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# MOBILE BAY

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## Mobile Bay's 2024 Class of 40 Under 40

*This year's class of young, local professionals is raising the bar of success and inspiring optimism for this new year on the Bay.*

By **Mobile Bay Magazine Staff** - January 2, 2024

### David D. Anthony



***Attorney, Armbrecht Jackson LLP***

After three years in Washington D.C., David returned to practice law in his hometown. Since joining Armbrecht Jackson LLP in 2017, he has been included several times in the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch list, given to lawyers who showcase outstanding professional excellence in private practice, and was nominated to chair the probate section of the Mobile Bar in 2019. David is a regular presenter of continuing education courses in probate law for the National Business Institute and writes a monthly column

in the Mobile Bar Bulletin detailing the significant decisions made by the Alabama Supreme Court. He is also heavily involved with the Boys and Girls Club of South Alabama and received the Helping Hands Award in 2020. A lifelong music lover, David is a co-founder and member of the Blow House Brass Band.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama; University of Alabama School of Law

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse** Melissa

**Guilty Pleasure** ASMR chiropractor videos with the volume up

**High School Superlative** Most Likely To Be on Broadway

**If Mobile had a Mount Rushmore, who would you put on it** Hank Aaron, Jimmy Buffett, Winston Groom, Joe Cain as Chief Slacabamarinico

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## Kyle Burney-Lamar



***K-12 Mathematics Academic Supervisor, Mobile County Public School System***

Kyle is responsible for K-12 mathematics curriculum implementation, professional development and support for Mobile County teachers. Although most of his daily interactions occur with teachers, Kyle's primary goal is to positively impact students. His philosophy is the more well-equipped teachers you have, the more students benefit. Under his leadership over past years, students' math proficiency has risen 11%. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University of South

Alabama. The faculty, staff and students respect him for his work ethic and willingness to work in whatever necessary capacity.

**Alma Mater** Alabama State; University of South Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**spouse + children** Briana; Preston (6), Malia (1)

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** I always knew I wanted to be an educator.

**Hidden talent** Cooking

**Where would you take out of town guests to eat** Kravers Seafood

**If i were mayor I would** Retain the 25-35 age group in the city by incorporating more events and venues that appeal to their interests

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## Cassie Burns, M.D.



*Interventional Pain Management Physician / Director of Pain Management, Infirmary Medical Clinics*

Since arriving in Mobile in 2016, Cassie has made a difference in her patients' treatment of their chronic pain through an interventional approach. Her innovative methods led her nominator to note that she is "changing the face of pain management" in Mobile. A double board-certified anesthesiology and pain management physician, Cassie uses a multimodal approach to chronic pain, which incorporates both pharmacologic and non-

pharmacologic strategies. She has made great strides in shifting the focus of pain management away from an opioid-centered field, and giving her patients the understanding, tools and guidance to return to normal living as quickly and safely as possible. She is also committed to helping patients understand their pain and treatment plan to create realistic goals for the future.

**Alma Mater** University of Southern Mississippi; University of Mississippi Medical Center

**Hometown** Tylertown, Mississippi

**Spouse + children** Trey; Ethan (8)

**First job** Writing animal-based articles for the Tylertown Times Newspaper where my mother was editor

**Guilty pleasure** Pollman's petit fours

**Best advice you've ever received** Always be yourself.

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## Christine N. Burns-Brown



*Partner, Burr & Forman LLP*

During her 10 years in law, Christine has been recognized in the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch list in commercial litigation, corporate law and municipal law. She has been named a Mid-South Super Lawyers "Rising Star" in civil litigation: defense every year since 2017. She joined Burr & Forman LLP in 2018 as an associate, quickly shooting to

the rank of partner in an impressive span of only two years. She is an active member of the Mobile Bar Association Women Lawyers, where she is vice president, and is a member of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Mobile Bar Association and the Baldwin County Bar Association. Christine also serves on the Board of Directors of the South Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program.

**Alma Mater** University of Virginia; Tulane University Law School

**Hometown** Virginia Beach, Virginia

**Spouse + children** Jerry; Jovi (almost 2), Brody (9 months)

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** Lawyer (but the kind on TV)

**Best advice you've ever received** A soccer coach once told me, "You'll miss 100% of the shots you don't take." True in soccer and in life.

**If I were mayor, I would** Embrace technology to streamline city operations, improve public service, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship

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## Whitney Christopher



*Director of Accounts, Hummingbird Ideas*

Whitney brings nearly 14 years of strategic marketing and advertising experience to Hummingbird Idea's leadership team. Her experience, passion and drive are not only beneficial to the agency, but to her clients and the community in which she lives and works. She has managed a wide variety of clients from multiple industries, including a

recent rebranding of the Mobile Chamber. Her campaign to attract new talent to Mobile, More to Mobile, won numerous ADDY awards in 2022. Whitney also serves on the board of the American Advertising Federation Mobile Bay as the public service chair.

