

FORTY UNDER 40 2024

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The Power of a U of I MBA



Emma Shafer

April 13, 1999 – July 11, 2023

Occupation: community organizer

Education: Associate degree in political science from Lincoln Land Community College and bachelor's degree in urban studies from the New School in New York City.

Family: Parents Cathy Schwartz and John Shafer; sisters Shelley Brown and Katie deMarco; nieces and nephews, Carter, Leo and Henry deMarco, Ava and Emma Brown; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Affiliations/community activities: Membership chair of the Sierra Club Sangamon Valley Group, an incoming board member for the Springfield Immigrant Advocacy Network, a former organizer with Faith Coalition for the Common Good, founder and co-leader of Students Demand Action for Gun Sense and an active volunteer with countless other community groups. She received the Dynamic Youth Award from the Faith Coalition for the Common Good in 2018 as a 19-year-old college student.

What is your guiding principle in life?

Emma was guided by a multitude of principles throughout her life. She was guided by her desire to learn, to grow, to understand communities and life circumstances, and to fight for a more equitable world. But what rose paramount amongst her numerous principles was her commitment to the betterment of all. Emma remained committed to finding actionable changes for inequitable and unfair realities. Whether it was fighting the CO2 pipeline, incorporating bike lanes throughout Springfield, finding better public transit, or advocating for cleaner water and affordable housing, she was equally and fully committed to creating the world she envisioned. She imagined a world where worry was present, but not dominant, a world where individuals could focus on their families and one another rather than constantly worrying about factors many individuals do not have to consider.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield?

Emma had innumerable hopes for Springfield and believed in Springfield's ability to be an incredible small-sized city. I believe her greatest hope – beyond food co-ops, solid public transit, affordable housing downtown, bike lanes and walkability, the elimination of unnecessary parking garages, creating awareness of redlining and historic discrimination or eliminating citywide discrimination – would be for the entire Springfield community to care enough to ensure the longevity of these endeavors.

So many in this city have accepted a reality that does not have to be our reality. Westward expansion only damages the hope and beauty Emma saw for Springfield in the future. If we – all Springfieldians – make conscious efforts to invest in and be a part of creating a more equitable, walkable and community-oriented city, the possibilities could be limitless. Emma had hopes far more specific than everything I have listed, but if we start to pay attention to those outside of our insular communities, to our downtown, to a positive environmental infrastructure, we can certainly achieve at least half of what Emma dreamed for our community.

What would you like to give back to your community?

The greatest thing Emma gave to her community was herself. Her passion and devotion to our community was far larger than any singular change she made and would have made in the future. Emma gave herself completely to the city of Springfield and in return, she radically changed lives and communities, while implementing actions to better life for all.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?

Emma faced immense pushback in many of the dreams she had for Springfield. Instead of succumbing to the constant "no" from individuals or institutions, she pushed on. Emma protested bravely, spoke confidently with conviction and overcame incredible obstacles.

The *Springfield Business Journal* proudly features **40 leaders** who are **under the age of 40** in the Springfield and neighboring business communities. These individuals are selected based on their contributions to our local business community and the community in which they reside. They represent, in part, the future of business in our community and in central Illinois.

The selectees' career paths, educational background, and community affiliations are varied. They represent **the best** and **brightest** from a wide range of occupations. You can expect to hear more from and about these leaders in the years ahead. The program is able to continue due to the commitment of local businesses that realize the importance of acknowledging these up and coming business leaders and supporting community business programs.

Visit springfieldbusinessjournal.com to view selectees from previous years.

A note from the selection committee:

It's been nearly a year since our community lost Emma Shafer, a bright light in this world extinguished much too soon. Just 24 years old, she had already made more of an impact on Springfield than some people do in a lifetime. Her parents, John Shafer and Cathy Schwartz, are both previous recipients of Forty Under 40 and Emma almost certainly would have gone on to be recognized with this distinction as well. The selection committee asked her family for permission to honor her posthumously with this year's class of Forty Under 40. Her close friend Iman Kamel helped with the responses to the questionnaire.



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WOMEN'S EVENT CALENDAR

Join Illinois Women in Leadership on Thursday, July 18, at Erin's Pavilion for the ATHENA Leadership Award. Cocktail hour will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:30 and the award presentation at 7 p.m.

This year's nominees are: June Wood Agamah, Kayla Edwards, Marnie Fauser, Tess Fyalka, Betsy Goulet, Carol Harms, Susan Hingle, Julie Krehbiel, Victoria Nichols and Deb Sarsany. The ATHENA Leadership Award is presented to an individual who is honored for professional excellence, community service and for actively assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills.

Tickets are \$100 per person through Friday, July 5, or \$115 per person after that date. The RSVP deadline is July 11. Make reservations online at iwil.biz.

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MARVIN MERRIWEATHER 37

Occupation: Licensed clinical social worker/Level-2 Crossfit coach

Email: mmmerriweather@BeststrongMH.com

Education: Bachelor's degree in social work, Tuskegee University; Master's degree in social work, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana

Family: Wife, Joli; parents, Doris and Marvin Merriweather Sr.; three siblings

Affiliations/community activities: Owner of Be Strong Mental Health and Therapeutic Services, Head Coach at Railsplitter Fitness, Chatham Area Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Urban League provider, clinical support with Hope Springs, presenter at Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Abuse and District 186, Ball Chatham School District.

What is your guiding principle in life? I have been guided by the principle expressed by Booker T. Washington in his quote, "Success is not measured so much by the position one has reached in life, but by the obstacles one has overcome while trying to succeed." It is inevitable that we will face obstacles in our lives, but these challenges present valuable opportunities for learning and personal growth.

What led you to your current career? My older brother Michael's experiences with the mental health system pushed me toward my current career path. Witnessing how he was treated ignited a desire within me to create a therapeutic environment where clients feel understood, valued and safe throughout their healing journey.

What would you like to give back to your community? I hope to raise awareness about the emotional trauma we have experienced and demonstrate the possibility of healing from these profound emotional wounds.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish I had known the value of close, meaningful relationships. In the pursuit of success, it's easy to get caught up in individual achievements and neglect the power of human connection. I have come to learn that strong relationships are not only essential for personal well-being but also have a significant impact on professional growth and success. Having close friends, family, and mentors who support, encourage and challenge me has been invaluable. They have provided me with a sense of belonging, purpose and motivation.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest professional achievement to date has been the successful completion of my Clinical Mentoring Program with the Springfield Urban League.

What's the song you sing in the shower? Anything by J.Cole is my go to artist but right now my go to shower song is "Take Off" by Wacotron. it's a good song to get motivated for the day.

ELIZABETH KNOEDLER 38

Occupation: Dentist at Prairie Dental Group

Email: DrLizKnoedler@gmail.com

Education: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, SIU School of Dental Medicine.

Family: Parents, Brad and Krista Steller; husband, Joe Knoedler, children Brice and Camille.

Affiliations/community activities: Board member of G.V. Black District Dental Society; past president, board member of Bundles of Joy; previous board member of Springfield Ballet Company; American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine; International College of Dentists; American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? I would like to be leading Prairie Dental Group/Prairie Sleep Center and to also be a super-involved mom at my kids' sporting events.

What is your guiding principle in life? I got it from a Peloton instructor but it really resonates with me: "How you do anything is how you do everything." Meaning in all aspects of my work and life, I give it my all.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I did not realize until recently how the women in my life have made such an impact on who I am. Growing up with a working mom and being a part of the all-female Prairie Dental Group is so empowering.

What led you to your current career? I always had a science and math brain and I always played instruments and danced ballet so I had the artistic side as well. Mixing the medical and artistic worlds led me to dental school.

What would you like to give back to your community? Growing up here I always felt safe, I had a great education, I was supported by my teachers and neighbors, and I was welcomed when I came back to Springfield to have my career. Being a dental provider is so much more than just fixing teeth. I love being in this community that raised me and being able to help our patients feel confident and healthy.

Worst career advice: "Keep your head down and hustle." Being part of a bustling office can create a lot of moving parts but I enjoy seeing the small moments between our team and our patients, watching team members help each other, and seeing the patients change and feel comfortable.



COLIN LISS 35

Occupation: General manager of Green Lincoln, General manager of Green Mazda, co-owner of Liss Holdings Inc.

