



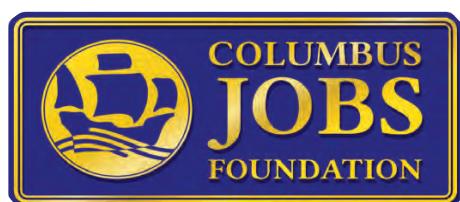
The News Reporter's

fifteen UNDER 40

CLASS OF 2018

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A Special thanks to our generous "fifteen under 40" corporate partners.
Discovering and celebrating Columbus County's rising young leaders
is made possible with their support.



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The News Reporter's

fifteen UNDER 40

The News Reporter is recognizing fifteen young professionals who are not only making a difference in Columbus County but who are also ready and willing to take leadership roles.

When The News Reporter asked for nominations for "fifteen Under 40," Columbus County answered the call. Then, five independent judges considered a nominee's impact on Columbus County, success in the nominee's career, plus his or her involvement, achievement and commitment to improving the quality of life in his or her community.

Congratulations Class of 2018, and thank you for making Columbus County a great place to live.

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We salute the "fifteen under 40" professional and civic leaders who make Columbus County a great place to live and work.



Columbus Jobs Foundation is the volunteer, non-profit arm of economic development in Columbus County and brings the business community to the table when recruiting new prospects.

Congratulations to CJF board member Jordan Carter for being selected to this year's class of "15 under 40."

Current board members who are past "fifteen under 40" honorees are Justin Smith, Jonathan Medford, Boyd Worley and Stephanie Miller

W.T. Edwards II, 29

Employment: West Columbus High School, teacher and coach
Hometown: Williams Township
Wife: Brittany Edwards
Daughter: Gray
Education: East Carolina University
Pets: dog-Cooper
Enjoys singing, golfing, watching television, attending musicals, traveling.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

Besides being an active teacher and coach, I also am the music director for Clarendon Baptist Church. I also serve as a deacon and on various committees there. Reclaim Ministries, led by Anne Jernigan, is also an organization I hold dear to my heart. Many productions and concerts are put on by them as a means to reach a lost community and lead them to Christ, one song at a time.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I am a firm believer that community involvement is essential for a thriving school, which is why I try to involve our community on the western end of the county as much as possible in my activities. My final exam for my AP Statistics course is framed around the popular TV show "Shark Tank." I ask various business leaders in our community to come act as "shark" investors for my students as they pitch their creative ideas. These community members act as an authentic audience for

my students, but more importantly build relationships and connections with future potential employees. Another way I try to involve our community is through my basketball team. Many of my players come from underprivileged homes and need help with basic necessities. I ask for community sponsors for each player and they are assigned to this particular player all season. This partnership doesn't solely consist of financial support, but also constant encouragement throughout the season. We honor each of these sponsors at a game at the end of the season to show our appreciation for their time and commitment to our youth.

Tell us about your family.

My family is the most special aspect of my life. Education runs in our blood, dating back to the educational influence of my late grandmother Alice Williams. I've had parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and even a wife as inspirations in the educational field. Their constant support and guidance is what pushes me to strive to be better each day in the classroom. My wife and I have been married three magical years and were blessed with our greatest blessing last Thanksgiving day with the birth of our daughter, Gray.

Favorite movie?

The Wizard of Oz

Favorite restaurant or dish?

Outback Aussie Cheese Fries!!

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and
congratulations
to all the
recipients
and nominees

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Chassie Strickland, 27



Employment: Speech Solutions, Inc., Speech Language Pathologist
Hometown: Tabor City
Husband: Walt Strickland
Son: Layson
Parents: Michelle and Richard Simmons
Education: Appalachian State University-Master's in Speech Language Pathology; East Carolina University-BS in Speech Language Pathology; South Columbus High School
Pets: Toy poodle, Charlie and Lab, Abby
Enjoys time with family and friends, interacting with children, water skiing and participating in church activities.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

I graduated from ASU and became a Speech Language Pathologist in 2014. Since that time, I have been employed as a Speech Language Pathologist in Columbus County working with patients of all ages in a variety of settings. I am also an active member of New Horizon Baptist Worship Center where I serve as a Preschool Sunday School teacher, Children in Action teacher, and choir member. My personal accomplishments consist of completely recovering from a traumatic brain injury as a result of my accident, completing a six-year degree in five years and marrying my high school sweetheart, Walt Strickland, in 2015.

