

A R K A N S A S

# 250



ARKANSAS' MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

2020

**ABPG**  
ARKANSAS BUSINESS  
PUBLISHING GROUP

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS BUSINESS, NOVEMBER 2, 2020, VOL. 37, NO. 44

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Business**

A nighttime photograph of the Arkansas State Capitol building in Little Rock. The building is brightly lit, with its large dome glowing. The surrounding city is visible in the background, with numerous lights from buildings and streets. The sky is a mix of dark blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is a vibrant urban landscape at night.



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# FROM THE PUBLISHER



As you scan through each of the 10 sections of the Arkansas 250, you will no doubt wonder why deserving candidates were left off the list. If you think we missed somebody who is shaping the way we live, learn and do business in Arkansas, tell us.

Who did we miss? Why should they be included? This is information that will be helpful in determining the 2021 Arkansas 250. Email me: cbahn@abpg.com.

Keep in mind, we build the list by looking beyond the CEOs and board chairs who typically populate these types of “power” lists. Certainly, this list includes the usual suspects, but the Arkansas 250 is intended to be a mix of household names, rising stars and those who prefer their influence and accomplishments to remain behind the scenes.

Each year we compare notes with executives and leaders from every region and each major industry category in the state. We mine board of directors lists for publicly traded companies, universities and nonprofit organizations.

And we deep dive into reporting from media outlets, including Arkansas Business, to identify the business, political and quality of life stories that mattered most. It is important to us that this list includes people actively plotting the course of our state.

Thank you to Lydia McAllister, who served as editor of the 2020 Arkansas 250. Her attention to detail, persistence and enthusiasm for this project made possible our best publication yet.

And thank you for reading. Please don’t hesitate to nominate someone you believe is shaping the way we live, learn and do business in Arkansas.



**CHRIS BAHN**

Publisher  
cbahn@abpg.com  
(501) 372-1443

# THE STORY OF SUCCESS

Having served numerous individuals, nonprofits, trusts, schools and corporations since our 1903 founding, Simmons Bank and Simmons Bank’s Wealth Management team have had the opportunity to witness success across an incredibly diverse spectrum. This perspective, coupled with Simmons’ own story, point to three universal practices that underlie success.

**HONOR WHERE YOU COME FROM.** Most Arkansans know this truth by heart, but remembering and honoring your roots is essential to the success of individuals and businesses alike. While all of us grow and evolve in many ways, we can only do so authentically when we remember the values and communities that gave us our start.

**KNOW WHERE YOU’RE GOING.** This value has been foundational to our own business as Simmons has grown from its small town start in Pine Bluff, Arkansas to serve seven states, with our Wealth Management professionals overseeing assets of approximately \$6 billion. Rooted in our community bank heritage, our team has intentionally scaled without compromising our commitment to provide exceptional customer service and personal touch.

**REMEMBER: PASSION IS YOUR PULSE.** Passion is what takes us beyond our job descriptions and gives us the ability to conquer obstacles that would otherwise be impossible. Being smart isn’t enough – you have to have heart. For these reasons, passion is the pulse that underlies and sustains every successful effort.

We recognize all these qualities in the outstanding AR250 honorees and Contemporary Legends. Thank you for the inspiration you provide as you continue to give back, pursue growth and overcome challenges. Congratulations, and please don’t hesitate to call on our Wealth Management team if we can help you achieve your next success!

Sincerely,



**JIMMY CROCKER**

EVP, Wealth Management  
Simmons Bank



# COVERAGE

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A photograph of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) hospital building at night. The building is illuminated, with the UAMS logo visible on a tall tower. The sky is dark blue. In the foreground, there are large, semi-transparent geometric shapes in white and red.

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2020-21

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2020-21

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For the second year in a row, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as having the best hospital in the state, and our ear, nose and throat (ENT) department was ranked among the top 50 nationwide. In addition, COPD, Colon Cancer Surgery, Lung Cancer Surgery, Heart Failure, Hip Replacement and Knee Replacement were rated as High Performing.

***U.S. News & World Report* rankings are designed to assist patients and their doctors in making informed decisions.** The Best Hospitals ranking means you'll find quality complex care for challenging health conditions and for common elective procedures.

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# UAMS Health

# byCOMPANY

64.6 Downtown.....106	Capitol Advisors Group.....66	Hudson, Cisne & Co. ....14	Riceland Foods.....99
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PLANS



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*Managing Partner*



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*Partner & Director of  
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# **1<sup>ST</sup>** *First National Bank* *You First. Always.*

“

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN FILLED WITH UNPRECEDENTED EVENTS, BUT IN OUR 130-YEAR HISTORY, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH UNPRECEDENTED BEFORE. WE KNOW HOW TO GET THROUGH THIS. FIRST NATIONAL BANK WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT WE DO BEST, PUT OUR CUSTOMERS FIRST. STABILITY AND SERVICE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR ORGANIZATION.”