Email: colin.liss@greenstores.net

Education: Rochester High School

Family: Wife: Breanne; children Gentry and Arlow; parents, Kenneth and Susan Liss.

What led you to your current career? I was unsure and moving without direction in my college studies. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I always loved cars and enjoyed talking to and interacting with people. In 2008 I went to Green Mazda with my mother for her new vehicle purchase – by the end I was offered a sales job. My parents were not thrilled, but I took it. I am thankful for my path every day.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? I feel it instinctual to say growth, but I think quality over quantity is my greatest hope. Springfield is an awesome place to raise a family. I think this place we call home can improve and be better before we need to worry about being bigger. I understand the importance of growth – but we already have a lot right here in front of us that can use more support and improvement.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Sometimes good people don't have the best day, and learning not to take things personally was a big thing for me. Understanding that every person digests things differently. Your experience with people can be so dependent on when you cross paths, under which circumstances, etc. I think when dealing with high volumes of people it's important to communicate in their way. A genuine desire to be helpful and serve goes a long way.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? No matter what you do there is no magic bullet. A great mentor told me this many times. I would always ask questions such as "What would you do?" and "How would you do this?" That's how we learn. But at the end of the day there is no magic bullet. Even the smartest of people at times don't know the right answer, they just consider all variables to make the best decision – and make it. Don't overthink things. You're in your position for a reason. Consider, calculate, decide and move on.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Without a doubt becoming a general manager of the dealership in 2019.

What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? "Don't ever teach people what you know, it will make you less valuable." If people did this they would never learn, cross-train or take on challenges. Open information and allowing others to know your job isn't a threat to you. If every person at a business could do every job can you imagine the insulation, efficiency and success that team would have?

Allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of the Springfield Business Journal's Forty Under 40 recipients for 2024.

Thank you for the leadership and contributions you have provided for our community.

I look forward to hearing about many more of your future successes.



Mark D. Cortesi, Agent

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EMILY LYNCH 35

Occupation: Marketing consultant/ABC NewsChannel20-FOX Illinois.

Email: erlynch@sbgvtv.com

Education: Bachelor's degree, business administration, University of Illinois Springfield.

Family: Husband, Bill, sons, Carson and Oliver, and three stepsons.

Affiliations/community activities: The Carillon Belles, president; Rees Carillon Society board member; volunteer coordinator at Lindsay Elementary PTO; member of Illinois Women in Leadership, The Networking Group, Central Illinois Customer Service Association and Kings Daughters Organization.

What led you to your current career? My love for my hometown ultimately led to my career. I was born in Springfield, graduated high school and college in Springfield, and wanted to stay in Springfield to have a career to be near my family. I've always been an avid TV watcher so when I saw the job posting 13 years ago, I knew I wanted to learn more. I've always liked connecting people. Connecting people with organizations and connecting people with other people. I get to do that all day, every day in my career!

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is for it to become a hub of collaboration, where people from diverse backgrounds come together to solve problems, innovate and create a better future for everyone.

What would you like to give back to your community? I'd like to give back by providing access to knowledge, promoting kindness and supporting initiatives that address local needs.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Obstacles vary widely in my profession, from facing rejection or setbacks with self-doubt or uncertainty. I've learned to be tenacious. That despite the challenges, stay focused on goals and adapt strategies when necessary to keep moving forward.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish my younger self knew the importance of patience, perseverance and adaptability.

What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? My Dad said don't take a 100% commission sales job. Still here after 13 years and through those years, I've learned that what I do is more than a sales job. It involves building relationships, understanding market trends, crafting effective strategies and contributing to the success of my clients.

DR. AIDA ADLIMOGHADDAM 38

Occupation: Assistant professor in the Department of Neurology and cross-appointed to the Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience, and Department of Molecular Biology, Microbiology and Biochemistry.

Organization: Southern Illinois University, School of Medicine

Email: aadlimoghaddam72@siu.edu

Education: PhD and postdoctoral training at the University of Manitoba, and St. Boniface Hospital Research, respectively (Canada)

Family: My family is distributed across North America and other parts of the world. In Springfield, I live with my husband, Kyle.

Affiliations/community activities: American Alzheimer's Association, Society for Neuroscience, The Society of Clinical Research Associates, Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation, The Alzheimer's Association International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment. Volunteer with the Behavioral Health Workforce Center in Springfield.

What is your guiding principle in life? I believe in treating others with kindness and respect, and I strive to make a positive impact on the world.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? Creating a safe and welcoming environment where everyone can thrive and feel proud to call home.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? I aim to continue advancing in my academic career, perhaps taking on leadership roles within my department or university. I aspire to be recognized internationally for my contributions to research and education, while also maintaining a fulfilling work-life balance and making meaningful connections within my academic community.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Earning my doctorate stands as my greatest professional achievement, reflecting years of dedication and hard work.

What would you like to give back to your community? I would like to give back to my community by actively engaging in initiatives that promote education, health care access and economic opportunities for all.

Who was your childhood/teenage celebrity crush? Enrique Iglesias



VALERIA CUETO 37

Occupation: Vice president, equity, diversity and inclusion

Email: cueto.valeria@mhsil.com

Education: Bachelor of arts, Williams College; Master of arts, McKendree University

Family: Husband, Juan Pava, and daughters, Elena and Lucia.

Affiliations/community activities: Springfield Immigrant Advocacy Network, SHG Board of Directors, Heartland HOUSED

What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle is that we are better together and togetherness is achieved through deep commitment to community expressed through action.

What led you to your current career? I've always been drawn to journey with people seeking safety, security and happiness. My career in what has become known as "DEI" started 20 years ago when I was volunteering to serve Guatemalan migrants in Florida. It evolved when I moved to Springfield in 2011 and began working with the Dominican Sisters of Springfield and then shifted in 2020 when much of the nation turned its attention to racial inequities. The undercurrent of my work has always been a commitment and sense of obligation to community.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is for it to continue to develop as a community in which people feel confident that it is the right place to put down roots – to start businesses, grow families, age and generally be an active part of a vibrant and conscientious community that is welcoming and inclusive.

What would you like to give back to your community? Simply put, what I want to give back to my community is love and care. The way I have found to "love" it is through my work at Memorial, volunteering, civic engagement and raising a family that cares about the community it lives in.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Find friends and mentors professionally and personally – specifically people who challenge you to be a better version of yourself. Relationships matter. Nurture them in genuine ways. Accept feedback – it is a gift.

Who was your childhood/teenage celebrity crush? Can I just tell you that my current crush is Regé-Jean Page from the first season of Bridgerton? My husband knows and he understands.



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Richa Pandey, MD
NEPHROLOGY

AARON HOUSE

28

Occupation: IT consultant, president/owner, CCS Inc.

Email: aaron@completecomputersolutions

Education: Bachelor's degree, cloud and systems administration

Family: Wife, Amanda, and daughter, Evelyn.

Affiliations/community activities: Member of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Springfield, Inc., Sangamon CEO graduate and board member

What is your guiding principle in life? Effective and honest communication are both essential for building strong relationships personally and professionally.

What would you like to give back to your community? The guidance and support I received from experienced business professionals in the community was instrumental to my success. I'm eager to pay it forward by offering that same level of mentorship and support to the next generation of local entrepreneurs and business leaders.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Starting my IT career at a young age, I faced the challenge of proving my knowledge and expertise despite my age. I found the best way to overcome this obstacle was by consistently exceeding expectations, seeking out challenging projects and embracing continuous learning.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Stick to your values. Don't be afraid to turn down or cut loose business and professional relationships with those who do not align with your values.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? My wife had a major surgery this year that had a lengthy recovery time. I learned the importance of having a strong network of friends and family who will support you at your highs and lows, that can mean the difference between staying afloat or sinking. My family stepped up and provided invaluable assistance with meals, child care, and emotional support, allowing me to focus on caring for my wife during her recovery. This experience deepened my appreciation for the strength and support that comes from family and community.

What app on your phone are you ashamed to say you use? Temu



COLTIN CUNNINGHAM

37

Occupation: Director of operations, Henson Robinson Company

Email: CCunningham@Henson-Robinson.com

Education: Bachelor's degree, Robert Morris University; master's degree, University of Illinois

Family: Wife, Megan, and children Tripp, Cami and Cooper.