Provide examples of your community service:

The services I provide with Speech Solutions

directly impact a patient's quality of life, academic functioning, self-confidence and ability to interact with others in their daily lives. We (the patient, patients' family and I) set goals based on patient needs and strive to obtain those goals through compassion, patience and dedication. As an employee of Speech Solutions (the red lip crew), children are my area of focus as this is the generation of tomorrow and the group that will be future leaders of Columbus County. I also participate in backpack buddies, assisting in the Columbus County Fair craft barn, and Special Olympics. I also serve as an active member in New Horizon Baptist Worship Center with the children's ministry. This is extremely important to me as the children are the future of our county.

Are there any personal battles you overcame to get where you are?

The most significant battle I've had to overcome was a devastating vehicle accident in 2007 when I was a junior in high school. However, through that accident and a month of intensive therapies and recovery, I determined my college field of study and what would eventually become my dream job as a Speech Language Pathologist. Becoming a Speech Language Pathologist allowed me to remain a resident of Columbus County as we had a need for services here. It also opened a door for me to work with children including children diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum, which is an area I love.

Favorite drink?

Sundrop and sweet tea

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Danaysia Powell, 28

Employment: Southeastern Community College, Early College Liason; formerly, Central Middle School, teacher
Hometown: Whiteville
Husband: William Powell
Children: Saniya, Cayson
Education: NCSU-BS in Middle School Science, UNC Wilmington - Master's in IT
Enjoys being an assistant coach for my daughter's softball team, singing, reading, and playing with my children.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

After graduating from NCSU in 2012, I taught 6th grade science at Shallotte Middle School in Brunswick County for three years. Eager to impact the community I lived in, I acquired a position at Central Middle School teaching 7th and 8th grade science. I have thoroughly enjoyed being an educator and building strong relationships with my students and colleagues. This school year, I will be moving on to work for Southeastern Community College as the Early College Liaison. I will advise students and facilitate collaboration between SCC and the Columbus College and Career Academy. Additionally, I am a member of the best church in the world, Baldwin Branch Missionary Baptist Church (Da Branch) located in Elizabethtown.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

In 2015, I co-founded a non-profit organization 'From Our Family To Yourz' (FOFTY)

with my mother, sister, and brother-in-law. Via this platform, we have provided Thanksgiving dinner to the community on Thanksgiving Day (yearly since 2010), presented gifts to children on Christmas, organized a Cancer Tea to celebrate cancer survivors, acknowledge those who have passed away and raise money for cancer awareness; planned and hosted the Live Black History Expo, which allowed local students to portray African-American history-makers educating the community on their contributions and achievements.

Are there any personal battles you overcame to get where you are?

At 19, as a freshman in college, I found out I was pregnant. Though it was not in my plan, I didn't let this keep me from accomplishing my goals! I successfully raised my amazing daughter while completing my BS at NC State as a single parent. Through this experience, I learned to trust God and that He will guide and keep you through the toughest battles life has to offer. I'm so thankful to my family for praying and being an amazing support system.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

I received a Barbie Power Wheel car for Christmas one year. On the same day I got it, I successfully crashed it and shattered the sliding glass door of our home. I still had fun, though!

Congratulations "Moochie"!!

We are beyond proud of you and all of your accomplishments! You continue to soar in your winning season!! May God continue to bestow His blessings upon you! We Love You!!



Love, Drewby, Saniya, Cayson, Mom, Shug and Jason
"From Our Family To Yourz"

Congratulations to all of the nominees and recipients of this year's Fifteen under 40



Edwin Russ
County Commissioner

Derrick Boyd, 35

Employment: Hallsboro Middle School, principal
Hometown: Tabor City
Wife: Jennifer Boyd
Children: Keith, Morgan and Lauren
Parents: Trish and Ken Boyd
Education: Campbell-BS in Biology; UNC Pembroke-Master's in School Administration
Pets: three dogs - Apollo, Gizmo, and Phoenix
Enjoys: fishing, hunting and going to church.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

I have been in education for 13 years. I have taught biology, chemistry, and physics at Overhills HS, West Columbus HS, and West Brunswick HS. At West Columbus, I coached JV softball as well as boys and girls soccer. I also coached girls soccer at West Brunswick. I began administration work at Whiteville HS as an assistant principal and in 2016, I was hired as the principal at Hallsboro Middle School. I have designed and led professional development for teachers in Columbus, Brunswick, and Whiteville City schools. I am a member of Grace Bible Church in Whiteville and look to serve in any way I can.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I am very active in my church and fill whatever roll that is needed. I help organize fundraising efforts at Hallsboro Middle School for various civic organizations and for the needy in the Hallsboro community. Recent-

ly, we held a book drive to collect books for kids who struggled to read to read over the summer. We also held two canned food drives this year to collect food for families at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

What would you tell your 16-year-old self?