**Alma Mater** Troy University

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Neil; Landry (12), Eliza (9)

**Guilty Pleasure** Good wine, fancy dinners and reality TV

**High school superlative** Most Loyal

**If mobile had its own mt. rushmore, who would you put on it** A fat and happy Bienville Square squirrel

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** A marine biologist

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## Trevor Clarke



***Principal Designer / Craftsman, Restructured***

Restructured, which Trevor started at the age of 27, is a local millworks and antique lumber business in Fairhope that specializes in reclaiming, reviving and repurposing wood from homes and other structures dating back to the 19th century. From this repurposed wood, Travis builds cabinets, countertops and furniture. Trevor's products have been featured in Baldwin County Parade of Homes and Alabama's Treasured Forests Magazine. Trevor's business gives back to the community by sponsoring Ride Yellow put on by Infirmary Health that raises money for Rapahope.

**Alma Mater** Auburn University

**Hometown** Daphne

**Where would you take an out of town guest to eat** River Shack on Dog River or to Dragonfly in Fairhope

**If I were mayor, I would** Invest in the beautification and accessibility of Mobile's waterfront areas, heavily increase environmental conservation efforts and continue to support the historic preservation of our architecture

**Guilty pleasure** Playing hooky and getting on the water on a Tuesday — weekdays have the best weather and you'll have it all to yourself

**First job** Construction site cleanup and general laborer

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## Chris Dugger



***Vice President, Thompson Engineering***

Chris has steadily risen through the ranks at Thompson Engineering since coming on as a college intern in 2010, marking several notable milestones along the way. He is one of the youngest employees in the company's 70-year history to reach a leadership role in the field services practice. Since he took charge of the position in 2019, the practice's revenue has grown 250%. In his daily tasks, he manages employee and project operations in eight states, overseeing nearly 50% of the over 400-person company and generating nearly \$25 million annually. In addition to leading his team, Chris can often

be found leading the entire company in charity efforts such as the Alabama Coastal Cleanup and the Downtown Cajun Cookoff.

**Alma Mater** University of South Alabama

**Hometown** Foley

**Spouse + children** Angela;

Jayce (5), Brantley (5), Noah (almost 2)

**First job** Groundskeeper at a cemetery and funeral home

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Dauphin's — the views are great and the food is good. A story of some of Thompson Engineering's significant projects can be viewed and discussed from the port view looking out from the table.

**Best advice you've ever received** Don't be afraid to fall. Just be sure to fall forward and for a different reason next time.

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## Sharrell Edmond, M. ED.



*Spanish / Theatre Educator, Mattie T. Blount High School; Educational and Community Outreach Chair / Director, Joe Jefferson Playhouse*

Sharrell is a dedicated educator and is active in student extracurricular activity leadership such as serving as an Azalea Trail Maid Sponsor. She is a board member for The Joe Jefferson Playhouse where she directed "Anne and Emmett," which earned her

an award from People United to Advance the Dream Organization. Sharrell was selected for the NEH Landmark program titled "From Clotilda to Community: The History of Mobile" where she collaborated with educators around the world to create lesson plans on the Clotilda. Sharrell is an active member of Harvest Church, is a leader in the Delta Sigma Theta sorority and is the state representative for the Arts and Letters on the Southern Regional Leadership team.

**Alma Mater** Auburn University; Alabama A&M University

**Hometown** Mobile

**Guilty Pleasure** Blue Bell chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream

**Favorite thing about your job** Pouring into the youth of my community, pushing Black and Brown students to see their full potential. It's an honor God has chosen me for it.

**Hobbies** Singing and painting

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## Alicia D. Evans, M.D.



**Owner / CEO, Ardor Scrubs; Family Medicine Physician, Franklin Primary Health Care**

Alicia is a multi-hyphenate whose list of achievements spans several arenas. In addition to her position as a family medicine physician, she has been appointed as the program director for a new family medicine residency program at Franklin Primary Health Care. Her work in the medical field does not end there. She has combined her experience as a female medical professional with her job as an entrepreneur. She is the owner and

founder of Ardor Scrubs, an e-commerce scrub line tailored specifically for women in the healthcare field. To top it all off, Alicia also achieved the rank of Major in the US Army, where she received the prestigious Meritorious Service Medal, given to military members who showcase outstanding noncombat achievement, during her deployment to Kosovo in 2018.

**Alma Mater** Florida State University; Florida State University College of Medicine

**Hometown** Pensacola, Florida

**Spouse** Joshua

**Guilty Pleasure** Reality TV

**Favorite thing about your job** Seeing sick patients become well both physically and mentally

**If I were mayor, I would** Update traffic infrastructure, especially the traffic lights on Airport Boulevard

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## Jessica Garner



***Graduate Dean, University of Mobile School of Nursing***

As one of the youngest graduate nursing deans in the country, Jessica is an innovative leader at the University of Mobile. In addition to serving on a wide range of committees at the university, Garner secured a significant nursing faculty repayment grant, which

enables nurses to pursue graduate degrees regardless of economic background. This, combined with her recruitment initiatives, has led to doubled enrollment in the graduate family nurse practitioner program in just a year. Garner is dedicated to the community and volunteers with Project Serve. She is also active at her twin daughters' school, UMS-Wright Preparatory School, as well as her church, Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

**Alma Mater** Spring Hill College; University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Christopher; Mary Cathleen (3), Eloise (3)

