

# FORTY UNDER 40 2021

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## Elizabeth Bazan

**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** Assistant curator of education, Illinois State Museum

**Email:** ebazan1107@gmail.com

**Education:** Master of Learning and Visitor Studies in Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester

**Family:** Spouse Tom Bazan

**Affiliations/community activities:** Illinois Association of Museums board member, Kiwanis Club of Springfield-Downtown, Young Philanthropists, Knox College Alumni Council secretary, Cherry Hills Church member and volunteer.



**What is your guiding principle in life?** I don't know that I've had a principle, but I have had a guiding person. As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I am committed to studying the Bible and listening to the guiding influence of His spirit in my life, seeking to be more like Him – humble, honest and loving – in all that I do.

**What led you to your current career?** I have wanted to be a teacher since childhood. Then, in college I fell in love with art history. My art history professor suggested that museum education would naturally combine both interests. After graduation, I began in the formal classroom, but found that informal education better fits the way that I enjoy both teaching and learning.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** Springfield is a place deeply connected to some parts of its past. I hope that it can become a place more connected to all parts of its history, embracing the stories of those who have not been heard before to become a place where every citizen feels a sense of belonging and ownership of their city.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** In 2019, I was selected to be part of the Transatlantic Seminar for Museum Curators and Educators on Museums as Spaces for Social Discourse and Learning organized by Fulbright Germany, the Leibniz Association and the Smithsonian Institution. The experience culminated in a guest-edited edition of the *Journal of Museum Education* in 2021 for which I co-authored an article entitled "Repatriation, Public Programming and the DEAI Toolkit." I continue to be excited about the work this group of international colleagues can accomplish.

## Jennifer Bosaw

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Vice president of collections, Heartland Credit Union

**Email:** jenniferb@hcu.org

**Education:** Graduate of Pleasant Plains High School

**Family:** Spouse, Will, and children Kaydence and Alayna

**Affiliations/community activities:** Family advisory board member at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital, Children's Miracle Network volunteer, United Way and Habitat for Humanity volunteer, assisting our daughters and neighborhood girls to organize a food drive and deliveries and as well as collecting items for the Ronald McDonald



House and delivering them. 2015 Heart of Gold Award recipient and 2019 Leadership Springfield graduate.

**What led you to your current career?** I have been with Heartland Credit Union for 18 years and knew as soon as I started working here that this is where I wanted to make my career. You could not ask for a better company for which to work. They genuinely care for their employees and are family-oriented. I would say helping members reach their financial goals has been one of the most rewarding features of my career.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Being able to gain the knowledge, experience and growth that I have within the credit union. I have been in multiple roles while at Heartland including teller, teller supervisor, phone center/teller manager, member service officer, branch manager and now my most recent position as vice president of collections. Working in so many different areas within the credit union has not only helped me to learn the different aspects of each job, but has also helped me to build relationships with our members and understand the members' needs. I feel this has definitely assisted me in attempting to achieve our mission statement, "To improve members' lives."

**How have the events of this year affected you?** The events of the past year have shown me to truly be grateful for how blessed we are: to stop, slow down in life and take the time to soak in the important things, such as quality time with family. Seeing our community come together to get through this pandemic has been inspiring and only fuels the drive to continue to help others.

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](http://springfieldbusinessjournal.com) to view selectees from previous years.

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## Erin Bromley

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** System administrator, supply chain at Memorial Health System

**Email:** bromley.erin@mhsil.com

**Education:** Master of Science in health services administration, University of Evansville

**Family:** Spouse, Zach, and children Cal and Sloan

**Affiliations/community activities:** Hope Institute board member, Central Illinois Foodbank board member, Memorial United Way committee member, Springfield Christian School volunteer, 2011 Leadership Springfield graduate.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** "Whatever you are, be a good one." –Abraham Lincoln

**What led you to your current career?** I always knew I wanted to be in health care and have the opportunity to help people. I explored several professions within our industry and honed in on the business side, as it allowed me to utilize my skillset to improve health in our community.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** I hope Springfield continues to build its reputation as a great place to live and raise a family. I hope we remain diligent about supporting local businesses and continue to welcome new businesses to our city.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** As Memorial Health System has grown over the years, I have had the opportunity to integrate our supply chain operations into a true system structure. I am fortunate to work with an unbelievably talented team to make this integration possible. This work includes contract consolidation, bundling capital equipment purchasing, integrating our staffing model and consolidating our information systems.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** We have all handled unbelievable challenges at home and at work during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this year has been challenging, it has also been extremely rewarding for me professionally and personally. It has been an incredible experience to see our health care community come together to protect and serve.



## Melissa Coultas

**Age:** 36

**Occupation:** Chief of staff, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

**Email:** Melissa.coultas@illinois.gov

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in business administration, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Family:** Spouse, John, and son Ollie

**Affiliations/community activities:** Springfield Road Runners and Illinois Women in Leadership.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** In all of your affairs, do the next right thing.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** It is

important to consider that Springfield is home to some of the nation's most talented professionals in community planning and development. Our people are passionate and active on a vast spectrum of important issues. And, our city has some of the state's richest untapped community resources in talent and potential. However, Springfield suffers from a longstanding set of conflicts and divisions that stifle advancement. My greatest hope is to experience an expansion of unity and understanding among all communities in Springfield.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** For my professional life, I would be grateful to continue to be of service to the people of Illinois. On a personal level, I look forward to being a parent and active community member.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** I've faced numerous personal and professional challenges along the way, but I have been fortunate to have learned from others how important it is to recognize that I have character flaws that I can seek to change. Professionally, I've been questioned more than once whether my educational experience and credentials are appropriate qualifications for me to do the job. I've used these challenges to drive my work, rather than let it hold me back.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Running the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, which is a state agency, that bears the name of our nation's greatest president, during a pandemic, while implementing a variety of changes to better serve the people of Illinois and the patrons from around the world who rely on the services our institution provides.



## Gina Carnduff

**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** System director of infection control, Memorial Health System

**Email:** carnduff.gina@mhsil.com

**Education:** Master of Public Health, University of Illinois Springfield

**Family:** Spouse, Dominic, children Aiden and Ava, and two dogs, Franklin and Rosie

**Affiliations/community activities:** Volunteer at Little Flower Church and Ball-Chatham School.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well.

**What led you to your current career?** I have always had a passion to care for others, which led me to the nursing field, following in the footsteps of my mother. While caring for patients at the bedside, I discovered my passion for wanting to improve the quality of care that was being delivered to patients. I started my career in infection prevention in 2013 and learned it is an incredible field where there are many opportunities to problem solve and collaborate with other health care professionals to provide for the best patient outcomes.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** I hope to be spending more time with family and friends and attending community events in a thriving, post-pandemic state.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** Self-doubt. Throughout my career, I have learned setting and achieving realistic personal and professional goals was the key to building my confidence and strength as a leader.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Having the opportunity to serve as the system director of infection control for Memorial Health System during a world-wide pandemic of a novel disease. I am proud of the countless hours and work that was done to protect patients, colleagues and the community during these scary and uncertain times.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Being charged with the responsibility to assist in leading a pandemic response has been one of the most challenging, yet rewarding, times in my career and my lifetime. These events have made me stronger, wiser and, most of all, appreciative for my family, friends, health and community.



## Cliff Bumgarner

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Partner at KEB

**Email:** cliffb@kebcpa.com

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in accounting, Millikin University

**Family:** Spouse, Emily, and children Ty and Elly

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Always do everything you ask of those you command. This guides me in my career and as a parent of two very observant kids.

**What led you to your current career?** When starting my career, the constant change and opportunity to work with a variety of businesses attracted me to public accounting. KEB's culture and an amazing group of peers and mentors has kept me here.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** I hope Springfield continues to adapt and grow in order to attract young talent to Springfield to begin their careers and build the community.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** The past year has taught me not to take the little things for granted and to enjoy time spent with family and friends.

# FORTY UNDER 40<sup>2021</sup>





## Denysa Crawford

**Age:** 33

**Occupation:** Human resources representative at the Executive Ethics Commission

**Education:** Master of Science in human resources management

**Family:** Spouse, Sean, and children Kynnedi, Emeri and Rudy

**Affiliations/community activities:** Cathedral of Praise Christian Center, Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln's Young Philanthropists, Girl Scouts of Central Illinois board member, Rotary Club of Springfield, Society for Human Resource Management, Illinois

Women in Leadership, Southeast High School cheerleading volunteer.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** My greatest professional challenge was leaping into the world of human resources. These past few years required a consistent approach to nurturing my passions and investing in myself. To make sure I was heading in the right direction, I took stock of my personal and professional achievements. This allowed me to focus on my plan and how I would overcome the obstacles or challenges. I discovered through this process that it wasn't the skillsets required of most human resources professionals today that drove my success, but drive, dedication and a passion for human resources that ultimately got me here.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** Be patient, listen and don't rush the process.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** I was asked to step into a role that had been neglected for years. I was tasked to lead a department through transitioning from new management and, unknown at the time, through the pandemic. As a new leader, this was a challenging task, but with a pandemic on the rise, the pressure was indescribable. It was important to me that I honored the legacy of the agency, while also preparing it for a new era of innovation and growth. To do so, I had to focus on observing and learning the details of the culture and agency that had been built over the years. Having a deep understanding of both, before making any major strategic changes, was critical to my success.