Being an adult is harder than you think. Don't be in a hurry to be one. Trust in the Lord and lean on him all the time, not just when times are tough. He will always be there.

Tell us about your family.

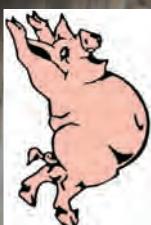
I come from a family of educators. My dad taught and coached at Tabor City Middle School for almost 30 years. My mother taught at Chadbourn Elementary and is currently teaching at Guideway Elementary. Even my wife is a teacher. She is a special education teacher at Loris High School. I guess you could say that it is in our blood. My two sisters are the black sheep of the family. They went into the medical field. (Love you - Terri and Carly!)

What are most people surprised to learn about you?

I love a good Bible study. I enjoy looking deep into the Word of God for knowledge, comfort, and guidance on a personal level and with the men in my church. I also enjoy teaching, and occasionally preaching when needed.

Favorite drink?

Sundrop, and more Sundrop!



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Sarah Lansing Gore, 28

Employment: Sarah Gore Events and Catering, LLC. Owner/private chef and caterer

Hometown: Whiteville

Parents: Terri and David Gore

Sister: Judge C. Ashley Gore

Education: Whiteville High School, Johnson and Wales University, *summa cum laude* BA in Food Services Management, AA in Culinary Arts

Enjoys spending time with friends and family, being a beach bum, jet skiing, dancing, traveling, and country music concerts.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

Blood, sweat, tears...and passion! As the proud owner of Sarah Gore Events and Catering, I have found that these four ingredients are necessary for a successful business. Professionally, I started my culinary career in 2012 working to open The Boundary House's first "sister restaurant," Clark's Seafood and Chop House in Little River. The next three years, I managed The Boundary House's bar, kitchen, and "front of house." I taught Culinary Arts at East and West Columbus in 2015/16, but my biggest accomplishment has been taking the leap of faith and starting my catering business. I take pride in serving delicious food to our community...and my 100 sanitation score!

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I take pride in calling Columbus County home! I work very hard to share my culinary passion and provide the community with a great dining experience! I love having the opportunity to donate my services, whether a private dinner or a key lime cheesecake, to various groups and causes. I am a member of Pleasant Plains Baptist Church. I am an assistant coach with the Upward basketball league. I also am a member of the Columbus County Chamber of Commerce and Columbus Young Professionals.

What would you tell your 16-year-old self?

Have fun and don't stress! Everything is gonna be alright! Travel, explore, and always know the road that leads you home!

Tell us about your family.

I have the very best serving staff. You might have seen them featured on Instagram, @chefssarahgore. But my catering "all-stars" are behind the scenes: my mom, dad, sister, brother-in-law, and best friend, Dori. I have the most supportive family and my success is 100 percent due to their love and support. I try to make them proud every day!! Who you gonna call when you are catering a wedding an hour away and you forget your trailer keys...?



Congratulations Sarah Gore



*We are so proud of you
We love you,
Mama & Daddy*



Ethan Scott, 30

Employment: Manager/Owner of Chadbourn Feed Service and Scott's Farm & Family
Hometown: Whiteville
Wife: Katherine Jordan Scott
Son: River
Education: NCSU-BS in Agricultural Business Management
Pet: Lab named Lexi
Enjoys fishing, hunting, cooking and sports.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

I have been at Chadbourn Feed my whole life. I can remember my mom picking me up from preschool and going over to the feed store and taking naps on top of feed. So it was only fitting that I ended up coming back to the family business. I graduated college in 2010 and started working full time. In 2016 my younger brother, dad and I opened up Scott's Farm & Family in Shallotte. I am involved in F3-Whiteville, serve as a Columbus County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism board member and I have served on the session of First Presbyterian Church. I have also served as the secretary/treasurer of the Columbus County Cattlemen's Association.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

My family has always been called on to help with any kind of cooking for the Strawberry Festival in Chadbourn or any organization doing a fund raiser (baseball/softball), so naturally I help with that. I also volunteer in

my church's nursery and help with kids activities. I participated in the Lip Sync Battle fundraiser for Families First.

What would you tell your 16-year-old self?
Don't sweat the small stuff, enjoy life. Always try something new and adventurous.

Tell us about your family.

I come from a close family my mom recently passed away from a long, hard-fought battle with ALS, but she was always there to support and referee myself and my two brothers. My dad instilled a good work ethic in all of us and both of my parents taught us how to enjoy life and have fun as much as possible. My wife Katherine and I started dating when we were 16, and she hasn't been able to get rid of me yet. My son River makes sure I stay active even after I get home from a hard day at work, and he reminds me to always laugh and smile at the little things.