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** Orthodontist

**Hidden Talents** Giving good advice (or so people tell me)

**Hobbies** Spending time with family and friends, reading, shopping and decorating

**Guilty pleasure** Bread pudding and anything chocolate

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## Graysi Gartman



### *Chief Operating Officer, MCG Workforce Solutions*

2023 marked a milestone year in Graysi's career, as she celebrated her 10-year anniversary at MCG Workforce Solutions and received her Professional Recruiter Certification. Since coming on board to the company as an intern, she has risen through the ranks, from a recruiter to director of marketing and recruiting to her current role as chief operating officer. Graysi now leads recruiting, onboarding, hiring and employee relations for roughly 1,000+ employees annually. The list of various organizations and boards she is a member of and involved in outside of work is large, and includes FUSE Project, the Mobile Chamber Board of Advisors, the Downtown Alliance Board of Directors and the Salvation Army Community Outreach Committee.

**Alma Mater** University of Tennessee

**First job** Selling Cutco knives — I can still recite the sales pitch word for word. I sold an obscene amount of knives.

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** I had dreams of congruently being on Broadway, an attorney and a doughnut maker. To this day, I'd be thrilled with any or all of those aspirations.

**Best advice you've ever received** If you're not working, someone else is.

## Jameron “Deon” Gatson, LMFT



### *Mental Health Therapist, Compass II Life Services*

Deon is the founder of Compass II Life Services, established to improve mental healthcare for youth across the Gulf Coast. As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Deon has extensive experience in juvenile court, community mental health, non-profit operations and private practice. He mentors at-risk youth and has coached youth sports in Daphne for 12 years. Additionally, he has attained the rank of Major and serves as a military police officer in the Alabama Army National Guard. Past military service includes combat experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Atlantic Resolve in Poland.

**Alma Mater** University of Mobile

**Hometown** Pensacola, Florida

**Spouse + children** Sarah; Cameron (19), Tre (17), Gabriel (11)

**Guilty Pleasure** Hot Krispy Kreme doughnuts — a lot of them!

**Hobbies** Hanging with friends, jazz music and traveling

**Best advice you've ever received** When people show you who they are, believe them.

**What word would you use to describe Mobile to someone who'd never been here before?** Unique

**Hidden talent** I play the keyboard and drums.

## Meghan Hermance, Ph.D.



*Assistant Professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine, University of South Alabama*

Meghan has earned more than \$3 million in federal funding, including a grant for \$2.6 million from the National Institutes of Health that will help to stop the transmission and spread of an emerging tick-borne virus in the U.S. She also teaches graduate courses at the collegiate level and continuously conducts research. She mentors student physicians and scientists and makes meaningful contributions to the global body of knowledge on the public health threats caused by the spread of certain tick-borne viruses. Meghan is regularly interviewed by local media to advise the public on the risks of, and preventative strategies for, ticks and tick-borne diseases.

**Alma Mater** Texas A&M University; University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

**Hometown** Houston, Texas

**Hobbies** Hiking, kayaking, traveling and exploring new places

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** A veterinarian

**If mobile had its own Mount Rushmore, who would you put on it** Frederick P. Whiddon, Hank Aaron, Joe Cain, William C. Gorgas

## Ashley Williams Hogue, M.D.



*Trauma, Acute Care & Burn Surgeon / Director of the Center for Healthy Communities, USA Health and USA Center for Healthy Communities*

Ashley has a long list of job titles and an equally lengthy list of association memberships to match. Last year, the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma named her a “Future Trauma Leader” for her work as a trauma surgeon. As the director of the Center of Healthy Communities, she is tasked with addressing health disparities and improving healthcare access for underserved populations. She and her husband co-founded Project Inspire, a multi-week, hospital-based injury prevention program aimed to reduce youth violence in the Mobile community. She recently won the 2024 John M. Templeton, Jr., MD Injury Prevention Research, the funds of which will go to Project Inspire for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Alma Mater** University of Georgia

**Hometown** Augusta, Georgia

**Spouse + children** Antwan; Amarii (11), Ava (6), Atlas (3)

**First job:** Sonic Drive-In

**Hidden talents** My ability to multitask is unparalleled. I can eat a bowl of cereal, check emails and hold an entire conversation at once!

**If Mobile had its own Mount Rushmore, who would you put on it** My Project Inspire kids! They overcome so many adverse childhood experiences in pursuit of becoming the best versions of themselves.

## Angelica Howard, M.A.



### *Educator and Author, St. Paul's Episcopal School*

A graduate of St. Paul's Episcopal School and a 2017 Athletic Hall of Fame inductee for her college track and field career at the University of Alabama, Angelica now teaches at St. Paul's. Last year, she was honored as a 2023 Mobile County Public School System High School Teacher of the Year for her work at Vigor High School. She is also a published author of "Thirty-Three: A Poetic Device," a poetry journal. Angelica is also engaged in the development of local youth. She launched the SPEAK Initiative as a result of being selected by Alabama's Poet Laureate for her five-person poetry delegation representing southwest Alabama. The initiative empowers young people to express themselves through poetry.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama; University of South Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** R&R Seafood on the Causeway and The Pelican Reef on Fowl River