## Nathan Davis

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Project engineer/project manager, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.

**Email:** ndavis@cmtengr.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in civil engineering, Bradley University

**Family:** Spouse, Krista, and children Lilly, Emma and Millie

**Affiliations/community activities:** Springfield Citizens Club, Illinois Water Environment Association first vice president and committee member, Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies and the Water

Environment Federation. I also participate in volunteer events through the United Way and regularly organize group participation for our company.

**What led you to your current career?** I knew growing up that I wanted to go into a STEM profession. I was already leaning towards civil engineering when I got a summer job at the Galesburg wastewater treatment plant while in high school. That led me to decide to go into civil engineering with a focus on environmental engineering. I got an internship with Crawford, Murphy & Tilly while in college and have been with them ever since.

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

To get involved in more professional organizations while in college. I was involved in campus-based engineering organizations, but I was not really aware of some of the opportunities for students at the state and federal levels.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** A proud moment was seeing both treatment plants for the Sangamon County Water Reclamation District fill with water for the first time after working on the planning and design. I am also excited to be managing the design of a treatment plant upgrade for the Galesburg Sanitary District where I worked as summer help while in high school. It has been a great experience being able to go from working as summer help to now working to assist with a plant upgrade that will replace a 1930s facility with a new, modern treatment process that will serve the community for years after I retire.



## Megan Crouch

**Age:** 33

**Occupation:** Physician liaison, Springfield Clinic

**Email:** megancrouch@gmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in marketing, Indiana University

**Family:** Spouse Jody, twins Connor and Claire, and baby number three due in December

**Affiliations/community activities:** Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln's Young Philanthropists

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Do the

right thing, even when no one is watching.

**What led you to your current career?** While living in Texas, my three-month-old son had unexpected surgery on his trachea. Our experience at the hospital was incredible, given the circumstances, and made me realize I wanted to make a career shift and pursue health care.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** My hope is that Springfield can continue to attract young families and businesses. I believe that organizations such as the Community Foundation for Land of Lincoln, with The Next 10 community visioning plan, and Illinois Local, with its mission to highlight local businesses, will be able to do just that.

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

When I started in corporate sales, it was difficult to not compare my achievements to my peers. I wish I would have realized that personal satisfaction within your role is far more important.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** This past year has caused my family to reflect on what is most important to us, and having our children grow up with their extended family was a top priority. I grew up in central Illinois, and my family recently moved back to Chatham from Texas. I'm grateful to have been given the opportunity I have with Springfield Clinic, and my husband and kids agree that this is where we were meant to be.



## Katharine Eastvold

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Policy adviser, Office of the Attorney General of Illinois

**Email:** keastvold@gmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in politics, Princeton University. Pursuing a juris doctorate at Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

**Family:** Fiancé, Kenneth Lowe, and children Charles, Kristianna, Kate and Juliana

**Affiliations/Community Activities:** Springfield Families Helping Families, District 186 school meal delivery volunteer coordinator, Lincoln Memorial

Garden, serve as editor-in-chief for Vol. 53 of the *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** To use what I've been given in the service of others for whatever time I have and, as Dylan Thomas put it, to "rage, rage against the dying of the light."

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** I hope we realize that it is within our power to make this city a better place for all of us to live. Springfield has significant challenges and we shouldn't paper over the problems. I see them as a reason to stay and advocate for our neighbors, not to move away or check out. I want us to start seeing ourselves as a compassionate, creative, forward-looking community and then do whatever it takes to turn that vision true.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** This past year has demonstrated to me the power of an individual's decision to lift up others or to cause harm. I've watched generous people start asking what they can do to help and end up meeting overlooked needs while giving hope and inspiring others to follow suit. And, I've watched other people endanger their neighbors through their refusal to bear even the slightest personal inconvenience for anyone else's sake. This has been profoundly discouraging at times, but it has taught me to not hold back from doing good out of fear that it's not the right way or the right time. We should never doubt that our actions or inaction can save a life or cost one. The stakes are that big, and not just during a pandemic.

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# Congratulations

All of us at Memorial Health System are proud to contribute to the health of our community. And now, we're delighted **Erin Bromley** and **Gina Carnduff** are Forty Under 40 recipients. This achievement is a symbol of their dedication and commitment to our mission to improve the health of the people and communities we serve.



**Erin Bromley, MS**  
System Administrator  
Supply Chain  
Memorial Health System



**Gina Carnduff, MPH, BSN, RN**  
System Director  
Infection Prevention  
Memorial Health System




## Congratulations Megan Crouch

SPRINGFIELD CLINIC PHYSICIAN LIAISON

on receiving recognition in the  
**SBJ Forty under 40.**








ORTHOPEDIC  
CENTER OF ILLINOIS

CONGRATULATIONS

Christopher  
Graves, MD  
Orthopedic Spine Surgeon

ON BEING NAMED ONE OF  
SPRINGFIELD'S 40 UNDER 40!



# Congratulati ons!



**Cliff Bumgarner, CPA**  
Partner

Cliff provides audit, tax, and consulting services for financial institutions, construction contractors and other closely held businesses.

*We are proud to have him on our team!*



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# CONGRATULATIONS Erik Williams!

Erik has been with Springfield Electric since 2004, and has served customers in various roles, most recently in outside sales.



Springfield Electric is proud to congratulate Erik Williams and all of the Springfield Business Journal 2021 40 Under 40 Winners.

Springfield Electric Supply Co. opened in 1932 in Springfield, IL. Today, Springfield Electric serves 19 locations throughout 4 states.

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**Jade Ebert**  
Age: 31  
Occupation: Salon owner/stylist, The Hair Studio  
Email: JadeDeanne67@yahoo.com  
Education: Graduate of the University of Spa and Cosmetology Arts. Pursuing a liberal arts degree at Lincoln Land Community College.  
Family: Fiancé, Jimmy, our children Cayden, Cameron, Christian and Clayton, my step-daughter Carissa, nephew, Treyton, and our dog Zeus.  
Affiliations/community activities: Aiding local homeless shelters, Toys for Tots, Sojourn Shelter and Services, Ronald McDonald House and local food and coat drives.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** If it's to be, it's up to me!

**What led you to your current career?** A passion for all things beauty – hair, skin, makeup, nails. I have always loved being creative with hair, so I enrolled in cosmetology school when I was 19 years old.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** I think the one that takes the cake would definitely be my first salon being driven into by a drunk driver, condemned, then torn down with everything inside. Starting completely over with nothing was definitely my biggest obstacle.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** It's not cupcakes and rainbows! It's hard work, long days and a never-ending learning process. You will fail and fall, time and time again. How you recover is what makes the difference.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** My current expansion. My salon is now home to so many wonderful women entrepreneurs, and that alone is one of my greatest achievements – to build a beauty dream team while allowing them to be their own bosses and build their own businesses. It's wonderful.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Learning to adapt as a business owner during a global pandemic was a learning experience for sure. Trying to continue services and keep the doors open with new guidelines on how to do so was very trying, but we made it through.



**Colleen Flinn**  
Age: 34  
Occupation: Owner, Nothing Fancy Supply Co.  
Email: nothingfancysp@gmail.com  
Education: Masters of Social Work, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
Family: Spouse, Tim, and children Cashin, Robyn and Leo  
Affiliations/community activities: Vendor at the Old Capitol Farmers Market, mentor for aspiring business owners and small business advocate

**What led you to your current career?** I wanted to reduce the amount of waste leaving our home and going to the landfill. I couldn't find any beeswax food wraps locally, so I made some, and the rest is history.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** I would like to continue to expand Nothing Fancy Supply Co. to grow into other sustainable product options while providing prosperous opportunities for our employees.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I hope to continue to educate customers about the difference they can make using reusable packaging rather than cling wrap or plastic zip bags. If they use the wraps and reduce their waste, then I have made a small contribution to saving our planet, one wrap at a time.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** The obvious, such as teaching myself to make beeswax food wraps and improving the method over time, learning to be a business owner, how to employ and manage staff, marketing and social media – the list goes on. However, I am thankful for each obstacle because I have overcome it, learned from the experience and became a stronger version of myself.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Nothing Fancy Supply Co. beeswax food wraps were featured in *Midwest Living Magazine*, which was extremely exciting for my business of just two years.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Honestly, when the pandemic hit and the country went on lockdown, it provided me two opportunities – an opportunity to stop and evaluate my business, make changes and grow and an opportunity to spend quality time with my children and husband, time I will forever cherish.