What was your favorite gift as a child?
A gun rack that my granddaddy made for me for Christmas.

What is your favorite band?

Joe Diffie - "John Deere Green." Somewhere there is a homemade movie of me playing a tennis racquet as my guitar.

What do you like to do on the weekend?
Anything out of the ordinary.



Congratulations!

**Ethan
Scott**

on being
chosen for the
15 under 40
class of 2018



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Jordan J. Carter, 30

Employment: BB&T, Mortgage Loan Officer/Assistant Vice President
Hometown: Loris, S.C., but attended Waccamaw Academy K-12 in Whiteville
Husband: Jordan Butler Carter
Son: Briggs
Pets: Two dogs, one cat
Education: NCSU-BS in Accounting
Enjoys: FiA and working out, cooking/baking, playing with my son and the beach and pool.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

I've worked at BB&T as a Mortgage Lender for nine years and have achieved Assistant Vice President title.

Personally, my greatest accomplishment is being a mom to Briggs. That is by far the best thing that has ever happened to me. Another personal accomplishment was the formation of Whiteville FiA. I was able to get to know and build a lot of relationships with women I normally would have never met.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

Vineland Station board, Columbus Jobs Foundation board, Dancing With The Vineyard Stars co-chair for 2019, Columbus Chamber Golf Tournament volunteer.

I also helped with the formation of FiA in Whiteville. FiA (Females in Action) is a group of women who get together and lead free workouts a few times a week. FiA's mission is to make each other strong in all areas of

our lives. It promotes physical fitness, friendships, building confidence, and improving leadership skills.

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

After graduating from college and getting married, I moved back to Columbus County to settle down and start our family. My husband and I both love the small town and community atmosphere that Columbus County offers. It's really a feel of neighbors helping neighbors.

Tell us about your family.

I am one of three children. My parents still live in Whiteville. I have a wonderful husband who works in Columbus County. I also have a rambunctious son who will attend Whiteville Primary this year and will become a big brother.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I actually told my mom when I was younger that I wanted to be either a used car salesman or a doctor. I could never decide. This is still a joke in my family.

What do you like to do on the weekends?

I look forward to my workouts with FiA every Saturday morning. The weekends are also my time to cook and bake things I want to try. Spending time with my husband, son and our pets.

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Dustin Chapman, 20

Student: Catawba College, Singer/Songwriter
Hometown: Whiteville
Parents: Sandi and Mark Chapman
Education: A rising senior majoring in popular music, music business and worship arts.
Enjoys spending time with my nieces and nephew, creative writing, and of course, singing and writing songs.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

In my music career, I am the Carolina Country Music Festival's 2018 Battle of the Bands Winner. I was nominated for Gospel Song of the year at the 2018 Carolina Country Music awards, as well as Fan Moment of the Year at the 2017 Rare Country Awards in Nashville. My debut EP charted #52 on iTunes, surpassing albums by Luke Bryan, Keith Urban, and more. Currently, I'm continuously gaining national recognition on many country music websites, radio stations, and more. At Catawba College, I was a junior marshal and am a member of Alpha Chi, Sigma Alpha Pi, Phi Epsilon, and in the honors program.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I try to unite our community by sharing my testimony and letting my personal journey offer encouragement for others. Moreover, I have tried to gain publicity for our community by speaking of our area on radio shows,

news stations, and at performances all around the East Coast. Through my medical journey and my musical ventures, I try to highlight the wonderful foundation Columbus County has offered me and shine a positive light on all this county has to offer.

What would you tell your 16-year-old self?

You have no idea what's ahead. There will be plenty of trials, you'll feel like giving up at times, and there will be many moments when you feel so overwhelmed that you just don't think you can keep pushing on, but you'll make it. No matter what you think now, you're a strong individual and there's no way you can fathom it now, but you, your voice, and your testimony will minister to many. There's a purpose for everything.

Tell us about your family.

My family is extremely supportive and close-knit. My parents go well beyond what is necessary to first make sure that I am healthy, and then to make sure that I am chasing my dreams. They are the most supportive individuals I have ever met. My mom is truly my rock and the most amazing, involved mother, while my father is an extremely hard worker who does whatever he can to provide for his family. I am extremely blessed to have them in my life.

Favorite drink?

For me, nothing is better than a room-temperature water, which is actually the only thing I've drank since I was 12 years old.



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Congratulations to the Class of 2018

“fifteen under 40”

to all the nominees & winners.

