



The News Reporter's

fifteen

UNDER 40

FIRST EDITION | JULY 2016

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The News Reporter's fifteen UNDER 40

Fifteen under 40's Class of 2016 is the start of great things to come.

The News Reporter is recognizing fifteen young professionals who are not only living and/or working here, but who are also ready and willing to take leadership roles in the county.

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 2016, and thank you for making Columbus County a great place to live!

Thank you to the judges

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Katherine Williamson Hyatt • 39

Science Lab Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School • BA Elem Ed-UNCW, MA Lit and Eng, UNCW • National Board Certification • Wife to Scott • Mother of Katelyn and Creek • Hometown, Granny's house in Whiteville • Two dogs, cats and fish, a rabbit and a chicken • Enjoys reading, lake time and planning creative family adventures or their next trip.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I am beginning my 18th year teaching, 17 years at Edgewood. I started the science lab here, and saw a large number of misconceptions about how the natural world works. We installed a raised-bed garden, which provides endless hands-on learning opportunities. We quickly added a greenhouse with the help of many local farmers. I find most rewarding the growth of the science lab's three enrichment programs. The Science Fair, Science Olympiad and Junior FFA provide unique science and agricul-

tural opportunities for our students.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I assist with Cub Scouts, coach soccer and serve on committees at Lake Waccamaw Presbyterian Church. I am really passionate about the importance of recycling. I believe that planting small seeds about things important now, can grow into solutions for our future.

What would you tell your 16 year-old self?

Travel as much as you can. Look for a college with a semester abroad program.

Tell us about your family:

My family lives on "lake time" at Lake Waccamaw. Our family rule: go to church, go to school and finish what you start with a cheerful heart. We are always looking for our next adventure. Scott and I hope we raise our children to be thinkers and doers!

Favorite movie?

Anything with John Cusack in it.



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Jared Worthington • 32

Principal, Edgewood Elementary • BA and MA School Admin, UNC-P • Husband to Katie • Father of Camden • Hometown, Cerro Gordo • Dog, Ginger • Enjoys golfing, hiking the AT, watching sports, wrestling with Camden.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

Professionally, I became a principal at the age of 30 and was Administrator of the Year for Edgewood the same year. I serve on the WHS Scholarship Review Board and the Gang Awareness Committee. I've taught six subjects, coached four sports and taught every level from third-12th grade. Personally, I enjoy travel and have visited three continents and eight countries. Since I was 20 years old, I've hiked different sections of the Appalachian Trail (AT) every year.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I help students at EES raise money for Eagle Scout Projects, American Heart Association and Relay for Life. I performed in the Dancing with the Vineland

Stars fundraiser, and assist with Boy Scouts fundraisers. I am kids' director at Vertical Church in Bladenboro. Katie and I assist kids at the DREAM Center.

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

"You are not as cool as you think you are. Creed will never be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Your brother is cooler than you think he is."

Tell us about a moment that changed your life:

I arrived to church one Sunday 45 minutes early for no reason. Our youth pastor comes running up to me and says, "I need a favor." A couple minutes later I'm holding a camera recording people as they walk in and saying, "I want a new life!" When this tall brunette walks in, I almost dropped the camera. All I could think was, "I want a new life ... with her!" I married Katie about two years later.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

A trampoline! My brother and I played Wrestlemania every day on that thing.

PNC bank salutes the nominees and recipients of the Columbus County Fifteen under 40



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Congratulations, Sherica!

*Your volunteer work with the
elderly in Columbus County
is to be commended.
You bring joy to all.*





Sherica McCoy Powell • 33

Bus Driver, Substitute Teacher, Bladen County Schools • AA BusAdmin-SCC

• Wife to Jeff • Mother of Justin •

Hometown, Spring Hill community near Whiteville • Pekinese dog, Talcom •

Enjoys gardening and decorating.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I am a wife and mother and I spend a lot of time with my son's activities. At work, I try to be a friend and lead by example. I was honored to receive the 2014 NCAA Community Service award for work with seniors in Columbus County. My faith in God, "can-do" attitude and perseverance, even when challenging, has allowed me to reach success.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I volunteer at the Columbus County Department of Aging. I share vegetables from my garden and fresh eggs to senior citizens as well as deliver wood. I volunteer with ROTC at WHS. I am also a T-ball coach for Whiteville Parks

and Rec and I serve on the Residential Rental Property Review Board.

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

I have endured many disappointments, all of which allowed me to strengthen my weaknesses. They were stepping-stones to help me out of some of the lowest points in my life. The times I spend helping others are the most rewarding experiences to me.

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

Always to say "Thank you so much for listening" and to do as you are told by adults.

What do you like to do in your free time?

