!

## Schopp

From Page 12

normal business, so on top of excessive local and state taxes, you're paying through the nose to remain compliant. If your business is vertically-integrated like mine, you're also a farmer. This means dealing with the challenges any other agricultural producer may face, like plant pathogens/disease, pest management, crop failures, you name it. All while you've got government agencies regularly coming through and conducting inspections. You've got dedicated staff to internal audits and compliance check points, adding to payroll costs. We get charged differently by various vendors, operators in this industry call it the 'green tax.' Nationwide, over 75% of cannabis businesses are not profitable, due to highly competitive landscapes and overproduction in the legal markets nationwide. All that's to say, that while those variables make my job challenging, there's nothing I'd rather be doing.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** “All the light we cannot see,” on Netflix. Highly recommend it.

**What is your favorite book?** “The Hard Thing About Hard Things” by Ben Horowitz.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Dual answer; On one side of the equation, the most important piece is the medical patients who find relief using our products. It's folks who are nauseous from chemo, or living with chronic pain, or without appetite from treatments or medications, etc. These folks have opened my eyes over the years as to what a wonderful medicine cannabis can be. On the other hand, I feel it's important to destigmatize cannabis use in society. Society gave the thumbs up to alcohol as a great way to relax, socialize, or unwind. However, alcohol is arguably one of the most harmful intoxicants to society as a whole. Folks have it in their minds that cannabis is used by a lazy and unproductive group, but it's actually used by people all over the social landscape. Many of the most hard working, successful people I know prefer cannabis as a way to relax over alcohol, and I think my job helps to highlight that it's okay to consume cannabis to just feel good, and there's still work to do to normalize that.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** Probably my boy, Bruce. If you're reading this, thank you for everything.

**Do you have a**

**motto that you live by?** “Opportunity cost.” What is the cost of your time allocation, your habits, your activities, and how do those affect the opportunities you have before you?

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** This is a highly volatile, saturated industry, with unique challenges. I would suggest finding the right partners who can offer support where you lack. Ultimately, your businesses profitability will be at the hands of the market, so create a product or store with unique value propositions that can stand out amongst your competitors.

**How do you view failure and success?** I think failures are avoidable, but are an excellent learning experience that you need to grow from. If you experience a failure like so many of us do, ask yourself: “What caused it to happen, what can be done to avoid it in the future, and how do I move forward?”

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to golf. Doesn't mean I'm any good, but it sure is fun.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received?** **Why?** I think every day we're given is a gift.

## Southard

From Page 22

**What's your guilty pleasure?** Music! I am lover of all music. My playlists range from George Strait, to Elton John, Queen, Cher, Morgan Wallen, classical piano music, you name it and its more than likely in my music library. Concerts and live music feed my soul.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** I cannot wait to finish my master's degree and apply my knowledge in leading and managing a team. Throughout our working careers we have all came across a manager who has had sub par skills when it comes to leadership. I want to change how we support healthcare workers. It is unfortunate that healthcare has become a profession with lots of mental fatigue and burnout and we need to prioritize this so patients can be well taken care of.

**How do you measure**

**your own success?** I do not measure success in all that I get right or achieve. I measure my success in how many times I try again after I have failed. The effort and passion we put into our goals far outweighs any recognition, award, or trophy we receive at the end.

**What failure have you learned the most from?** Oh this is a hard one to bring up. At the time when I took my RN national boards, I was not in a healthy midframe. I was struggling to stay focused and take care of myself and family. I had failed the RN-national boards and I was absolutely at a new low point. After I made peace with my failures, I dusted myself off and got back to studying. I knew I needed to organize my life and routine to be most successful. I let go of areas in my life that no longer served me well and focused more on my mental health, children and paving a path to becoming a registered nurse. The most important thing I learned as a wife,

mom and nurse, is that if we do not prioritize ourselves we cannot properly care for others. Like the saying goes, you cannot pour from an empty cup. **What is the hardest part of your job?** The most challenging part of my job is facilitating communication between multiple parties who might not agree. This has also opened up the opportunity to learn different communication and learning styles. I have had difficult conversations while maintaining an unbiased opinion, ultimately advocating for patients, nurses, care managers and the Hospitalist providers at Intermountain Health.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Currently my husband and I are watching Boardwalk Empire. As always I'm consistently Keeping up with the Kardashians, which I guess you could say is also a guilty pleasure. My favorite shows I have binge-watched were Sons of Anarchy, This is us, Sex and the City and Bewitched.

## Williams

From Page 27

practical way people feel and think. I think it has been a game changer for me with my family, my friends, and my coworkers!