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The News Reporter's

fifteen UNDER 40



Class of 2018



Todd Burney, 37



Employment: Edgewood Elementary School, Physical Education teacher, Carolina's Home Care, CAP Worker
Hometown: Clarkton
Wife: Carrie Short Burney
Daughter: Jolie
Father: Ronnel Burney
Mother: Ann Burney
Education: Methodist University-BS in Physical Education
Pets: Cash, Emmy Lou, Charlie
Enjoys coaching for Whiteville High School, working out with F3, rucking, and spending time with family at Lake Waccamaw.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I am currently the assistant coach for the five time state champion WHS baseball team. I've played football for Methodist University and run in three marathons and two ultra marathons. I was the 2015 NC Region 2 Assistant Baseball Coach of the Year and am a member of Whiteville First Presbyterian Church. I am a member of F3 which stands for Fitness, Fellowship and Faith. F3 is a national network of free, peer-led workouts for men. I volunteered as a participant in Dancing with the Vineland Stars fundraiser and was a member of the "Come Back Tour" for the annual Families First Lip Sync Battle. I am the EES Jump Rope for Heart Coordinator and I have umpired Dixie

Youth Baseball for 11 years.

Tell us about a moment that changed your life.

My daughter Jolie being born really changed my life. It changed how I teach and coach. It gave me a whole new outlook on children.

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

The best part about living in Columbus County is the people.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

My first baseball glove

Favorite restaurant or dish?

Flaming Amy's in Wilmington

What do you do in your free time?

Hang out with my family at the Lake fishing and boating.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

A vet.

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on being chosen for
Fifteen under 40

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Matthew S. McLean, CPA www.spdouglas.com

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Todd Burney
on being chosen for "Fifteen under 40!"

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Jamika Lynch, 35

Employment: Columbus County Health Department (FT) and Columbus County DREAM Center (PT), Health Educator
Hometown: Born in Washington, DC and raised in Tabor City
Mother: Wanda Lynch
Education: Peace College-AA
Enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

I've worked with youth for 12 years, but specifically I've been educating in sexual health for seven years. I love being an advocate for young people in Columbus County. My loyalty and commitment to sexual health education can be associated with the reduced rate of teenage pregnancy in Columbus County, which has fallen over 13 percent since I started in adolescent sexual health. In Columbus County, I am responsible for the facilitation of sexual and reproductive health education to adolescents. I am continuously honing my skills to be of the best service to youth in Columbus County.

Provide examples of your Community Service:

I am currently serving as treasurer of the Good Shepherd Fund, a member of WELL BIRTHS Advisory Board, have volunteered for Lower Cape Fear Hospice fundraisers. I volunteer as a speaker for various groups

and organizations in the community.

Tell us about a moment that changed your life.

A moment that changed in my life would be attaining the opportunity to receive support from Whiteville City Schools to educate in classes on a weekly basis at Whiteville High School. It is truly a rewarding experience to educate and connect with students at WHS.

What do you do to relax?

Travel or spend time with family and friends.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I am half West-Indian, my late father was from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

What are people most surprised to learn about you?

I have no children, but I'm an aunt of 12!

What is your favorite food?

Sushi

Favorite drink?

Mango LaCroix

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Congratulations
to our very own



**Jamika
Lynch**

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Columbus Young Professionals
Columbus Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Connect > Develop > Lead

The mission of Columbus Young Professionals is to connect individuals throughout our community while offering opportunities to develop their talents and skills – all in the name of curating them to become leaders of the future for Columbus County.

We applaud the
Fifteen under 40
Class of 2018!



Leadership Columbus is a program designed to develop a corps of informed, committed and qualified citizens capable of providing dynamic leadership for Columbus County, recognizing that volunteer leadership is one of the most valuable assets of a community.

For more information on these programs, contact the Chamber at 910-642-3171, or at www.thecolumbuschamber.com.

Mary Bennon Wheatley, 38

Employment: Speech Solutions, Inc., Speech Language Pathologist and Beautycounter consultant

Hometown: Whiteville

Husband: Brent Wheatley

Children: Emma Gray and Price

Parents: Janet and Coke Gray

Education: Whiteville High School, Peace College-AA, NCSU-BA, NCCU-Master's in Education

Pets: Black Lab, Bella, and a lionhead rabbit, Bunbun

Enjoys taking naps, exercising, dancing, watching movies, traveling and watching my daughter dance and my son play sports.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I organized Dancing with the Vineland Stars, a very successful fundraiser for Vineland Station. I have served on this board since its beginning and have participated as a dancer in the event three out of four years. I participated in the 2017 Lip Sync Battle fundraiser for Columbus County Arts Council and Families First. I lead and participate in Females in Action (a peer-led, nationally recognized exercise group for women.) I have been on the Columbus Regional Healthcare's Hospital Gala board two years and have chaired the silent auction. I served on the Pastor Nominating Committee for First Presbyterian Church. I lead the children's sermon every Sunday in worship and teach middle school and high school Sunday school each