**FORTY UNDER 40**

Allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of the Springfield Business Journal's Forty Under 40 recipients for 2021.

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 Cortesi, Agent  
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924 Clock Tower Drive

Springfield, Illinois 62704







## Chris Graves

**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** Adult and pediatric spine surgeon, Orthopedic Center of Illinois

**Email:** christopher-graves@orthocenter.net

**Education:** Doctor of Medicine, University of Illinois Chicago

**Family:** Spouse, Jennifer, and children Aubrey, Hannah, Eleanor and Penelope

**Affiliations/community activities:** Orthopedic Center of Illinois Foundation board member, SIU Spine Fellowship co-director, St. Agnes Church and School, volunteer wrestling coach at Sacred Heart-

Griffin, associate professor at SIU Orthopedic Surgery and Neurosurgery.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** To be "Worthy to Serve the Suffering," which is the motto of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. I am humbled and grateful to have the opportunity to take care of people for a living.

**What led you to your current career?** Being an orthopedic surgeon is a great fit for me. I love meeting people and helping them improve their quality of life. I enjoy the challenge of diagnosing difficult spine problems and the intense, delicate nature of performing surgery around the spinal cord and nerves.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** I hope we can continue to attract young professionals who are looking for a friendly, Midwestern city that is a great place to live and raise a family. I hope that our locally owned businesses and restaurants will continue to thrive and grow post pandemic and that we can serve as a model for successful cities in Illinois.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** The grass isn't greener on the other side, it is greener where you water it.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Becoming a board-certified orthopedic spine surgeon and a partner at the Orthopedic Center of Illinois.



## Jessica Handy

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Government affairs director, Stand for Children Illinois

**Email:** jessica.handy@hotmail.com

**Education:** Master of Arts in history, University of Illinois Springfield

**Family:** Daughter, Natasha, and several current and former bonus kids

**Affiliations/community activities:** The Outlet, Faith Coalition for the Common Good, foster mom, affordable housing provider, occasional food artist

**What led you to your current career path?** Networking, my writing ability and privilege.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** Springfield should transform its housing policies to maximize integration and end housing insecurity. Systemic inequities, which historically deprived Black families of access to loans and generational wealth through redlining, continue today through exclusionary zoning policies. Springfield lags in its commitment to housing-first models that immediately provide permanent supported housing, increasing the likelihood that individuals maintain jobs and complete support services.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** A kidney. Alas, I'm too fat to donate. But listen to Freakonomics podcast episode #209 and you, too, might want to donate a kidney. Also, I've been buying distressed properties to rent at cost. I'd like to transition my single-family homes into ethical rent-to-own contracts to help families become homeowners, and to expand into multi-family housing, prioritizing low barrier-to-entry efficiency units for individuals who cannot access housing assistance, but who nevertheless deserve the dignity of an affordable home.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** Teenage parenthood. Without incredible family support, I couldn't have pursued my education and worked long hours as a legislative staffer early in my career. This identity-shaping experience led me to foster teen moms and their babies, and to value the autonomy of every woman to decide when to become a mom.

**What has been your greatest professional accomplishment to date?** After writing Stand for Children's 2016 report "An Education Funding No-Brainer," the legislature fixed a little-known inequity that siphoned federal funds away from low-income students and students with disabilities to pay down Illinois's massive pension debt, which was disproportionately created by wealthier school districts.



## Lauren Groff

**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** Certified public accountant and director at Sikich LLP

**Email:** lauren.groff@sikich.com

**Education:** Master of Arts in accounting, University of Illinois Springfield

**Family:** Spouse, Keith, children Gavin and Clara and dog Lucy

**Affiliations/community activities:** Board member and treasurer of Looking for Lincoln, Christ the King School volunteer, member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and member of the Illinois CPA Society.

**What led you to your current career?** I had always been interested in business and I took my first accounting course in high school and immediately knew this would be my career. I wanted to select a college major that had a defined career path upon graduation. I am not a risk-taker and wanted to know exactly what I would be doing after college, so accounting was a great fit for me.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** I did not grow up here, but I have called Springfield home for 16 years, and I love this community. My hope is for continued investment in the community to make it better and that it remains a safe and desirable place for my kids to grow up.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** The work/life balance. Having a demanding career along with raising two small children is a constant balance which I have yet to master, but I have found a way to make them both work.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** I wish I would have known to believe in myself and have more confidence in my ability to succeed in the public accounting industry. In high school I desired to be successful in public accounting, but my younger self did not have the confidence to believe it was possible. I now know that working hard every day and having self-confidence will lead to success and achieving your career goals.



## Kirsten Holler

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Vice president of retail, United Community Bank

**Email:** kholler@ucbbank.com

**Education:** Associate degree in business administration

**Family:** Partner, Matthew, and children Ian, Gracie, Lex and Fiona

**Affiliations/community activities:** Breast Cancer Awareness Month, annual Peacekeepers Ride, Toys for Tots

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Live life one day at a time because you are never promised tomorrow.

**What led you to your current career?** A happy accident. I was going to school for child development and needed a part-time job, so I applied for a teller spot. I enjoyed the challenges and opportunities, and never left. I have worked my way up to a branch manager and still continue to find my career rewarding.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Being named *Illinois Times* Best of Springfield® Best Banker two years in a row and helping my customers on a daily basis. For me, winning the Best Banker award is not about the title itself, it is about knowing I earned the honor by making a difference for those I work with and work for every day – my colleagues and my customers.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Although the year has been challenging in many respects, it has also made me stronger and more patient with not only other people, but myself as well. We all had to slow down, and this provided me an opportunity to take time for myself, something I have not always been good about doing. I am often focused on the needs of others, and in the isolation the pandemic forced upon us, I found an opportunity to reflect on my priorities and my well-being. This helped me realize that it's OK for us to cut some slack for ourselves and each other every once in a while.

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## CONGRATULATIONS to **Kirsten Holler!**



Kirsten Holler  
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Branch Manager

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**Rachel King, CADC**



**Congrats Rachel!! Rachel is the Director of Clinical Outreach. She works to prevent the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C by doing testing & outreach and providing harm reduction services throughout the region. We are SO PROUD to have you on our team!**

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ACCOUNTING TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY

## CONGRATULATIONS **LAUREN!**

Sikich LLP is excited to congratulate Lauren Groff on being selected for the 2021 Springfield Business Journal's 40 Under 40. To learn more about how Lauren and Sikich can assist your business, contact us today.



**217.793.3363 SIKICH.COM**





## Jocelyn Holzmacher

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Marketing specialist at HSHS St. John's Hospital

**Email:** joce85@yahoo.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Art in graphic design, Robert Morris University

**Family:** Spouse, Rhett, and children Olivia, Payton, Cayden and Hadley

**Affiliations/community activities:** Kidzeum of Health and Science board member, member of Rochester Christian Church and children's ministry volunteer, FIRST Lego League coach and coach for multiple youth sports organizations.

**What led you to your current career?** Since I was a child, I have always had a love for art and creating art on the computer. I was introduced to the basics of graphic design in high school and knew it was what I wanted to study in college. I worked as a graphic designer for many years, was a creative director for seven years and recently decided to move into the health care sector doing marketing for HSHS.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** Springfield is a vibrant, growing community with so much potential. It's a great place to live and raise a family. I hope Springfield continues to embrace the arts, support our cultural attractions and beautify spaces throughout the city.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** It was a slow and steady journey, but my greatest professional achievement was being a leader in building the creative agency at Systemax. When I joined Systemax, the creative department consisted of myself and one other graphic designer. After moving into the role of creative director, we grew the department to a team of nine creative and talented individuals – quadrupling the team and vastly expanding our service offerings in six years.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** The events of the past year have made me reevaluate my priorities in my personal and professional life. I was able to slow down a bit and reset my values and goals. Relationships and caring for others has become even more important to me. I have always found much joy in helping others, and I am excited to make this more of a focus in my new career opportunity.



## Rusty Jones

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Chief strategy officer/co-founder hellowater

**Email:** rusty@hellowater.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in political science, Maryville University

**Family:** Spouse, Ashley, and children Palmer and Beckett

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Go make a life. Not a living.