**-VICE-CHAIRMAN, WILL BREWER**



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ARKANSAS  
250  
BANKING  
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**JOHN  
ALLISON**

**CHAIRMAN**  
Home BancShares / Centennial Bank

Under Allison's leadership, Home BancShares was recognized as No. 4 on the Forbes 2020 America's Best Banks list after two years ranked No. 1. Home BancShares has eclipsed \$15 billion in assets and has more than 160 branches in Arkansas, Florida, Alabama and New York. Allison is a distinguished alumnus of Arkansas State University.



**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** Arkansas State University

**Favorite hobbies:** Hunting and boating

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Mike's Place in Conway

**Words I live by:** Don't ask others to do what you would not do.



**PHIL  
BALDWIN**

**CEO**  
Citizens Bank

Citizens Bank is Arkansas' newest billion-dollar bank. This is the second bank that Baldwin has led to this size, the first being Southern Bancorp in 2009. In 2020, the Citizens Bank Board of Directors changed its mission statement to "People First," which is a reflection of how the bank aims to treat each customer.



**Lives in:** Batesville

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading:** 13 Bankers by Simon Johnson

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** The Faded Rose in Little Rock

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Robert Baldwin, my father

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Boxley Valley



**SCOTT  
BEARDSLEY**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Crews & Associates

Beardsley, who advises municipalities and school districts on financing options for new construction projects, was elected to the board of directors to the National Association of Municipal Advisors. He had a hand in the \$65 million Jacksonville North Pulaski High School and the Don Tyson School of Innovation in Springdale.



**Lives in:** Paron

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A.), Southern Methodist University in Dallas (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Ambassador

**Favorite hobby:** Traveling with my family

**Proudest career moment:** Working on the largest education bond issue

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Ferndale

**Words I live by:** Treat others as you want to be treated.



**CLETE  
BREWER**

**CO-MANAGING PARTNER**  
NewRoad Capital Partners

Brewer has more than 25 years of experience leading successful startups and publicly traded companies encompassing the service industry, retail, franchising and manufacturing. He has led two initial public offerings and raised almost \$400 million in public and private financing. NewRoad invests in companies including health care technology, retail and consumer packaged goods and business services.



**Lives in:** Rogers

**College:** University of Arkansas



**WILL  
BREWER**

**VICE CHAIRMAN**  
First National Bank

Brewer joined First National Bank in 2009 after seven years working as a paramedic. Brewer has had a hand in the bank eclipsing \$1 billion in assets and growing statewide from its headquarters in northeast Arkansas. Brewer and his family have been involved in a number of philanthropic efforts, including the Arkansas State Police Foundation.



**Lives in:** Paragould

**College:** Utah Valley University

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Greers Ferry Lake

**Dream job as a kid:** Law enforcement

**Favorite hobby:** Flying

**Words I live by:** Work hard and treat people the way you would want to be treated.



**JIM  
CARGILL**

**PRESIDENT & CEO FOR CENTRAL,  
NORTHEAST AND SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS**  
Arvest Bank

Cargill is responsible for all aspects of banking operations and strategic direction for Arvest in central Arkansas, which includes more than 450 employees and 32 banking locations. Cargill is a native of Lewisville (Lafayette County) and a fourth-generation banker who began his career at his family's bank, First National Bank, in Lewisville.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas



**DAVY CARTER**

**REGIONAL PRESIDENT**  
Centennial Bank

Carter is a banker, attorney and former Arkansas Speaker of the House. In 2020, he was appointed to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Memphis Branch board of directors. He is a regional president of Centennial Bank, which was named one of the World's Best Banks after receiving the recognition of "Best Bank in America" for two consecutive years.

**Lives in:** Jonesboro

**Colleges:** Arkansas State University (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.), Louisiana State University

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Delta

**Dream job as a kid:** To be like Michael Jordan

**Favorite hobby:** Time spent on Greers Ferry Lake

**Words I live by:** Be respectful.



**GARY COOPER**

**LITTLE ROCK MANAGING PARTNER**  
HoganTaylor

Cooper was named managing partner of the top 100 accounting and consulting firm when JPMS Cox merged with HoganTaylor in 2018. Cooper has been involved in a number of community organizations and leadership roles, including boards of trustees for the University of Central Arkansas Foundation and the Arkansas Arts Center.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Central Arkansas (B.B.A.), Baylor University (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Attorney

**Proudest career moment:** Accepting a community service award at the governor's mansion over lunch

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Jim Phillips

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** great schools, an inviting business environment and gutsy leadership.



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## RANDY DENNIS

**PRESIDENT**  
DD&F Consulting Group

Dennis has served as the principal or senior consultant for hundreds of bank and thrift mergers and has served on the faculty for the Berret School of Banking for more than 15 years. This year, his focus has been assisting clients through a pandemic and epic recession that followed one of the longest expansion markets in U.S. history.

**Lives in:** North Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas (B.A. and MBA)

**Recommended reading:** The Lincoln Conspiracy by Brad Meltzer

**Dream job as a kid:** A doctor

**Favorite hobby:** Bush hogging at our farm in Monticello

**Words I live by:** When I asked my teenage daughter about a guy in her life, she replied, "It's complicated, Dad." Truer words were never spoken.