Sunday. I am currently on the YMCA steering committee. My husband and I, along with Rachel Smith, organized the fundraiser "Run for Rhonda" to raise money and awareness for ALS in support of the late Rhonda Scott, who was battling ALS at the time. We raised approximately \$20,000. I have been an assistant soccer coach for the past seven years. In the past two years, I have been educating and advocating dyslexia. I have spoken to the staff of Williams Township, Whiteville Primary, Edgewood Elementary, Central Middle School and Whiteville High School regarding dyslexia in order to increase awareness of this specific learning disability in hopes that more children can be identified and get the help they need.

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

The support. The people here really do rally around you when you are in need.

Tell us about your family.

I have the best sister and two brothers anyone could ask for. I have amazing parents, I have been married to the most wonderful man ever for 14 years and have two hard-working, polite, beautiful children.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I am afraid of heights, and I don't like seafood.

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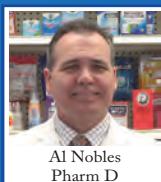
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Justin Furlow, 24



Employment: East Columbus High School, teacher and coach

Hometown: Henderson

Wife: Mallory Falkner Furlow

Mother: Lisa Furlow

Father: Frank Furlow

Education: Campbell University-BA in History and Spanish

Enjoys spending time with my wife, playing sports, coaching and watching or reading anything by Marvel.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

At ECHS, I am the Spanish teacher and will have a Spanish 3 class this fall. I coach boys and girls soccer and JV boys basketball. I helped organize the first Columbus County Schools JV boys soccer team and hosted the first soccer jamboree this past spring. I give back to my community by organizing a soccer clinic for the past two years at the DREAM Center, which has been a ton of fun and a great way to spread the sport of soccer. I am also very involved at my church, Lake Waccamaw United Methodist, as the chairperson of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, co-lead a young adult Sunday school class, a youth leader, and assisting with VBS. Personally, I have been with my wife for more than eight years, we have been together since my junior year of high school and were married this past March.

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

I love the atmosphere here. Growing up in a small-town was wonderful for me and the small town feel and the community pride is something I absolutely adore. The best part is that the people in these communities will welcome you and take you in as their own. I have been blessed to have this happen to me, and Columbus County has truly become my home.

What do you do to relax?

I run with my wife, spend time with friends and family, play pick-up games of basketball or soccer, lay out at the lake, watch Netflix or go to the movies to watch the latest Marvel or DC movie.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

My favorite gifts used to be fossils. I'd ask for them on birthdays and at Christmas because I loved dinosaurs.

Favorite movie?

Forrest Gump. Best American history movie ever.



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Jason Elleby, 29



Employment: Columbus County Department of Social Services, Child Support Enforcement Agent II; formerly with BB&T as a branch agent

Hometown: Tabor City

Wife: Shaneqa Elleby

Son: Matthew Davis

Mothers: Heather Brown and Valerie King

Father: Bobby Brown

Education: South Columbus High School

Pet: A dog named Sasha

Enjoys going to the beach, spending time with my family, eating, running, and having a great debate.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

Each year, I pick a family that is in need and assist with buying their Christmas to make sure at least one child has a great Christmas.

Are there personal battles you overcame to get where you are?

I was diagnosed with bladder cancer June 23, 2016. I kept it to myself for months, not even telling my wife. Some mornings I forced myself to get out of bed and hide my hurt and went to work faithfully with a smile and no complaints. I did this because I had a family to feed and a job to do. One day I passed out at work and that's when it all came out. My wife, being the wonderful woman that she is, took a leave from work and stepped up and became a superwoman of a wife. Today, I'm cancer free and never felt better. I give all my

praise to God.

Tell us about your family.

I have a beautiful wife, Shaneqa, who is 28 and is the amazing woman who keeps our family intact. She is my best friend and has a beautiful heart and soul. My 7-year-old little boy, who is also amazing and keeps us going; he's all boy. I come from a loving family and have the best parents in the world. My mom, Heather, is my right hand. She will tell me like it is and be ready to knock me out if I get out of line. My aunt, Valerie King, played a huge mother roll in my life. She practically raised us as her own and she is our backbone. I don't know what I would do without her. Last, but not least, my father taught me what to do and what not to do in life, and I will always be grateful for him.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I love to get into politics and have a great debate.

What is your favorite restaurant?