**What is the hardest part of your job?** As a nurse, many people can imagine, the hardest part of my job is when a baby gets their “angel wings” far before they ever should, when their potential was never reached. As a flight nurse, the hardest part of my job is going to pick up a baby from an outlying community, full well knowing their is a mom that will be separated from her baby in the most treasured time of their bonding moments, and I am responsible for

separating that bond. I always know its necessary, and important, but my heart breaks every time.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Lessons in Science on Apple TV

**What is your favorite book?** I'm very much not a reader but in the spirit of the question, I can reach back to my high school years and say the only book I have ever read that has kept my attention is “Where the Heart Is” by Billie Letts.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** The most rewarding part of my job is watching families come together! Everyday I am afforded the opportunity to watch people change everything about their whole life. Whether people go from a couple to a family or a

single mom to a superhero - it's such a privilege to see love happen right before my eyes.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My greatest inspiration is my Granny. Long story about the relation, but in the end, she is my special Granny who “chose” me and has always kept me close to her heart. She began her own female-owned produce business in Dallas, TX many years before that was a usual occurrence. She wanted better for herself and, being a kind heart, still learned how to forge her way in the industry, be successful, and be an amazing person/leader in the process.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Be the change you wish to see in the world! I try hard to be the person I'd like to see others be.

## Gordon

From Page 11

family and friends and our future was uncertain. This is one example that failures can lead to success.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** Managing the geology department and the day-to-day stress that comes along with it. I'm never really "off" and it's hard even while on vacation to disconnect from work.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** Since my commute to work is around three hours a day by bus, I have plenty of opportunity to binge watch

shows. I have recently been watching "Virgin River" and "Friends."

**What is your favorite book?** I don't think I have a favorite book, I have so many books that I love for different reasons. I think growing up the Harry Potter series was one of my favorites. I have a personal library and have a passion for collecting books. I really enjoyed "The Time Traveler's Wife" by Audrey Niffenegger. If I know a movie is coming out that is based on a novel, I always have to read the book first.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

It's always rewarding to have geologists that I have trained become leaders within the company and experts in their field.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My dad. He was always there for me growing up and is still always there for me. He is the reason I am a Geologist and the first in our family with a college degree. He made me a rockhound at a very early age and if it wasn't for him, I don't know where I would be today.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "Learn to value yourself, which means: fight for your happiness."- Ayn Rand

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** No matter what field you are in, the best thing you can do is network. Ask questions and try to learn something new every day. Try to get pushed past your comfort zone, challenge yourself, and don't be afraid to fail.

**How do you view failure and success?** I feel like failure is needed to learn and grow. We can't be successful without making mistakes and learning from them along the way. Failure can be used as a tool to help motivate you and lead you to success.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to crochet and also have a passion for quilting. My family members have more hats, scarves, gloves, and blankets than they will ever need...But every year I still make them something new. I love buying yarn and fabric and probably have enough inventory to open my own store.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** I would say motherhood is the greatest gift I have ever received. My son and husband are everything to me and without them I would not be the person I am today.

## Skiff Corwin

From Page 22

**What is your favorite book?** "Where the Crawdads Sing" has been a favorite for a while now but I'm always reading and discovering new authors and books.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Having the opportunity to lead change and work alongside impactful healthcare professionals is the most rewarding part of my job. Being able to step back and look at the good work that has been done to improve patient care and outcomes, together, is a remarkable feeling.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I could name numerous colleagues and individuals I have had the

opportunity to work with and learn from, professionally. Specifically, those that have encouraged me to lead with my heart and put people first, but I'd be remiss to not mention my parents here. My dad is the hardest working individual I have ever known and my Mom exemplified a working mother who always put her family first and made sure we knew how loved we were. Growing up, I was told often and believed in my soul that I could do anything and be anything I wanted to. They empowered my sisters and I to dream big, set overwhelming goals, and then work hard to achieve them. I absolutely would not be who I am or where I am today without my parents supporting and pushing me to achieve my highest potential.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "You can have roots

and wings." It keeps me grounded in who I am and where I come from, while still pushing me to reach great heights.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Don't be afraid to fail. When something doesn't go as expected, take the time to learn from it, don't dwell on it, and move forward using the knowledge you gained. Nothing will always go as planned, so all we can do is learn from it and continue growing.