## BRAD EICHLER

**HEAD OF INVESTMENT BANKING**  
Stephens Inc.

Eichler oversees more than 170 investment bankers with offices across the U.S.; London, England; and in Frankfurt, Germany. Eichler, who began as a junior analyst at Stephens in 1991, has spent the last decade as head or co-head of investment banking, overseeing rapid growth in the department.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock



## NIK FISKÉN

**HEAD OF INSTITUTIONAL EQUITIES**  
Stephens Inc.

After learning accounting was not for him, Fiskén joined Stephens in 1994 as a junior analyst. He was promoted to research analyst in the late 1990s to cover life and health insurance, and in 2006, he was promoted to run all of the equity research department. In 2016, he took over institutional sales and equity trading. His most meaningful accomplishment over the last 12 months was beating cancer for the second time.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Denison University

**Dream job as a kid:** Play for the Washington football team, then Redskins

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Greers Ferry Lake

**Words I live by:** Live each day to its fullest, sleep is overrated.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs to** eliminate state income taxes.



## KAREN GARRETT

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
Hudson, Cisne & Co.

Garrett, as managing partner, oversees and implements the firm's strategic vision and currently serves as a director for the board of Home BancShares. Hudson, Cisne & Co. operates in three cities across the state: Little Rock, White Hall and Rogers.

**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** University of Central Arkansas

**Favorite hobby:** Traveling just about anywhere

**Words I live by:** Work hard, play hard.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Mike's Place in Conway

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs to** retain talent.



**GEORGE GLEASON**

**CHAIRMAN & CEO**  
Bank OZK

Gleason left his legal practice at the age of 25 to purchase controlling interest in Bank of Ozark, with \$28 million in total assets and 28 employees. Gleason has transformed this small rural bank into Bank OZK, the state’s largest. In 2020, the bank moved into its new headquarters in Little Rock.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)



**TIM HICKS**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
& EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF INVESTOR RELATIONS**  
Bank OZK

Hicks oversees a broad range of functions at Bank OZK, including technology, information systems, human resources and more. He has led Bank OZK’s decision to invest \$6 million in the construction of a solar power plant to offset the energy usage at their new headquarters.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Hendrix College

**Favorite hobby:** Watching my kids play sports

**Proudest career moment:** First paycheck

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs to** find innovative ways to encourage economic development.

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Ryan Underwood

We’re raising our glass to the outstanding leaders throughout the state striving to make our communities better places to live, work, and play. Congratulations to BKD Partner Ryan Underwood and the rest of this year’s Most Influential Leaders in Arkansas honorees.

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**GARY HUDSON**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Farmers & Merchants Bank

Hudson practiced law in DeWitt before becoming the trust officer for Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1980. He has worked for a number of financial institutions, being named CEO of Farmers and Merchants in 2010. Hudson is a current member of the Foundation Board of the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University.

**Lives in:** Stuttgart

**Colleges:** Arkansas State University (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.), Southern Methodist University

**Recommended reading:** Anything about or by Winston Churchill

**Dream job as a kid:** To be a banker like my late father T. F. Hudson

**Words I live by:** Be better today than you were yesterday. Change is not always bad.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more local volunteers and statewide broadband internet coverage.



**JASON LAFRANCE**

**PARTNER**  
Dale Capital Partners / Tempus Realty Partners

LaFrance co-founded Dale Capital Partners following the sale of his family's USA Drug to Walgreens Co. in 2012. He serves as vice chair of the Arkansas Children's Foundation board and as the chair of the Children's Circle of Care Committee. He also serves on the board of Episcopal Collegiate School.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Proudest career moment:** Selling our first Tempus deal

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Count Porkula in Little Rock

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My dad

**Best career advice I ever received:** Always do what you say.



**ALEX LIEBLONG**

**INVESTOR**  
Lieblong & Associates

Lieblong, who operates his own investment firm, also serves on the board of directors for Home BancShares, which eclipsed \$15 billion in assets with 158 branches in Arkansas and three other states. He was reappointed in January 2019 to the Arkansas Racing Commission.

**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** University of Central Arkansas



**MIGUEL LOPEZ**

**SVP, CHIEF COMMUNITY OUTREACH OFFICER**  
Encore Bank

In addition to his work for Encore Bank, Lopez serves on the boards of Just Communities of Arkansas, Harmony Health Clinic, Museum of Discovery, Pulaski County Imagination Library, University of Little Rock at Arkansas Alumni Association and Goodwill of Arkansas. Lopez also teaches public policy to graduate students at Webster University.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock (B.S. and M.P.A.), University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading:** Residence on Earth by Pablo Neruda

**Dream job as a kid:** Poet

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My mother, Cecilia Lopez. She is my everything. I owe everything in my life to her.