My family and I like to visit the sick and the elderly at rest homes and at the Department of Aging.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

The Christmas I received a quarter-length leather coat ... my granddaddy always made sure we had Christmas!

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Erica M. Evans • 29

Staff accountant, S. Preston Douglas & Associates, LLP • Event Coordinator, Vineland Station • BS, NCSU • Daughter of Timothy Evans • Hometown, Nakina • Dog, a rescued mix, Raleigh • Enjoys gardening, canning and raising chickens.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I graduated from NCSU with honors in only three years. Professionally, I am proudest of relationships I have built with clients, understanding their goals and helping them achieve them.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I serve on the Columbus Young Professionals committee, Columbus County Industrial Golf Tournament, Dancing with the Vineland Stars, N.C. Yam Festival board and Whiteville Junior Woman's Club. I have also participated in the Chamber's Leadership Columbus program and Women Leading Columbus. In addition, my firm participates annually in the NCACPA's Day of Service.

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

When I was 11, my mother passed from breast cancer. I was blessed with a wonderful father and he helped me grow in faith and strength from the situation. Experiencing this at an early age allowed me to mature and focus on my goals while giving me the mental strength to reach them.

Tell us about your family.

My father and my boyfriend, William Godwin, are my biggest supporters. My younger sister, Katie, my aunt Jody, and my grandmother, Lola, are three strong women who keep me inspired and moving towards my goals.

What are people most surprised to learn about you?

That I love to hunt. I started hunting with my father when I was a child and absolutely love it!

What was your favorite gift as a child? My first pair of heels!

Favorite drink?

I love Diet Coke!

Hamp with his FAB FIVE UNDER 40

Tyler, Austin, Sierra, Hamp, Anna & Chris

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Nicole Detrice Kelley • 33

Pinnacle family Services, LLC, Foster Care Coordinator • BS UNC-C, MSW NCA&T and UNC-G • Mother of Shawn Reaves • Daughter of Mary Anne Kelley • Hometown, Tabor City • Enjoys photography, couponing and scrap-booking.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I graduated from South Columbus High School in 2001. I received my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Communications Mass Media from the University of N.C. at Charlotte in 2005. I received my master's degree from the Joint MSW program at N.C. Agricultural and Technical University and the University of N.C. at Greensboro in 2009.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I give back to my community as a volunteer and event chair for Columbus County Relay for Life. I've been a team captain of Dorothy's Angels, organizing events like Singing for a Cure, Hooping

for a Cure and Skating for a Cure. With Relay for Life as a whole, we have held several events throughout the community. I have helped with the Tabor City Spring Festival and have been an active parent in recreational sports with my son. Recently, I have collaborated with my co-worker to collect duffle bags and suitcases for children in foster care. I have also been a Guardian Ad Litem for Columbus County.

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

Love who you are, and no matter what happens, life goes on and you can't control everything.

What do you do in your free time?

I like to shop and complete projects that I find on Pinterest.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I love to coupon.

Favorite movie?

Love and Basketball

Favorite restaurant or dish?

Crab legs

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*Congratulations to Nicole Kelley
from your Whiteville TFC Team*



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Corey Ardell Faison • 38

Sachs Peanuts, Professional truck driver • Whiteville High School, 1995 • Husband to Sharika Faison • Father of Kwalian Graham, Jazmin Faison and Corey D. Faison • Hometown, Brunswick • Pets, Diamond and Cash • Enjoys coaching 8-10-year-old basketball, softball, DeeJaying, riding motorcycles, cutting grass and enjoying life with family and friends.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I've been a professional truck driver for more than 16 years with no accidents. To be able to travel to different U.S. cities is a big experience. After changing jobs to be closer to home, enjoying life without financial stress, watching my kids grow and play sports, traveling outside the U.S. and just being able to do for others is a personal accomplishment.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

By organizing fundraisers like basketball, flag football, softball and kickball events to help provide funds to help

families in financial hardship. Thanks-giving food drives, winter coat drives, Christmas toy drives for those less fortunate. I help put together backpacks with supplies for school. The one thing I love the most is making dreams or wishes come true.

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

Aim high, don't let anyone tell you can't do something. Life is about decisions: the road you travel is from the decisions you make. Good or bad!

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

Great people!

What do you do to relax?

Listening to music and watching videos.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

To be a business owner! Help provide jobs for people in my city or just to be a piece of someone's puzzle to help make his or her life happy.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

A dirt bike.