**How do you view failure and success?** Failure and success are going to happen every day in some way, big or small. Learn from your failures, don't dwell on them, and success will come with dedication and perseverance.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I enjoy reading

and baking for fun at home. When we have more time we like to get away to go hiking or camping with the kids and our extended family.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** I am a very sentimental person and have small things that I have saved through the years to help me remember people that are no longer with me. My last birthday card signed by my Great Grandma just prior to her passing, my Grandma's cookbook full of her handwriting and tips, etc. Truly though, my greatest gifts would be my husband, children, and sisters. They each support and push me, give me strength on my toughest days, and celebrate every win and milestone. I couldn't do life without each of them and hope they know how cherished they are!

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## Niles

From Page 19

the outcomes for our patients and our community, it brings me joy.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

My greatest professional mentor was my first boss in Quality, Elaine Watkins. She was so knowledgeable and always led with respect and kindness. She had an unwavering passion for improving health-care quality and patient outcomes. She taught me so much during the six years that I worked with her. When it comes to who inspires me, it is definitely my parents. Sadly, we lost my Mom a few years back, but both she and my Dad were/are the most incredible people to me. They were both extremely dedicated people; not only to each other, but to the companies that they worked for.

I can say that I learned early on, the importance of work-life balance from them. They both worked extremely hard to provide for me and my sisters, but they also loved to get out and enjoy life and all it has to offer. I can also credit them with instilling in me the value of family and good friends and spending time with those that you care about and creating memories to look back on.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Be kind...it's the simplest act that we can show to those around us and it doesn't cost us anything to treat others with kindness.

### What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?

Follow your passion but always remember to keep balance in your life. Burnout is real and can easily crush your passion

for something. Keeping a balance between your work life and your home life helps with the stress that accompanies any career.

### How do you view failure and success?

I think failures and struggles in your career and life are necessary to really appreciate our successes.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I enjoy doing things with my family and our friends. Camping, fishing, ATV rides, and just getting out and making memories. Golf has also become one of my favorite things to do with my husband and my girlfriends, even though I am still not that great at it.

### What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

Definitely my kids. I have 11-year-old twins and being their mom and watching them grow has been the greatest gift I have ever received.

## Whitmoyer

From Page 26

as well as being a wife, a mom and a friend can be a lot! There's way too much pressure in the world today for people to be "everything to everyone". My focus currently is trying to get to a place where I feel satisfied with what I'm doing, and the quality of what I'm doing, with regards to all of the commitments on my plate.

**How do you measure your own success?** Obviously it is always rewarding to "see" positive results of your efforts- things like increased profits, job creation or footprint growth when you are running a business. However, I also love to measure success by affirmations of value created. When I hear people say "what you did to help me, worked" or "I've heard good things about your company", I think those indicators of success are

equally as important when it comes to the question of if what you're doing is the right thing, and worthwhile.

### What failure have you learned the most from?

I've had several moments in my life where I've found myself in situations where I felt like I was "failing" or situations that I really wanted to get out of, or get past. From a young age, however, my parents instilled in me the instinct to not run or hide from these situations, but to persevere through them. Some critical life lessons I've learned in these situations is how to professionally initiate and navigate uncomfortable conversations, and the importance of practicing patience.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** By far the most mentally draining, emotionally and intellectually, is dealing with the "bad" parts of being an employer- discipline, terminations, etc.

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** My TV remote is usually under the control of one of my kids or husband, so when I get a chance to pick what I want to watch, I feel like I have no idea where to start. That means I typically just go back to my favorites and watch them over and over again- The Office, Parks and Rec, Schitt's Creek are probably my main three on repeat. We're big football fans tho too, so during football season we're usually "binging" on that (Go CC Saints! Go Fighting Irish! Go Broncos!).

**What is your favorite book?** As much as I hate to admit it, I haven't gotten to read as much in the last few years as I would've liked, so coming up with a current favorite is a difficult ask. Podcasts have been more of my go-to lately. I truly love listening to people talk, especially those who are much smarter than me.

## West

From Page 26

**What is your favorite book?** "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" - this book really has it all.

### What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

The opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who would otherwise not be able to help themselves. Serving as an advocate for individuals facing legal challenges or injustices, I find fulfillment in using my skills and expertise to share their voice.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

The legendary Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Her impact on the legal profession and her tireless advocacy for women's rights have been transformative,

shaping not only the law but also the opportunities available to individuals like myself. In fact, I hold such deep admiration for Justice Ginsburg that I have a 9ft painting of her prominently displayed in my home. Her legacy motivates me to continue striving for justice, equality, and positive change in my own legal practice.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead other to join you" - Ruth Bader Ginsburg

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Trust your gut and instincts. While careful planning and research are crucial in the business world, there's a unique intuition that comes from your

own experiences and insights.

