

FORTY UNDER 40 2025

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

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

Visit springfieldbusinessjournal.com to view selectees from previous years.



ADAM MCCONNELL
39

Occupation: Human Resources; associate HR business partner and employee relations lead at Horace Mann

Email: adam.mcconnell@horacemann.com

Education: Bachelor's degree in human resources management from Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota

Family: Single

Affiliations/community activities: Legislative director, Central Illinois Society for Human Resource Management board of directors (2025-present); Legislative committee member, Central Illinois Chapter SHRM (2023-2024); National SHRM member; Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce; 2024 Leadership Springfield graduate and 2025 Ask HR event, planner and panelist; former board of directors for United Way of Central Illinois (2019-2021)

What is your guiding principle in life?
My guiding principle in life is to listen and meet people where they are. I take the time to understand how people work, what motivates them and what they need to thrive.

What led you to your current career?

A summer job in college answering phones quickly turned into processing payroll, recruiting and supporting key HR functions. I realized I had a knack for the work and a genuine interest in helping people succeed.

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

One of the biggest obstacles I've worked to overcome is the stigma that HR is only present when something goes wrong.

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

I wish I had known not to compare my path to others. Everyone's journey is different, and growth doesn't follow a straight line.

What's the song you sing in the shower?

Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams." It helps me start the day with a clear mind.



ALLISON LONG
29

Occupation: Dentist at Prairie Dental Group

Email: drlong@prairiedentalgroup.com

Education: Rhodes College, Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine

Family: Parents, Rae and Scott Long; husband, Nicholas Koch

Affiliations/community activities:

Vice president of G.V. Black District Dental Society; board member and volunteer for Wooden It Be Lovely; executive committee member and community service chair of RISE Springfield; American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry; American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine; Illinois State Dental Society and Emerging Leaders Network

What led you to your current career? I chose dentistry because it blends my strengths in science and art. Excelling in math and science, along with a passion for art, led me to a career where I can diagnose and treat patients scientifically while creating aesthetic restorations.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest achievement to date is being awarded a fellowship in the American College of Dentists. This honor recognizes my leadership, professional accomplishments and contributions to both the dental profession and the community.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? Ten? In the next five years, I plan to continue practicing at Prairie Dental Group. Within the next year, I aim to become a diplomat of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine and join Prairie Sleep Center.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is to see it grow as a community where individuals can thrive personally and professionally.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Trust your intuition. With a career that allows me to work anywhere in the country, I was initially hesitant to return to Springfield. However, coming back has been the best decision for both my personal and professional life. Working at Prairie Dental Group, an all-female practice, has surrounded me with inspiring colleagues who challenge me to grow daily. Their support has been instrumental in my development, and I wouldn't be where I am today without them.

What's the song you sing in the shower? "Man! I Feel Like A Woman!" by Shania Twain



All of us at Memorial Health
are proud to contribute to
the health of our community.

We're delighted **Katie Beveridge** and
Ginny Evans are Forty Under 40 recipients.

This achievement is a symbol of their dedication and
commitment to our mission to improve lives and build
stronger communities through better health.

Congratulations!



KATIE BEVERIDGE

System Director, Talent Acquisition
Memorial Health



GINNY EVANS

Director of Hospitality
Springfield Memorial Hospital



We are excited to announce
that Ross Hager, CFP has been
**recognized in Springfield's
Forty Under 40!**

Congrats, Ross!



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AMANDA M. BROWN

24

Occupation: Member engagement coordinator, Illinois Senate
Email: amandamarie275@gmail.com
Education: Bachelor of arts in communication and education from UIS; Master's in public administration with a certificate in community planning, UIS (in progress)
Family: Parents and two younger brothers
Affiliations/community activities: Board member and event committee for Kiwanis Club of Springfield Downtown, creator and director of literacy and reading corners at local laundromats; Sangamon County Republicans, precinct committee person.
What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle in life is to lead with empathy, service and

integrity. I believe meaningful change begins with listening and acting with compassion.

What would you like to give back to your community? Giving back is essential to who I am. I strive to promote civic involvement and support youth development through projects with Kiwanis, like the children's reading corners. Through community events, I aim to make connections that build trust and result in positive change in the lives of others.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? As a young woman in government, I've had to overcome doubts about my experience and credibility. Navigating professional spaces where I'm often one of the youngest has pushed me to lead with confidence, preparation and purpose. Each challenge has strengthened my voice and presence in the field.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? My greatest professional achievement has been earning a bachelor's degree in three years while working part time and being a first-generation college graduate. That experience built my discipline and drive. I'm proud to work full time in the Illinois Senate while pursuing my MPA and continuing my commitment to public service and growth.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you, and how so? The one that stands out the most is organizing a kids' fair in a low-income community. I was able to organize a free community event that provided fun, resources and support to more than 200 children and families. Seeing so many people benefit reminded me why I'm passionate about service; small efforts can make a big difference.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received? The worst advice I've received was to "wait my turn." While patience is important, that mindset can hold people back, especially young professionals and women. I've learned that if you're prepared, passionate and willing to work hard, you don't need to wait to lead or make an impact.



BENJAMIN MCGILL

39

Occupation: Sergeant with the Springfield Police Department
Email: bmcgill2@gmail.com
Education: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Family: Single with a golden retriever named Igloo
Affiliations/community activities: Phi Beta Sigma Inc.; PBPA #5 Springfield; PBPA of Illinois; NOBLE; NAACP
What is your guiding principle in life? My guiding principle is rooted in integrity and resilience. I live by two quotes that have shaped how I approach both life and leadership: "Reputation is what other people know about you. Honor is what you know about yourself," and "Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again." These remind me that true character is defined not by titles or praise, but

by how you carry yourself in difficult moments and whether you stay true to your values when no one is watching.

What led you to your current career? As a kid, I remember Springfield officers being kind and helpful. Their presence made a lasting impact. I initially went to University of Illinois to study engineering but realized that law enforcement was my path.

What would you like to give back to your community? I want to be the same positive presence officers were for me – someone who helps others feel safe, seen and supported.

What do you wish your younger self had known? I wish I had followed my passion sooner instead of investing time in a field that didn't truly motivate me.

What has been your greatest professional achievement? Mentoring a young officer who earned the top spot on the sergeant's list. His success felt like mine.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received? Early in my career, I was told I should consider quitting because I questioned why we did certain things – especially when the only justification was, "That's how we've always done it." At the time, it was disheartening. But I've since learned that asking questions and challenging outdated practices is how real progress happens. That mindset has helped improve processes, encourage accountability and mentor others to think critically. I'm thankful I didn't take that advice.



BECKY GABANY

38

Occupation: Owner, ChangeBridge Consulting
Email: Becky@ChangeBridgeConsulting.com
Education: Bachelor of arts in communications; master of arts in human services
Family: Husband, Adam; two sons, Julian and Arlo; 30-plus pets
Affiliations/community activities: National Association for Community and Restorative Justice, co-chair, DEI committee; Washington Street Mission, life skills training facilitator, volunteer; St. Patrick's Catholic School, community advisory committee; Illinois Women in Leadership, DEI committee; Certified Diversity Executive and professional designations from the Institute for Diversity Certification; Level-1 Trauma-Informed Practitioner certification

through the Attachment and Trauma Network; National Rise to Health Coalition Individual Practitioners 2024 cohort; 2024 Forefront Illinois Racial Equity Collective inaugural cohort; Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois, member

What is your guiding principle in life? When I think of my guiding principles, I think of inclusion and the Platinum Rule. I love to connect people, resources and knowledge together to create meaningful, lasting impact. You can't do that without inclusion and treating people the way they want to be treated.