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



Edwin Russ
County Commissioner

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Congratulations to
COREY FAISON



Stephanie Cox Miller • 37

Physician Outreach Coordinator, Columbus Regional Healthcare System • BS Rehab Studies, MS Clinical Counseling, ECU • Wife to Sid • Mother of Sidney and Emma • Hometown, Whiteville • Enjoys dancing, the beach, playing with her children and reading.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

Every time I recruit a new provider, I feel it enhances the healthcare of our community. I served the Whiteville Junior Woman's Club as president, treasurer and chaplain; CRHS Gala, Relay for Life and Lower Cape Fear Hospice's Festival of Trees; Chamber of Commerce and Tourism board member, Live at 5, Columbus Young Professionals, Leadership Columbus committee and participant. I am a Vineland Station board member and performed in Dancing with the Vine-land Stars fundraiser. I am a member of Western Prong Baptist Church and am active with MWU, AWANA,

Women of Worth, and 2015's Go Tell Columbus. I am a member of Colum-bus Jobs Foundation and the WPS PTA board.

Tell us about your family:

My husband, Sid, is the "ying" to my "yang." He can do anything handy around the house, he can cook, plus he is a hottie! Young Sidney loves sports, and as a rising first grader, he knows every NFL team in the league and their players. Our little princess, Emma, enjoys starting up family "Dance Party USA" in our kitchen! We are very blessed.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I used to have a heavy foot ... I have had 13 speeding tickets! Thankful for Alan High and Will Callihan!

What was your favorite gift as a child?

BARBIES! I had 49, knew their names and the dresses they came in. I made my mom and sister sit through Barbie pageants.

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Sid, Sidney & Emma Miller



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- Dancing with the Vineland Stars
- Liberty Commons
- Lower Cape Fear Hospice
- Take the Lake
- WCS Scholarship Review Board
- Health Fair at Edgewood Elementary
- Mistletoe Market

Monetary Support:

- Over \$3,000 in local scholarships
- Care Coordination for Children
- Columbus Charter School
- Whiteville City Schools
- The H.E.A.R.T.S. Foundation
- Families First
- Multiple Sclerosis Walk
- Christian Missions in Uganda



Event Sponsorships:

- Marc Mero, Motivational Speaker at Whiteville High School
- Families First Lip Sync Battle
- Columbus County Youth and Families Tips Dinner
- Fifteen Under 40

**Congratulations to WJWC members
Anna Richardson, Rachel Smith,
Stephanie Miller & Erica Evans**

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Marisel Barker Sellers • 30



Science Teacher ECHS • BS Science Ed, NCSU • Wife to Ryan • Hometown, Burlington • Four dogs and a cat • Enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband, playing with their pets, and cooking.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I am the Science Department chair at ECHS, where I have taught for 10 years. I'm the Student Council co-advisor, National Honor Society advisor, and a member of the School Improvement Team. Along with colleagues, I help mentor beginning teachers. Syngenta Teacher Fellowship 2014 and NIEHS Teacher Externship 2015. I was honored to serve as the 2014 Columbus County Schools Teacher of the Year and the 2015 N.C. Region 4 Teacher of the Year.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I try to prepare students to be good citizens and value civic involvement. I encourage this in ECHS Student Council through the Alzheimer's Association

Walk, visiting local nursing facilities, Relay for Life, Toys for Tots, Cystic Fibrosis, and Lake Waccamaw Halloween Safe Night. Also, I was in the Chamber's Leadership Columbus class of 2015 and volunteered with the Literacy Council through this program.

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

It's ok not to be a member of the "cool" crowd! You will be much happier to know that you have done what's right instead of what's popular. Also, your words and actions are much more powerful than you think!

What do you do in your free time?

I love to cook and I'm always up for trying a new recipe!

What did you want to be when you grew up?

An artist or designer of some sort

What was your favorite gift as a child?

A telescope from Santa

Favorite drink?

Ice cold root beer



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Anna Hall Richardson • 37

*English instructor, SCC • BA in Eng, ECU
• MA Eng Ed, UNC- P • Wife to William
• Mother of Riles and Porter Grace •
Hometown, Whiteville • Pets, three pre-
cious dogs: LuLu, George, and Ruby. •
Enjoys reading, traveling, swimming and
relaxing at the beach.*

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I've taught 14 years in public education. During the nine years at WHS, I was voted Most Inspirational Teacher by the National Honor Society and Teacher of the Year. I served on the Lead Team for WCS's Common Core Implementation. I was the 2015 Woman of the Year for Whiteville Junior Woman's Club, where I served as secretary, treasurer and am currently president – a third-generation distinction and honor in my family.

Provide examples of your Community Service:

The Whiteville Junior Woman's Club. We work hard to raise funds at annual events like our charity ball, Mistletoe Market, and Breakfast with Santa to provide funds for local scholarships and

to non-profit organizations.

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

My husband and I feel this is an excellent place to raise children. They've received a great education at Whiteville Primary and the SCC Child Development Center. We have rich and varied opportunities for young people

What do you do to relax?

Being at the beach or the lake is my ultimate relaxation strategy, and luckily both are only a short drive away.