### How do you view failure and success?

Failure and Success go hand in hand. You likely won't succeed without a little failure. They both are crucial in shaping who you are as a person. Success and failure are never the end, there is always room for improvement.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to read anything from Reece Witherspoon's book club as well as spending time with my family and two dogs.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** A blanket made by my grandmother for my son this past year. The blanket was made out of all the fabrics from past baby blankets that she made for each child in my family. It is so special and I will cherish it forever.

## Winslow

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### What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

The most rewarding part is being able to create lasting relationships with people from all walks of life. The bonus part is having an opportunity to play a role in helping people find their dream home or their very first home and watching their excitement build during the process.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

have had various people help throughout different seasons of my life and I love to draw inspiration from some of the most influential and successful people throughout history. However, my wife and kids are the reasons behind why I do everything. My wife is my biggest supporter and encourager. Without her help I would not have been able to make this cosmic switch from the world of science to real estate.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** Our family motto that we try to instill in our children is "Grit. Grace. Gratitude".

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Trust yourself and tune out the noise. I know it sounds cliché, but you only have to take one step at a time, and you can get anywhere. Another analogy I like to remember is the fact that you can drive across the entire country in the dark only seeing a hundred feet or so in front of you. You don't always have to know all the answers, you just need to make the next best decision and go from there.

**How do you view failure and success?** Failure is nothing more than a nudge back on the path towards success. I believe it was Nelson Mandela that said, "I don't lose (fail), I win or I learn." Success is when you feel aligned with your calling and have an inner peace

and happiness about what you are doing in life.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I enjoy being outside as much as possible with my family hiking, golfing, or just playing with the kids. We also love to play board games and games in general in our family. Our oldest is to the age where I really have to be on my game to still beat her in some of the strategy games.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?** The opportunity to travel at a young age was the greatest gift I received. Not only did it create lifelong memories, but it also helped cultivate and develop how I view the world and interact with people from all sorts of backgrounds. When I was seven years old, my parents moved our family to Southeast Asia and from that point on we were always exploring a new region, country, or culture. I hope to pass along this passion for traveling and experiencing new cultures and ways of life to my children.

## Parker

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**What is your favorite book?** “My Darling Elia” by Eugenie Melnyk

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** It is pretty incredible to see how much fight and spirit some patients have. There have been many instances where I was humbled and surprised to see someone who was admitted to ACHM on a ventilator, walk out on their own two feet. Witnessing that moment for a patient will never get old.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** Janice Burnison. She was the Director of Nursing at the Skilled Nursing Facility

that I was an administrator at. She took me under her wing and taught me so much, while also allowing me to make mistakes to learn from. She has since passed away, but I will always remember her.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** My dad always told me, “When things are not going your way, you get 10 minutes to feel bad about it, and then you need to decide how to fix it.” That advice has served me greatly in a lot of different situations.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Never ask your peers or staff to do something that you are not willing to do yourself. Gaining the respect of the people around

you through dedication and action builds an amazing culture and foundation for success.

**How do you view failure and success?** I am coming to find that they are not mutually exclusive. A situation or event can be both a failure and success, but always an opportunity to learn from.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** Spending time with my family. Reading. I love to travel to tropical warm places next to the beach.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received?** Why? My education. I was fortunate enough to grow up in a family that valued education. That value system and subsequent education has allowed me to create a life that I love.

## Tempel

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**What is the hardest part of your job?** Keeping what concerts we will be announcing a secret!

**What was the last show you binge-watched?** “Suits” - #TeamHarvey

**What is your favorite book?** I can’t pick a favorite, but I recently read Dolly Parton’s and James Patterson’s novel “Run Rose Run,” it was so good; the accompanying album by Dolly is amazing, and I hope they turn it into a movie.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Witnessing the sheer delight on people’s faces when they experience a show featuring an artist they love. It’s a powerful reminder that events are more than just entertainment; They can contribute to amazing experiences and create lasting memories.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** My mentor for my professional career would have to be

Bill Dutcher. He served as the General Manager of MetraPark for 15 years, dedicating a total of 40 years to MetraPark. He is a true example of integrity and dedication. During my five years as his assistant, I learned valuable lessons that have shaped my professional trajectory and continues to guide my ongoing journey.

However, in my personal life, my greatest guiding force is undoubtedly my mom and dad. Their influence has given me determination in everything I set out to accomplish.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** What Would Dolly Do?