What led you to your current career? An unexpected layoff became a turning point for me. In a time of crisis and pain, I was met with overwhelming community support and mentors. They encouraged me to build ChangeBridge Consulting, so I could continue supporting positive change in the community.

What would you like to give back to your community? The community has given me so much. I strive to follow and uplift all the incredible leaders doing amazing work to advance equity and inclusion; and I hope to fill gaps that help contribute to the brilliance, resilience and needs of our community.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? As a woman and first-generation college student, I've learned how to navigate complex, unfamiliar systems as well as pressure to shrink or conform; but I've found when I embrace my full, authentic self I consistently have the greatest impact and success.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Launching ChangeBridge and, in our first year, facilitating more than 50 speaking engagements, generating strong return on investment by securing over \$500,000 in grant funding for nonprofits and driving supplementary income to community partners through equity-centered collaboration.

What's the song you sing in the shower? Anything Taylor Swift, of course.



BRANDI GOODIN

39

Occupation: Vice president of marketing communications, BUNN
Email: brandi.goodin@bunn.com
Education: Bachelor's degree from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Family: Spouse, Eric; children: Max, Pierce and Brooke

Affiliations/community activities: Board member and executive committee member of United Way of Central Illinois

What is your guiding principle in life?

My guiding principle is simple: Work hard. Be kind. Have fun. This motto has been the compass for my career and personal growth. It emphasizes that striving for excellence requires dedicated effort and that anything truly worthwhile takes work. Equally important is treating everyone with kindness, empathy and integrity. And finally, finding joy in the journey

– no matter what you're doing – and always remembering to smile because it is crucial for a fulfilling life.

What led you to your current career?

From an early age I have loved creating and brainstorming innovative ideas. In college, I discovered that marketing offers a career where it is possible to dream big, create and make an impact. Marketing is a rewarding career path. I get to work with incredible people to craft compelling campaigns, use different mediums and directly engage with our audience. It's very fulfilling to see direct results based on our creations and know that a tangible impact was made.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My hope for Springfield's future is to see younger generations actively contributing their skills and perspectives. By investing their expertise in the community, we can shape and drive innovative projects that will create a vibrant and thriving place for future generations.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Embrace the present and do not get caught up in future worries. Fretting over hypothetical situations is easy. Focusing on the actions within your control today is what truly matters. Do that and the rest tends to follow.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? Fishing poles. It is a fun activity my whole family enjoys. We love casting a line in our neighborhood pond and seeing what we hook.

Congratulations



BRANDI GOODIN

Vice President of Marketing Communications



WOMEN'S EVENT CALENDAR

Women Entrepreneurs - Central Illinois will host an August luncheon on "Self-Promotion for Your Business." Sherri Leopold of WOW Warrior Network will discuss how to best use whatever means you have to promote your business. Her message is for anyone in any business because self-promotion is vital.

The luncheon is scheduled for Aug. 13, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Illinois Educators Credit Union, 3101 Montvale Dr., Springfield. Members and their guests may attend for \$20, and the fee for non-members is \$30. Registration is required. Visit wecispringfield.org to register.

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Congratulations, Marscia Anderson!

2025 40 UNDER 40

All of us at Keller Williams Capital are beyond proud to celebrate Marscia Anderson—an exceptional leader, changemaker, and community advocate—as one of this year's 40 Under 40 honorees!

As the founder of Solid Rock Transitional Youth Services, Marscia is transforming lives and creating brighter futures for at-risk young adults aging out of the foster care system in Springfield. As a dedicated real estate agent, she brings that same heart, hustle, and purpose to every client transaction.

Marscia, your passion for service and your impact in our community inspire us all. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!

— Your KW Capital Family

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Congratulations

John Pankau

*UCB congratulates
John and the 2025
Forty Under 40
recipients.*

*We are proud of
you, John!*



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BRANDON DAMM 37

Occupation: Public information officer, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Email: damm.brandon@gmail.com
Education: Bachelor of arts in communication from University of Illinois Springfield
Family: Wife, Jill; son, Braydan
Affiliations/community activities: Volunteer director for Rock & Run for Mental Health, member of Springfield Road Runners Club

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? I hope we can develop a positive mindset for the city that is also focused on growth. Focusing on what's lacking generates negative headlines, which can be detrimental to our mental health. Contributing solutions creates a better community for everyone.

What would you like your life to look like in five or 10 years? My son will have graduated from high school by that time. I hope he can look back and see that I did everything I could to be a good father.

What would you like to give back to your community? I've been giving back through Rock & Run for Mental Health for the last three years. It raises funds for mental health and suicide prevention nonprofit organizations, an area I recognized was lacking in central Illinois.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? I didn't attend college right after high school. It took me 19 years to complete my bachelor's degree.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Life is a series of chapters. We are never at the end of the story. This is just a segment of a story. It's never too late to write a new chapter.

What's the best purchase under \$100 that you've made in the last six months? A gym membership.



CLAIRE KRAMER 39

Occupation: Organizational effectiveness specialist at Teachers' Retirement System of the state of Illinois
Email: TheKramers515@gmail.com
Education: Bachelor of arts in communications, currently working toward a master of science in organizational leadership
Family: Husband, Devon; Children: Leo (13), Julia (11) and Caroline (7)
Affiliations/community activities: Helping Hands Meal Train, Elks Lodge #158 member

What is your guiding principle in life? Choose kindness, even when it's hard. I often remind myself that people may be carrying

burdens I can't see, and I strive not to add to their load. My goal is to leave people and places a little better than I found them.

What led you to your current career? When I was younger, I thought I was meant to be a teacher. Over time, I found my path in talent development and training, where I've spent the last 16 years. I truly enjoy witnessing the positive impact personal and professional growth has in the workplace. It's a privilege to coach, collaborate, empower and celebrate my colleagues as they tap into their talents and discover ways to make themselves, their peers and our organization better.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10? I hope to see my family healthy and engaged in activities that align with their unique passions and purpose – ideally making a positive impact on others along the way. Professionally, my dream is to build and lead a team of diverse talent dedicated to developing and growing our organization.

What would you like to give back to your community? I intentionally design and deliver training that aims to ignite empathy, curiosity, fairness and kindness in the people I work with. I hope these qualities take root and spread throughout our wider community, creating a more compassionate and connected environment for everyone.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish my younger self had known not to be afraid to simply try. Everyone starts somewhere. Don't let the idea of perfection get in the way of progress. And most importantly, it's okay to not know everything – ask all the questions.

What's the song you sing in the shower? "Dancing Queen" by ABBA



BRANDON HUGHES 33

Occupation: General manager at Cafe Moxo
Email: brandonhughes23@gmail.com
Education: Riverton High School
Family: Wife, Gabby; children: Landon and Lux

Affiliations/community activities: Head coach for Springfield Youth Football's eighth-grade Bears; volunteer with Christ the King Men's Club

What is your guiding principle in life? Growing my faith, providing for my family and living a virtuous life; accepting what you cannot control and focusing on what you can.