**What led you to your current career?** Soccer. I was given the opportunity to join the Nike Joga Bonita Play Beautiful World Cup Tour after playing college soccer at MacMurray College and Maryville University. It was this opportunity that opened my mind to a whole new world of marketing and creativity for brand building. From there, I was hooked on creating lasting consumer experiences for brands, until the day it was time to build my own brand. Enter hellowater.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** Professionally, I'd love to continue sharing new hellowater products with the community that have true efficacy on their health. Personally, I would love to continue giving back in any way I can. It takes a village to be successful.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** Surround yourself with people who are smarter than you. Be the vision, but build the team faster.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Seeing hellowater on the shelves at Target was a fun day!

**How have the events of this year affected you?** 2020 impacted us all, but on a positive note, it made kids in the workplace a new normal. My boys made many Zoom appearances in which I started introducing them as our chief flavor officers.



## Colleen Ikerionwu

**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** Owner of First Impressions Daycare

**Email:** ikefamilyinc@gmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice, University of Illinois Springfield,

**Family:** Spouse, Jon, and children Zyon, Tina, Jakobi, Rowan and Jaxson

**Affiliations/community activities:** Springfield Jaycees, Special Olympics

**What is your guiding principle in life?** My guiding principle is to help others. I try to find opportunities in my life where I can be of service and uplift and encourage those around me.

**What led you to your current career?** I initially started my career as a police officer, followed by a position as a truancy caseworker. I purchased the daycare because I saw a need to connect and have an influence on children and families during early childhood development in hopes of improving their lives by giving them a good start.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** My greatest hope for Springfield is that we can have more tolerance for each other. As a former police officer and current business owner and mother, I would like to continue to see opportunities for togetherness and unity in the Springfield area.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I would like to give my community a safe place for children to grow, learn and play. I have a huge heart for children and want to provide them with as many opportunities for success as I can. It is also important for me to provide a place of employment where my staff feels valued, appreciated and respected.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Everything that has occurred with the pandemic has brought me closer to family and friends and has shown me the value of persistence and determination. I had to look for guidance on something that was ever-changing while trying to keep my staff employed and reassure my daycare families.



## Damien Kaplan

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Director of music activities at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School

**Email:** DamieDrum@aol.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Fine Arts in music education, Illinois State University

**Family:** Spouse, Morgan, and sons Sawyer and Palmer

**Affiliations/community activities:** Director/arranger of The Lincoln Troubadours, half of Dual Piano with Mark Gifford, music director for multiple musical shows at The Muni, Hoogland Center for the Arts, Springfield Theatre Centre

**What is your guiding principle in life?** I have two – Rather than think 'what if,' think 'next time' and create your own opportunities, because no one lives your life except you.

**What led you to your current career?** Music has always been in my family, so it was a perfect fit for me. I started on drums, then piano took over, then singing became a passion. When the time came for a career path, music education was the perfect fit. I had always enjoyed teaching others how to make music as a soloist and in group settings. I started with instrumental music and ended up doing choral music as my path changed during my teaching career.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** My greatest hope is that Springfield keeps expanding opportunities for the arts to grow, especially in its schools. More than ever, students need access to the fine arts, and it's our job to expose them to the joys of all things artistic.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I want to give back to my community by starting a community choir in Springfield and surrounding areas (Chatham, Rochester, Williamsville, etc.). We have a community band, a community orchestra and a community jazz band in this town, so I think it is time to start a community choir.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Taking my choir students to perform at Carnegie Hall three times since 2013. I have been fortunate enough to have amazing students at Springfield High School and Sacred Heart-Griffin High School; we were able to perform at such a grand venue in New York City – SHS in 2013 and 2017, and SHG in 2019.

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Mark Cortesi, Agent  
State Farm





## Tara Kessler

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Program director, Enterprise Resource Planning, Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology  
**Email:** tara.patton@hotmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in accountancy, University of Illinois at Springfield

**Family:** Spouse, Michael, and children Sophia, Eve, Stella and Theo

**Affiliations/community activities:** Illinois CPA Society

**What led you to your current career?** Circumstance. While in college, I was pregnant with my first child and I needed to choose a field of study that I knew I could

get a job in, so I went with accounting. I was lucky enough to get an internship with Sikich and worked primarily on the audits of state agencies. When one of those agencies needed a new financial reporting manager, I joined them. My goal was to not only understand the deficiencies, but actually help to rectify them. This goal was amplified by the start of the State of Illinois' ERP program as my services were loaned to the program and I soon joined the team to keep the momentum of growth going.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I have volunteered with the United Way and, along with many of our nonprofit clients at Sikich, I learned of so many worthy causes in town. Two of my girls are in Girl Scouts, so we enjoy being active in the community – singing at nursing homes, cleaning up parks, donating cookies and learning about new opportunities. I also volunteered as treasurer for our homeowners' association, which is a great way to get to know neighbors.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Getting to witness my children learning first-hand has been incredible! It is tough to have a kid running around while I am on video meetings or phone calls, but luckily my cohorts are great sports about it. I've definitely gained a lot of patience this year and enjoyed the simple life more. It was very difficult to not be able to spend time with my parents prior to vaccinations being available, and I certainly learned to appreciate the time I have with them more.



## Cayla Keyes

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** Vice president and branch manager, INB, N.A.

**Email:** ckeyes@inb.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in business administration/management, Robert Morris University. Pursuing a Graduate School of Banking degree, University of Wisconsin – Madison

**Family:** Spouse, Brett, and children Jordan, Brayden and Greyson

**Affiliations/community activities:** Pleasant Plains Community School District #8 board member and

secretary, West Side Christian Church volunteer, 2015 Leadership Springfield graduate.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Surround yourself with great people. Whether personally or professionally, surround yourself with people that enable you to every day be better, more knowledgeable and to make a difference.

**What led you to your current career?** The desire to help others and give advice led me to my current career.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** In five years, I hope to see my two older sons successful in life and be attending my youngest son's sporting events and celebrating his milestones. In 10 years, I hope to be spending time with my husband and enjoying traveling (without kids!)

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I enjoy my responsibility as a school board member and being a voice of our community to help guide our school district in a fiscally and socially responsible way.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** My greatest professional achievement to date is watching those that I have mentored move into bigger roles and progress in their own careers.



## Congratulations, Ryan!

From the team at  
Little Lincoln's Toy Shop

## CONGRATULATIONS!

### Colleen Ikerionwu

on being named one of  
Springfield's Business Journal's

**FORTY**  
UNDER **40** 2021



## Congratulations

INB's Cayla Keyes shines when working with customers, helping put them on the road to a better financial life. But she also serves as a bank leader and mentor. INB President and CEO Sarah Phalen says, "Cayla keeps all of us focused on what the future holds for banking and has helped develop objectives and strategies to accomplish this vision."



Cayla is a Leadership Springfield graduate and Pleasant Plains School Board member. She expects to complete the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison next year.

Congratulations to our colleague, mentor, boss and mom, Cayla Keyes.

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Cayla Keyes, Vice President  
South Sixth St. Branch Manager  
NMLS #662877

**FORTY** UNDER **40**





## Rachel King

**Age:** 32

**Occupation:** Director of clinical outreach, Phoenix Center

**Email:** rachelking.phoenix@comcast.net

**Education:** Attended Eastern Illinois University

**Family:** Fiancé, Bryan Johnson, daughter, Lilly Rose, and a rescue dog named Bronze. I'm the oldest of five siblings from a blended family.

**Affiliations/community activities:** Advocate for housing first for our unhoused population and for folks with substance use disorders and mental health issues.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** My guiding principle in life is to meet people where they are at.

**What obstacles have you overcome on your career path?** For many years, I was unable to obtain or retain employment due to my alcohol and drug addiction. During my use, harm reduction kept me alive, and the love and support of my family allowed me to seek treatment when needed. I have the gift of my recovery today, which has allowed me to overcome the barriers of addiction. Overcoming addiction and working each day on my recovery has blessed me with the career and life I have today.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** That my past would be my greatest asset to helping others.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement?** My greatest professional achievement has been becoming a certified alcohol and drug counselor.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** COVID-19 really made a lot of folks isolate. I have learned that, in my recovery, connection to others is very important. During that time, I started to do outreach to Tent City and provide emotional support and harm reduction services. Being of service to others is a humbling and rewarding experience. Getting to know the folks at Tent City inspired hope in them, and me. It is so important to elevate the voices of marginalized people in our community. The pandemic made me realize that no matter what happens, life goes on, and the people that struggle the most can sometimes be placed on the back burner. Getting to know these people and grow relationships with them were some of the best things I've ever experienced.