What are people most surprised to learn about you?

I was an unfocused and unmotivated student in high school and my first two years of college. It wasn't until I began honing my writing skills and developed a love for English that I started to excel academically. As an educator, I try to light the fire in students like me who don't have confidence and focus.

Favorite movie:

"The Goonies." My father took me in 1985. Even now watching it takes me back to my childhood.

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She is a wonderful daughter, wife,
mother, sister, educator and friend...

Anna Hall Richardson

Much love from your family!



David 'Kirby' Holmes • 32

Director, Wound Care Healing Center • WHS • AA-SCC, BS Health Mgmt-ECU, Cum Laude, MBA-ECU • Husband to Heather. • Father of Henry • Hometown, Whiteville • Enjoys golf, relaxing at Lake Waccamaw, spending time with family and talking to new people.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

As the first director of the Wound Care Center, I have seen this much-needed service in our community allow patients to save limbs with our Advanced Wound Treatment Options. CRHS is the first community hospital to bring Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy treatment to patients in Southeastern N.C. and S.C. The Wound Healing Center has been able to create a niche in Medical Tourism, where people travel to a place outside their hometown to receive specialized healthcare. My previous job experience at Liberty Medical Specialties, a full-service Durable Medical Equipment and Infusion Pharmacy, enabled me to have a 360 degree

view of health care, which has been of great value. Also, I am certified as a Six Sigma Black Belt. I am most proud of being married to my wife, Heather, and being a dad to my son Henry.

Provide examples of your Community Service:

I am an active member of the Columbus Chamber, serving on the Shuck 'N' Shag Committee as well as the Leadership Columbus Committee. I was a Leadership Columbus participant as well and am a member of the Columbus Jobs Foundation.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I am an avid Table Tennis player

What did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I always wanted to be a meteorologist like Willard Scott.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

This will sound a little odd but even as a child I enjoyed getting cash.

Favorite band?

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**Congratulations, Kirby,
from your entire family!**



Santana Sade Miller • 28

Managing attorney, Law Office of Santana S. Miller, PLLC • SBHS 2005 • BS Criminal Justice NCCU, Magna Cum Laude • NCCU School of Law, JD 2012 • Hometown, Riegelwood community, Bolivia • Yorkie, Brody • Enjoys reading, DIY projects, kickball and watching HGTV.

Tell us about your personal and professional accomplishments:

I became a licensed attorney at age 24. One year later, I opened my own law practice and I serve as secretary of the Columbus County Bar.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I volunteer with Teen Court, tutor neighborhood kids, and serve as trustee at Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church. Opening and locating my law practice in Delco has been convenient for the elderly here and I provide paid summer internships for high school students. I participated in Lip Sync Battle fundraiser for Families First and Columbus County Arts Council.

Tell us about a moment that changed your life.

Self-doubt is a personal battle I had to overcome. I've always had big dreams of being an attorney and owning my own practice but I also doubted my abilities. I overcame this battle by trusting in God.

What do you enjoy during your free time?

Shopping with my mother, watching television with my dad and grandfather, getting manicures and pedicures with my boyfriend, double-dating with friends.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

Baby dolls. I had tons and tons of baby dolls. I still have most of them to hopefully pass on to my future daughter.

Favorite movie?

"Gone in Sixty Seconds"

Favorite book?

"Think Big" by Ben Carson. For as long as I can remember I've always had big dreams.

CONGRATULATIONS SANTANA

from your family, friends and staff at
The Law Office of Santana S. Miller, PLLC



We are proud of you being recognized for your accomplishments as a young professional and look forward to your continued contributions in our community!

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Lucy Pope Byrd • 39

Sexual Assault Advocate-Families First Inc. and mom • BS Soc. Work-ASU • Wife to Joel Byrd • Mother of Miller and Locke • Hometown, Whiteville • Rescue dog, Chelsea, Oggie the fish • Enjoys diggin' in the dirt, dancing, keeping her children "out of prison" due to "radical protesting" (Miller) and "crimes" (Locke), changing social norms, advocating for equality, driving Vickie Pait batty, hugging everyone, pestering law enforcement about victim blaming, and advocating for people to be treated with dignity and respect.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I have worked as a domestic violence and sexual assault advocate for Families First. I serve on the N.C. Coalition Against Sexual Assault Executive Board and Teen Court Advisory Board, coordinate two Sexual Assault Response Teams, am an active member of First Baptist Church of Bladenboro and I absolutely LOVE being a mom.

Provide examples of your community service:

I participated in Whiteville Dancing with the Vineland Stars and a former Junior Women's Club board member. I participate in The Columbus Jobs Foundation. I assisted my daughter's food drive for which she was nominated for the Columbus County Volunteer Award.