What led you to your current career?

I've always had a passion for good food and serving the community, so when I started working for Mark Forinash at Cafe Moxo in 2011, I knew I was in the right place.

What would you like to give back to your community? I get the opportunity to coach for the Springfield Youth Football League, and it gives me a chance to help teach a group of unbelievable young men the value of hard work, attitude and effort.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? The value of developing your team's skills, and the power of communicating with your staff.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? The June 19, 2024, fire downtown on Adams Street had a huge impact on my life. This event allowed us to look for a new location, and has given me the opportunity to help Mark and Cafe Moxo reopen in the central west end of Springfield.

Who was your childhood/teenage celebrity crush? Typical 90's kid answer, but Topanga from Boy Meets World.

café
Moxo.

It has been our pleasure to learn from and work with Brandon.

We are extremely proud of all you have accomplished and thank you for putting the x's and o's in Moxo!!

Mark, Shawna & Baker Forinash

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Honoring A Leader On The Fast Track

Join us in celebrating **Cory Libka**, proudly selected as a **2025 40 Under 40** honoree.

As a key part of the **Isringhausen Imports** team, Cory represents the spirit of innovation, excellence, and integrity that drives our organization forward.

We are proud to recognize his leadership, not only within our company, but across our community and industry.



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Congratulations to our Forty under 40 Winner,
Dr. Erika Eigenbrod! Well deserved!

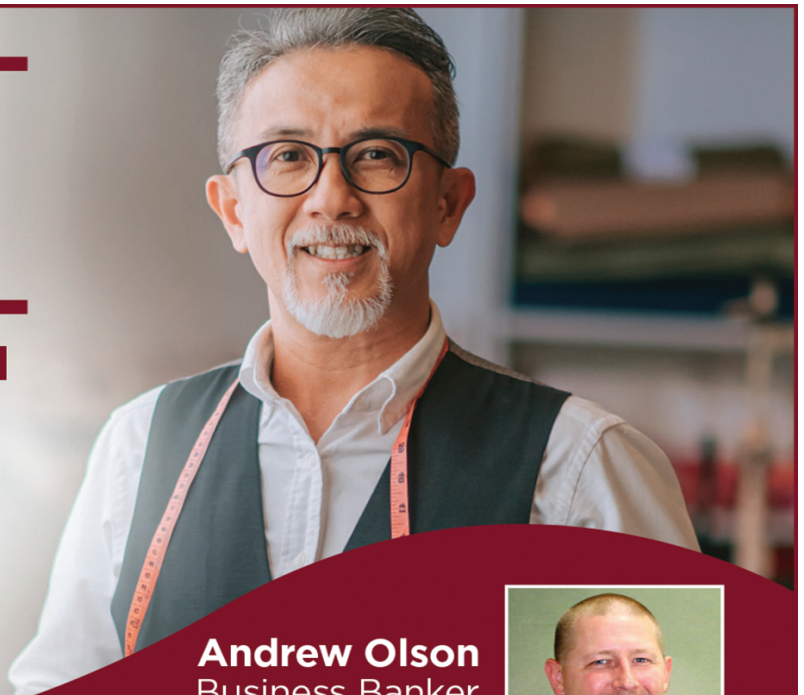


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CORI JAHNS 39

everything else falls into place.

What led you to your current career? My passion for helping people has always been the driving force behind my career. Becoming a family nurse practitioner allowed me to connect with others on a deeper level, provide compassionate care and truly make a difference in their lives. Opening Rose Aesthetics & Wellness was a natural extension of that calling, combining medical expertise with a heart for restoring confidence and well-being in the individuals I serve.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10? Honestly, I try to stay grounded and present. I appreciate where I am in life right now.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? That perfection isn't required to make a difference. Growth, faith and persistence matter more than getting everything "just right" from the start.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Building a business from the ground up and finding a team of strong, compassionate women who share my vision and values.

What's the song you sing in the shower? "Hard Fought Hallelujah" by Brandon Lake and Jelly Roll

Occupation: Owner, Rose Aesthetics & Wellness Clinic, Family Nurse Practitioner
Email: RoseAWclinic@gmail.com
Education: Master of science in nursing, Saint Louis University
Family: Husband, Aaron; Children, Rylan (14), Adalynn (10) and Callan (6)
Affiliations/community activities: Actively involved and volunteer at West Side Christian Church

What is your guiding principle in life?

My guiding principle is keeping God and my faith first and foremost in all that I do. Faith grounds me, guides my decisions and reminds me that every step, both personal and professional, is part of a greater purpose. When I center my life around that truth,



CUYLER COLEMAN 37

What led to your current career?

As a kid I was always fixing things. During high school I was employed at a motorcycle shop, but never thought I would have my own shop.

What would you like to give back to your community?

I contribute to my church by doing things with the kids and encouraging them to be active outdoors. I would like to teach the younger generation the importance of learning a skill.

What do you wish your younger self had known?

I'm happy with my life and my family; I can't say that I'd change a thing. Even a bad experience can contribute something good.

What has been your greatest professional achievement?

I started my business at the age of 19, and it's still going strong.

What's the best purchase (under \$100)

My \$20 pocket flashlight. I use it all of the time.

Occupation: Owner and operator, Capital City Motorsports
Email: ccmotorsports@sbcglobal.net
Family: Wife, Emily; daughters, Cuylie, Brooklyn, Dakota, Ember and Oakley
Community activities: Active member of Church of the Little Flower and its school. Den leader for the youth scouting groups.

What is your guiding principle in life?

My faith guides me, and I believe in "love thy neighbor," which means reaching out and helping those you're closest to.



CORY LIBKA 39

enough to sustain our family? But above all, it is to honor God with my life.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? For renaissance – for us to rise to our potential and develop a community in which we are proud to be a part of, where businesses are proud to be located and where other capitals look for inspiration.

What would you like to give back to your community? Isringhausen has always been a philanthropic pillar of our community, and I hope to see that grow and develop further. Additionally, the continued and expanded access to exceptional automotive experiences. We have a genuine and deep passion for these vehicles and the emotions they evoke, we want to share that with the community and beyond while providing an exceptional place to work.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? A little over three years ago, during a high-pressure stage in my career, one of our children was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia. The struggle to balance professional responsibilities while fighting for the life of our child was almost unbearable. Fortunately, we were able to exceed professional expectations and, more importantly, our son survived and today is a funny, wild, healthy and joyful kiddo. God shined on us that year, but it was a battle on all fronts, at all times.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Focus on building trust and making relational deposits with those along your journey. Remain humble, open minded and curious. Also, when you're upset about something – write the email/text but reread it in the morning before sending and reconsider.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? A nice pair of in-ear monitors. Specifically, the Simgot EW300 DSP's so they can plug directly into most phones.

Occupation: Director of operations, Isringhausen Imports
Email: Cory@isringhausen.com
Education: Bachelor's degree in finance and marketing from Indiana University Kelley School of Business; master's of health care administration from St. Louis University.
Family: Wife, Brittney; Kids: Navy, Rome, Lily
Affiliations/community activities: SLSIA, board member; member, Hope Church

What is your guiding principle in life? Professionally, I have always made career decisions based upon the answers to these three questions: Is it a good work that positively impacts the world? Is the work done with good people and culture? Lastly, can the work provide



DAVID KIENZLER 39

long term and act today for future benefit.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? A united, thriving Springfield where youth flourish, communities connect and sports, education and opportunity drive a vibrant, healthy future.