## Ryan Leake

**Age:** 33

**Occupation:** Owner, Little Lincoln's Toy Shop

**Email:** info@littlelincolnstoy.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in business and marketing, Franklin University, Columbus, Ohio

**Family:** Spouse, Tony, two dogs and several nieces and nephews

**Affiliations/community activities:** Local First Springfield, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, American Specialty Toy Retailers Association, The Good Toy Group

**What is your guiding principle in life?** The only way to do great work is to love what you do.

**What led you to your current career?** I have always wanted to start my own business. The idea of opening a toy store started in the fourth grade when my mother and I drafted a business plan. I got the opportunity to work in specialty retail management while completing my degree and gained the foundation to venture out on my own. It took 20 years and lots of hard work, but I finally got the chance to make my dream a reality.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** The opportunity to open my own business. Every day that I get to turn on the open sign, I get the chance to fulfill a lifelong dream.

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

I would encourage my younger self to practice good time management skills and techniques. Time is one of the most important assets I have, and managing it properly can make a huge impact on the results I am seeking.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** The past year has been a rollercoaster for me and my business. It has given me an opportunity to step back and reflect on what is really important. We have had to adapt quickly, and we hope the changes we have made put us in a stronger position than we were before the pandemic.



## Erin Kleinlein

**Age:** 28

**Occupation:** COO and project manager, Turner Painting & Construction

**Email:** ekleinlein.tpc@gmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in business administration, University of South Carolina

**Family:** Parents Mark and Ellen Kleinlein, siblings Casandra Turner and Scott Kleinlein, and nine nieces and nephews

**Affiliations/community activities:** Jubilee

Habitat for Humanity vice president and family

selection chair, Jacksonville Kiwanis Club board member, Western Illinois Youth Camp board member, Jacksonville Area Baseball coordinator, Jacksonville Young Professionals Network, Jacksonville Holiday Committee, Our Savior School speech coach

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Impact others in a positive way, no matter how small. We are all in this life together and can't do it without each other.

**What led you to your current career?** I previously worked in the nonprofit sector, which I very much enjoyed. Currently, I am beyond blessed to work within a family business owned by my brother-in-law. My family members are avid supporters of my community involvement and I am thankful they provide me the time and space to continue pursuing my passions.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** In five, 10 or even 50 years, I hope to still feel a connection to my community and feel passionate about serving and growing in that community.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I would like to support the youth of our community to help them continue to learn and grow, as I continue to do so as well.



## Essence D. Lee

**Age:** 37

**Occupation:** Owner and therapist at Essential Clinical Counseling Services, LLC and extra-help counselor at University of Illinois Springfield

**Email:** essence@essentialccs.net

**Education:** Master of Arts in human development counseling, University of Illinois Springfield

**Family:** Spouse, Corley, children Kashay and Zion and a furbaby, Louis Maximus Lee

**Affiliations/community activities:** University of Illinois Springfield, American Mental Health Counseling Association, Illinois Counseling Association, co-owner of Lee Sports

Academy and ATC Athletics.

**What led you to your current career?** My love for the mind and psychology is what originally sparked my interest in counseling. Over time, my natural connection to others and the desire to be a help to those in need grew as I advanced in my education.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** My hope for Springfield is inclusion, equality, support and community education in a wide range of areas, especially in regards to mental health. Our community, like many others, fights with misperceptions and stigmas surrounding mental health. I hope that, as a community, we can work on breaking the stigma, allowing support and more resources to bring wellness and healing to our families, friends, children and neighbors.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome in your career path?** One of the obstacles I encountered was my own personal thoughts of defeat. When you are in school you have all these ideas about how you are going to change the world. Once you start in your career path, and especially depending on the environment in which you work, you come to the harsh reality that life has a way of teaching you lessons for which not even school could prepare you. Working in the mental health field, whether it was in the corrections system or in private practice, I have had to learn that the road to success and wellness is not all roses and rainbows. Hardships and some losses are often necessary elements of one's success. Changing my outlook helped me gain the motivation I needed to overcome my insecurities.

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## Emily Lewis

Age: 27

**Occupation:** Entrepreneur

**Email:** threetwigsbakery@gmail.com

**Education:** Graduate of Athens High School

**Family:** Spouse Timothy, daughter Esther and baby number two is due later this year

**Affiliations/Community Activities:** Illinois Local, Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Chatham Chamber of Commerce

**What led you to your current career?** In high school I worked for a small bakery and catering business that was in Elkhart, Illinois. They closed in

2012, right after I graduated. My whole high school career, I planned on going to school to become a doctor. I just really wanted to help people. While in my first year of college, my then-boyfriend (now husband) and I decided it would be fun to participate in our local farmers market. We enjoyed learning to bake from scratch together and I wanted to continue to do so, but I wanted to share my love of pastry with others. After the market season, I felt at a crossroads with my future plans. Like I said, I wanted to help people. I spoke with my mother and she told me that no matter what career path I chose in life, I could always make it about helping people. What better way to spread joy than through great food?

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I truly love central Illinois, and in particular, Springfield. It brings us so much joy to be able to use our three businesses' platforms to help so many nonprofits in our area, and I want to continue to do that. I also want to start planning events that aren't just for the places with which we already work, but for those in our community in general. Everyone goes through tough times, especially like this past year, so we want to plan free, year-round events that families can attend. I want us to keep growing so we can keep giving back in more ways than just one. I also really enjoy creating places in which everyone feels welcome and can hang out for as long as they want.



## Mike McGraw

Age: 37

**Occupation:** President and owner of McGraw Enterprises, Inc.

**Email:** mmcgraw0730@gmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Art in business administration, Illinois Wesleyan University

**Family:** Spouse Juliana, children Mason, Eli, and Connor, father Rick, mother Dona, sisters Christa and Jenna, and brother-in-law Rich Beyers

**Affiliations/Community:** Secretary of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois board of directors, Springfield First United Methodist Church.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** Our family has been blessed to be a part of such an amazing community with so many wonderful people. Springfield may not be known on the world stage, but it is a giant in terms of heart. My wish would be for people not familiar with the Springfield community to know and understand the love, support and sense of family it has, and the amazing people and businesses here.

**What led you to your current career?** My father and mother. My father started as a crew member for McDonald's and worked his way up to become an owner/operator. He and my mother ran the business together with our McFamily. As I grew older, my parents were adamant that my sisters and I went and worked elsewhere before coming into the family business, if we chose to. After watching my dad and mom for so many years, I recognized the challenges and adversity they faced running a business and raising a family, but more importantly, the joy it brought them working with so many people and having an impact in the community and so many lives. Another big reason for coming to this career was our family. We have a very close family, and I liked the idea of being able to work together every day.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** Like everyone, this past year has been extremely challenging. Obviously, the number-one item was working to keep our team and our customers safe and healthy during a pandemic, as well as managing the many changes and shutdowns that we all faced. I am so proud of our team and how we worked through those challenges together.