**Favorite thing about your job** I love engaging, empowering, educating and shaping young minds to change the world!

**If Mobile had its own Mount Rushmore, who would you put on it** Jo Bonner, Ann Bedsole, Vivian Figures, Yvonne Kennedy and Lonnie Johnson

## Lee Johnson



*Executive Vice President, Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance*

Lee played a pivotal role in the site location of Novelis in Baldwin County, one of the largest economic development projects in the state of Alabama's history, which will create over 1,000 jobs and an investment exceeding \$2.5 billion in the local economy. Under his leadership, his organization won the Area Development's "Project of the Year" and the International Economic Development Council's "Economic Development Organization of the Year." Lee manages the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance team, and serves on the Metro Board of Directors for the South Alabama YMCA, the Executive Committee for the South Alabama Workforce Development Council and the Economic Development Association of Alabama's Board of Directors.

**Alma Mater** University of Southern Mississippi

**Hometown** Pearl, Mississippi

**Spouse + children** Amber; Maxine (2)

**High school superlative** Class Favorite

**Where would you take an out of town guest to eat** La Martina for tapas in Fairhope

**Best advice you've ever received** You can't be trusted with the big things if you can't do the little things.

## Claire Jones MSN, RN, CCRN, CPAN



*Director of Critical Care and Emergency Services, Springhill Medical Center*

Claire began her career at Springhill Medical Center in 2012 as a registered nurse in the Intensive Care Unit. She steadily made her way up from there. Last year, Claire was promoted to the director of Critical Care and Emergency Services while remaining the supervisor of other key areas of the hospital, including the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit and Cath Lab Recovery. She balances her roles at Springhill Medical Center with her membership in the Nursing Leadership Committee. In addition, Claire has participated in Hearts for Athletes, several American Heart Association events, United Way events and nurse recruiting events at local college nursing programs. She is also an active part of the national branches of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, the American Association of PeriAnesthesia Nurses and the Emergency Nurses Association.

**Alma Mater** University of South Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Kent; Charlie (6), Amelia (5)

**Guilty Pleasure** Dessert! I have to eat something sweet after every meal!

**Best advice you've ever received** Respond, don't react.

**If I were mayor, I would** Bring Trader Joe's to Mobile!

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## Gracie Johnston



### *Director of Operations, Cunningham Bounds*

No matter where she works, Gracie has a reputation for being more than involved. In addition to her daily tasks during six years in human resources at Cunningham Bounds, LLC, she was an Association of Legal Administrators member and social media committee chair. Upon joining Premiere Medical in 2022, Gracie was a local and national Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) member, secretary of the Mobile Chapter's MGMA board, and local and national Society for Human Resource Management member. She is now back at Cunningham Bounds as the director of operations. She somehow still finds time to be an Association of Legal Administrators member and an active alumna of The University of Alabama and Kappa Delta.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama

**Hometown** Athens, Alabama

**Spouse + children** Henry; Henry (4) and Dottie (2)

**First job** Wrapping gifts and checking people out at my mother's gift and home decor store in downtown Athens

**Favorite thing about your job** The amazing people I get to work with daily and the impact that I am hopefully able to make in their lives at work

**Best advice you've ever received** Treat everyone you meet with kindness and respect. You never know what impact you could have on them or in their lives that day.

## Daniel Laan, MD, FACS



*Surgeon, Director of Bariatric Surgery, USA Health Providence Hospital*

Daniel has several roles at USA Health Providence Hospital. He is both a bariatric and general surgeon, where he performs state-of-the-art robotic surgery. He also serves as the medical director for bariatric surgery and is the chairman of the robotic surgery committee. Thanks to hours upon hours of rigorous work, he recently led Providence to become an accredited comprehensive center for bariatric surgery awarded by the American College of Surgeons, making it one of only two hospitals in lower Alabama with this accreditation. Among several boards and committees on which he serves, Daniel is amongst the seven appointed physicians on the Mobile County Board of Health.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Hometown** Fort Payne, Alabama

**Spouse + children** Kimberly; Rosemary (6), Samuel (4)

**Best advice you've ever received** Don't let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me (John 14:1).

**Hidden talents** I can do a pretty mean Forrest Gump impression.

**What word would you use to describe Mobile to someone who'd never been here before** Welcoming

# Paul Larson



## *CEO, Larson Real Estate and Investments*

Paul is the CEO of a real estate investment and development firm focused on acquiring multifamily value-add properties. Paul has built a 30-million-dollar business, all stemming from small multifamily, mobile home parks and Airbnbs. Paul has also moved into ground-up real estate development, and his first project is now going up in Mobile. He enjoys giving back to his community through nonprofits such as Wildwood for Children, Flourish, FUSE Project and St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, as well as through coaching youth baseball.