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

I am THE HAPPIEST I have ever been. Advocating for women comes naturally to me. Helping those who have suffered at the hands of an abuser helps me stay strong. I owe SO much of my happiness to Families First.

Tell us about your family:

My incredible husband is a wonderful father to Miller, and together we have a rebellious, cute wild child, Locke Byrd. We love to have dance parties and spend as much time together as we can.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

A purple Earth Cruiser that Santa brought.



*Families First is
proud of their
very own
Byrd*

**Congratulations Lucy Byrd
on being one of
Columbus County's
Fifteen under 40**



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Congratulations to the Honorees



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ones chosen and
all the nominees.

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wonderful place
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Amon McKenzie
Columbus County Commissioner

fifteen UNDER 40



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Congratulations Fifteen under 40 Class of 2016



Front Row: Mary Ann Allgood, Amy B Carter-Owner, Ann Brown, Cheryl Jefferson-George
Back Row: David G. Carter-BIC, Franklin George, Darian Ransom



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*We
applaud the
Fifteen under 40
winners*

A special congratulations to our Leadership Columbus Alumni



David "Kirby" Holmes



Erica M. Evans



Stephanie Cox Miller



Mariel Barker Sellers



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.

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.



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



Rachel Pence Smith • 31

Assistant Principal, Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary • BS Elem Ed - ASU, MEd in IT, NCSU • Schl. Admin Licensure, Sandhills Leadership Academy • Pursuing EdD Ed Leadership, ECU • Wife to Justin • Mother of Scott and Julia • Cat, Gayle • Hometown, Cleveland, NC • Enjoys piano, running and chasing her kids around.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I taught elementary school, worked in middle school curriculum support and served in school administration for three years. I am a N.C. Teaching Fellow, and received the Governor's Volunteer Service Award and Shirley W. Brown Volunteer for promoting running in Columbus County.

Provide examples of your Community Service:

I've been a Whiteville Junior Woman's Club member since 2009, president in 2013. I founded and organized the Columbus County Farmers Market Fun Run & Walk since 2010. I organized the Columbus County Girls

on the Run 2011 assist start/support county youth running teams.

The best part about living in Columbus County?

Knowing that almost anywhere I go with my family - whether to a store or ball game or event - we'll run into someone we know. I love that we're raising our kids in a place where they are part of a community that supports them. I grew up on a dairy farm with a large, supportive extended family nearby. Justin and I are grateful to have family close by and to have our kids experience being part of a close extended family.

Please tell us a little-known fact about you.

I sang in the Appalachian Gospel Choir in college.

What was your favorite gift as a child?

The playhouse that my sisters and I built together with my dad.

Favorite restaurant or dish?

Shrimp and grits

We're proud of our Mommy for being one of the Fifteen Under 40!



Rachel - All of your family is so very proud of you for the many good things you do for our community and for being recognized as one of Columbus County's "Fifteen Under 40"!

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Jenny Cribb Fonvielle • 28

Assistant Director Critical Care/Med-Surg and Telemetry, Registered Nurse, Columbus Regional Healthcare System • Associate's Degree-Nursing, will complete BS in September • Wife to Jake • Mother of Jaxx • Hometown, Clarendon • French Mastiff dog, Merlin • Enjoys boating, church softball, time with family and friends, attending athletic events

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

Diverse nursing career. Started on telemetry unit, later became Nursing Informatics Analyst. Asst. Director for the Med-Surg, Telemetry and CCU. Currently working full-time and maintaining a 3.82 GPA.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

Established South Columbus Community Touchdown Club. My husband and I are very supportive of all youth athletic programs. Our goal is to help the youth grow personally and professionally.

Tell us about a moment that

changed your life.

I was diagnosed with Type I Diabetes at a very young age and Jaxx has cystic fibrosis. These two moments have shaped the person I am today and the compassion I give to my patients.

What is the best part about living in Columbus County?

It is home. I love that you know everyone and they know you. It is the true small town life.

Tell us about your family:

My family support has been a huge reason for my successes. My parents always taught me to work hard. My brother was a major supporter through high school and college. My husband is a major supporter of my present and future successes. My son Jaxx is an inspiration to make a difference in the lives of patients who battle chronic illnesses. He is wild and wonderful and keeps the whole family on its toes.

What are people most surprised to learn about you?

My age

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Way to go Mom...



Jaxx



Jenny Cribb Fonvielle's #1 fan!
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Congratulations from Jaxx, Jake, your entire family and the crew at E.W. Fonvielle & Son ~ Tabor City

Cynthia M. Ellis • 34



Practice manager, G&G Healthcare • PC and Cellis Management and entrepreneur • WCHS, UNC-P, AAPC, CFCC • Wife to Renay • Mother of Hannah and Lizzy • Born in Louisville, Ky. • Grew up in Chadbourn • Enjoys working and consulting, reading, spending time with her children and listening to music.