# CONGRATULATIONS Mike McGraw!





# TOP LAWYERS

## SPRINGFIELD AREA

BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS



These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

Matthew J. Cate	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.544.4868	Comm Lit; Creditor's Rights; Real Estate: Comm; RE: Residential
Randy S. Paswater	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.544.4868	Creditor's Rights; Elder; Family
Bernard G. Segatto III	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.544.4868	Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Land Use/Zoning; Real Estate: Comm
Randall W. Segatto	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.544.4868	Close/Private Held; Elder; Real Estate: Commercial
R. Kurt Wilke	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.544.4868	Civil Appellate; Close/Private Held; Real Estate: Commercial
Barry Hines	Barry Hines — Attorney at Law	217.698.8444	Agriculture; Real Estate: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Michael Glenn Barton	Bellatti Barton Cochran & White LLC	217.793.9300	AG; Close/Private Held; Real Estate: Comm; Tax: Indiv; Trust/Will/Estate
Mark S. Cochran	Bellatti Barton Cochran & White LLC	217.793.9300	AG; Environmental; Public Utilities;; Real Estate: Comm
Andrew G. White	Bellatti Barton Cochran & White LLC	217.793.9300	Agriculture; Trust/Will/Estate
Claire A. Manning	Brown Hay & Stephens LLP	217.544.8491	Employment: Management; Environmental; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
Amy K. Schmidt	Brown Hay & Stephens LLP	217.544.8491	Family
Robert A. Stuart Jr.	Brown Hay & Stephens LLP	217.544.8491	Association & Non-Profit; Trust/Will/Estate
Joseph N. Rucpich	Cassiday Schade LLP	217.993.5644	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Med-Mal Defense; PI Defense: General
Sarah Delano Pavlik	Delano Law Offices LLC	217.544.2703	Trust/Will/Estate
Thomas Chester Pavlik Jr.	Delano Law Offices LLC	217.544.2703	Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Creditor's Rights; Real Estate: Comm
Carl R. Draper	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Employ: Employee; False Claims Act/Whistle Blow
Howard W. Feldman	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Construction; Family; ADR: Family
Kelli Ellen Gordon	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Family
Roger L. Rutherford	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Trust/Will/Estate
Stuart H. Shiffman	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Civil Appellate; Criminal Appellate; Crim Defense: Felon/Misd
Stanley N. Wasser	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Construction
James R. Enlow	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Bankruptcy: Individual; Bankrupt/Workout: Comm; Comm Lit; Land Use/Zoning
Gordon W. Gates	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Bankrupt/WO: Comm; Close/Private Held; Comm Lit; Land Use; Real Estate: Comm
Todd M. Goebel	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Criminal Defense: DUI; Crim Defense: Felon/Misd
Frederick J. Schlosser	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Criminal Defense: DUI; Crim Defense: Felon/Misd
Bradley B. Wilson	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Employment: Employee
D. Peter Wise	Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel	217.522.9010	Criminal Defense: DUI; Crim Defense: Felon/Misd; Criminal Defense: White Collar
Herman G. Bodewes	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Association/Non-Profit; Close/Private Held; Gov/Muni/Lobby; Trust/Will/Estate
Creighton R. Castle	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Close/Private Held; Real Estate: Commercial; Tax: Business; Trust/Will/Estate
John M. Gabala Jr.	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Civil Appellate; Comm Lit; Copyright/Trademark; PI Defense: General
David A. Herman	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Comm Lit; Election/Political/Campaign; Gov/Muni/Lobby; Trust/Will/Estate
R. Mark Mifflin	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Commercial Litigation; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
Christopher E. Sherer	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Civ Appell; Elect/Political/Campaign; Family; Gov/Muni/Lobby; Trust/Will/Estate
Matthew R. Trapp	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Civil Appellate; Commercial Litigation; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
Thomas G. Hamill	Harrison & Held LLP	217.546.6940	Trust/Will/Estate
Adrian E. Harless	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	Health; Med-Mal Defense; PI Defense: General
Michael T. Kokal	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	Commercial Litigation; Copyright & Trademark; Patent
John O. Langfelder	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	PI Defense: General; Toxic Torts Defense; Workers' Compensation Defense
Deanna Seward Mool	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Health
Theresa M. Powell	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	Employment: Management; Med-Mal Defense; Prof'l Malpractice Defense
Gary S. Schwab	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	Personal Injury Defense: General; Prof'l Malpractice Defense
Daniel R. Simmons	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	Personal Injury Defense: General; Workers' Compensation Defense
Larry A. Apfelbaum	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation
Todd A. Bresney	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General
Charles N. Edmiston II	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation
William J. Harrington	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General
Kathy A. Olivero	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation
John J. Waldman	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Workers' Compensation

Stephen Scott Morrill	Morrill & Fiedler LLC	217.789.5411	Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
James E. Neville	Neville Richards & Wuller LLC	618.277.0900	Med-Mal Def; PI Def: General; Product Liab Def; Transportation Def; Tox Tort Def
Timothy S. Richards	Neville Richards & Wuller LLC	618.277.0900	Med-Mal Defense; PI Defense: General; Products Liability Def; Toxic Torts Def
Cheryl S. Neal	PNC Wealth Management/Estate Settlement	217.753.7130	Trust/Will/Estate
James A. Borland	Quinn Johnston	217.753.1133	Personal Injury Defense: General; Products Liability Defense
Matthew J. Maddox	Quinn Johnston	217.753.1133	Med-Mal Defense; PI Defense: General; Prof'l Malpractice Defense
Betsy A. Wirth	Quinn Johnston	217.753.1133	Family; Med-Mal Defense; PI Defense: General
David R. Reid	Reid Law Office LLC	217.546.1001	Close/Private Held; Tax: Business; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Gregory A. Scott	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Adoption/Reproductive Tech; Family Appellate; Family; Trust/Will/Estate
Jared M. Scott	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Family; Personal Injury: General
R. Stephen Scott	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Bankrupt/WO: Comm; Close/Private Held; Tax: Business; Tax: Indiv; Trust/Will/Est
Michael M. Durr	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Bruce LLP	217.789.1200	Real Estate: Assoc/Condo; Real Estate: Comm; Real Estate: Residential
Gregory P. Sgro	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Bruce LLP	217.789.1200	Land Use/Zoning/Condemnation; Real Estate: Commercial; Workers' Comp
Timothy M. Shay	Shay and Associates	217.523.5900	Personal Injury: General; PI: Professional Malpractice; Workers' Compensation
Michelle L. Blackburn	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Family; Trust/Will/Estate
Michael C. Connolly	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Close/Private Held; Real Estate: Comm; RE: Tax; Tax: Business; Trust/Will/Estate
E. Zachary Dinardo	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Close/Private Held; Health
James G. Fahey	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Civil Appellate; Employment: Management; PI Defense: General
C. Clark Germann	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Close/Private Held; Mineral/Natural Resource; Real Estate: Comm
Stephen F. Hedinger	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Animal; Environmental; Mineral & Natural Resource
Michael G. Horstman Jr.	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Assoc/Non-Profit; Close/Private Held; Real Estate: Comm; RE: Resident; Tax: Indiv
Alan J. Jedlicka	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Employee Benefits; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Tax: Business
Brian D. Jones	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Banking; Close/Private Held; Employee Benefits; Real Estate: Comm
John A. Kauerauf	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Close/Private Held; Employment: Management
Kirk W. Laudeman	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Med-Mal Defense; PI Def: General; Prof'l Malpractice Def; Transportation Def
James M. Morphew	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Election, Political & Campaign; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
Lisa A. Petrilli	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Comm Lit; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Land Use/Zoning; Real Estate: Comm
David A. Rolf	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	AG; Comm Lit; Land Use/Zoning; PI Def: General; Real Estate: Comm
Peggy J. Ryan	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Family
John R. Simpson	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Stephen A. Tagge	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Banking; Close/Private Held; ADR: Comm Lit; Real Estate: Comm; Tax: Business
Randall A. Wolter	Wolter Beeman Lynch & Londrigan LLP	217.753.4220	Personal Injury: General; PI: Professional Malpractice; Workers' Compensation

**These EMERGING LAWYERS have been identified by their peers to be among the TOP LAWYERS in Illinois who are age 40 or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.**

Brittany Kink Toigo	Barber Segatto Hoffee Wilke & Cate LLP	217.544.4868	Family
Ashley D. Davis	FeldmanWasser	217.544.3403	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Family
Samantha A. Bobor	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Employment: Management; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Labor: Mgmt; School
Jason E. Brokaw	Giffin Winning Cohen & Bodewes PC	217.525.1571	Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
J. Tyler Robinson	Heyl Royster Voelker & Allen PC	217.522.8822	False Claims Act/Whistle Blower; Health; Med-Mal Defense
Gina Couri-Cyphers	Kanoski Bresney	217.523.7742	Personal Injury: General
Jason T.H. Germeraad	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Bankruptcy: Individual; Commercial Litigation; Foreclosure Defense
Pamela E. Hart	Scott & Scott PC	217.753.8200	Bankrupt/Workout: Comm; Elder; Family; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Benjamin M. Sgro	Sgro Hanrahan Durr Rabin & Bruce LLP	217.789.1200	PI: General; Real Estate: Comm; Real Estate: Residential; Workers' Comp
Gregory E. Moredock	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Commercial Litigation; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin
Joshua J. Watson	Sorling Northrup	217.544.1144	Family
Matthew A. Brewer	Stephen P. Kelly, Attorney at Law	217.544.8000	Workers' Compensation

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## Ty Milner

**Age:** 34

**Occupation:** Dentist/owner, Milner Dentistry, LLC

**Email:** tydmilner@gmail.com

**Education:** Doctor of Dental Medicine, Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine

**Family:** Spouse, Kasey, and children Karsyn, Keagan and Griffin

**Affiliations/community activities:** American Dental Association, Illinois State Dental Society, G.V. Black District Dental Society board member, Mission of Mercy volunteer, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Young Philanthropists.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Treat others how you want to be treated.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I'd like to continue to provide high-quality oral health care and education to Springfield and the surrounding communities, as well as positively change the way people perceive a dental appointment for generations to come.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** You can only control what you can control. As with any journey, there will be bumps in the road and many obstacles to overcome. Keep your head down, work hard and try not to sweat the small stuff.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** I was able to build my dream dental office during 2020 which has allowed our practice to thrive and our patients to enjoy a new dental experience.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** The events of the past year have affected all of us in a tremendous way. I am thankful for the health and safety of my family and friends, and I empathize with those who have been negatively affected. Our practice was shut down for two months in 2020, and that time allowed me to take a step back and enjoy the little things in life. I was able to spend a lot of quality time with my young family and reassess the vision for our practice.