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Von; Avery (16), Parker (5)

**Guilty Pleasure** My wife's bread pudding with vanilla cream sauce

**High school superlative** Most Likely To Talk to Anyone

**Best advice you've ever received** Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.

**First job** Cutting grass in the neighborhood for \$5 - \$10 dollars a yard.

**What word would you use to describe Mobile to someone who'd never been here before** Charming

**When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** A professional baseball player

## Sheamon McCants



### *Regional Branch Administrator, Navigator Credit Union*

In just 5 years with the company, Sheamon has moved into a leadership position with the largest state-chartered credit union in Mississippi, and one of the largest credit unions in Alabama. He oversees the day-to-day operation of five of the 12 branches in the Mobile and Baldwin county areas, and his team serves over 50,000 members. He is active in the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and is dedicated to serving the community. Sheamon volunteers and teaches at his church and volunteers with a program that assist individuals in obtaining clothing to wear to interviews. He often shares his professional insight with local media outlets about avoiding financial scams.

**Alma Mater** Alabama State University

**Hometown** Montgomery

**Guilty Pleasure** Watching “Living Single” and “Martin” (also, eating sweets)

**Favorite thing about your job** Working with amazing, talented people in the credit union industry to lead our members into financial success

**High school superlative** Most Likely To Succeed and Teacher’s Pet

**When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** A dentist because I love to see people smile!

# Jared McDonald



## *Mortgage Loan Officer, VP Trustmark National Bank*

In March 2016, Jared began his career in the mortgage business with Trustmark National Bank. In 2017 during his first full year of production, Jared was one of the three top-producing loan officers in Mobile and Baldwin County. From 2018 to 2022, he was recognized annually and a recipient of three Presidential awards, with annual production topping \$40 million in 2021. In 2022 he was the number one producing loan originator in the Mobile and Baldwin County market. In addition to his normal workload, he has been instrumental in construction lending and several pilot programs within our market and has stepped up as a true leader.

**Alma Mater** Auburn University

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Megan; Harlen (6), Clara (4), Mary Elise (4), Nora (4)

**Guilty Pleasure** Sitting on the back porch, firing up the Kamado Joe, pouring myself a cocktail and cranking up some Allman Brothers

**Hidden talent** I am a 90's country human Shazam. Give me five seconds on a song intro and I'll nail it.

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Chuck's Fish

**Hobbies** Boating, golfing, cooking, playing guitar

# Tyler McDonald



## *Pediatric Orthopedic and Spine Surgeon, USA Health*

Tyler has worked tirelessly to broaden services for children with scoliosis. He is a prolific researcher whose work has been published in several academic journals, He is a member of multiple organizations that work to advance the profession and serves as vice president of the Mobile Chapter of AMBUCS, a national organization devoted to promoting independence in children with disabilities through adaptive tricycle use. Tyler has a long history of community service, including a recent mission trip to Ecuador, where he provided care to underserved children. One recent example of his innovation and leadership was the creation of a new program that provides halo gravity traction for children with scoliosis.

**Alma Mater** The University of Texas

**Hometown** Grapevine, Texas

**Spouse** Jazz

**Guilty Pleasure** Chocolate chip cookies and a glass of milk; sci-fi books

**Favorite thing about your job** The kids and the people I work with — I have an awesome team of folks devoted to the excellent care of children.

**Hidden talents** Cooking, playing banjo, not getting brain freezes, forgetting where we keep things in the house and butchering lyrics to songs I've heard 1,000 times

# Jack O'Dowd



## ***Lawyer, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale***

Upon moving back home to Mobile in 2016 after practicing law in Atlanta and Baton Rouge, Jack began making an impact in the law profession locally, making a name for himself along the way. He was recognized as a Super Lawyers “Rising Star” in 2022 and 2023 in business and corporate law, a distinction awarded to only 2.5% of young attorneys per state. Recently, he was part of the team that headed the \$100-million acquisition of a regional homebuilder. He maintains several pro bono cases annually through the South Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program, volunteering time and expertise to low-income clients.

**Alma Mater** U.S. Naval Academy; University of South Alabama; University of Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Anna; Jack (14), Betty (10), Pete (7), Thomas (5), Jamie (2), Phil (1 month)

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** The pope

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Callaghan’s

**Best advice you’ve ever received** My grandfather, a banker, told me when I was young, “You can put money in a bank account or stock market, but never put money in your mouth.”

## Michael Orso, MBA



### *Project Manager, Hargrove Engineers and Constructors*

Michael leads a dynamic program with a projected capital expenditure of \$450 million. He is experienced in multiple phases of capital projects ranging from front-end scoping to commissioning. This includes developing proposals, planning, organizing and leading the execution efforts for engineering phases of projects, ensuring equipment and materials arrive on time, and construction contracts are in place to support the project schedule. Michael participates in the Hargrove Chili Cook-Off team to support American Cancer Society and the Baton Rouge Engineering Softball Classic to support St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. He coaches youth sports, is a mystery reader at Saraland Early Education Center and is a member of Redemption Church.