What would you like your life to look like in 10 years? Looking forward to being in the sweet spot of life with a thriving and healthy family, traveling to new destinations and working on my golf game.

What would you like to give back to your community? After losing my mom a few years ago and standing through a never-ending receiving line for four hours, I'd like to have made an impact to warrant a receiving line a fraction of what she had.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Everyone stumbles along the way but learning from mistakes and perseverance will get you where you want to be.

Favorite song lyric? "It's time to move on, time to get going. What lies ahead, I have no way of knowing," from "Time To Move On" by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Occupation: Senior analyst, INB
Email: dkienzler@inb.com
Education: Bachelor of science in business administration with an emphasis in finance and a minor in economics from the University of Missouri Columbia
Family: Wife, Sarah; sons, Owen and Nolan. Dogs, Archie and Albert.
Affiliations/community activities: Leadership Springfield; Risk Management Association; former United Way funding panelist; former board member for Fairview Youth Athletic Association; SU Tee Ball and soccer coach for Rochester Youth Athletic Association
What is your guiding principle in life? Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. Think



A huge congratulations to Cori on being named one of the 40 Under 40!

As the heart behind Rose Aesthetics and Wellness Clinic, Cori's passion, leadership, and dedication truly set her apart. She pours her heart into everything she does and genuinely cares for every single patient who walks through the door. This recognition is so well-deserved, and anyone who's had the pleasure of working with or being treated by Cori knows how impactful she is — not just as a professional, but as a person. We're so proud of you, Cori!



INB Congratulates Dave Kienzler

With nearly 14 years at INB, Dave has been instrumental in implementing CECL (Current Expected Credit Loss) and supporting over \$1 billion in commercial loan growth. He's a key leader in our credit team and a future Senior Credit Officer.

Off the clock, he's just as committed—coaching his 4-year-old son's soccer and baseball teams.

Way to go, Dave!
Congratulations to our newest Forty Under 40 recipient!



Congratulations to Claire Kramer

on her recognition as one of *Springfield Business Journal's* Forty under 40 honorees. As an expert in Organizational Effectiveness, Claire has been instrumental in strengthening our internal culture and supporting the growth and development of our team during a time of exciting expansion at TRS. Her efforts reflect our deep commitment to **service, teamwork and continuous improvement**, enhancing our ability to serve Illinois public educators as they earn their promised retirement security.

As TRS continues to grow and evolve, we are proud to celebrate Claire's leadership and the lasting impact she is making on our organization, our staff and the members we serve.





ELANA FISCUS 35

Occupation: Chief financial officer at Heartland Credit Union
Email: efiscus@hcu.org
Education: Bachelor's in accountancy at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Master's in accountancy at University of Illinois Springfield
Family: Parents, Sari and Randy Fiscus; Levi the cavapoo; siblings, Rebecca, Gabe and Ariel; proud aunt of six nieces and nephews
What is your guiding principle in life? Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity.

What led you to your current career?

I enjoy the detail-oriented and analytical nature of accounting and have been fortunate to have had influential professors and mentors over the years. Finance serves as the backbone of every organization; it's an area that connects all areas of operations and I love playing a key role in driving long-term success.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Staying true to who you are will give you confidence for success. Ask questions, listen to understand and be coachable. Avoid comparisons and trust in your own timing.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? What seemed like small moments over the years compounded and led me to my current role as CFO at Heartland Credit Union that I am so proud of.

What's the best purchase, under \$100, you've made in the last six months? Starting a small herb garden for the summer.



GINNY EVANS 39

Occupation: Director of patient experience and hospitality for Memorial Health
Email: evans.ginny@mhsil.com
Education: Bachelor of business administration and marketing from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; MBA from University of North Florida
Family: Husband, Aaron Evans; sons, Desmond (8) and Emric (5)
Affiliations/community activities: Project SEARCH host; Memorial patient experience advisory committees
What is your guiding principle in life? Make it fun.

What led you to your current career?

Business and marketing are such broad fields. I love the challenge of communications and all the different ways that communication can impact people's lives. At the start of the pandemic, I was employed in the communications and marketing division at Memorial Health. Throughout the pandemic, I worked on crisis communication, vaccination communication and became much more interested in the connectedness of our community. When my current position came open, I was excited for the opportunity to bring my communications experience to a role that has more direct impact on patients and visitors of Memorial Health.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield is that we build a community that supports one another and builds each other up.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Don't be afraid to take risks and try new things. Failing forward is progress.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? One of my proudest achievements is building a thriving patient experience team across multiple care sites and unifying efforts to not only recognize, but also to honor the dignity and humanity of patients alongside their medical care.



ERIKA EIGENBROD 37

Occupation: Veterinarian
Email: eigenbrod3@gmail.com
Education: Bachelor's of science in animal science from University of Illinois Champaign Urbana and doctorate from University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine.
Family: Husband, John; Our kids, Kaleb, Kodi and Kolt
Affiliations/community activities: Vice president of the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association

What led you to your current career?

A love of science, medicine, an insane drive and the fistulated cow in ANSCI 101's first lab.

What would you like to give back to your community? I would love to work with high

school and college students to help mentor them through finding careers, selecting schools, finding jobs and starting their adult life in the right direction.

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

Veterinary medicine can be challenging in many ways: emotionally challenging, mentally challenging and physically challenging. I was able to forge a path of my own with great mentors by my side. I was able to learn how to have a satisfying and successful career while also being a mom to three very busy children and a wife to a hard-working husband.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Trust yourself. You make the right decisions and you get where you always wanted to be. The road is long and hard but you learn so much. You learn that the road is never ending so start to enjoy the journey.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

Every family of every pet I have helped say goodbye takes a piece of my heart that I will never get back. It is both a blessing and a curse to help.

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

Tik Tok...eek.



GREG MOREDOCK 36

Occupation: Corporation counsel for the city of Springfield
Email: Gregory.moredock@springfield.il.us
Education: Bachelor of science in business administration, University of Dayton; juris doctorate, University of Cincinnati College of Law
Family: Wife, Annie; daughter, Maggie and parents Bill and Sue Moredock
Affiliations/community activities: Illinois State Bar Association, Board of Governors; Sangamon County Bar Association, board member; Salvation Army Advisory Board, past president; Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS, ecology committee.

What is your guiding principle in life? I have

three. As I was entering high school, a graduating senior told me, "Make friends with the lunch ladies" (presumably to get free cookies). In high school, my dad would tell me, "Every day is a battle." A priest I lived with in Kenya told me simply, "Do something really good with your life." Following these three principles ensures that I treat everyone with respect, that I am productive every day and that I do not let daily issues cloud the overall goal of being a good person.

What led you to your current career? In my early days of practicing law, I was drawn to municipal law because it was a way to positively impact the communities that I represented. An unexpected call from Mayor Misty Buscher led me to my current role.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? Springfield is a historically significant community with wonderful assets. My greatest hope is that Springfield can market these assets and develop new, attractive employment options so that individuals look to live here and stay here.