Affiliations/Community Activities: Youth volunteer martial arts instructor; Boys & Girls Club of Central Illinois board of directors; Local First Springfield vice president; West Side Christian Church; Mechanical Contractors Association of America.

Guiding principle in life? Do what is right, and stand for what is right, no matter how hard it is!

What led to your current career? When I was young, I believed college was the only smart path after high school. In college, I discovered a passion for business and economics. I was fortunate to get an opportunity to help manage a local mechanical contractor, which opened my eyes to the "trades" world. I quickly realized that some of the smartest people you'll ever meet wear blue collars, not white. I fell in love with the business of helping people build and fix things.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? If you treat people well and put your best effort into everything you do, you don't have to worry so much. I stressed over every little thing for too long. "Success" looks different for everybody, but if you're doing those two things quit worrying and just enjoy every day as much as you can.

What would you like your life to look like in 5-10 years? I am a very driven person, but I am blessed and have everything I'll ever need right now: An amazing wife, three awesome kids, great friends, and a career with an amazing company. My hope for the next 5-10 years would simply be to meet (and get to know) many more people in our community. One of my greatest professional joys is being helpful, providing answers and connecting people. The more people I know the more helpful I can be. A great network is great energy, and I want more of that in my life.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? I am proud of my role in helping a few companies achieve financial and reputational success over the past 15 years. However, I consider my greatest professional achievements to be the people I have hired, some against recommendation, that have gone on to be outstanding employees and people in general. Being a significant part of someone's happy life in a meaningful way is better than any other benchmark I can think of.

COREY KATES

39

Occupation: Assistant vice president, mortgage lender

Email: ckates@inb.com

Education: Bachelor of business administration, University of Illinois Springfield.

Family: Wife, Jamie, and son, Aiden.

Affiliations/community activities: Member of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Chatham Chamber, Chatham Area Public Library Foundation Member, former co-chair of the Mike Steele Memorial Golf Tournament.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Becoming a certified veteran mortgage adviser to help spread awareness about VA loans while helping our military members and veterans obtain their dream of owning a home!

What led you to your current career? I had the pleasure of working at Systemax about 15 years ago selling marketing materials for banks and credit unions. My experience there led me to want to work within the banking profession. From there I worked at Wells Fargo helping ensure homeowners find solutions to keeping their homes during financial crises. At that point I knew I wanted to be in the chair to help clients in the initial homebuying process, and never turned back.

What is your guiding principle in life? Be humble, treat others how you would want to be treated, and no laying up on a par 5.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Not to be so critical of myself and know that growth only happens when you get out of your own way.

What would you like to give back to this community? The only thing that we leave behind when we pass is our last name to our children. I want to be able to have a positive impact on the people I come in contact with in my life, and for my son to be proud of carrying on my last name for how I was as a father and how I treated others.

What app on your phone are you ashamed to say that you use? I have an app called "Satellite Tracker" that tracks the International Space Station's current location and will send me a notification when it is visible at night to see it pass over.



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TIMOTHY COLLIER

35

Occupation: Springfield Police Department officer
Email: Colliertimothy89@gmail.com
Education: High school diploma, attended Langston University
Family: Wife, Talia; daughters Teegan and Taylor and expecting third daughter.
Affiliations/community activities: Diversity Adversity Committee of the Springfield Police Department, board member of Do it from the Heart nonprofit
What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle in life is to stay true to myself, never give up and to keep God first.
What led you to your current career? Helping people in the community is what led me to my career choice. I want to be the change as an African American on the police force. Changing the narrative for others that look like me to let them know there are positive influences in this role is a goal of mine.
What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? In five years I hope to be a sergeant for my department and in 10 years hopefully be a lieutenant.
What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish my younger self would have known that at the end of all the hard work, it will work out. All the sacrifices and tears are worth it.
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest professional achievement is when I did my first back to school event. With the help of family and friends I was able to give over 100 kids book bags and school supplies. This year I am aiming to help over 300 kids.
What's the song you sing in the shower? Kendrick Lamar's Not like Us



ZACHARY HEINEMAN

39

Occupation: SVP/Director of IT, United Community Bank
Email: zheineman@ucbbank.com
Education: Bachelor of applied science, Robert Morris College
Family: Spouse, Leah, and son, Chase.
Affiliations/community activities: Lincoln Land Community College Computer Science Advisory Committee.

What is your guiding principle in life? Offer help to others even if they may not seem to need it. Some may be too hesitant or proud to ask.
What led you to your current career? As a kid I was intrigued with computers and technology. Chatham's high school had a CCNA IT certification program that exposed me to challenging coursework. Later, Springfield's Robert Morris College had an amazing group of teachers. As an IT field service technician, I enhanced my technical skills, but it taught me more about customer service. Helping a stressed-out college student with a broken laptop or an anxious business owner with a server down really opened my eyes to the variety of environments and needs. Later, I started at United Community Bank. UCB's desire to put the best technology in customers' hands, superior customer service and aggressive growth aligned with my work ethic and set me on an amazing journey that continues.
What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish my younger self would have acted sooner on the advice and wisdom from others, especially my wonderful wife's. A better work-life balance, and more focus on learning the big picture of the business. Above all: Do less better!
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Training and mentoring so many talented people.
Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? Seeing my son present a robot at the STEM fair and fixing issues with it on the fly immediately took me back to a college final exam where I was doing the same thing. It was a great moment of pride but also a moment of clarity regarding the influence we have on others and the legacy it can create.
What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? Library card. It was free!



CHARLES LONG

37

Occupation: Deputy executive director and ReStore Manager.
Email: clong@habitatsangamon.com
Education: Some college
Family: Middle child out of three siblings.
Affiliations/Community activities: Member, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and board member, Springfield's Local First. I work with various rehabilitation and job placement agencies. I team up with volunteers from District 186, several colleges, United Way's Day of Action for businesses and other community outreach opportunities.
What is your greatest hope for Springfield? To see more ergonomic growth, better infrastructure, strategic planning and stronger community activities.
What would you like to give back to your community? More homes to be built. More foundation for youth engagement and training.
What led you to your current career? I wanted to be involved in something impactful that would help people. I certainly wanted to get out of corporate stores.
What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Have strong work ethic, having a vision, being determined, always saying yes: Yes to investments, training and promotions.
What do you wish your younger self knew when you started this path? I wish I'd known the various stages of involvement. Being able to see the end result would have saved me a lot of headaches.
What's the song you sing in the shower? Michael McDonald's I keep forgetting.



TRAVIS DAVIS

35

Occupation: CPA
Email: travisd@kebcpa.com
Education: Bachelor's degree, accounting and finance, Illinois College; Master's degree, accounting, UIS
Family: Wife, Laura; children, Wesley and Adaline
What is your guiding principle in life? There are several corny iterations of it, but, generally, just the idea of being where you are and controlling what you can control.
What would you like to give back to your community? One of the unique things about my job is the opportunity to get to know and work with several leaders in the community. Being able to work with them and help them complete their visions for the future of not only their businesses or organizations, but also the community itself, is a role and opportunity that I'm very grateful for.
What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Working in accounting is just a series of (seemingly never-ending) deadlines. I'm very fortunate to have a supportive family and co-workers that help to overcome the ebbs and flows of time commitments that go along with it.
What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? You don't know half of what you think you do.
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Making partner this year.
What app on your phone are you ashamed to say you use? Facebook – but specifically Marketplace. I spend entirely too much time looking at the various "bargains" around.

CONGRATS!

FORTY UNDER 40



Misty Adams
Chief Financial Officer



Congratulations

to Marvin for his significant contributions to the Springfield Urban League's Restorative & Community Justice initiatives through Be Strong Mental Health & Therapeutic Services. Providing our youth with a safe space to grow, develop, and heal has been an incredible addition to our mission of empowering communities and changing lives. Congratulations on this well-deserved accomplishment!

Sincerely,
The Springfield Urban League Inc.

Congratulations
Zac Heineman

UCB congratulates Zac and all of the 2024 Forty Under 40 recipients.

We are proud of you, Zac!



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CONGRATULATIONS JIM WATTS!