**Alma Mater** William Carey University

**Hometown** Satsuma

**Spouse + Children** Tiffany; Avery (12), Wesley (8), Charlotte (2), Olivia (1)

**Hobbies** Coaching youth sports, exercising, hunting and fishing

**Favorite thing about your job** Supporting my teammates as I strive for success

**First job** Washing cars and running errands for a used car dealership

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## Ross Parrish, CPA



***Controller, The American Equity Underwriters, Inc.***

Before being hired as controller at American Equity Underwriters, Inc. in 2022, Ross was hired as accounting manager at the Archdiocese of Mobile and was promoted just five years later to controller. He helped coordinate and lead the 2021 Regional Diocesan Fiscal Management Conference, which facilitated learning and networking opportunities for CFOs, Controllers and HR Managers from Catholic dioceses across the southeast. He spearheaded the HRIS transition across over 100 Catholic ministries, streamlining processes for approximately 2,000 employees as well as implementing an internal audit program across these ministries. Ross is an active parishoner at St. Lawrence Catholic Church and utilizes his financial expertise to serve on the finance committee at Archangel Radio, a Catholic radio station based in Fairhope.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama; University of South Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse** Genny

**Guilty Pleasure** A cheesy rom-com

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** I wanted to do something outdoors, so, naturally, I became an accountant.

**If I were mayor, I would** Resign ... Nobody needs me to be the mayor ... Maybe build the new bridge and then resign.

## Evan N. Parrott



*Shareholder, Maynard Nexsen P.C.*

Evan has a solid reputation in law, with several awards to back it up. He has been named a Mid-South Super Lawyers “Rising Star” in business bankruptcy every year since 2020, was selected for the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges Next Generation Program Class of 2022 and has been listed in the Best Lawyers in America’s Ones to Watch list every year since 2021. He is a leader at Maynard Nexsen, chairing the Mobile office recruiting program for the past five years. He is the vice-chair of the Alabama State Bar’s Bankruptcy and Commercial Law Section, has served as a member of the Senior Bowl committee for the past seven years and has taught multiple courses as an adjunct professor in the Political Science and Law department at Spring Hill College.

**Alma Mater** Spring Hill College; University of Mississippi School of Law

**Hometown** Grand Bay

**Spouse + children** Abby; Cooper (5), Anna (1)

**First job** Farmhand on a corn and cattle farm

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Red or White

**Guilty Pleasure** Cinnamon sugar doughnuts from Sugar Rush

**Best advice you’ve ever received** Say what you mean, mean what you say, and if you say you are going to do something, do it.

## Edwin “Lee” Peters III



*Partner / Financial Advisor, Peters Financial LLC*

As a partner and financial advisor at Peters Financial LLC, Lee works with individuals, families and businesses in the areas of investments, retirement planning and life insurance. Lee is a two-time graduate of the University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in finance and a master's degree of financial planning and counseling. Lee has a years-long passion for helping clients gain financial independence and achieve their monetary goals. Outside of work, Lee participates in several charitable and religious associations, including serving on the board of the Providence Foundation, and is a member of the Order of Fuse, a parishioner at St. Ignatius Catholic Church and a member of the Men of St. Joseph. When not at work, Lee enjoys duck hunting in Venice, Louisiana, or being out on the Mobile Bay water.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Annie; George (1 month)

**Favorite thing about your job** Helping people from all walks of life take control of their finances and achieve their goals

**If I were mayor, I would** Hire Sandy Stimpson, then resign.

**Best advice you've ever received** People don't care what you know unless they know that you care.

## Tiffany Rauls



*Chief Operating Officer, Heart Group of the Eastern Shore, PC; Budget and Contract Leader, Eastern Shore Research Institute, LLC*

Tiffany leads the administrative side of the cardiology practice as manager over the nurses and office staff, and coordinates with the physicians. She is also the cardiovascular ultrasound sonographer and director of diagnostic testing. In addition to the cardiology practice, she handles the contracts and budgets for more than 10 ongoing clinical trials. Tiffany has served in leadership positions with National Charity League of the Eastern Shore and is a member of Impact 100 Baldwin County, Flourish, and Order of Fuse. Her community service extends to the National Charity League of the Eastern Shore, Fairhope Youth Rotary, Prodissee Pantry, Family Promise of Baldwin County, American Heart Association, and Exceptional Foundation.

**Alma Mater** University of West Florida

**Hometown** Mobile

**Children** Camryn (16)

**Guilty Pleasure** Watching sunsets on the Bay and dog TikTok and Instagram videos

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Jesses' in Magnolia Springs

**Best advice you've ever received** Troubles are only temporary. Don't let yourself get consumed by a temporary problem.

## Catherine Reaves



### *Vice President of Policy and State Affairs, Alabama Port Authority*

After starting out as a law clerk, Catherine pursued a career in governmental relations, later joining the Alabama Port Authority in the fall of 2022. There, she has led several major projects, most notably a board of directors statewide tour, which involves increasing awareness of the Port's significant economic impact by hosting meetings and regional leadership receptions in cities throughout Alabama. She was also crucial to securing funding for infrastructure modernization at McDuffie Coal Terminal during the 2023 state legislative session. Catherine sets time aside to be involved in the Mobile community, serving on the board of directors for the Dauphin Way United Methodist Church Child Development Center and Partners for Environmental Progress.

**Alma Mater** Auburn University; Cumberland School of Law

**Hometown** Pintlala, Alabama

**Spouse + children** Brock; Wright (4), Charlie (3), Bo (2 months)

**Guilty Pleasure** As a mom of three... sleeping.

**Favorite thing about your job** The ability to work alongside diverse stakeholders and state officials to ensure the Port's continued growth and success. The ships are pretty cool too.