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

Finding the appropriate work-life balance. There is always work to be done, and it is easy to allow this to dominate one's thoughts. It took me several years to be able to put work out of my mind and live in the present moment.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Not every case is a winner, even if the law is in your favor.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? Callaway 3-wood (on sale). Bomb it down the fairway.

We are proud to recognize Nicholas Koch, Strategic Account Representative, for his recent distinction as an exceptional professional in the fields of cybersecurity and community leadership. His commitment to enhancing cybersecurity posture and awareness among his clients continues to set a high standard of excellence.

With a wealth of experience implementing cybersecurity services for organizations around the globe—from Fortune 500 companies to SMBs—Nicholas Koch has consistently elevated cybersecurity infrastructure and awareness. As a Certified Security Awareness Practitioner (CSAP), he is a trusted cybersecurity partner, known for delivering expert support that strengthens client confidence and defensive capabilities. Beyond his professional excellence, Nicholas is a dedicated community leader, serving as a board member at Local First Springfield, the United Way of Central Illinois, and as Executive Committee Member & Community Service Chair at RISE Springfield.



Elevate your organization's cybersecurity strategy by connecting with Nicholas on LinkedIn to discover how his expertise can help strengthen your security framework and drive lasting impact.



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Elana Fiscus, CPA
Chief Financial Officer





JAKE WOOLLEN

33

Occupation: Orchestra and choir conductor, Illinois Symphony Orchestra and Springfield Choral Society
Email: jwoollen@ilsymphony.org

Education: Bachelor of music in cello; master's in orchestral conducting from University of Michigan; post-graduate studies at the Vienna University for the Performing Arts

Affiliations: Illinois Symphony Orchestra; Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestra; Springfield Choral Society; UIS Music; Sing by Heart Dementia-Friendly Choir

What led you to your current career?

How does one arrive at hysterically waving a stick around for a living? Well, I grew up in a musical home.

My mother is a wonderful singer and choral conductor, and I would lie on the floor upstairs and listen to her teaching singing lessons, only occasionally interrupting to sing a passage or two myself. I suppose somewhere along the way there I caught the musical sickness from which I have thankfully never been cured.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield?

That we recognize and invest in the simple things that make life meaningful and enjoyable: building friendships, connecting with nature, preserving our health, engaging with culture and the arts and cultivating community.

What would you like to give back to your community?

Opportunities for Spring-patchers of all ages and backgrounds to experience the transformative power of music, which can bring communities together like nothing else.

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

Midway through my college degree in cello, I developed a severe ulnar nerve injury that forced me to give up my planned career as a cellist. Conducting offered a path for staying in music, but I really had to rewrite the story of myself on the fly and construct a healthy new foundation for my self-confidence.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

Besides making the Forty Under 40 list? I am very proud of the Concerts for Kids we have put on these past few years with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, which just won a Gold Award from the League of American Orchestras, and, thanks to a new partnership with Springfield 186, are now reaching over 3,000 kids each year.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received?

Don't move to Springfield. So glad I ignored that one.



JESSICA SISK

39

Occupation: Director of residential operations, Hope

Email: jsisk@hope.us

Education: Bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University

Family: My fur babies, Luna and Ryno

What led you to your current career?

I began working at Hope 15 years ago and quickly realized I was working with a team of amazing people to support a mission that positively impacts so many lives. There was never a reason to leave.

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

The pandemic profoundly impacted

our organization. Our staff and kids were getting sick, but when it seemed impossible, our staff rose to the occasion.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Don't let the fear of failure hold you back.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

I am in a position where I can make positive and impactful changes in our program and the lives of the kids and families we serve.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? My supervisor has had a positive influence on my life. I have more on my plate than ever, but having a supportive teammate at my side is an incredible feeling.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? Fantasy novels and crisp-white wine.



JESSICA BARNEY

34

Occupation: Department administrator of internal medicine, SIU School of Medicine

Email: jbarney@siumed.edu

Education: MBA, Master's in nursing leadership

Family: Husband, Justin; children, Noah and Sophia; Mom, Reny Drendel and sibling, Adam Drendel

Affiliations/community activities: SIU Internal Medicine Community Advisory Board; volunteer with children's programs at West Side Christian Church

What is your guiding principle in life? My mother and my husband taught me to focus on what you can control, work hard and always move forward.

What led you to your current career? I

wanted to be a veterinarian until my grand-

father had a heart attack and almost passed away. While in the hospital, he reflected on how much he enjoyed the nurses that were caring for him. He said, "That is what you should do, be a nurse and care for people like me." I made the decision to become a nurse—one of the best decisions I ever made.

What would you like to give back to your community? A continued focus on quality care. Not only through the organization where I work but on a broader scale in the community.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? It is always better to use your voice. As a nurse I advocated for

patients and that is where I found my voice. It made me a better person and a better leader.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six

months? Board games. Our family loves them. It is a great way to unwind and spend quality time together.



JOHN CURRY

37

Occupation: Chiropractor and owner, Curry Chiropractic in Springfield and Petersburg; owner, Cowork Springfield; adjunct biology instructor at LLCC and UIS

Email: drjohn@currychiro.com

Education: Bachelor of science in biological sciences, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; Master of Science in sports science and exercise rehabilitation, Logan University; doctorate of chiropractic, Logan University

Family: Parents, Dan and Pat Curry; proud uncle to Hayden and Addison

Affiliations/community activities:

Cantor and accompanist at Christ the King Church

What is your guiding principle in life?

To be useful, honest and kind. Help others grow, learn and feel seen. Everything meaningful stems from service and authenticity.

What led you to your current career?

I was a pharmacy technician where I developed a strong foundation in patient care and education.

What would you like to give back to your community?

Helping entrepreneurs collaborate, grow and thrive at Cowork Springfield.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

Establishing and growing a chiropractic office dedicated to improving the health and well-being of our community.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

I moved back to Springfield and reconnected with family and longtime friends. It's reminded of the strength that comes from community and the importance of investing in relationships.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received?

Don't open a practice in Springfield because the market is saturated.



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JOHN PANKAU 39

Occupation: Senior vice president and commercial credit manager, United Community Bank

Email: jpankau@ucbbank.com

Education: Bachelor of Science in finance with minors in accounting and economics from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, MBA from Benedictine University

Family: Wife, Maurielle; son, J.R.; parents, John and Holly Pankau

What led you to your current career? I started my career as a licensed financial adviser and gained invaluable personal growth and experience. My skill set seemed more conducive to deep analytical work, and after working in an accounting role for several

years, I transitioned to the role of commercial credit analyst with UCB, which led me to my current position.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Shifting career paths is inherently challenging, but ultimately my experience in multiple roles within the finance and banking industries has added to my professional strength, knowledge and character.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? The most invaluable commodity known to man is time. Work/life balance is important and can be more elusive than one expects.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Promotion to senior vice president at United Community Bank.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? My wife and I were blessed with the birth of our firstborn son, J.R., who is now 9-months old.

What's the best purchase under \$100 you've made in the last six months? My wireless, noise-cancelling headphones. Listening to classical music is essential for deep focus when reviewing credit analyses.