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Manager, Regional Development & Government Relations

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AALIYAH KISSICK 23

Occupation: Miss Illinois United States, Owner at AK Boutique
Email: info@aaliyahkissick.com
Education: BS in agricultural and consumer economics with a focus in financial planning, UIUC; graduate student, master's of science in management, UIUC
Family: Husband, Jay; mother, Cheryl; grandmother, Julia.
Affiliations/community activities: Founder, The Financial Literacy Diaries; volunteer, The Financial Literacy Foundation; veteran, Illinois Army National Guard; Talent representation, Images Agency; and previously Student Trustee at Lincoln Land Community College (2019-2020).
Memberships: Illinois Women in Leadership, Women in Leadership Central Illinois, Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois, Central Illinois Film Commission, Get Your Flicks at Route 66 Committee, Financial Planning Association, Chemical Corps Regimental Association.
What is your guiding principle in life? Deep listening solves most problems.
What led you to your current career? After running a successful boutique at 17, I loved personal finance. The boutique is online as I focus on higher education and building expertise in financial planning.
What would you like to give back to your community? I have dedicated my time in 2024 to volunteering to make financial education more accessible through my statewide platform as Miss Illinois United States and by creating The Financial Literacy Diaries. I would love to see financial education accessible to all.
What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? To quote the Wizard of Oz, "There's no place like home."
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Being a first-generation, former foster care university graduate.
What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? To slow down.



MALLORY DREWES 39

Occupation: Service Account Manager
Email: Mallory.Drewes@bunn.com
Education: Bachelor's degree, business
Family: Philip, Madalynn and Ella Rose.
Affiliations/community activities: Annual Patrick Sheehan Golf Outing that raises money for families in need locally. During my time at Capitol Radio Group, I had the opportunity to help organize and promote: Radiothon, WYMG Christmas Wish, Cooling the Capitol and Little Miracles 5K.
What is your guiding principle in life? I will never forget this quote from my Aunt Leanne: "Every job, opportunity, or event adds another tool to your toolbox of life."
What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? I hope to have more responsibilities and be a part of helping any company I am working for reach its maximum potential. I want to learn all I can about the industry and be a thoughtful leader who inspires others to grow and achieve anything they put their minds to.
What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Public speaking (and being live on the radio, TV and promotional videos).
What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Work at businesses you are interested in as a career so you have a clear vision when you get to college. Also, get out in the community to volunteer and network with locals.
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Spearheading the Patrick Sheehan Golf Outing for the past 17 years, raising \$150,000 to help families in need. Nothing is more rewarding than building a legacy of giving.
Who was your childhood/teenage celebrity crush? Zack Morris of Saved By the Bell (played by Mark-Paul Gosselaar).



JOSEPH HACKER 38

Occupation: Restaurant owner/general manager, Joseph's Fine Cuisine
Email: Braydenjoseph07@yahoo.com
Education: BS in business administration and management with a focus in entrepreneurship and franchising
Family: Wife, Dovie, and children Brayden and Adelina
What is your guiding principle in life? Pray for what you want and manifest destiny.
What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? After graduating from college during the recession, I found adversity in finding sustainable employment as a real estate broker and obtaining financing to start a business. In addition, the pandemic led to Joseph's having to temporarily close due to government mandates. Businesses like ours were forced to rally together and find solutions to survive.
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Creating employment opportunities, which benefits the growth of our local economy.
What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? During the recession in 2009, I was advised to not pursue real estate due to the economy. In hindsight, pursuing a real estate career, even part time, would have been advantageous for my professional development.
What led you to your current career? Entrepreneurship has always been a passion of mine. I built a skill set from prior positions which ultimately led to fulfilling my goal of owning and operating a business. When my partner presented the idea of opening a restaurant, I thought it was a great opportunity for not only us, but our community to experience Chef Joe Solomon's amazing food and flavor creations.
What is your greatest hope for Springfield? I pray Springfield continues to create opportunities to thrive in strategic growth and that local businesses continue to expand with the support of the community.



KYLE HUTCHINSON 36

Occupation: Video Storyteller, Neuhoff Media
Email: hutchinthradio@gmail.com
Education: Lincoln Land Community College, University of Illinois Springfield
Family: Wife, Catie, and daughter, Lizzy.
Affiliations/Community Activities: Volunteer, Land of Lincoln Honor Flight; Brand ambassador for American Cancer Society 'Men Wear Pink'; Board Member, SOB Festival.
What is your guiding principle in life? Be nice to the people you meet on the way up, because you'll meet the same people on the way down.
What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? I would say the obstacles I've overcome were in my head. Being someone who has ADHD as well as a perfectionist can give me bouts of "overthinking" or "I don't know where to begin" – in those moments, I just say start somewhere.
What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? It doesn't happen overnight. It comes from hard work, building relationships and meeting people. It's also filled with many failures.
What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? It would be helping the American Cancer Society of Central Illinois raise \$15,000 through my Brand Ambassador campaigns.
Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? When our daughter was born, it definitely changed my perspective on life. It wasn't about me anymore. It was also the 'kick in the butt' moment I needed to start tackling the goals I wanted to achieve.
What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? A journal. I try to take 20 minutes at the end of the day to reflect on personal and professional things.



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MATTHEW OVERBEY 39

Occupation: Civil engineer, CMT

Email: moverbey@cmtengr.com

Education: Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Family: Wife, Kendra, and children Mason and Emmersyn

Affiliations/community activities: Illinois Society of Professional Engineers, FBI Citizens Academy Alumni Association, Springfield Southwest Baseball Association.

What is your guiding principle in life? Process and preparation will lead to quality results.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? That current residents would do a better job of conveying to outsiders what a great community we have here.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? In five and ten years, I aim to be steadfast in my current values – growing as a leader, being my wife's favorite person and creating unforgettable memories with my children. Embracing each stage of life with humor and love, I'll weave a legacy of laughter and adventure.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? That resourcefulness, initiative and planning will allow you to achieve most goals. To develop new skills and knowledge you must be committed to lifelong learning and evolution. No one becomes an expert at anything without committing to the experience.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Being trusted with the responsibility to mentor people who are newer to the profession.



SARAH ENLOW 36



JENNA L. TUCKER 34

Occupation: Attorney and partner, Rammelkamp Bradney, P.C., Jacksonville.

Email: jenna@rblawyers.net

Education: Undergraduate degree, Bradley University; juris doctor, Southern Illinois University School of Law.

Family: Husband, Kaylob Tang, and first child due any day.

Affiliations/community activities: Member and soon-to-be past president of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville; Jacksonville Promise Foundation; past president, Morgan County Bar Association.

What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle in life is to take responsibility for your world. This philosophy reminds me that it is within my control to take actions that impact my world – whether big or small, personally, or professionally – so that even the smallest actions have a lasting impact.

What led you to your current career? My father, Alan Tucker, was the state's attorney in Mason County for most of my childhood. I learned early on that there were different types of attorneys in our world and that I could practice the law in my own style. I knew early on that I wanted to make connections and assist people with complex topics. After that, I focused on finding a firm with like-minded attorneys who would support that vision. Rammelkamp Bradney was an excellent fit for me.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish my younger self had known that the plan does not always work out exactly as you imagined but can be so much better.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Becoming a shareholder at Rammelkamp Bradney. I feel honored to practice with my fellow partners and continue a legacy of all those before me.

What's the song you sing in the shower? My favorite song to sing, in any location, is Objects in the Rear View Mirror May Appear Closer Than They Are by Meat Loaf.

Occupation: Information technology, Hanson Professional Services, Inc.

Education: Graduate Certificate in IT Project Management, University of Illinois Springfield; Bachelor of Arts, Illinois State University

Family: Spouse, Eric

Affiliations/community activities: Central Illinois Food Bank board member, instructor at Bungee x Dené Fitness, 2024 graduate of Leadership Springfield

What is your guiding principle in life? Everyone makes mistakes and no one is ever right 100% of the time. Give people grace – even when they won't give any grace to themselves.

What led you to your current career? After getting my degree in art history from Illinois State, I was working in libraries and discovered that I loved teaching technology classes at the library; I loved the detective work of helping people find that one book their friend told them about when they couldn't remember the title or author. It wasn't a straight path, but that eventually led to me to IT – I love training people and diagnosing problems.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Being a woman in IT is not always easy. It is a field of mostly men and I often have to fight to make my voice heard.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My first promotion into a leadership role in the IT department at INB. I'm not sure I even took myself seriously in the IT field until then.