**Best advice you've ever received** Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.

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## David Rodgers



*Vice President of Economic Development, Mobile Chamber*

David's nominator wrote that he "has demonstrated exceptional leadership abilities throughout his career." As vice president of economic development at the Mobile Chamber, he was designated as a Certified Economic Developer (CEd) in September 2022 by the International Economic Development Council and has also been acknowledged by the International Economic Development Council as one of the 40 Under 40 in Economic Development at their 2023 Leadership Summit. He is a part of several boards and committees, including the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, USA Research and Technology Park and South Alabama Workforce Development Council.

**Alma Mater** University of Southern Mississippi

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Lauren; David (6), Thomas (1)

**First job** Lifeguard and swim coach at the Country Club of Mobile

**Best advice you've ever received** Stay humble, keep God in your life, and be true to

yourself – my father.

**What word would you use to describe Mobile to someone who'd never been here before** Opportunity

## Francie Ruzic, M.D.



*Physician / Board Certified OB/GYN, Mobile Bay OB-GYN Center*

Even before she began her medical career, Francie was destined for medical greatness. During medical school, while she participated in research projects and attended medical mission trips abroad, she received the “Clyde G. Huggins Research Award.” In residency, she was awarded the “Resident Research Award” two years in a row. In her first year of practice at the Mobile Bay OB/GYN Center at Mobile Infirmary, she performed over 150 OB/GYN cases with a patient-centric approach. As a result of her work, she has been invited to join the Medical Association Young Physician Counsel and the Women and Childrens Division Committee.

**Alma Mater** Auburn University; University of South Alabama College of Medicine; University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Hometown** London, Ontario

**Spouse + children** John; Watts (2)

**Guilty Pleasure** I love mozzarella sticks (Pink Pony in Gulf Shores has the best, in case you were wondering).

**Hidden talents** Poetry. Growing up I memorized a poem a week and when I was 10 one

of my own poems was published.

**Favorite thing about your job** I am a passionate advocate for women's health. Nothing makes me more fulfilled than being able to provide comprehensive care while making a patient feel heard and empowered.

## Rachel T. Seaman, M.D.



*Associate Professor of Internal Medicine / Chief Quality Officer – Internal Medicine / Associate Program Director – Internal Medicine / Director of the Academic Hospitalist Program, USA Health*

Rachel has served as a leader in both the emergency department and hospital medicine services. She currently leads the hospital medicine team for the academic department of internal medicine. She serves as an associate chief medical officer and chief quality officer for the entire USA health system. She is a dedicated member of the hospital peer review and safety committees. She is passionately dedicated to quality, safety and patient satisfaction across the USA Health system.

**Alma Mater** University of South Alabama; Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine

**Hometown** Grand Bay

**Spouse + children** Larry; Preston (9), Harper (7)

**Guilty Pleasure** True crime podcasts and docuseries

**Favorite thing about your job** I have the extraordinary privilege of caring for patients while simultaneously mentoring the future of healthcare in a system that supports me to effect real change to make patient care better.

**Hidden talent** Expert level Amazon shopper — just ask my husband!

## Hawk Sindel



*Chief Executive Officer, Urology Associates*

Hawk's nominator described him as embodying "a rare combination of integrity, commitment, and passion," further stating that "he exemplifies the type of young leader we should recognize in our community." While those are big kudos, the results of Hawk's work prove them to be true. When he joined Urology Associates in 2017 as CEO, the medical practice had eight urologists and a few dozen staff. Under his watch, Urology Associates is now comprised of 28 physicians, 15 advanced practice providers and over 300 staff. Despite his packed schedule, he finds time to serve on the board of the Mobile MGMA for five years, currently as president, and is an active member of the Rotary Club of Mobile.

**Alma Mater** Vanderbilt University

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Campbell; Hemming (6 months)

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Noja. This restaurant is the

definition of quaint atmosphere and wonderful customer service.

**Favorite thing about your job** Every day I am presented with a new challenge/opportunity for success. It makes every day unique and exciting.

**If I were mayor, I would** Improve public transportation throughout Mobile to draw more Mobilians to downtown.

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## Dr. Brandon Spradley



*Dean of the School of Sport Business, The United States Sports Academy*

As dean of the School of Sport Business at The United States Sports Academy, Brandon is one of the youngest faculty members at the university to be promoted to a dean position. Before his promotion at the age of 34, he previously served in various leadership positions at the university and helped develop sport education programs in countries around the world. Another defining career achievement is helping the university earn accreditation for its sports management degree programs, making it the first institution to have all three of its sports management degree programs at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels accredited by the Accreditation Council of Business Schools and Programs. Brandon is also the founder and pastor of New Life Restoration Church in Saraland.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama: United States Sports Academy

**Hometown** Saraland

**Spouse + children** Camilla; Gabrielle (7), Lailah (4)

**Favorite thing about your job** A great faculty and staff, helping others reach their potential and achieving their goals, and opportunities to travel overseas, learn different cultures and meet new people.