KELSEY VARNER 26

Occupation: Assistant treasury management officer

Email: kelseyvarner@carrolltonbanking.com

Education: Bachelor's in business administration from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; 2025 graduate of Illinois Bankers Association's Future Leaders Alliance

Family: Husband, John; dogs, Tuff and Bandit
Affiliations/community activities: Ambassador/team captain for the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce; 2022 Leadership Springfield graduate; Friends of Sangamon County Child Advocacy Center board member; Wooden It Be Lovely Annual Little Black Dress

Gala committee member; O'Shea Builders' Emerging Leaders Program

What is your guiding principle in life? Trust the process, God has a plan for you.

What led you to your current career? I started at Carrollton Bank as a part-time teller in early 2018 with no plans of staying in banking, or any plans at all other than wanting to be successful. Since starting, I have had several incredible mentors that genuinely care about me succeeding both professionally and personally. Pair that with a CEO that understands and values each and every employee, and I knew there was no place I would rather be than Carrollton Bank. I have truly grown to love banking and getting to help people in my community.

What would you like to give back to your community? I would love to help people that haven't been as privileged as I have become the best version of themselves and find success, whatever that may mean for them.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? I wish I would have forced myself out of my comfort zone earlier. So many young businesspeople are in the same comfort zone, and creating a network of good people is essential to career growth.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? I recently graduated from the Illinois Bankers Association's Future Leaders Alliance program. I gained a wealth of knowledge about banking and got to connect with many great bankers from all across the state.

What's the song you sing in the shower? Anything by Kelsea Ballerini



KATIE BEVERIDGE 38

Occupation: System director of talent acquisition at Memorial Health

Email: Beveridge.katie@mhsil.com

Education: Bachelor of science in business administration with a concentration in human resources management and a minor in Spanish from Saint Louis University; master of human resources and industrial relations from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Family: Husband, Colin; children, Graham and Abigail
Affiliations/community activities: Central Illinois Chapter of Society of Human Resources Management

What is your guiding principle in life?

Whatever you are, be a good one. – Abraham Lincoln

What led you to your current career? My first job at

16 was as a teller at Heartland Credit Union, where I was trained not only on systems but also on delivering excellent customer service. I was inspired by the trainer and asked her about her role – that was my first real exposure to human resources. This interest led me to three summers interning in human resources at Memorial Health, which solidified my path. Returning to Memorial in 2023 felt especially meaningful, as it was the first employer to give me the opportunity to explore and learn about the human resources field.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield?

My greatest hope is that it becomes a place where everyone feels they belong and can thrive personally, professionally and as a community. I want to see us grow in ways that attract employers, support families, remove unnecessary bureaucracy and ensure equity in opportunity and access.

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

I wish my younger self knew that leadership isn't about having all the answers, it's about listening well, staying curious and building trust.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

My heart aches over the tragedy in Chatham. It's a painful reminder of how fragile life is. I'm holding the families and community in my thoughts and hugging my kids tighter, slowing down and trying to be more present each day.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

Breakfast from Café Moxo – after going nine months without it, I was so excited they reopened.



LARRY LUSTER II 39

Occupation: Lobbyist and real estate investor

Email: larry@grconsultingil.com

Education: William Rainey Harper College; Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Family: Wife, Sierra; children, Kenadie, 17, Olivia, 6

Affiliations/community activities: Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Omega Nu Chapter

What is your guiding principle in life?

If you make a mistake, make it going 200 miles an hour. It's not always about accuracy, sometimes it's about simply giving it your all and playing with reckless abandon. We can't excuse a lack of effort.

What led you to your current career? One of my mentors took me to the Governors Ball in 2006. I was hooked.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? I hope downtown Springfield returns to its mid-90s eminence.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10? I generally want to be fitter, wiser, more accomplished, more polished and more disciplined.

What would you like to give back to your community? I want to give more Black boys hope for their future the same way leaders at Union Baptist Church and my football coaches at SHG gave me hope.


What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Self-doubt and racism

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

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Winning a statewide campaign as the political and field director for Attorney General Kwame Raoul and then going on to become his campaign manager.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so? I broke 100 at Illini, so now I spend more money on golf equipment I don't need.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received? Cut your hair




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MANASI HULYALKAR 39

Occupation: Pediatrician and pediatric obesity specialist
Email: mhulyalkar85@gmail.com
Education: MD, MBA, Diplomate ABOM
Family: Husband and two boys
Affiliations/community activities: Asian Indian Women's Organization
What is your guiding principle in life? I treat my patients with the same care I want for my family.

What led you to your current career? I wanted a profession where I can make

a difference.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?

I would love to expand my work in promoting healthy lifestyles for children at a global level.

What would you like to give back to your community?

The best care that our children truly deserve.

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

In my roles as a doctor, team leader, mother, caretaker, spouse of a physician and a friend, I have learned to multitask and make the best of each day.

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

Don't be scared to take risks.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

Creating the Pediatric Healthy Lifestyle Center that is dedicated to combatting pediatric obesity.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

A water bottle that reminds me to hydrate.



MARSCIA ANDERSON 32

Occupation: President and CEO of Solid Rock Youth Transitional Services
Email: Manderson@solidrockyts.org
Education: Bachelor of Arts in communication, public relations and marketing
Family: Husband, three brothers including a brother-in-law, sister and two nieces
Affiliations/community activities: Board member of Abundant Faith Christian Center
What is your guiding principle in life? "Well done, my good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

This reminds me to live with purpose, integrity and faithfulness in all I'm entrusted to do.

What led you to your current career?

I've always had a passion for helping younger people.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield?

My greatest hope for Springfield is that we become a city where everyone – no matter what side of town they live on, their socioeconomic status, beliefs or race – is considered, supported and provided with equitable opportunities.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?

I want to have developed supportive housing and recreational spaces for our youth.

What would you like to give back to your community?

Hope and opportunity for our youth.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received?

To not go into real estate full time. I took a leap of faith, and I haven't looked back.



NATALIE GRIDER 38

Occupation: Hairstylist and owner of Appearances Salon and Retreat
Email: appearancesng@gmail.com
Education: USCA School of Cosmetology
Family: Husband, Nathan; daughters, Hadley and Caroline
Affiliations/community activities: Greater Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce; Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois; Sleep in Heavenly Peace; Central Illinois Food Bank and St. Agnes Church.

What is your guiding principle in life?

Be a kind and patient person. Try to see the other person's point of view.

What obstacles have you overcome in your career path?

The pandemic hit one month before I took ownership of the salon. It taught me adaptability and resilience in leadership.

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

Nothing. Mistakes can be your best teacher.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

Winning Illinois Times' Best of Springfield for best salon in 2021.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

Inflation has been a challenge that has caused me to be more sustainable and efficient.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

My Blenders sunglasses.

What's the song you sing in the shower?

No singing, just ideas.



NICK KOCH 29

Occupation: Strategic account representative, Tech-Guard Security
Email: nicholas.koch@techguardsecurity.com
Education: University of Mississippi
Family: Parents, Steve and Jodie Koch; Mom, Lisa Kincaid; Wife, Dr. Allison Long
Affiliations/community activities: RISE, chair-elect, community service subcommittee, events subcommittee; United Way of Central Illinois, board of directors and resource development committee; Local First Springfield, board member; Chatham Jaycees, member; Wooden It Be Lovely, volunteer; Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County, volunteer; Titan Fuel, volunteer;

Land of Lincoln Professional Networking Group, member and Real Men Read, volunteer
What is your guiding principle in life? Work hard, give back and support your community whenever possible. Always treat others the way you want to be treated. Martin Luther King Jr. has a quote I try to live by, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? My greatest hope for Springfield would be to keep young professionals here and attract more young professionals to town. I hope more job opportunities come to town that attract young professionals who will plant their roots here.