Tell us about your professional and personal accomplishments:

I am the owner of Cellis Management Business Administration and Consulting Services. I serve my church, Jerusalem Chapel Freewill Baptist Church, as a Sunday school teacher and worship leader. I am blessed with two beautiful daughters and am very proud of them and their desire to be leaders.

In what ways do you give back to the community?

I network with community leaders and local businesses (Families First, Columbus County Literacy, Boys & Girls Homes and others). I use my consulting business to assist small business owners with start-ups and train them to successfully manage their new business. I

mentor youth and work with my church to lead others to spiritual wellness and promote unity in the community.

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

My mother was a victim of domestic violence and my sister and I were victims of the situation, so I battled with fear, low self-esteem, and little or no self-confidence. At an early age, I focused my energies on learning everything I possibly could.

Tell us about your family.

I have the most wonderful family. My mother, Joanna Childress, has overcome so much. She worked hard to make sure we had everything we needed to be successful. My sister has been my strong arm. My husband and children have loved me without condition.

Favorite band?

Jackson 5, I'm a huge music buff, and love all genres.

Favorite drink?

Southeastern NC sweet tea! Second choice is Mt. Dew.



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*Katherine Williamson Hyatt
Anna Hall Richardson
Mariel Barker Sellers
Rachel Pence Smith
Jared Worthington*

Kudos...from the Community

"To be under the age of 40, I don't think there is another person in the county who does as much for her community as **Stephanie Miller**! Her passion for our community is infectious. As a professional, a wife and a mother, **Stephanie** still takes time to make life better for others. She cares about people, the future of our area, is widely respected – a true asset to our community."

"**Mariel** is a fantastic leader that has a servant's heart. Her presentation skills are exemplary. She not only has leadership skills, but passion and determination. She is a wonderful, caring educator and just a 'solid person.' **Mariel** sets the bar high for those around her – adult and student alike."

"**Sherica** has a beautiful spirit and she is a great example for any young person who wants to make it in life. She is very helpful to senior citizens, not only by sharing from her garden but also in finding grants to help weatherize homes in order to save money on energy bills or for needed home repairs. **Sherica** gives a 'hand up' and guides people to help others."

"**Corey** made a difficult career change in order to be able to spend more time with his family. This also gave him more time to be involved in the community. With a kind heart and an infectious spirit, he has spearheaded numerous fundraisers for those in need. He has done an outstanding job setting an example for his family."

"She is kind, trustworthy and a committed citizen to Columbus County. She is so giving of her time that she rarely has time for herself. If we had more citizens like **Katherine**, this place would be outstanding."

"**Nicole** is a selfless individual. She is always willing to help in any way possible. She stepped up to lead Relay for Life while having a time-consuming job and being a single parent. She spends most of her time helping the community and those around her. I can't think of a better example of someone striving to make Columbus County a better place."

"**Cynthia** has proven to be a profound asset to Columbus County. She coordinates community health fairs, collaborating with other organizations to provide free health screenings."

Cynthia has a genuine desire to make Columbus County a healthier place."

"I've never encountered a nurse, so young in her career, to be so knowledgeable and so dedicated to patients and staff. She is an outstanding young leader. Her colleagues respect her commitment to CRHS as well as the community. **Jenny** is dedicated, eager to learn, always has a smile and has an infectious, positive, hilarious personality. She cares about what she does and it shows to everyone she encounters."

"**Anna** is full of creativity and passion for youth in the community. She is hard working and humble. She doesn't get credit for all the things she does, but takes pride in just doing a good job. She sincerely gives 100 percent effort in any endeavor she attempts."

"**Rachel** is selfless and always willing to help in our community. She is always positive and looks for a way something can be done as opposed to why it cannot. Her success in her professional roles illustrates her ability to get along with people from all socio-economic backgrounds. She is and will continue to be a stellar goodwill ambassador of Columbus County."