Who was your childhood/teenage celebrity crush? Orlando Bloom. The year *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* was in theaters, my friend and I went to see it 12 times. That is a three-hour movie so that was some serious dedication.



ANTHONY SCHUERING 32

Occupation: Attorney, Brown, Hay & Stephens, LLP

Email: aschuering@bhslaw.com

Education: Law degree, Indiana University Maurer School of Law.

Family: Parents, Sarah and Dan; brother, Sam; and sister, Emma.

Affiliations/community activities: Past president, Downtown Springfield Inc. I also provide pro bono legal services to several regional nonprofits and community groups.

What is your guiding principle in life? When you play, play hard. When you work, don't play at all.

What led you to your current career? I have no idea. I grew up knowing that I would become a lawyer, even before I understood what lawyers did. I'm not sure how that plan developed.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? That we "crack the code" for a large-scale, sustainable downtown revitalization. There are many factors (regulatory, financing, infrastructure, etc.) that make a large-scale redevelopment extremely difficult, but I think we are capable of doing it.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Imposter syndrome.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? That you need to take time to enjoy the process instead of solely focusing on the result.

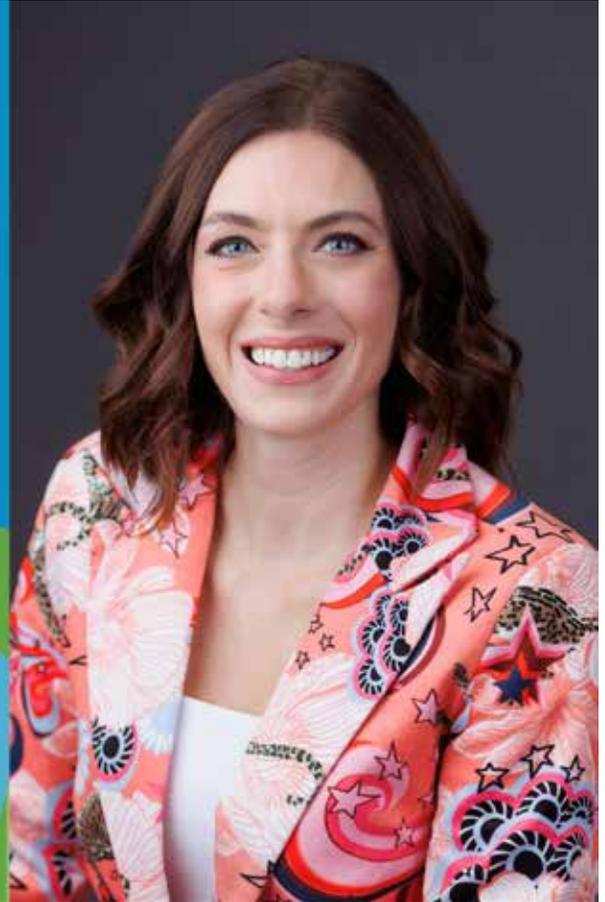
What's the song you sing in the shower? The Bird Hunters by Turnpike Troubadours.



Congratulations

Hope congratulates Jodi Ogilvy and all of the Forty Under 40 recipients of 2024!

Jodi's innovative vision and unwavering commitment to our mission make her an essential asset to our team. She is forward thinking and dedicated to supporting the individuals we serve.



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JODI OGILVY 38

Occupation: Chief communications and development officer at Hope

Email: jodi.lc.ogilvy@gmail.com

Education: Bachelor of Arts in communication, Millikin University. Currently obtaining master's in Strategic Communication from USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

Family: Husband, Graham, and daughters, Vivienne and Josephine.

Affiliations/community activities: Member of the NPR Community Advisory Board, Ambassador of Hope, Association of Fundraising Professionals member.

What is your guiding principle in life? Leave this world better than you found it.

What led you to your current career? I began my career in corporate communications and decided I needed a change. I wanted to feel that my work was helping others and making an impact. I found a job posting for a communication specialist position at Hope, and the rest is history! I love working at Hope because not only do I get to do what I love every day, but I'm also able to see the impact I make on those we serve.

What would you like to give back to your community? A legacy of kindness that I pass down to my children.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Hard work and perseverance are worth it! Do not be afraid to say yes to new opportunities.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Being named the chief communications and development officer for Hope.

What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? Someone once told me that I would never be able to do anything with a communications degree. I followed my gut instead of that advice and it has never steered me wrong.



WHITNEY CANTERBURY 35

Occupation: Director of marketing and recruitment at Mennonite College of Nursing, Illinois State University

Email: wbraue@ilstu.edu

Education: Bachelor's degree in public relations and advertising at the University of Southern Indiana

Family: Husband, Jared; two children, Camden and Olivia, and another daughter on the way.

Affiliations/community activities: Co-fundraising chair for Town and Country Women's Club, volunteer for Petersburg Athletic Association.

What is your guiding principle in life? Be quick to offer grace. Life can be difficult, and we never know what someone else is going through.

What led you to your current career? I have always enjoyed marketing, but I became passionate about my career when I found recruitment. Recruitment is a beautiful blend of marketing and developing meaningful relationships with professionals.

What would you like to give back to your community? I have had the privilege of being the co-fundraising chair for the Town and Country Women's Club and being surrounded by driven women. We had an audacious goal of raising funds for a new park for in Petersburg. With the help of elected officials, securing several grants, various fundraising efforts, and the support of our generous community, we have raised close to \$500,000 and completed our Phase 2 goal, which is new playground equipment and turf surfacing. We are \$60,000 away from completion, which includes resurfacing our basketball court and a walking path.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Learning how to balance work and life as a working mom can be challenging or at least I have found it to be. I'm still trying to master how to balance everything gracefully.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? I recently purchased a new devotional, Unshakeable, and a journaling Bible. I enjoy my time in the word to help draw closer to God and help my heart's posture.



JORDAN STOTT 38

Occupation: Accounting and finance recruiter, Express Employment Professionals

Email: Jordan.stott@expresspros.com

Education: Bachelor's degree, business management and organizational leadership, Illinois College

Family: Wife, Chrissy, and children Leah, Reagan, Jay and Levi.

Affiliations/community activities: Local First Springfield, The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Petersburg Athletic Association

What is your guiding principle in life? Do your best and think of others before yourself.

What led you to your current career? I have been blessed with wonderful people around me. My people and my desire to make a difference have led me to my current career.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is that we continue to grow. I hope that businesses thrive and families live their best lives in an environment where they are safe, happy and successful.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? I'm an introvert living in an often-extroverted world. I don't view being an introvert as an obstacle, but I do acknowledge the fact that people are different, and everyone communicates differently, and sometimes that creates obstacles. Over my career in helping people, I've enjoyed overcoming each other's personality differences and achieving success together.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Helping hundreds of accounting and finance professionals navigate their career path. At the same time, helping local organizations hire people who significantly advance their cause. I was a recent recipient of the President's Club Award; given to the top 5% in my field.

What's the song you sing in the shower? King of the Road (the Randy Travis version)



RYAN KUNKEN 38

Occupation: Owner and brewer, Springfield Beer Company; Owner, Kunken Enterprises; LLC, lead underwriter, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage.

Email: rkunken@gmail.com

Education: Bachelor's degree - business administration, Illinois State University

Family: Wife, Rebecca, and sons, Gabriel and Benjamin

What led you to your current career? I started homebrewing several years ago with a goal of trying to reproduce my favorite craft beers. This led me to start researching how to build recipes and I eventually started writing my own. For fun, I started entering local and national homebrew competitions, and to my surprise, I won some of them. This, along with having discussions with friends and family who encouraged me to write a business plan, gave me the confidence to spend the next year researching and creating the business plan that ultimately led to opening a brewery. For the past 12 years, I've also worked at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? There are many, but I would like to see Springfield become a city that has clear and achievable goals for future prosperity, along with ways to meet them. Every time I have attended a city council meeting, I'm always surprised at how disjointed each alderperson's perspectives are compared to the others. Nothing great can be accomplished with the current way the city operates in my opinion, and my hope is that changes in the near future.