What would you like to give back to your community? There isn't one particular thing I'd like to give back, but rather, know that I've made a positive impact and encouraged others to get involved and give back to the community. Like Howard Zinn said, "Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world."

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? Life is like a roller coaster – there's ups and downs, twists and turns, so strap in and enjoy the ride.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

Being involved with RISE Springfield, United Way of Central Illinois, Local First Springfield and Land of Lincoln Professional Networking Group have opened many doors for me and allowed me to make both personal and business connections that will last a lifetime. I've really discovered what it means to be involved and have seen firsthand what it means to "get out what you put in."

What's the song you sing in the shower? "Cheeseburger in Paradise," by Jimmy Buffett

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CONGRATULATIONS, JACOBSEN WOOLLEN!

It is with great pride and admiration that we celebrate your well-deserved recognition as one of the Most Influential 40 Under 40.

Your passion, leadership, and tireless dedication—as Artistic Director of the Springfield Choral Society, Director of the Illinois Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Assistant Director of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra—have left an indelible mark on our community.

Your visionary commitment to enriching lives through music continues to elevate Springfield's cultural landscape and inspire the next generation of musicians and musical dreamers alike.

Congratulations on this tremendous honor, and thank you for all you do to shape a brighter future for us all.

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NICK OEHMKE
37

Occupation: Corporate business services officer, Clock Tower Community Bank

Email: nick.oehmke@mortonbank.com

Education: Bachelor's degree in business management, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Family: Wife, Brittney; children, Olivia, Max and Nora

Affiliations/community activities: Christ the King Men's Club; member of Knights of Columbus 364; volunteer youth baseball and basketball coach

What is your guiding principle of life?

Don't sweat the small stuff. Life is too short.

What led you to your current career? I started working at a local bank right after college as a temporary employee and worked my way into a permanent position.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10? I hope a lot like it is now. I am blessed to have a beautiful and healthy family.

What obstacles have you been able to overcome on your career path? Community banking in Springfield is very competitive. Springfield is all about developing relationships and staying true to your word. At the end of the day, you must be there for your customers and make sure you are giving them the best service you can.

What app on your phone are you ashamed to say you use? Tik Tok. I have a lot of barbecue recipes, bourbon reviews and golf swing tips saved in my favorites.



RACHEL THOMAS
34

Occupation: Owner and jeweler of RLT Jewelry by Rachel Lauer Thomas

Email: rltjewelry@yahoo.com

Education: Bachelor's in psychology with a minor in art

Family: Husband, Michael; daughter, Addy; bonus kids, Ethan and Jolee

Affiliations/community activities: Partnerships with Butler Funeral Homes; First Steps Support Group; Five Star Vet; Staab Funeral Homes and Tails to Remember

What is your guiding principle in life? "Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith

produces perseverance," James 1:2.

What led you to your current career? I admire the work of my family. It has inspired me to create jewelry. In 2019, I took the opportunity to stay home with my daughter and focus on my own business.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? I get the opportunity to be of service to individuals and families in their hardest trials. I allow them a safe space to grieve, share stories and design a work of art to reflect that.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

Last year, we lost our 14-year-old dog, Maizy. Being able to be of service to myself and our family in one of our most difficult times allowed me to have a deeper respect for the work we do.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months? A laser wire for our new welding machine.



ROSS HAGER
35

Occupation: Principal/senior wealth adviser

Email: rossh@kebcpa.com

Education: Bachelor of science in agricultural and consumer economics with a concentration in financial planning

Family: Wife, Marlee; 2-year-old son Hank; 6-week-old daughter, Annie

Affiliations/community activities: Central Illinois Saddle Up for St. Jude, Sangamon Valley Estate Planning Council

What is your guiding principle in life? Treat people the way you wish to be treated.

What led you to your current career?

At a young age I was interested in saving money, compound interest and watching money grow.

During college I stumbled into the financial planning major after switching from economics.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?

Hopefully, I'll have a healthy, happy and active family.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date? Getting promoted to principal at KEB.

Are there any events of the past year that have affected you and how so?

The birth of Annie and watching Hank develop has made me realize that time is limited while they are this young, and I need to enjoy each moment I get to spend with them, regardless of the stress that comes along with a busy schedule and career.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

Breeze shoes, they are very lightweight and comfortable.

Congratulations, Nick!

Nick Oehmke
Corporate Business Services Officer



This honor is a powerful acknowledgment of your meaningful contributions to the local business landscape and clearly identifies you as a key shaper of Springfield's business future. Thank you for all you do for us.

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FORTY UNDER 40 NOMINEES

VISTRIT, thank you for your thoughtful research and drive to expand health care access. We appreciate your commitment to improving care for people in rural communities across our region.

JESSICA, thank you for your steady leadership and calm under pressure, keeping SIU Medicine's team and patients safe. We appreciate your dedication to supporting our community's health.



SIU MEDICINE



**FORTY
UNDER
40**



Congratulations to
Kelsey Varner

*on this well-deserved recognition.
We're so grateful for your dedication
and the impact you make.*

Thank you to Kelsey and all of the 2025 Forty Under 40 honorees for the meaningful leadership you bring to our communities.

Kelsey Varner
Treasury Management Officer



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SARAH MOORE 39

Occupation: Chief compliance officer, BOS Asset Management, LLC
Email: sarah@bosassetmanagement.com

Education: Industry qualifications include: Series 7 General Securities Representative; Series 24 General Securities Principal; Series 66 Uniform Combined State Law Exam

Family: Husband, Troy; daughter, Corrine (18); son, Kingston (7)

Affiliations/community activities: Community education co-chair, Springfield Old Capitol Art Fair executive board

What is your guiding principle in life?

My guiding principle is simply to be a good person; showing up with integrity and moral courage, looking out for the underdog, making room at the table when someone is sitting alone, choosing compassion over judgment and being authentic in the relationships I have with others.

What led you to your current career?

I joined the investment services division of Bank of Springfield in 2008. As my experience and knowledge of the industry and our partners grew, I gravitated toward a central compliance and operations role that offered me the opportunity to serve as a valuable resource to the organization, our advisers and our clients.

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

I wish my younger self understood that a lot can be accomplished and overcome by simply asking for what you need.

Who was your childhood/teenage celebrity crush?

Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez from the movie "The Sandlot."



SUNNY HAMPSEY 39

Occupation: Vice president, operations and quality at Springfield Clinic

Email: suhampsey@springfieldclinic.com

Education: MBA, master of science in nursing, Benedictine University

Family: Cindy and Robbie

Affiliations/community activities: Board member, American Nurses Association Illinois; board member, Illinois Nurses Foundation; member of American College of Healthcare Executives; Illinois Women in Leadership and Sigma Theta Tau

What is your guiding principle in life?

Do unto others.

What led you to your current career? I always knew I wanted a career in health care and found my calling as a nurse. I will always be an oncology nurse first, but as I progressed throughout my career, I discovered I have a passion for helping support the people who take care of people.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10? For myself and my family to be happy and healthy.