**Words I live by:** Diligence is the mother of good fortune.





**GEORGE A. MAKRIS JR.**

**CHAIRMAN & CEO**  
Simmons First National Corporation

Makris has overseen massive growth since taking over Simmons in 2014, leading the bank through acquisitions that have increased its assets to nearly \$21 billion. Simmons, which operates in eight states, has been recognized in consecutive years among Arkansas' "Best Places to Work." The bank was also named one of the top 20 banks in the U.S. by Forbes.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Rhodes College (B.A.), University of Arkansas (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Pro baseball player

**Proudest career moment:** Working with my three sons

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Delta - some of the most genuinely nice folks you'll ever meet

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a flexible public school agenda that tailors local education to the needs of the community.



**FRANKLIN MCLARTY**

**CO-FOUNDER & CO-CHAIRMAN,**  
The Firmament Group  
**CO-FOUNDER,** CapRocq Core Real Estate Fund  
**CO-FOUNDER & CO-CHAIRMAN,**  
Southern United Auto Group

McLarty continues to lead Southern United Automotive Group, Firmament Group and CapRocq alongside his partners. A significant recent accomplishment was McLarty's anchor investment in XTR, a nonfiction film and TV content studio, where he provides strategic guidance and is able to work alongside his cousin, Christina Arquette.

**Lives in:** Little Rock and New York City

**Colleges:** University of Richmond (B.A.), University of Miami (MBA)

**Recommended reading:** Thinking in Bets by Annie Duke

**Best career advice I ever received:** Good things come to those who hustle.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Our family home along the Arkansas River

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** strong leadership, business growth and talent. A great example can be found in Mayor Frank Scott Jr., Galen Perkins, John Trainor and Gain Robinson's work bringing Express Rx's headquarters to Little Rock.

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**DETRIA STACKHOUSE**  
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& Entrepreneur  
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## MARTIE NORTH

**SVP, DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/CRA**  
Simmons Bank

North manages multiple bank products that impact hundreds of people across seven states. She successfully launched a multi-million dollar development program and approach; served as representative of banks with assets of \$50 billion on a federal regulator panel; and is viewed as an expert on banking, race and equity, and housing matters impacting limited asset individuals.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Harding University

**Dream job as a kid:** Interior designer

**Favorite hobby:** I am a bargain shopper and it takes commitment and strategy to be successful.

**Words I live by:** No one owes you anything and no one is better than you.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to be more innovative. Too often we attempt to mimic what other places have done. It's time for us to be the trailblazers in more arenas of endeavor.



## MARNIE OLDNER

**CEO**  
Stone Bank

Prior to Stone Bank, Oldner worked as a bank consultant with DD&F Consulting Group for seven years and as an executive officer in several banks for 20 years. She was named as one of Arkansas' Most Influential Leaders in 2019. Oldner currently serves on the board of the Arkansas Bankers Association and is chair of the Federal Reserve's 8th District Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** California State University

**Recommended reading:** The Ride of a Lifetime by Robert Iger

**Proudest career moment:** Growing a once small "troubled" bank into a thriving bank with \$500 million in assets

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to support its rural communities through improved roads, bridges, health care availability and internet access.



## MATT REDDIN

**EVP, CHIEF BANKING OFFICER**  
Simmons Bank

Last year, Simmons named Matt Reddin chief banking officer, placing him at the helm of nearly all the bank's revenue-generating units. The promotion followed Reddin's successful leadership for areas ranging from Simmons' treasury management and product development to correspondent banking, mortgage, commercial lending and retail efforts.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.), Southern Methodist University

**Dream job as a kid:** Mountain climber

**Proudest career moment:** Becoming the chief banking officer for all of Simmons Bank

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Fairfield Bay or Greers Ferry Lake and the hunting woods of southwest Arkansas



## CHRIS ROBERTS

**CHAIRMAN & CEO**  
Encore Bank

Roberts, a native of Pine Bluff, has been in banking since 1992. He graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1991 with a B.S.B.A. in finance and insurance. He served as CEO and president of Centennial Bank from 2005 to 2009, president of Delta Trust and Bank from 2009 to 2014 and executive vice president of corporate sales for Simmons Bank from 2014 to January of 2018.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Be honest in all you do and build lasting relationships.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Cheers in The Heights is my regular go-to.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to invest in education, workforce development and infrastructure, all with a focus on both the economy today and tomorrow.