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** What I would recommend to someone who wants to start a new business or excel in a particular field is to take the risk. Embarking on a new venture involves stepping into the unknown, and while success is never guaranteed, it’s the willingness to embrace

uncertainty that often leads to significant achievements.

**How do you view failure and success?** I view failure and success as connected components rather than isolated outcomes. Failure serves as a catalyst for learning, resilience, and growth. While success, on the other hand, is a continuous process marked by milestones and achievements. Viewing failure as a stepping stone and success as ongoing allows me to embrace both with a commitment to constant improvement.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** It’s probably not surprising, but one of my favorite pastimes is attending concerts. I love the energy that comes with live music, and it has also helped me to create a massive koozie collection!

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received?** Why? When my son, Kasen, was born. He has brought me and my husband joy, purpose, and an overwhelming sense of love. We are so grateful for the privilege of being his parents.

## Voller

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achieving/ accomplishing something, and I’m just not wired that way. However, I have made more mistakes than I can even remember. The most memorable mistake was when I was new into a finance role and was trying to teach myself how to run the company’s budget model. I had made a \$500 million mistake in the budget that was sent to the CEO for review. In that moment, that mistake turned into one of my greatest lessons. When I called the CEO and owned my mistake, he said that fessing up to the mistake was 1,000 times better than hiding the mistake (if anyone could ever hide a \$500 million mistake), and that I just needed to get

it fixed and sent back. This lesson has taught me that to build integrity, we must own up to our actions and decisions, even when they are wrong or need to be adjusted.

**What is the hardest part of your job?** The hardest yet most rewarding parts of my job has been learning how to facilitate work within teams, rather than managing the project myself. Seeing a team work together to define, develop, and complete a project is even more rewarding through facilitation, because you get to see the growth from a different lens, allowing for feedback through check-ins, but not needing to be intimately involved in every aspect of the project itself.

**What was the last show you binge-**

**watched?** “Quarterback” on Netflix. I never knew how intensely detailed a quarterback must be, and the onerous training that they go through. To see behind the scenes gives you a large appreciation for their job.

**What is your favorite book?** “Dare to Lead” by Brené Brown is one that I have really enjoyed and has taught me lessons on vulnerability in a time in my life that it was critical to know the boundaries of being vulnerable.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Being apart of a company that is producing precious metals in the most responsible way possible, and educating the public on the importance of this production to our state and worldwide supply chain.

## Wollner

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**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Helping others and having the opportunity to give back to a population that has given so much of themselves for our country. I am humbled to get to work with some pretty amazing clients.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?** I am extremely fortunate to be surrounded by very strong, passionate, and successful women in my life. I am beyond thankful for my mentor, Dr. Amanda Carroll PH.D, OTR/L. Her compassion, experience, and drive are just a few of the qualities I look up to. She is very much a guiding light in my life, and I am incredibly grateful for her continued support and guidance of me, as a newer occupational therapist. I also cannot forget my biggest

role model and inspiration since I was little, my mom. I strive daily to be even half as hardworking, caring, patient, focused, and strong as she is.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?** “Mindset is everything.” I am very much a positive person and I personally believe having a positive mindset and being grateful helps to attract the good and completely reshapes my life.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?** Find a mentor and/or people you can trust to lean on when you get lost or overwhelmed. Finding your people can make all the difference in keeping you on track and holding you accountable and helping you remember why you started.

**How do you view failure and success?** I view both failure and success as learning experiences.

I strive always to be the best version of myself and even if I do not succeed the first time, as long as I learn from it, I am able to grow and do better the next time.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?** I love to spend my free time outside with my fiancé, Willard, and my dog, Leo, being active and getting out of service. I also really enjoy Pilates, yoga, reading, and cooking.

**What’s the greatest gift you ever received?** Why? My family. They are by far the best support system I could ever ask for. I have little bits and pieces of their personalities within my own and I am very thankful for that. I have my dad’s strong headedness, my mom’s focus and work ethic, my sisters, humor, compassion, and honesty. Not only that, but they push me to be my best always, help to keep me levelheaded, and are always there to remind me of why I started.

# Congratulations to all 40 Under Forty recipients!



Ashlee Voller

Congratulations to our own Ashlee Voller and Ashleigh Gordon! Ashlee Voller is our Environmental Systems Engineer. She specializes in creating and managing the environmental systems, processes, and standards that enable our continued excellent environmental performance. Ashleigh Gordon is our Senior Production Geologist. She leads the team of geologists responsible for locating the vein of precious metals we produce at our Stillwater Mine. We are proud to have you on our team.



Ashleigh Gordon



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