What do you wish your younger self had known when you started on this path? If you're not making mistakes, you aren't learning.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

Having patients and their families put their trust in me to care for them. Developing and implementing programs aimed to help employees grow their careers and developing a culture that supports personal and professional growth.

What's the song you sing in the shower? "Defying Gravity"



STEVE HOTT 34

Occupation: Supervisor of Illinois electrical operations at Ameren; owner of Central Illinois Gutters

Email: S.hott1190@gmail.com

Education: Bachelor of arts in business administration, University of Maine

Family: Wife, Katlyn; children, Mila (8), Sam (6) and Laila (4)

Affiliations/community activities: National Society of Leadership; Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce; American Business Club; Better Business Bureau member

What led you to your current career?

A passion for leadership, entrepreneurship and serving others led me to my career(s)

where I build strong teams, deliver quality service and give back to the community that supports us.

What is your guiding principle in life?

Lead with integrity, work hard and treat others with respect. Success is built through consistent effort, strong relationships and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

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

Each challenge has made me who I am. I've learned that success isn't about avoiding failure, but reacting to it strategically, learning from it and continuing to move forward with determination and purpose.

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

Failure is part of growth, leadership takes time to develop and that consistency matters more than perfection.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received?

Play it safe. Growth comes from taking risks, embracing challenges and failing.



TIM FLINN 38

Occupation: Financial adviser, Stifel Investments, Jacksonville

Email: flinnt@stifel.com

Education: Western Illinois University

Family: Wife, Colleen; children, Cashin (11), Robyn (9) and Leo (7)

Affiliations/community activities: Board member, Prairieland United Way; treasurer, Jacksonville Main Street

What is your guiding principle in life?

I strive to be a source of light in the lives of others, choosing kindness, compassion and integrity in all I do. I believe every act of goodness, no matter how small, creates ripples of positive change. My purpose is to uplift, to give more than I take and to live in a way that leaves the world better than I found it.

What led to your current career?

When I earned my certified trust and fiduciary adviser designation, everything clicked. The CTFA opened my eyes to the human side of finance: the trust, responsibility and long-term relationships involved in helping individuals and families manage their wealth, plan their legacies and navigate complex life transitions. I find fulfillment in being a trusted adviser who can make a meaningful difference in clients' lives.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

Kettlebells. The older I get the more I realize the importance of taking care of my body. Now, for the candy habit...

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Forty Under 40 recognition!**
.....



Sarah Moore

Assistant Vice President, BOS Asset Management

BOS

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19

SEPTEMBER

Crowne Plaza | Springfield

7:30am Registration

8:30am Sessions begin

4-5pm Concluding reception

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**Andrea
Flack-Wetherald**

**A fabulous day with
breakout sessions
and networking. You'll
come away with
inspiration and
practical advice for
your leadership and
life!**





TIM SOMMER 39

Occupation: Chief of police, village of Rochester
Email: tsom5985@gmail.com
Education: Bachelor's in law enforcement and justice administration
Family: Spouse Ashleigh; daughter, Annabelle; son Henry
Affiliations/community activities: Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police; Sangamon County Law Enforcement Executives; Central Illinois Association of Law Enforcement Executives; Massey Commission Law Enforcement Hiring, Training, Wellness and Cultural Competency Workgroup; Illinois Concerns of Police Survivors; Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Illinois; Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 55

What is your guiding principle in life?

The simplest acts can significantly impact someone's life. Never miss an opportunity to positively influence another person.

What led you to your current career? I adore the outdoors and desire to help others. I completed an internship with the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office during college and immediately became interested in municipal policing. After spending 13 years on patrol at various local law enforcement agencies and a 10-year tenure in the Illinois Army National Guard, I decided to be a leader as the chief of police in the community where I began my law enforcement career – the village of Rochester.

What is your greatest hope for Springfield? For more citizens to harvest their skills and talents in positive ways to foster a stronger, united and safe community. "Light is the burden of a torch bearer," -Thomas Curtis Clark

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10? I would like to become more involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Illinois Concerns for Police Survivors.

What would you like to give back to your community? More of my time.

What's the worst career advice you've ever received? "Stop caring as much."



Trae Covington 33

Occupation: State Farm agent and partner at TD Capital Ventures, LLC
Email: trae@traefromsf.com
Education: Bachelor's in criminal justice
Family: Wife, Marguerite; parents, Terry and Carla Covington; siblings, Taija Charnley and Terry Grigsby
Affiliations/community activities: American Business Club; community sponsors of Gonzo's Legacy: The Zack Defreitas Project; Rumble Around the Lake; trunk or treat; Voices of Love and NAACP

What is your guiding principle in life?

My guiding principle is to always prioritize kindness, respect and compassion

while living a life of purpose.

What led you to your current career?

I worked for a local State Farm agent, and embraced what it meant to become a State Farm agent.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?

I would like to open a second office with State Farm while continuing to grow my real estate portfolio. My wife and I just celebrated our 11-year anniversary and look forward to growing our family.

What would you like to give back to your community?

I want to mentor the next generation of young professionals, and create an after-school program for underprivileged youth.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

My greatest professional achievement is qualifying for chairman's circle with State Farm.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

A nice bottle of Weller 12 year for retail price at Binny's.



VISTRIT CHOUDHARY 32

Occupation: Health policy coordinator at SIU School of Medicine
Email: vistrit.c@gmail.com
Education: Master's degree in public policy, University of Chicago
Family: Wife, Melessia; cats, Luna and Benzene; dog, Nala
Affiliations/community activities: Rural Health Leadership fellow, National Rural Health Association; chair, Administrative Professionals Council, SIU School of Medicine
What led you to your current career?

While in college, my mother became seriously ill. It took more than a year to find a doctor who could treat her. My father took extended time off of work to care for her

and ultimately lost his job. That experience left a lasting impression that made me want to pursue a degree in public policy.

What is your guiding principle?

The harder a problem is to solve, the sweeter is the satisfaction of having solved it.

What would you like your life to look like in five years? 10?

I would like to work at the intersection of policy, strategy and equity to help shape a system which prevents people from falling through the cracks.

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

I'd remind myself that learning happens in many forms and that knowledge is never wasted. Stay engaged. Stay open. Grades are not the only indicator of intellect.

What's the best purchase (under \$100) you've made in the last six months?

A \$50 manual espresso maker I found on Facebook Marketplace.



ZACH STEAD 39

Occupation: General superintendent of generation for CWLP's generating facilities

Email: zach.stead@gmail.com

Education: Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; registered professional engineer.

Family: Wife, Lauren; sons, Luke and Alex

Affiliations/community activities: Rochester Competitive Baseball, head coach; Rochester Junior Football League, coach; Rochester Athletic Booster Club, member

What is your guiding principle in life?

Each morning I choose to be a positive influence to those around me.

What led you to your current career?

During college I interned at CWLP and was offered a full-time position in 2009, which marked the beginning of my professional career.

What would you like to give back to your community?

I give back by supporting youth athletes and using sports as a platform to teach the values of hard work, dedication and sacrifice.

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

There is no substitute for urgency and personal drive.

What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?

I am most proud of passing the professional engineer exam.

What's the song you sing in the shower?

"Party in the USA," at the top of my lungs.