## JOHN RUTLEDGE

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
First Security Bank Central Arkansas

Rutledge has worked in the family business of banking in some capacity since 2000. Rutledge is currently serving as chairman of the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation and serves on boards for the Little Rock Municipal Airport Commission, Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce and Baptist Health Foundation. Rutledge was a member of Mayor Frank Scott Jr.'s transition committee.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas



## KEVIN SCANLON

**DIRECTOR OF PRIVATE CLIENT GROUP**  
Stephens Inc.

Scanlon joined Stephens in 1987, and prior to his appointment as head of the Private Client Group, his previous responsibilities included managing director for growth and development, and managing director for the professional strategies group. Scanlon is a member of the FINRA District 5 Business Conduct Committee and the Arkansas Razorback Foundation board.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

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## RODNEY SHOWMAR

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Arkansas Federal Credit Union

During Showmar's 20 years at Arkansas Federal Credit Union, the company has grown from \$300 million in assets to its current size of \$1.5 billion. The company has been named one of the "Best Places to Work in Arkansas" and "Best Credit Unions to Work for in the Nation" for the past five years. The company will be moving into their new headquarters in west Little Rock in the summer of 2021.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), Capella University (MBA), Furman University

**Best career advice I ever received:** God gave you two ears and one mouth. Use them proportionally.

**Dream job as a kid:** Motorcycle police officer or astronaut

**My biggest mentors in Arkansas:** My parents, my son, my grandfathers and Father George Tribou



## WARREN STEPHENS

**CEO**  
Stephens Inc.

Stephens, who has been at the helm of his family investment banking business since 1986, has an estimated net worth of \$2.5 billion, ranking among Forbes' 400 richest Americans. He was a 2019 inductee into the Walton College Arkansas Business Hall of Fame and is a director for the board of publicly traded Dillard's and Washington & Lee University.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Washington & Lee University



## W.R. "WITT" STEPHENS JR.

**CEO & CO-CHAIRMAN**  
The Stephens Group

Since 2006, Stephens has served as CEO and co-chair of The Stephens Group LLC, the family and direct investment vehicle for his family and his sister Elizabeth S. Campbell's family. One of the company's main focuses is to invest in stable and sustainable business models. This year, he has enjoyed seeing how The Stephens Group's various portfolio companies have performed despite the pandemic.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Always do the right thing. Your reputation is your number one asset.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Arthur's Prime Steakhouse in Little Rock

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** My father, W.R. Stephens

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** tax reform.



## ALAN TEDFORD

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
Stephens Group Asset Management

Since establishing Stephens Group Asset Management in 2017, the company has \$650 million assets under management and has continued to add staff each year. Tedford established Stephens Group Asset Management along with Witt Stephens Jr. and Elizabeth S. Campbell. Prior to co-founding Stephens Group Asset Management, Tedford worked 19 years for Stephens Inc.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas



**RYAN UNDERWOOD**

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
BKD LLP

Ryan Underwood was just 32 years old when he became a partner in BKD LLP. A 1991 graduate of Arkansas State University, he became the firm’s managing partner in 2008. He assists financial institutions with U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission compliance. Underwood serves on the board of directors at the Arkansas Children’s Protection Center.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Arkansas State University

**Recommended listening:** Nada Surf is my favorite alternative rock band.

**Favorite hobby:** Scuba diving. My wife and daughter are also scuba divers.

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Steven Warren and Bill MaGee played significant roles in my career.



**SAM WALLS, III**

**PRESIDENT & COO**  
Arkansas Capital

Walls has been with Arkansas Capital since 2003 and was promoted to become president and COO in 2015. Arkansas Capital is a 63-year-old private economic development company that is active in small business lending, project finance, equity capital and entrepreneurial education.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Southern Methodist University (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** When I was in law school I had an attorney tell me that when the idea of going to work gives you an upset stomach, it’s time to do something different. He called it his “upset stomach test.”

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Lake Ouachita

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to improve educational opportunities for all Arkansans regardless of where they live.



**IT TAKES BOULDER LEADERSHIP TO BUILD A BETTER BANK**

We salute our CEO and friend Marnie Oldner on her recognition in the Arkansas 250. It was Marnie’s bold vision to create the team which led Stone Bank from a small community bank in Mountain View to a statewide powerhouse in government-guaranteed lending for farmers and an SBA Top 100 & Preferred Lender.

Marnie is not just our CEO, she’s also our MVP.

**IN CHALLENGING TIMES, IT PAYS TO THINK BOULDER.**

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**JIM WALTON**

**CHAIRMAN & CEO**  
Arvest Bank Group

Walton has an estimated net worth of \$62.1 billion and ranks No. 11 among Forbes' 400 wealthiest Americans. Walton, one of the Walmart founder Sam Walton's three children, gave away \$1.2 billion shares in Walmart to the Walton Family Foundation in 2019. He runs Arvest Bank, which was named by Forbes magazine as the top-rated Arkansas bank and No. 7 among the country's banks.

**Lives in:** Bentonville  
**College:** University of Arkansas



**KARA WILKINS**

**PRINCIPAL**  
KWilkins Consulting Group

Wilkins is the principal at KWilkins Consulting Group and serves as the director of Bank On Arkansas+. Wilkins is co-host of Blackbelt Voices, a podcast recently recognized by Vanity Fair as one of the top podcasts in the country for teaching black history. She serves on the board of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Health Professions and is a member of the Junior League of Little Rock.

**Lives in:** Little Rock  
**Colleges:** Hendrix College, Duke University  
**Dream job as a kid:** Historian, specifically a history professor  
**Favorite hobby:** I am currently studying for a Level 2 WSET Certification in wines and spirits.  
**Words I live by:** I am the one thing in life I can control. I am inimitable. I am an original.  
**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to invest in greater educational and economic opportunities for individuals and families, particularly in unrepresented communities.