Ruth's Chris

Favorite drink?

Pepsi

Favorite movie?

Black Panther.



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Sam's Pit Stop - Bolton 1128 Green Swamp Rd Phone: 910-655-8611	Sam's Pit Stop - Whiteville 531 Jefferson Street Phone: 910-641-9117	

Staci Ezzell, 35

Employment: Simply Dance,
Owner/Instructor

Hometown: Chadbourn

Husband: Isaac Ezzell

Son: Abel

Education: West Columbus High School

Hometown: Chadbourn

Pets: 2 dogs - River and Journey

Enjoys dancing (of course), working out, shopping, motorcycle rides, and spending time with family and friends.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments.

I've been dancing since the age of 2. I always knew I wanted to be a dance teacher and with the help of many people, my dreams came true. I opened Simply Dance in 2015 with the hopes of registering 50 students. I registered 252 students in my first year and it continues to grow each year. God is so good and He gets the glory. I am an active member of Piney Forest Baptist Church where I lead the youth Praise and Worship team.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I have the ability to do more than teach dance inside the studio. While there are children who do not have the same opportunity as others, I enjoy volunteering my time with the special needs kids at different schools within the county. Last year, we had a group of kids

from Chadbourn Middle School perform at our spring recital. This brought so much joy to my heart and the audience members, as well. I look forward to doing this year after year.

What would you tell your 16-year-old self?

Believe in yourself, for you are beautiful, fearfully, and wonderfully made. Be patient and slow down.

What do you do to relax?

Every morning I start my day with a devotion and a cup of coffee while rocking on my front porch. This keeps me sane.

What are people most surprised to learn about you?

The first time I ever flew on an airplane, I jumped out of it...Skydiving!

Favorite band?

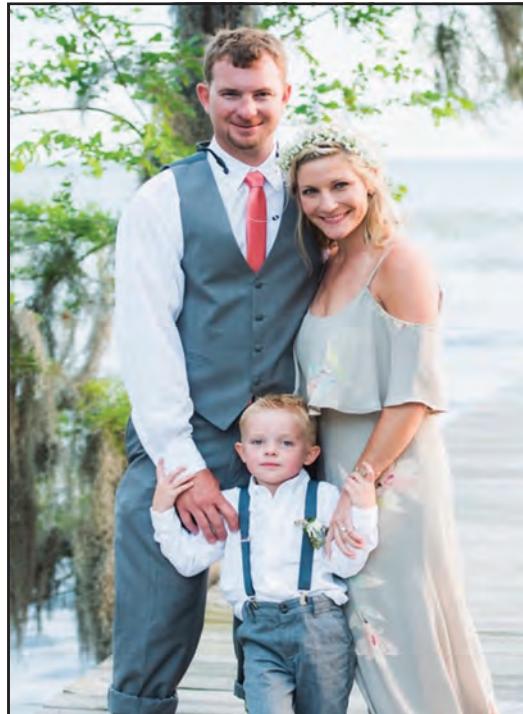
Chairman of the Board

Favorite movie?

Dirty Dancing - I'm almost ashamed to say how many times I've watched it.



Congratulations Mrs. Staci!



Wife

Mom

Boss

You rock at everything you do!

**Congratulations
on all of your accomplishments.
We love you! Isaac and Abel**

Brandon Patrick, 37



Employment: Pro 1 Services, LLC Power Washing, owner

Hometown: Buckhead

Wife: Kyaran Patrick

Children: Brisson and Adriana Patrick; Liz Grice; Caleb, Gavin and Gage Ammons, and Carlos McClure

Parents: Louise Patrick, Kermit Patrick

Education: East Columbus High School, some courses at SCC

Pets: Doberman, Zeus and Yorkiepoo, Bella
Enjoys singing, fishing, riding 4-wheelers and fixing up our house.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I started my company with a worn-out lawnmower and string trimmer. After knowing God called me to open this business, I started questioning it. I started out maintaining 15 commercial properties by myself; after many frustrating hours I took my keys and wallet and laid them on my trailer and I asked God to grow it if he wanted it to grow. The rest is history; my company has grown fast. We are about to expand for the third time in just four years. This is God's company, I just operate it day to day.

Provide examples of your community service:

I headed up the "Blue Line Prayer" for law enforcement officers from neighboring counties (300 people attended), we led a nationwide boycott of the 2018 Super Bowl to clean

grave sites for our veterans, we provided power washing services to a couple hundred cancer patients, we paid to have a new roof put on a church that was leaking. There is a lot more we do, but I don't want praise for it, so those things will remain unknown.

What would you tell your 16-year-old self?