## Lauren Nevius

**Age:** 34

**Occupation:** Vice president of sales, Resource One/agileResource

**Email:** lneviu@resourceoneoffice.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in politics and government, Illinois State University

**Family:** Spouse Ryan, Layla the English Bulldog, June Carter Cash the Pudelpointer, and Olive and Martini the alley cats

**Affiliations/community activities:** Chair/co-host Downtown Springfield, Inc. annual dinner and fundraiser, International Interior Design Association Central Illinois City Center board member.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Stop doubting yourself. Work hard and make it happen! When your head hits the pillow tonight, remind yourself that you've done a good job. Be patient with yourself, and remember that big things are achieved not all at once, but one day at a time.

**What led you to your current career?** I grew up seeing the furniture business, and I always felt that sales and design were a natural fit for me. Our mom, Cindy, with help from our dad, Larry, started this company 33 years ago while she was a mother of three, and she has since built quite the legacy in Springfield. When I was asked to join almost 10 years ago, it happened to be the right fit and now that I've a the taste of the furniture Kool-Aid, I can never (and don't want to) go back.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** We are passionate about downtown Springfield and would love to see our current neighbors thrive. We think it's the best kind of community, where it almost feels like a neighborhood where we all help each other out when we can. It has been so wonderful seeing it bounce back after the pandemic, and I hope that means we will welcome many more new neighbors soon.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** Downtown Springfield is like a neighborhood. I want this city to become a destination for a diverse population and continue to grow and evolve.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** 2020 was a reminder to keep things in perspective, appreciate what you have and remember that abundance is a mindset.



## Seth Morrison

**Age:** 33

**Occupation:** Real estate investor and president of Morrison Property Management

**Email:** Springfieldrentalsllc@gmail.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in economics and history from SIU Carbondale

**Family:** Spouse, Kayla, children Adalyn and Leela, and one mystery child on the way

**Affiliations/community activities:** Big Brothers Big Sisters, the community garden at Southeast High School

**What is your guiding principle in life?** To treat everyone I encounter with respect. Every single person in this

world deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter who they are or from where they came.

**What would I like to give back to my community?** My goal is to provide nice, clean and affordable housing to people that live in the downtown area. It's not my intention to become rich on crazy high rent prices, but to build a solid community in the downtown area that will thrive for years to come. If you concentrate a large number of cool people in one area, good things will inevitably start to happen.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** Currently, I am super excited about the Third Street rail relocation project. It seems as though in the next five years the Third Street rail corridor will be replaced with a nice bike path that will be a conduit for people to travel to the downtown area and invigorate the businesses there. My role will be to provide housing for people in that general vicinity so they can live close to where they eat, drink and shop.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement?** The thing I am most proud of is transforming the neighborhood in which we operate, which is just south of downtown, into a vibrant community. I'm also very proud of the team that helps me day in and day out - Kayla Morrison, Mary Morrison and Steve Morrison, Greg Harvey, Troy Moore and Bill Mort. I could not do it without them.



## Sarah Sevenser

**Age:** 36

**Occupation:** Guidance dean, Lincoln Magnet School, Springfield School District 186

**Email:** sarahsevs@sps186.org

**Education:** Master of Education in educational psychology, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

**Family:** Spouse, Sam, stepchildren Alayna and Adam and children Amelia and Archer

**Affiliations/community activities:** Christ the King Parish, Lindsay Elementary PTO, United Way of Central Illinois.

**What led you to your current career?** I love teaching

and taught in District 186 for 11 years. I felt a call toward administration and hoped to impact students and teachers on a greater scale than I could in my classroom. I love District 186 for its size, diversity and the opportunities it provides for all of its students and teachers. I am proud to send our children to its schools and that my husband and I are servants to public education within this system.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** One challenge that I continue to face is balancing family and career, and I know I am not unique in this. I am proud that my children are witnessing their mother as a strong working woman, and I am proud of my husband for taking the lead with the children, especially during this year while they were at home for a majority of the time. A challenge I feel that has been difficult to overcome is the desire to continually work on my own education. I love school, learning and being a student, so I am always thinking about or working on the next degree or certification. Who knows? Maybe someday a PhD!

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** I am beyond proud of what we have been able to accomplish through all of the changes and uncertainty of this year. The pandemic has had such an impact on education, but we have made it through and learned so much. Our future as a district, and in education as a whole, is very bright as we continue to adapt to the effects of the pandemic and hopefully elevate the profession of education in the process.

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## Erin Sommer

**Age:** 37

**Occupation:** Talent acquisition and marketing manager, Express Employment Professionals

**Email:** erin.sommer@expresspros.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in health studies, Eastern Illinois University

**Family:** Child Hadley Sommer-Watts, dad Ron Sommer and siblings Tiffany Rhodes and Tim, Tanner and Samantha Sommer

**Affiliations/community activities:** United Way volunteer, former Sangamon CEO mentor, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Park District Youth Work Program volunteer, Central Illinois Food Bank volunteer, EIU

Alumni Association.

**What led you to your current career?** I started out in retail management and wanted to transition into a professional leadership role. I came to Express to see if they could help me with my next career move, which led to me being hired on to their internal team.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** I would like to set an example for future leaders in our community. I would like to provide them with mentorship and guidance through the experiences I have lived through and be a sounding board for the issues they are experiencing in their lives today. I want them to know they have a support system within the Springfield business community.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** Making assumptions about what I can achieve is an obstacle I have worked hard to overcome. I have learned that by working hard and doing the right thing, there are endless possibilities to showcase your skills and talents. As I have gained maturity, I have become more confident in knowing that there is always a next step or opportunity for growth within my career path.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** I'm most proud of starting the talent acquisition unit that I continue to manage. At the time, only two other Express offices in the country were experimenting with similar ideas and methods. I jumped in to help build it from the ground up, completely changing our process for receiving applicants. Through the wisdom I gained along the way, mistakes that I made and successes my team and I celebrated, we are now a model for other Express offices internationally. Franchisees and leaders come to us to help them get started and implement this unit in their offices.

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## Greg Shelton

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Vice president, Solution Printing

**Email:** greg@solutionprint.com

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in business administration, Benedictine University

**Family:** Parents Steve and Debbie Shelton, and Hudson, a Bernese Mountain dog

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Always be kind and help others. If you have the power to help or make someone smile, do it.

**What led you to your current career?** My entire life, my father has been in the printing industry. I can remember as a child always wanting to go to work with him, run up and down the aisles of printing presses, jump around on the pallets of paper and talk the ears off his employees. In 2008, my father became very ill, and I moved back to Springfield to help him with his printing business. From day one until now, my passion for the printing industry has grown, and I enjoy every minute of it.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** Rejection is never easy, and no matter how accustomed to it I have become, it doesn't get any easier. But rejection is something I face all the time in sales. I know that if I don't face the possibility of rejection, then I also won't open myself to the chance of learning new things and growing. Overcoming obstacles is required for constant growth and reaching new levels in life. If you want massive success, then you need to expose yourself to the potential for massive rejection.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** I wish I would have listened more. Of course, everyone at a younger age feels they know everything and are always correct. If I would have taken in the knowledge of others, I would not have had to learn everything the absolute hardest way.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years?** Happily married, starting a family and enjoying life. I look forward to continuing my growth and involvement in the Springfield community.

**FORTY UNDER 40**



## Callan Stapleton

**Age:** 39

**Occupation:** President, Illinois Bankers Education Services, Inc.

**Email:** cstapleton@ilbanker.com

**Education:** Master of Business Administration, University of Illinois Springfield

**Family:** Spouse, Jessica, and children Hagen and Lillian

**Affiliations/community activities:** T-ball coach for my kid's team, member of the Illinois Society of Association Executives/Association Forum.

**What led you to your current career?** I have always had a passion for helping people and a love of finance.

My initial goal was to be a debt counselor because I dislike seeing people struggle financially by spending money on nonessential items. I started in banking in April 2001 and was able to assist people in reaching their financial goals. In 2005, I transitioned into correspondent banking, which allowed me to provide products, services and other resources tailored to supporting the banking industry and assisting in making banks stronger. This led me to joining the association in January 2015 so that I could continue in that proactive role. Banks are an essential backbone of our community and economy.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Most recently it would be studying for and achieving the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation during the peak of the pandemic. I was also able to lead the initiative to develop an Illinois Bankers Scholarship Fund in 2019, and in the last two years we have been able to award 11, \$1,000 scholarships to aspiring bankers throughout the state.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** Don't go through school or life to just to get through. You will never want to stop learning to become a better person.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten?** Honestly, besides getting older, I cannot imagine it looking much different, everything changes and at the same time stays the same.