**Best advice you've ever received** Put God first and everything else will fall in place.

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## Grant Stone, D.O., M.B.A



### *Interventional Pain Management Physician, Gulf Orthopaedics*

Grant's work at Gulf Orthopaedics has given pain management options to a new patient population that previously had minimal treatment options. In his five years of practice in Mobile as a double board-certified physician in both physical medicine and rehabilitation as well as pain medicine, he started the pain management division of Gulf Orthopaedics. He also created an interventional pain management practice that brings new procedures and treatments to patients, assisting in pain control and increased functionality. Last year, Grant raised nearly \$10,000 for the Real Men Wear Pink Campaign for the American Cancer Society. He has also served on the board of Gulf Coast Surgical Partners.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama; DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine; Lincoln Memorial University

**Hometown** Birmingham

**Spouse + children** Brooke; June (8), Henry (6), Benjamin (2)

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Ruth's Chris Steak House

**Best advice you've ever received** Treat a patient like you would treat your family.

**If I were mayor, I would** Add more playgrounds throughout the city with well-maintained amenities like bathrooms and water fountains

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## Peter Susman



*Chief Administrative Officer, University of South Alabama*

Peter leads development and compliance reporting for a \$1.5-billion operating budget. Additionally, he is responsible for the management of human resources, information technology, student financial services, the budget office, tax accounting, the university police and internal audit. Outside of the office, Peter serves on the board of directors for the Community Foundation of South Alabama and the USA National Alumni Association. He is an active member and board member for the Ahavas Chesed Synagogue in Mobile.

**Alma Mater** Southern Methodist University; University of South Alabama

**Hometown** Mobile

**Spouse + children** Jennifer; Pete (7), Lucy (5)

**Guilty Pleasure** Eating a big bowl of ice cream before going to sleep

**Favorite thing about your job** Collaborating with colleagues to solve problems and

improve the student experience at USA

**Hobbies** Playing golf, gardening, and collecting maps, books and historical items about Mobile and Alabama

**If mobile had its own Mount Rushmore, who would you put on it** Sieur de Bienville, Peter J. Hamilton, Hank Aaron, Sandy Stimpson

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## Jai Deep Thakur, M.D.



*Assistant Professor, Neurosurgery / Director of Minimally Invasive Cranial and Skull Base Neurosurgery / Director of Neurosurgery Education, USA Health, University of South Alabama*

Getting a diagnosis of a brain tumor or cranio-vascular disease can be frightening for a patient. Fortunately, Jai puts patients and their families at ease in challenging circumstances, going above and beyond to help them understand their diagnosis and navigate their journey towards recovery. Jai is a highly skilled neurosurgeon whose research has been extensively published. Additionally, he is the director of neurosurgery education where he mentors current medical students who are interested in careers in neurosurgery and adjacent specialties, and is working to develop a neurosurgical residency program at USA Health system.

**Alma Mater** Government Medical College, Amritsar, India; Louisiana State University Shreveport

**Hometown** Panchkula, India

**Spouse + children** Nidhi; Sohum (6), Shasta (2)

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Chuck's Fish in Mobile and Hope Farm in Fairhope

**Hidden talents** Playing cricket and, apparently, I dance well after some wine!

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## Travis Valentine, IOM



*Chief Operations Officer, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce*

Travis joined the South Baldwin Chamber team in 2015 and has forged many connections within the business community as membership director, vice president of investor relations, and now chief operating officer. In 2021, under his leadership, the chamber experienced its highest number of new businesses joining in recorded history. Over the last two years, he has successfully grown chamber membership by 18% and connected over 1,000 businesses to the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce. Travis has also led the South Baldwin Chamber's Diplomat Program and co-founded the Lower Alabama Young Professionals. In January 2025, Travis will step into the role of chief executive officer. In his spare time, he is a youth basketball coach for Gulf Shores recreation department, coaching his daughter's team.

**Alma Mater** Colorado State University

**Hometown** Lakewood, Colorado

**Spouse + children** Merritt; Tatum (10), Holden (5)

**Hidden talents** Juggling, naming all 50 state capitals and 46 U.S. presidents

**Favorite thing about your job** Working with professionals and helping them discover what a chamber of commerce is and how they can utilize the chamber's event and resources to succeed

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## Maxine Walters, ESQ.



*Attorney, Dearman Law Firm*

Maxine handles municipal, state and federal criminal cases in Mobile and surrounding areas, including work on a capital trial. While at Georgetown Law, she was president of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) and received the Dean's Achievement Award. Currently, she is a member of the Mobile Bar Association, the Paul W. Brock Chapter of the American Inns of Court and the Junior League of Mobile. She is president of the Vernon Z. Crawford Bay Area Bar Association and has been published in the Georgetown Environmental Law Review. Outside the courtroom, Maxine is dedicated to organizing community outreach with her colleagues and volunteers her time teaching mock trial to high school students.

**Alma Mater** University of Alabama; Georgetown Law

**Hometown** Mobile

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up** A spy in the CIA

**Where would you take an out-of-town guest to eat** Noja

**Hobbies** Tennis and reading

**Guilty pleasure** Chocolate turtles and wine

**Best advice you've ever received** Be patient.

**If I were mayor, I would** Make parking free Downtown

*Photos by Chad Riley // Shot on location at Mobile Bay Magazine Offices*

*[Click here](#) to learn more about Mobile Bay's 40 Under 40 program*

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