"Chase 'me' now!" Don't wait until your 30s to start chasing the me you want to be in five years. "DO IT NOW." Live your life, find God, and do things the right way. Always chase me, even when you think I'm too far out of reach; find a way to catch up. Don't you give up on me, push through the temporary pain and hurt. Don't you dare take steps backward. Always push forward, no matter what, "Brandon, we got this, come on."

Tell us about your family.

My amazing wife is everything I've ever prayed for in a woman. And our family? Well, it's a hot mess, but it's our hot mess. I wouldn't trade them for anything in this world. My girls, my step-sons, and to balance it all out, a 2-year-old girl God placed in our lives because the mom and dad struggle with addiction. Our hot mess...our family, we're not perfect by any means, but we love each other like we are.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

A Superman outfit until I figured out it wouldn't make me fly. I don't think I ever experienced that level of disappointment again.

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Fifteen Under 40 Recipients



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Erica Evans
Corey Faison
Jenny Fonvielle
David Holmes
Katherine Hyatt
Nicole Kelley

Santana Miller
Stephanie Miller
Sherica Powell
Anna Richardson
Mariel Sellers
Rachel Smith
Jared Worthington

Class of 2017

Amber Bellamy
Rebekah Benton
CeCe Creech
Jessica Davis
Cassie Dawson
Christian Grate
Fielding Hammond

Chris Helak
Lacie Jacobs
Jonathan Medford
LeighAnn Merritt
Sid Miller
Justin Smith
Kevin Williamson
Boyd Worley



Celebrating the Class of 2018

Derrick Boyd
Todd Burney
Jordan J. Carter
Dustin Chapman
W.T. Edwards II

Jason Elleby
Staci Ezzell
Justin Furlow
Sarah L. Gore
Jamika Lynch

Brandon Patrick
Danaysia Powell
Ethan Scott
Chassie Strickland
Mary Wheatley

Boys & Girls Homes Exhibition Center
Lake Waccamaw

Bandanas & BBQ

July 12, 2018

Kudos...from the Community

Brandon clearly recognizes the impact that his “roots” have had on his life. He has been aggressive in giving back to his community. Leaders are always looking for the formula in engaging people in their community; Brandon personifies all that is right about staying intentionally connected to a community that helped shape his life’s path.

Chassie is a great role model for the children of our community. She makes a positive impact on lives by helping improve their ability to communicate. She realizes children are our future and knows there is not a better way to improve our community than by serving children.

Danaysia is a beautiful person inside and out. Her personality draws you to her. She is willing to do and help out wherever and whenever needed. She gives her all to everything she does.

Derrick has devoted his life to serving his community since his youth. Now as a young man and father, he serves Columbus County as an excellent educator. He gives 110% to his school and his community.



Dustin sings the praises of Columbus County with vibrato! He does not let the challenges of achalasia deter him from achieving his dream as a rising country music artist. He is an inspiration to those with medical challenges and he represents our county on regional and national stages with honor.

Ethan is a good business leader in Chadbourn with his family business. He also leads in his church and community. Ethan is always willing to help those in need and is someone you call on when you want to get the ‘job done!’

Teens are at the center of **Jamika’s** heart. She gives back by providing education about a subject most people are very uncomfortable speaking on. She has true concern for the plight of people who need a hand in realizing personal successs for themselves.

Jason is a very compassionate individual who cares about the welfare of others. He is genuine and would give you the shoes off his feet. He leads with the belief in equality for all and that all should be treated justly.

Jordan promotes the future development and economic growth of our county. She chose to live in our community and help it grow into a thriving, economically sound community. “Fifteen under 40” is a great way to show a bit of faith in our young leaders who have faith in Columbus County and Jordan has faith!

Justin is an outstanding member of the community and has accomplished much for his age. His character is built on a foundation of inner-strength, determination, perseverance and integrity.

Mary is a true go-getter and does nothing half-way. She is proud of where she comes from and wants her hometown to be the best it can be. Mary represents the best of her generation.

Chef Sarah is a hometown person. Her abundant enthusiasm is contagious. She is professional and will go the extra mile to make sure customers are satisfied. We are fortunate she has invested her career in our community.

Staci is a role model for our youth. She leads and teaches with love and dedication. She is positively affecting the next generation of youth.

Todd leads behind the scenes without seeking recognition. He is passionate and a role model for the young athletes he works with. Wherever there is a need, he steps up to the task, no questions asked.

W.T. has had a special year being recognized as a Columbus County teacher and coach of the year. He is an excellent example of going above and beyond his job description. Despite many offers, he chooses to stay home to make a difference in his community.

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