**DARRIN WILLIAMS**

**CEO**  
Southern Bancorp

In the wake of the financial crises caused by the coronavirus and racial unrest, Williams has provided expert commentary appearing live on CNBC, Fox News, Bloomberg and Sirius XM, as well as being interviewed by American Banker, The Economist, Forbes and Euromoney. Williams serves on the boards for Our House, the Little Rock Tech Park and Little Rock Central High Foundation.

**Lives in:** Little Rock  
**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), Vanderbilt University School of Law (J.D.), Georgetown University Law Center (LL.M.)  
**Dream job as a kid:** Sports commentator (professional football and basketball)  
**Words I live by:** Treat others the way you want to be treated.  
**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to close the education achievement gap and prepare every student for success in college or a career.



**JEREMY WILSON**

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
NewRoad Capital Partners

Wilson and NewRoad Capital Partners continue to invest in companies with strong management teams and demand-driven businesses. The company is disrupting established industries and is bringing new technologies to market in groundbreaking ways. Recently, the company has introduced NOWDiagnostics' blood pregnancy test, available in parts of Europe, which is the only blood-based diagnostic test to ever gain self-testing approval anywhere in the world.

**Lives in:** Bentonville  
**College:** University of Arkansas  
**Favorite hobby:** Quail and duck hunting with my sons  
**Dream job as a kid:** Archeologist  
**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Blake Street House in Bentonville  
**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My father, Dr. Jack A. Wilson  
**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more entrepreneurs, more capital and more technology.

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**SAM ALLEY**

**CHAIRMAN/CEO**  
VCC Construction

Alley is the chairman and CEO of VCC Construction, the largest retail contractor in the United States and the No.1 contractor in Arkansas. He was recognized as a 2020 honoree for the Brandon Burlsworth Foundation and established the Sam and Janet Alley Masters in Construction Management Program at the University of Arkansas.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** I've always loved being my own boss so I always wanted to be an entrepreneur.

**Favorite hobby:** Golf, golf and more golf

**Proudest career moment:** Starting my own company on March 17, 1987, which was my 31st birthday

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more public/private partnerships. I've heard it said that Arkansas is the best kept secret and we need to not keep it a secret anymore.



**RICK BARROWS**

**PRESIDENT (1989-2019)**  
Multi-Craft Contractors

Barrows served 30 years as the president of Multi-Craft Contractors (MCC), a leading provider of mechanical and electrical contracting services, metal fabrication and specialized engineering. MCC employs 800 and supplies products and services to companies worldwide, growing from \$7 million to \$140 million in revenue during his tenure. He currently serves on the Arkansas Economic Development Commission board.

**Lives in:** Springdale

**College:** Served five-year apprenticeship for plumbing and pipefitting

**Best career advice I ever received:** Surround yourself with people smarter than you are.

**Proudest career moment:** Successful execution of many difficult projects and the Springdale Civic Service Award

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** good roads, schools and workforce development.



**JOSHUA BROWN**

**PRINCIPAL**  
Haag Brown Commercial Real Estate & Development

As president of Haag Brown, Brown has helped the company earn a reputation for expanding national and regional retailers quickly through multiple states. Recently, the company partnered with NEA Baptist to create The Reserve at NEA, a new lifestyle-focused medical development that is a virtual extension of the NEA Baptist Medical Campus in Jonesboro.

**Lives in:** Jonesboro

**College:** Arkansas State University

**Dream job as a kid:** Doctor or farmer

**Favorite hobby:** I enjoy spending quality time at the lake with my family. I am also an avid runner/cyclist.

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** My business partner, Greg Haag. His wisdom and insight is invaluable in all aspects of our company and my life.



**WILLIAM CLARK**

**CEO**  
Clark Contractors

Clark founded Clark Contractors in 2009 after working for his late father Bill Clark at CDI Contractors. Clark Contractors, with offices in Little Rock, Bentonville and Dallas, had record revenues of \$156 million in 2019, with another record year expected in 2020. Clark also serves on the board of directors for Simmons Bank and UAMS.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** I always pictured myself winning the Masters.

**Proudest career moment:** The first year we turned a profit. Starting a construction company in 2009 with zero revenue and turning a profit four years later will probably always be my most satisfying accomplishment.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to shed its inferiority complex and realize (and sell) what a jewel Arkansas is. It's such a great place to raise a family and great business opportunities are all around us.

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**SCOTT COPAS**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Baldwin & Shell Construction Co.