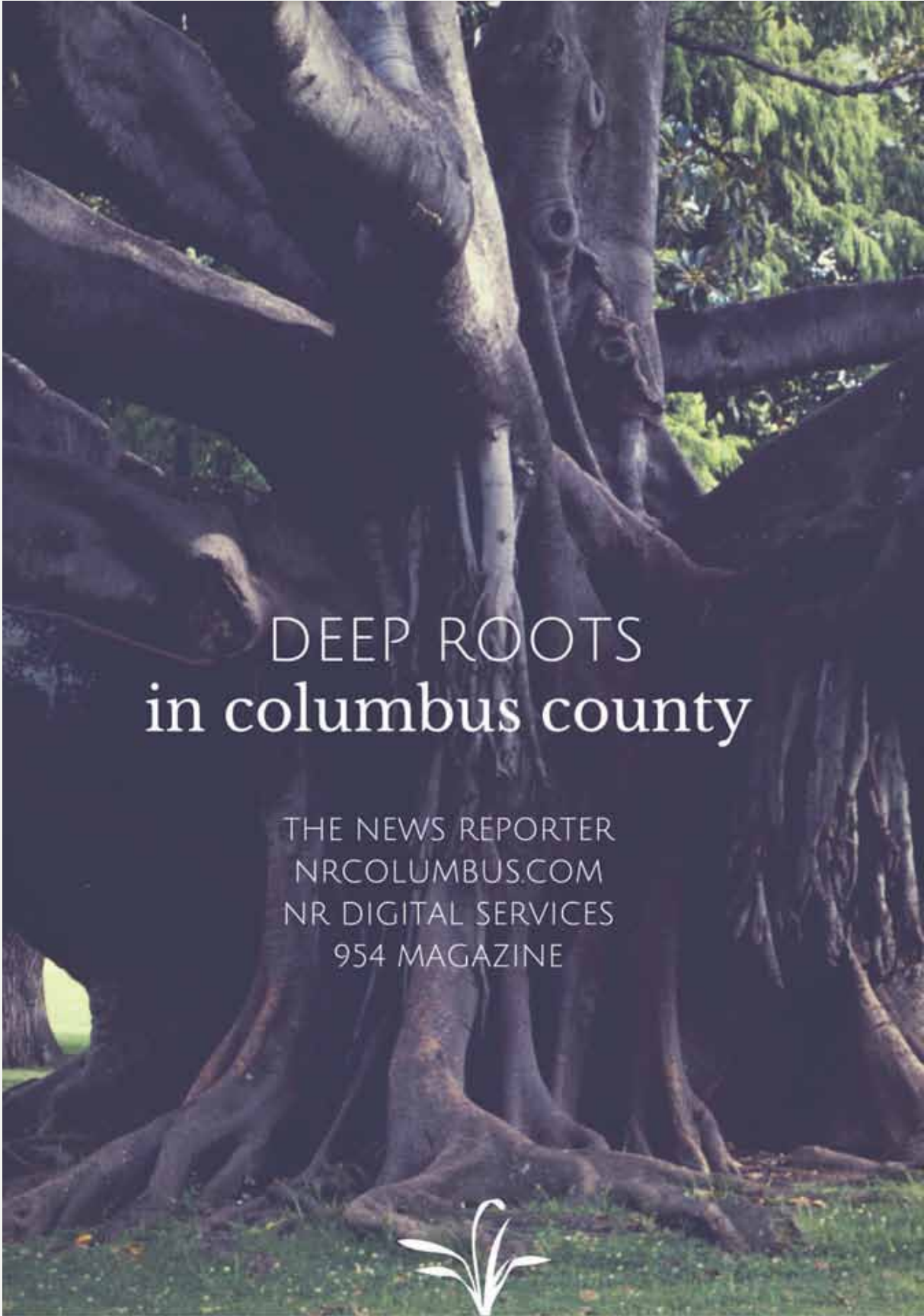
"Taking one moment and talking with **Santana**, it is hard not to see that she is a mover and shaker. She represents the best of what Columbus County has to offer. And her positive story about going off and then coming home to make a difference in her community is a story that needs to be told."

"**Erica** is beautiful inside and out. She is a great woman and future leader in our community. Our community too often lacks the ability to retain our educated young people. **Erica** chose to come back and make Columbus County her home."

"**Lucy** is one of those rare humans who chose not only to change her own life situation, but to use her experience to help others change theirs. In my book, humans can't do better than that."

"**Jared** is able to communicate with and guide students while maintaining authority. His background in social work is at the heart of decisions he makes and is reflected in his volunteer time outside of work. He constantly encourages parents and guardians to invest time in their child's education, making special attempts to involve more male role models for students. **Jared's** enthusiasm and genuine concern for others is as contagious as his smile. He considers his career to be of great importance, but keeps the perspective that it is his family that is the most important to him. Columbus County is a better place because of **Jared**."

"**David** is always in the public eye doing something to help others as well as promoting the importance of the wound care center. He is always willing to go the extra mile to get the job done. We need more citizens who care as much about their hometown and support the community as **David** does."



DEEP ROOTS in columbus county

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The future's so bright

By LES HIGH
Editor

The latest census numbers show that Columbus County is getting older and expected to lag behind the rest of the region in growth over the next several years.

Yet, there is a very bright spot that isn't reflected in those numbers: a surge in young people who are not only living and working here, but who are also ready and willing to take leadership roles in improving the county.