What app on your phone are you ashamed to say you use? Temu

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Charles Long
for being recognized with Forty under 40!





BAILEY WOOLSEY 30

Occupation: Account executive, LRS

Email: bailey.woolsey@lrs.com

Education: B.S. Hospitality Management from Iowa State University

Family: Husband, Chris, and son, Jackson

Affiliations/community activities: Co-founder, RISE Springfield; board member, Friends of the SCCAC (Sangamon County Child Advocacy Center); coach, Central Illinois Girls Hockey Association.

What is your guiding principle in life? "There's a world out there waiting for you to conquer it." This is something my dad used to say to me and it reminds me to be fearless and relentless when it comes to following something I'm passionate about.

What led you to your current career? Tremendous amounts of hard work, constantly being curious and being open to trying new things.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish I would have understood how to own every aspect of my life. There's a book by Jocko Willink that I really like, *Extreme Ownership*, and if you haven't read it, I totally recommend it. This book changed my perspective because now that I have this mindset – I feel more empowered about making decisions.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? RISE. This group has had such a positive impact for both young professionals and the community – so being part of the team that formed RISE has been an achievement I am proud of. While I personally have learned so much being part of this team – I'm most proud of seeing how my team has also grown, and hearing from attendees how this group has positively impacted their lives.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? My son Jackson was born in the fall, and it has completely changed my perspective on just about everything. The first time I held him, I learned you could truly hold your entire world in your hands. He inspires me every day to become the best version of myself.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? A paper planner! I have to write things down. I've tried many varieties over the years but my Full Focus (planner) is by far my go-to.



CATHERYNE POPOVITCH 38

Occupation: Deputy director, Illinois State Archives, Office of the Illinois Secretary of State

Email: cnthomas09@gmail.com

Education: BA in history, Millikin University; MS in library and information science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a certificate in special collections.

Family: Husband, Jonathan, children Joseph and Jacob.

Affiliations/community activities: Council of State Archivists (Vice president/president-elect), Illinois State Historical Society (Advisory Board), Illinois State Museum Society (Board of Directors), Old State Capitol Foundation, Springfield Road Runners Club, Springfield Bicycle Club.

What is your guiding principle in life? I love the mantra "leave it better than you found it." I try to follow that advice at work, with my family and in my community.

What led you to your current career? I studied history education in college and really enjoyed doing one-on-one work with the students. I discovered that I wasn't cut out for teaching in a traditional classroom, but I love working with individuals to meet their information needs.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? In the next five/10 years I'd like things to look a lot like they are now: happy and healthy family, great relationships within the community and a career that I'm passionate about.

What would you like to give back to your community? Government archives are essential to document government actions and protect citizens' rights. I'd like to continue to serve the people of Illinois by making our state's public records as accessible as possible and to encourage the next generation of Illinoisians to learn about our state's rich and diverse history.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish I had learned years ago to be confident in difficult situations and to trust that I could accomplish what needed to be done.

What's the song you sing in the shower? Lately it's been Ocean Avenue by Yellowcard.



ETHAN J. POSEY 32

Occupation: Director of community relations, city of Springfield

Email: posey.ethan1@gmail.com

Education: BS in psychology, Howard University, and an MS in community psychology from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.

Family: Wife, Tiffany Mathis Posey, and four children, Avery, Nylah, August and Leena.

Affiliations: Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., Leadership Springfield 2023 Cohort, RISE Young Professionals.

What is your guiding principle in life?

My guiding principle is the motto for my fraternity – "Culture for Service, Service for Humanity." If what you do in life is done in the service of others, then your actions will undoubtedly make a positive impact in your community and in the world.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?

I wish my younger self knew not to take criticism personally in a professional setting.

What led you to your current career? After working as a family and community engagement liaison for Student Support Services with District 186, Mayor Misty Buscher told me her vision for a better Springfield and how I could be a vital role in shaping it into reality. She offered me the opportunity to lead the Office of Community Relations and shape it into what I think it should be. Despite my lack of directorial experience, she has trusted and supported my leadership every step of the way. I am grateful for her faith in me and for the dedication of a phenomenal team.

What would you like to give back to your community? I'd like to give back opportunity and advice, especially to young men and women of color in our city.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? In the last year I married my best friend, Tiffany Mathis Posey, which gave me three beautiful bonus children: Avery, Nylah and August. My baby girl Leena-Alison Posey was born three months later. My perspective on life has shifted to be centered on them instead of myself. I want to keep them safe and make them proud with every decision I make both personally and professionally.

What's the best purchase you've made in the last six months? The Deception trailer hitch and matching emblems for my truck.



JAMES WATTS 39

Occupation: Manager, donor and government relations, ImpactLife

Email: jwatts@impactlife.org

Education: Bachelor's degree, politics and government, Illinois State University; master's of business administration, Benedictine University.

Family: Wife, Rebecca, and children, Jaelyn, Jensen and Jaden

Affiliations/community activities: President, Illinois Coalition of Community Blood Centers; chair, Conference Committee, The Association for Blood Donor Professionals; vice chair, Public Policy Council, America's Blood Centers; member, Illinois Homeland Security Advisory Council; volunteer coach, Rochester Youth Athletic Association.

What is your guiding principle in life?

Build people up and be considerate of all people. You never know what someone else is going through, or the challenges they have already overcome to be where they are now.

What led you to your current career?

After a workforce reduction at my previous employer, I found myself looking for a new venture. At the time I did not know much about blood donation outside of my own experiences as a donor. Since then I have come to love the mission and vision of ImpactLife, our local community blood bank.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is that we as a community continue to support all of our local citizens and businesses. I hope we continue to expand on business opportunities and to be a beacon in the health care industry.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? As a first-generation college student, early in my career I had to overcome significant self-doubt and a sense of imposter syndrome. Over the years I have had many great professional mentors who have helped me reach my career goals.

What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? "Follow your passion," because that doesn't always pay the bills.

What app on your phone are you ashamed to say you use? Temu.



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Vice President
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion



LANCE MILLBURG
Vice President
and Chief Quality Officer

CONGRATULATIONS SARAH HARTWICK



on being named to the **Springfield Business Journal's 40 Under 40**. Sarah is the **IMA Vice President of Education & Workforce Policy** and the **Executive Director of the IMA Education Foundation**. Sarah works tirelessly to connect our manufacturers and educators to build our future workforce.

We are proud of you!





**TIA
MAHR**
38

Occupation: Entrepreneur, executor director of Made by Monea

Email: tmonea@madebymonea.com

Education: Bachelor of arts, communications, University of Illinois Springfield

Family: Proud aunt of 17.

Affiliations/community activities: Chair, Queens Table, women's entrepreneur social club; Northside Church of Christ.

What is your guiding principle in life? Keep God first and the golden rule – treat others how you would want to be treated.

What led you to your current career? I started my entrepreneurial journey after finishing college. I was a first-generation college student and was totally lost after I graduated. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do but knew I wanted to help people in some form. After completing intensive research, I obtained entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that I love sharing and implementing with clients. I'm the proud owner of Made by Monea, a business consulting firm. I help entrepreneurs stay in business by helping them obtain financial support for their businesses. I specialize in providing personalized business services with budget friendly options. I have a passion for helping others and I think regardless of a client's budget, they're still very deserving of help to start a business. I have helped hundreds of clients all over the world with business funding ranging from small business grants to building business credit. I take pride in being a powerhouse when it comes to working for my clients and I'm willing to get my clients the results they deserve.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish my younger self would've known that college is not the only option to being successful in life.



**CLAYTON
YANTIS**
39

Occupation: Recruitment manager, Illinois Department of Transportation; Illinois and Iowa state lead for The Fallen Outdoors.

Email: clay_41_2000@yahoo.com

Education: Bachelor's degree, business administration, and master's degree, project management. Family: Wife and four children.

Affiliations/community activities: The Fallen Outdoors – a national nonprofit for veterans specializing in outdoor adventures and therapeutic activities. Active member of Chatham-Auburn VFW 4763.

What is your guiding principle in life? If it's worth doing – do it right.