## Shreepada Tripathy

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Pediatric hospitalist attending, assistant professor of clinical pediatrics

**Email:** stripath20@gmail.com

**Education:** Doctor of Medicine, Marshall University School of Medicine, Huntington, West Virginia; Master of Business Administration, Southern Illinois University School of Business, Carbondale

**Family:** Spouse, Kelly, parents Rasika and Prabasini Tripathy and dog Serena

**Affiliations/community activities:** Friend In Deed, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign medicine interest group, Southern Illinois University pediatric

interest group, St. John's Hospital Foundation, Hands on Healthcare, American Business Club.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Educating and mentoring residents about how to be a pediatrician. In 2018, I was named Pediatric Teacher of the Year, which is an award that is voted on by the pediatric residency class. I work with amazing pediatricians that I look up to every day. I did not expect to win the award, and was very humbled by it.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** As COVID-19 started, being a frontline worker was scary as we were learning about the virus on the fly as well as adapting to the guidance from the state and federal governments. I like to think the entire staff at the hospital weathered this storm together and am happy to see things starting to return to normal. As well, it was hard not seeing my parents for over a year, but I was lucky enough to see them a few months ago. But for all of the negatives, there were some positives. My wife and I were supposed to get married when the pandemic first hit. But due to the events of the pandemic, we went from planning a large wedding that was supposed to happen in a hotel ballroom to hosting nine people in our living room. While it was not what we were expecting, it was something that we will always remember.



## Michael Thomas

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Business relationship manager, Express Employment Professionals

**Email:** Michael.Thomas@expresspros.com

**Education:** Studied accounting at Lakeland College

**Family:** Spouse, Rachel Lauer-Thomas, and children Ethan, Jolee and Adalynn

**Affiliations/community activities:** Board member with Central Illinois Customer Service Association, The Salvation Army, ambassador for Safe Families for Children, The Outlet, United Way loaned executive, new member coordinator for Central Illinois Christian Business Network.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Matthew 6:33

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** My greatest hope for Springfield is that we can have more unity and help streamline resources for those who need them most. We have many great organizations, but lack collaboration in many cases. The only way for Springfield to get better is for more people to work together.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** To listen more.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Achieving Top 50 Sales Rep for Express Employment Professionals, which has over 840 offices around the world.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** This past year has allowed me to better appreciate the relationships I have, both professionally and personally.



## Monique Wantland

**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** Owner, Duct Dusters and senior public service administrator, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

**Email:** DuctDusters@comcast.net

**Education:** Attended Lincoln Land Community College

**Family:** Spouse, Jeff, children Kerrin, Skyler and Christian and dogs Ginger and Baxter

**Affiliations/community activities:** Member of the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) and the Illinois Association of Public Procurement Officials.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** Challenge the process, enable people to act and encourage the heart.

**What led you to your current career?** As my husband and I drove by the Illinois State Capitol shortly after moving to Springfield in 2003, I knew that was where I belonged. I have been serving the State of Illinois for almost 17 years now. My journey to Duct Dusters, LLC was driven by our family needs. Our daughter developed severe allergies at a young age. In seeking a holistic solution, our home air quality became a priority. In combination with that, my husband, who had a background in HVAC, noticed the demand for quality air duct cleaning services. Duct Dusters LLC was established in 2018 and is a woman and minority-owned small business.

**What is your greatest hope for Springfield?** It is my hope that Springfield maintains its historic charm and continues to encourage the success of small businesses. As a small business owner, I have been amazed by the collaboration and support of other local businesses. By supporting each other, we support family, tradition and a better community.

**What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path?** My family and I quickly learned that when pursuing the path to success, there is little room for self-doubt. Duct Dusters has been our family's greatest accomplishment. A lot of sacrifice happens when creating a legacy. However, all the obstacles have taught us that we are more powerful together than we will ever be apart.





## Monique Williams

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Program student adviser, University of Illinois Chicago College of Nursing

**Email:** mwill8@uic.edu

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in political science, University of Illinois Springfield. Pursuing a Master of Science in public health, University of Illinois Springfield.

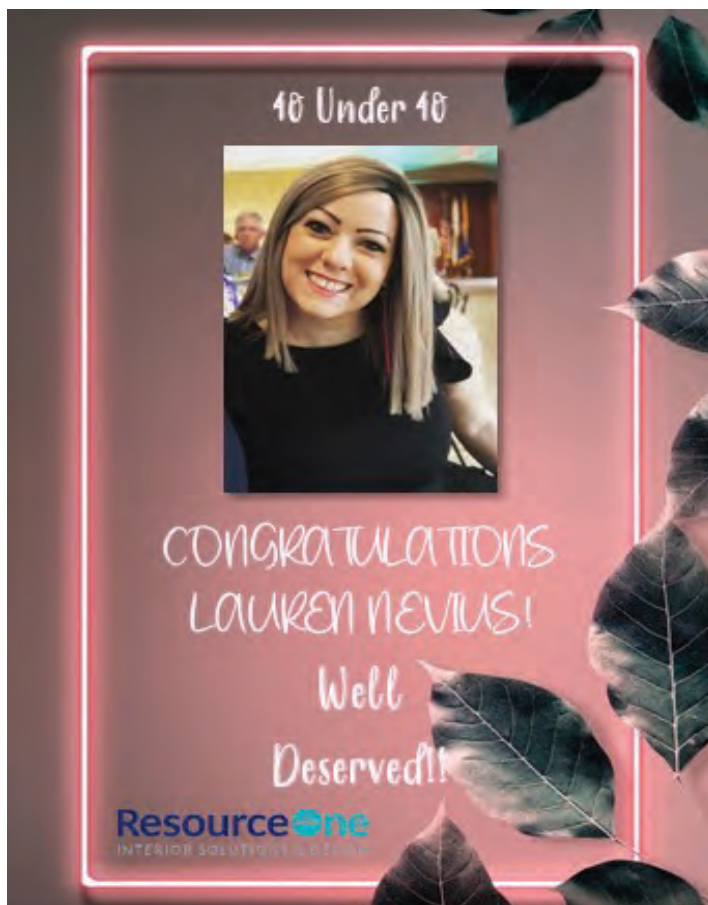
**Family:** Parents Rory and Linda Williams and siblings Angela Williams and James Williams

**Affiliations/community activities:** Rotary International Springfield Downtown, Rotary Youth Exchange Program, National Coalition Builders Institute.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** I envision myself working on another graduate degree as I believe in being a lifelong learner, an example set by one of my mentors, Dr. Janice Paron, who was once my elementary and high school principal. Throughout my adolescence, she was the first woman with whom I interacted who held a terminal degree. Her leadership and spiritual qualities have had an impact on shaping my future. In addition, I plan to turn my hobby of handmade jewelry into a business. In the next 10 years, I see myself having a doctoral degree while still working in higher education to serve and represent first-generation college students, promoting community health initiatives.

**What would you like to give back to your community?** As an African American woman and a first-generation college graduate, I would like to give back to my community the opportunity of equal access to education through community relations, advocacy and equitable public health projects.

**What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?** Being the founding program adviser for UIC College of Nursing at the Springfield regional campus. I started in this position in June 2015 when UIS and Memorial Health System worked with UIC CON to establish a new location to educate and provide BSN, AGMS and DNP programs in central Illinois to nurses. Through this role, I was a recruiter for undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition, I was an academic adviser for regional undergraduate students while assisting faculty members with student support services. Through this position, I was able to connect with hundreds of students and health agencies over the last six years and establish relationships with several other central Illinois colleges.



## Erik Williams

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Account Manager at Springfield Electric Supply Co.

**Email:** ewilliamsconserve@gmail.com

**Education:** Attended Lincoln Land Community College

**Family:** Spouse, Haley Williams, and children Kamya, Erik and Quincy

**Affiliations/community activities:** - United Way volunteer, youth mentor and advocate for DCFS adolescents, NAED CEP Certified Electrical Professional, NAED EPEC Bronze, Silver and Gold Graduate, Springfield Electric Circle of Excellence Award recipient.

**What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path?** In order to achieve my goals, I needed to be more assertive. I needed to not fear the unknown and take risks head-on.

**What is your guiding principle in life?** To make my mother proud. Also, to give my children early in life all the tools I received late in life.

**What led you to your current career?** I started at Springfield Electric Supply Co. right out of high school when I was 18. I worked hard and was able to work my way up the ladder. Account manager is a job that I have always seen myself doing. I'm thankful to the Schnirring family for guidance and the way they have treated me and my family like their family in the 17 years I've been there.

**What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?** I would like to continue to build on what I have done in the electrical wholesale supply industry and continue to build an empire to leave for my children.

**How have the events of this year affected you?** In the realm of being an account manager, the pandemic has taught me resiliency and self-determination in order to continue to achieve my goals.

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A photograph of a woman in a polka-dot top and dark pants walking up a set of stone steps on a university campus. In the background, a man in a suit is also on the steps, and another person is walking down them. The building has classical architectural features like columns and arches.

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