That's something to celebrate, so The News Reporter asked its readers to nominate 15 up-and-coming "Fifteen Under 40" young professionals who are under 40 years old and making a difference in Columbus County.

What's even better, we believe these "Fifteen Under 40" winners will serve as a call to action for other potential young leaders.

All of the nominees were outstanding in his or her civic and/or professional roles. Nominators were also asked to give personal reasons why his or her nominee should be considered. The more complete and personalized the responses, the better the chance for the nominee to make it to the final 15. These responses are compiled in "Kudo's from the community!" The "Fifteen under 40" publication features a snapshot bio of each winner. After reading them, I'm sure you will agree that the future looks bright for Columbus County.

We fully expect this will become a prestigious, annual award. And,



we look forward to celebrating with the winners, their contemporaries and families on July 29 at Vineland Station's Batten Pavilion for a casual evening of fun and conversation.

Those who aren't selected shouldn't be discouraged with so many strong candidates; there will be other opportunities.

A panel of volunteer judges, none of whom work for The News Reporter, reviewed the nominations and chose the top 15. The 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 the community.

There are plenty of ways the county's young professionals can get involved to improve the quality of life here.

For example, The Columbus Jobs Foundation recently hosted a luncheon for young leaders to encourage them to get involved in volunteering for economic development initiatives. Nearly 40 attended.

Because of their enthusiasm and a desire by the Columbus Jobs Foundation to move the county's young professionals into serious leadership roles, CJF recently nominated seven of those attendees for election to its governing board. Columbus Jobs Foundation hopes to include more young leaders in its fold. The organization has created a "Millennials" membership level, offered at a lower price, to get more young people actively involved in the task of creating new jobs. When jobs are created, such as those at the new computing center at Tabor City that will pay a starting salary of \$30,000, and the S&A railroad tie recycling company that's coming soon, it's easy to see where economic development involving both seasoned and young leaders can set Columbus County on a better path. When there is economic development, there are more opportunities for better schools, better restaurants, the creation of other jobs like home construction, and all sorts of things

you gotta wear shades

that will make life here better.

Nowhere was the emergence of a vibrant, young professional class more evident than at Dancing With The Vineland Stars, held this past April before a packed house. The event raised more than \$42,000, with more than \$30,000 going toward the upkeep of Vineland Station. I was at the last Dancing with the Vineland Stars, and a large portion of the crowd and the amateur dancers were in their 30s and 40s. I'd be surprised if any other Dancing With The Stars event in the state is more fun than ours.

Many of the county's young leaders are alumni of Leadership Columbus, a collaboration between the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and Southeastern Community College.

Each class begins with a weekend retreat, attends leadership seminars conducted by professional trainers addressing communication skills, social networking, negotiation and conflict management, tours and panel discussions addressing educational, governmental, business and industry, and health and wellness issues. The group then completes projects that benefit the county. Applications for the next class will be accepted beginning in August.

Leadership Columbus alumni recently formed new committee,

Columbus Young Professionals. This group is looking at ways for young professionals to network with the objective of keeping our best and brightest at home. They also plan to develop strategies to make our community more attractive for young professionals. Call the Columbus Chamber to find out more.

And there are other civic groups, like the Whiteville Junior Woman's Club, that have been stalwarts of community building for decades.

The future of Columbus County looks brighter than the numbers project.

Thanks to efforts of past leaders, the table has been set for the county to grow. The industrial park west of Whiteville now has everything it needs to attract new industry. A second industrial park is in the early planning stages in the Delco area, and Tabor City's industrial park is adjacent to one of the fastest-growing areas in the country.

But despite all that, nothing will happen unless there is strong leadership. Judging by the enthusiasm of the county's young professional class, the ship's rudder is in good shape.

The young leaders who attended the Columbus Jobs Foundation luncheon got to see an old photo of the Whiteville Rotary Club, taken in the late 1940s or early 1950s. There are easily 80

people crowded into the photo. Many are the leaders who helped propel Columbus County and Whiteville into an unparalleled period of prosperity, fueled by tobacco, textile and family-run retail shops and businesses.

The loss of these industries, plus the advent of big-box retailers and internet commerce, coupled with the Great Recession, badly hurt the local economy.

Even though there are still many challenges ahead, one gets the sense that there is a new air of optimism.

Looking back at the old Rotary Club photo reveals that there are new opportunities in 2016 because there are no women or minorities included, and not many young people.

It's up to the old guard to empower the next generation of young leaders. We can begin by recognizing them through initiatives like The News Reporter's "Fifteen Under 40."

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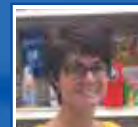
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Fifteen under 40!



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We invite you to join CJF as we sail Columbus County into the future!



The Millennial's Luncheon - May 2016 - The Mill Pond

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