Copas has guided Baldwin & Shell to a company record \$321 million in annual volume with projects in seven states. Baldwin & Shell, now ranks as the state's third-largest commercial contractor. Copas was recently elected as president of Fifty for the Future and ended his 17-year stint on the Arkansas Contractors Licensing Board to focus on career education.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** Architect

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Arthur's Prime Steakhouse in Little Rock

**Words I live by:** Always tell the truth!

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Lake Ouachita



**CODY CRAWFORD**

**PRESIDENT**  
C.R. Crawford Construction

Crawford, co-founder and president of C.R. Crawford Construction, began his construction career early in life by working in various heavy industrial and manufacturing businesses. C.R. Crawford Construction was formed in 2006 and has grown to the fifth-largest construction company in Arkansas.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Dream job as a kid:** Pro baseball player

**Recommended reading:** Fearless by Eric Blehm

**Proudest career moment:** Winning Arkansas Business of the Year in 2016

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to reduce or eliminate state taxes like Texas and Florida.



**PATRICK CURRY**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
WACO Title Company

WACO has continued to grow under Curry, who took over the CEO role in 2012. The 135-year-old company now has more than 20 offices spread between Arkansas and Missouri, which means that if you buy a home in central Arkansas, northwest Arkansas or the Arkansas River Valley, there's a strong likelihood that Curry's company was involved.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** Colorado State University (B.S.), Denver University (M.S.T.)

**Dream job as a kid:** To own a bakery. I worked in a bakery in college and decided my dream was a better hobby than a job.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The running trails in Fayetteville

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to make long-term investments in educational programs that focus teaching technology skills to the next generation of workers.



**TED DICKEY**

**PARTNER, CapRocq Core Real Estate Fund**  
**ADVISER, Innovate Arkansas**

Dickey is a founding member of six investment funds, an adviser to Innovate Arkansas and is active in his community. Dickey has served on the boards of the Metropolitan Housing Alliance, Little Rock Christian School, the Arkansas Fellowship, Our House and Governor Asa Hutchinson's initiative, Restore Hope. He also served as the former chairman of the Arkansas Ethics Commission, appointed by Governor Mike Huckabee.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

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From left: Cheryl Stewart, Cynthia Lu, Daryl Peeples, Eric Varner, Hank Kelley, Kevin Pledger, Nicholas Kelley, Brooke Miller, and Maggie Hogan  
Photo by Marlon Willis/The Daily Record

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**DEXTER  
DOYNE**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Doyne Construction Company

Doyne Construction is a joint-venture construction manager partner for the Little Rock School District's \$100 million Southwest Little Rock High School and the \$70 million renovation of the Arkansas Arts Center. Doyne currently serves as director of the Little Rock Port Authority. He also serves on the Pulaski County Planning Commission.

**Lives in:** College Station

**College:** San Francisco State University



**ALEC  
FARMER**

**PRESIDENT**  
Farmer Enterprises

Farmer, who oversees a family-run farming and property investment management company, is in his fifth year as an Arkansas State Highway Commissioner. He was selected as a 2019 inductee into the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts Hall of Fame and named a Distinguished Alumni of Arkansas State University.

**Lives in:** Jonesboro

**Colleges:** Arkansas State University, University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

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**JILL FLOYD**

**PROJECT MANAGER & DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH**  
CDI Contractors

Floyd is a project manager and director of community outreach with CDI Contractors where she works to pique girls' interest in STEM and provide opportunities for minority and women subcontractors. She previously held roles in operations management and procurement with Cummins Engine and Ford Motor Co. Floyd is also a Little Rock Airport Commissioner and board member of the Women's Foundation of Arkansas and Arkansas Capital Corp.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Oklahoma (B.S.), Penn State University (M.S.)

**Proudest career moment:** Selection as a Presidential Leadership Scholar

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Kontiki African Restaurant in Little Rock

**Words I live by:** To whom much is given, much is required.



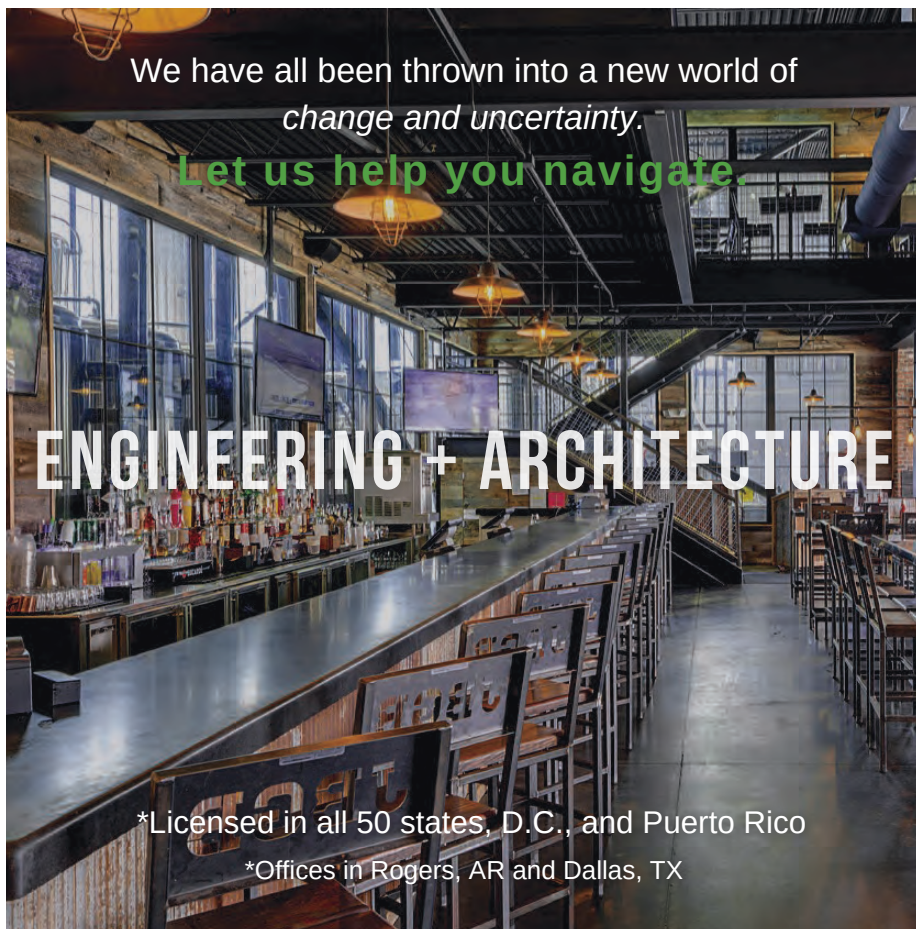
**LLOYD GARRISON**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
CDI Contractors