What led me to help veterans? I served 13 years in the U.S. Army before being medically retired. I had a hard time adjusting after my overseas tours and the lifestyle changes that come with transitioning. If I can provide some guidance and help to local veterans through outdoor therapeutic adventures and building a stronger, more resilient veteran community, then I owe that to them and their families.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? In five years I would like to be a part of the national board for The Fallen Outdoors.

What would you like to give back to your community? I'd like to give back to every veteran, whether they were a mother, father, son or daughter that didn't think they had someone to call or someone that could just understand what haunted them. Our organization refers as many PTSD/Suicide hotlines and VA resources as we can.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? I can be my own obstacle at times. Like everyone, I want to be more than I am but at the end of the day, I am making a difference for my own community and that's something I have to remember.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Just because they sit in a glass office with degrees on the wall doesn't mean they are smarter than you. When you find yourself in that glass office – stay humble enough to know that if you are the smartest man in the room – you need to find a different room.



**AMBER
SPAINHOUR**
38

Occupation: Assistant deputy director, labor relations, CMS, state of Illinois.

Email: amspainhour12@gmail.com

Education: Master's degree in public administration, University of Illinois Springfield; Bachelor's degree, Eastern Illinois University.

Family: Immediate family is my 4-year-old Labrador, Jed.

Affiliations/community activities: Board member, Girls on the Run of Central Illinois; member, Illinois Women in Leadership.

What is your guiding principle in life? Stay humble. Hustle hard.

What led you to your current career? I've always had a passion for public service and believe that public service is an agent of good that can have a profound impact on the lives of those around us, even through the smallest of changes.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is that we continue to grow as a community and continue to put creative resources into our schools and downtown areas to make them places people want to be. Sometimes I cannot believe I have been a part of this community for 15 years after initially only coming here for graduate school. This is my home and I would love to see it continue to grow.

What would you like to give back to your community? Over the last several years I have served within multiple nonprofit organizations and would like to find new pathways to serve in the Springfield area, teaching the value of service to youth and young adults within our community.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Impressions matter always. Opportunities for growth and promotion may not always come from those immediately above you in the organizational chain.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? A memory foam mattress pad because I'm not there yet, but getting close to 40!



**MICHAEL
MORGAN**
36

Occupation: Director of grants, Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois.

Email: Michael.Morgan0226@gmail.com

Education: BS in Public Relations, Southeast Missouri State University; MBA, Lindenwood University.

Family: Wife, Abby, and sons Eli and Mason

Affiliations/community activities: Volunteer mentor and middle school program coordinator at The Outlet, a mentoring nonprofit program.

What is your guiding principle in life? I try to give my best and support others. I believe we grow more when we uplift each other.

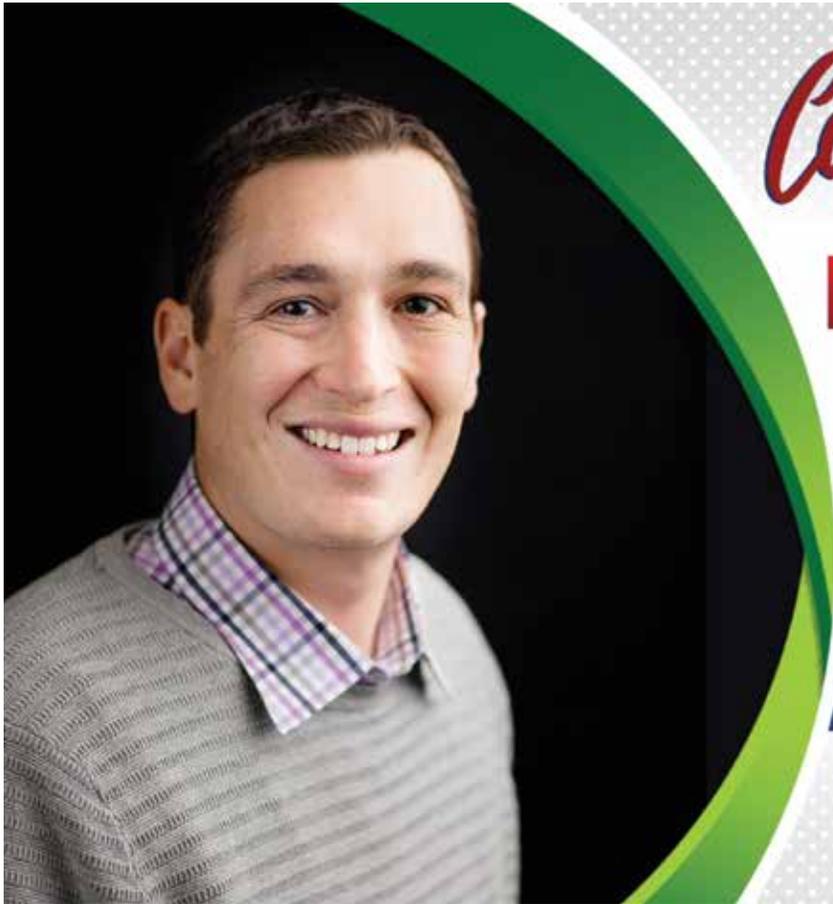
What led you to your current career? My career path is inspired by my mother, who dedicated her life to helping our community. She tirelessly supported families, even during our tough times. Watching her make a difference taught me the value of service. I strive to follow her example by making a positive impact in my work.

What would you like to give back to your community? I want to help young people become their best by providing support, resources and encouragement. I believe our future depends on their potential to create a better world. Through mentorship, education, and safe spaces for growth, I aim to empower them to pursue their dreams and succeed.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? If I could give my younger self advice, I'd say: "Focus on your priorities and work hard. Tackle challenges now to create freedom for your passions later." Also, "Enjoy the journey." Find joy in the process, not just the destination. Lastly, "Learn from everyone you meet." Their insights can help you grow.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest professional achievement is founding "What's Next Fair" at The Little Bit Foundation in St. Louis. It started small but grew into a major event, helping students explore careers and connect with professionals.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? In the last six months, my best purchases have been a baseball batting net, a soccer goal and a wiffle ball set. They've helped me bond with my sons and watch them improve at sports.



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LANCE MILLBURG 37

Occupation: Vice president, chief quality officer, Memorial Health

Email: Work: millburg.lance@mhsil.com; Personal: lmillburg@gmail.com

Family: Wife, Becky; children Claire, Lydia, Andrew and Benjamin; and parents, Michael and Cindy.

Affiliations/Community Activities: Holy Cross Parish in Auburn, Part-time musician at St. Maurice in Morrisonville, Knights of Columbus member (Auburn Council), volunteer baseball coach (Auburn Youth Baseball/Softball Association).

What is your guiding principle in life? I firmly believe hard work and dedication to one's craft brings not only professional success, but personal joy. I also believe that one's integrity is the foundation that everything else is built upon.

What led you to your current career?

The most influential role for me was becoming a quality improvement practitioner. All the different clinical and non-clinical challenges, as well as working with so many amazing leaders from all walks of life I was able to learn from, have shaped me into the leader I am.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? Central Illinois has been home to me all my life, and Springfield has played an instrumental part. My greatest hope is that Springfield continues to be that "biggest small-town" where people continue to feel welcome and safe to be who they are and reach their potential.

What would you like to give back to your community? A quote that has guided me for years is: "Leadership matters." My leaders throughout my career saw within me something I didn't see in myself and helped me flourish into who I am today. It is my goal in my career to likewise lend a helping hand wherever I can to help people reach their goals.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Achieving my Baldrige Executive Fellowship. It is a prestigious recognition for business excellence.

What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? The worst career advice I have ever heard is to maximize profit. Not because profit is bad, but because we should focus on maximizing value, which is broader than just profit. Maximizing profit often involves cutting corners, reducing resources and is almost always short-term focused. Maximizing value looks at all stakeholders and determines how to create the most benefit for all.

RACHEL SELVAGGIO 30

Occupation: Director, Illinois Bankers Association

Email: rselvaggio@illinois.bank

Education: Master of business administration and bachelor of science, applied communication studies – public relations, both from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Family: Husband, Stephen, and sons Benjamin and Harrison Selvaggio

Affiliations/community activities: Executive committee member, RISE Springfield; Springfield's Young Professionals Network; Co-chair, RISE Events Subcommittee; Member, American Bankers Association's Emerging Leaders Council

What is your guiding principle in life?

Though it may seem cliché, I firmly believe everything happens for a reason.

What led you to your current career?

Entering my current career, I brought over five years of experience in event planning and over five years of experience in banking. My current job is a marriage of the two, allowing me to plan educational events for bankers across Illinois.

What would you like to give back to your community? My engagement with the RISE Young Professionals Network revolves around our mission to provide Springfield's young professionals with networking, learning, and community service opportunities. My objective is to sustain and advance this initiative.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?

Transitioning into a career-focused role while embracing motherhood has been a significant achievement. Balancing the responsibilities of being a devoted mother/wife, a committed employee, and an engaged community member has been both challenging and fulfilling.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Aside from this honor, I am privileged to have been chosen as one of four state banking association professionals to represent Illinois and the banking community on the American Bankers Association's Emerging Leaders Council.

What's the song you sing in the shower? I cannot stop singing Stick Season by Noah Kahan or Espresso by Saprana Carpenter.



MISTY ADAMS 35

Occupation: CPA/Chief Financial Officer, Bank of Springfield

Email: madams@bankwithbos.com

Education: Bachelor of Science, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and master's degree, accountancy, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

Family: Spouse, Jeremy Adams; son, Mason Adams; parents, Bill and Brenda Gauch; brother, Corbin Gauch

Affiliations/community activities: Board member, secretary and finance committee member of Sojourn Shelter & Services, Inc.; board member and secretary of Pregnancy Care Center, Springfield Park District ad hoc audit committee member.

What is your guiding principle in life? Don't sweat the small stuff.

What led you to your current career? When I was young, my dad would always joke about me going to college, getting my CPA license and opening up our own family business where he would reap the rewards of my mom (who is also an accountant) and I doing all the work. Fast forward to college, I really didn't have any better plans and I thought I would be able to make a nice living as an accountant. I ended up liking the classes and the rest is history!

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? I plan to continue my professional development in my current position as CFO of Bank of Springfield. My husband and I are expecting another child in October 2024, so I look forward to both children being out of diapers.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Don't be afraid to ask questions! It is likely that if you are thinking it, someone else in the room probably is, too. Also, don't take feedback or constructive criticisms personally.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Passing the CPA exam was a major accomplishment.

What's the WORST career advice you've ever received? I can't say that I have had bad career advice. I have been very fortunate over the years to have co-workers, supervisors and mentors who have guided me in the right direction.



JONATHAN VALUCK 37

Occupation: Regional president, Prairie State Bank & Trust

Email: jvaluck@psbank.net

Education: Bachelors degree in communication and accounting - Illinois College

Family: Wife, Angela, and sons Landon, Camden and Logan.

Affiliations/community activities: Treasurer, Springfield Road Runners Club.

What is your guiding principle in life? Embrace change and always be growing.

What led you to your current career? I started as a part-time teller while attending Illinois College. However, I did not plan on becoming a lifelong banker back then!

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? That Springfield continues to build a diverse community with affordable housing and quality schools. I would love to see us expand our recreational opportunities as well.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?

Prioritize your health and mental well-being. You can best help others when you yourself are healthy and happy.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Becoming the regional president of a very successful community bank.

What app on your phone are you ashamed to say you use? Twitter, or as some people call it, X.



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Thanks to Gies Online, Aaliyah could pursue an MSM while traveling the State of Illinois. She's proud to be an Illini and Gies Ambassador.

Additional Titles

Director of PR for The Financial Literacy / Foundation Founder and CEO of The Financial Literacy Diaries | Owner of AK Boutique

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SARAH HARTWICK

39

Occupation: Vice president of education and work-force policy, Illinois Manufacturers' Association, and executive director, IMA Education Foundation

Email: shartwick@ima-net.org

Education: MPA

Family: Children Jude, Cooper, Silas and Layla.

What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle is that it's okay to love hard and take one day at a time. Life can get extremely busy and overwhelming so taking things one day at a time and not being afraid to take chances on the things and people that I love has been the most rewarding to me.

What led you to your current career? I had an economics teacher in high school that opened my eyes to the impact of government leaders. I attended University of Illinois at Springfield where I took advantage of every internship that I could, including staffing the education committees for the Illinois House of Representatives. It was there that I found my passion for education policy and have spent the past 15 years in roles advocating for public education.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? I look forward to the day when the downtown area has more residents to truly make it a community where people live, eat and gather.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? I would not call this an obstacle, but I was challenged as a working mother after the birth of my children. After my oldest was born and I returned to work, I received an awful performance review. I was determined to continue working and I learned so much about myself. Never be ashamed of needing to ask for help.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? It is such an honor to be part of the 40 Under 40 list for Springfield. I am thankful to have been recognized and honored by my peers at this moment in my life because I know I could not have achieved what I have achieved without the support of my personal village.

What's the song you sing in the shower? Florida by Taylor Swift featuring Florence and the Machine.



CLARE ZIMMERMAN

35

Occupation: Pediatric hematologist/oncologist, SIU Medicine.

Email: clare.zimmerman.md@gmail.com

Education: Board certified in pediatrics and pediatric hematology/oncology; Washington University master's degree in clinical investigation; Washington University Pediatric hematology/oncology fellowship; Loyola University pediatric residency; SIU School Of Medicine; Illinois College.

Family: Husband, Brian Atlas, son, Leo Atlas; parents: Maureen Farmer and Richard Zimmerman; brother, John Zimmerman.

Affiliations/community activities: Chair, SIU Medicine Institutional Review Board; moderator, SIU Medicine Research Symposium; Leadership and Service in Pediatrics Committee, SIU Medicine; Pediatric Residency Clinical Competency Committee, SIU Medicine; Physician Pipeline Preparatory Program, SIU Medicine; Mid America Emergency Symposium speaker, Memorial Learning Center; Children's Miracle Network Radiothon; Relay for Life Springfield, 2024; Illinois College Alumni Board 2018-2023; St. Agnes Parish member, choir member and cantor; Panther Creek Country Club member.

What led you to your current career? From the time I was a little girl, I always wanted to be a pediatrician. I decided to specialize in pediatric hematology and oncology when I was in my pediatric residency.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? As chair of the Institutional Review Board at SIU Medicine, I am hopeful that we will continue to see increased cutting-edge research coming to Springfield.

What would you like to give back to your community? While I often tell my friends and families I hope that I never have to see their kids in my clinic, it is reassuring that we have great pediatric subspecialty care right here in Springfield at SIU Medicine. Not having to travel far for excellent medical care is helpful and convenient for families.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest achievement is when I see my patients thriving and doing well after completing therapy.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? The birth of my son, Leo, in November. While I always felt I was empathetic to my patients' families, becoming a mother has really changed my perspective as a pediatric physician and made me a better doctor.

What's the song you sing in the shower? I am a big Swiftie and currently singing any song from The Tortured Poets Department.

DR. RICHA PANDEY

39

Occupation: Nephrologist (kidney doctor)

Email: doc.richa@gmail.com

Education: MBBS, MD medicine, and specialized in kidney disease

Family: Husband, Dr. Rajan Kochar, and two daughters.

Affiliations/community activities: President, Asian Indian Women's organization

What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle in life is to approach each day with integrity and honesty. I believe in striving to be honest in my actions, and continually seeking to grow and learn. This principle helps me navigate challenges, build meaningful relationships and contribute positively to the world around me.

What led you to your current career? My mother encouraged me to pursue a career in medicine, believing in its stability and the positive impact it has on people's lives. While becoming a Bollywood actor was my first choice, I decided to give medicine a try. As I progressed through my studies and began interacting with patients, I discovered a deep passion for helping others and a genuine interest in medical science. This journey has taught me the value of compassion, resilience, and the profound difference health care can make.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is equal access to quality health care, education and growth opportunities. I envision a holistic, preventative health care approach, strong local partnerships and a spirit of volunteerism, creating an inclusive, thriving community where everyone feels supported and empowered.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest professional achievement to date has been earning the trust and affection of my patients. Knowing that I've made a meaningful impact on their lives through my care and strong relationships is incredibly rewarding and validates my commitment to my profession.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? The best purchase would have to be a convertible standing desk and a walking pad. My standing desk and walking pad have revolutionized my workspace, allowing me to stay active during long shifts and improve my overall well-being.