Garrison has been with CDI since 1987 and was named CEO in 2009. CDI is the state's sixth-largest construction company, with services that include preconstruction and construction management. A few of CDI Contractors signature projects include Heifer International World Headquarters, the Robinson Center renovation and expansion and the U.S. Marshals Museum.



**Lives in:** Little Rock



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**BRAD  
HEGEMAN**

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**  
Nabholz Construction Services

Hegeman oversees Nabholz’s South Central Operations and serves on the company’s executive leadership team, helping develop and implement growth strategies across a 44-state region. Hegeman is the chairman of the Governor’s Military Affairs Committee and serves as the chief of staff of the Air Force Civic Leader Group.



- Lives in:** Conway
- College:** University of Central Arkansas (B.B.A. and MBA)
- Favorite hobbies:** Travel and landscaping
- Dream job as a kid:** Meteorologist
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** Home
- My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My father, Bill Hegeman



**BROCK  
HOSKINS**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Garver

Hoskins is chair of Garver’s board of directors and became the company’s ninth president and CEO during the firm’s 100th year in 2019. He has three decades of engineering experience, all with Garver. Hoskins is a member of the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineering and the Northwest Arkansas Council. He was recently honored as a Distinguished Alumni from the University of Arkansas College of Engineering.



- Lives in:** Fayetteville
- College:** University of Arkansas
- Best career advice I ever received:** Always do the right thing.
- My biggest mentors in Arkansas:** I’ve been blessed to work with several mentors within Garver who were visionaries and taught me about our business and our industry. One of those was the late Brock Johnson, a former Garver CEO, who taught me the importance of contracts, profitability and how to build meaningful relationships with clients.



Marshall Savier  
President, Principal

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**KEVIN HUCHINGSON**

**CHAIRMAN & CEO**  
Colliers International

Huchingson, who has been with the firm since 1993, was recognized among the top 10% of Colliers International brokers globally. His clients include Bank OZK, Southwest Power Pool, McLarty Automotive Group, Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield and Centennial Bank. In the midst of the pandemic, Huchingson and his team members have dealt with hundreds of issues from businesses across the state while continuing to provide great communication and service to clients despite working remotely.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Centenary College (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** FBI

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** At a hunting club

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Dickson Flake

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to expand its economic development, bringing more wins to the state like the recent Amazon announcement.



**HENRY "HANK" KELLEY JR.**

**CEO**  
Kelley Commercial Partners

Kelley is the CEO of Kelly Commercial Partners, whose recent accomplishments include significant real estate transactions such as Little Rock Port Authority site acquisitions, Trader Joe's, Amazon and Costco. Kelley completed his term as president of Rotary Club 99 in June 2020 and continues to serve the club as a past president and board member. He was also named as a Distinguished Alumni by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Business.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (MBA)

**Favorite hobby:** Golf

**Best career advice I have ever received:** Educate yourself and be persistent even when it's not easy. Build trust in all you do.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Heber Springs, specifically the Little Red River and Greers Ferry Lake

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**CHRIS  
MOSES**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Newmark Moses Tucker Partners

Under Moses' leadership, Newmark Moses Tucker Partners has become the second-largest real estate company and largest retail advisory firm in Arkansas. The firm's property management division has grown over 600% to more than 8.5 million square feet. Since 2013, Moses has been involved in development, leasing and investment projects with a combined value of more than \$600 million. Recent projects include The Vue on Riverfront, The Distillery and Premier Medical Plaza.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Arizona State University (B.S.), Clemson University (Master of Real Estate Development)

**Dream job as a kid:** Honestly, I've always wanted to be in real estate

**Proudest career moment:** The development of the Mann on Main project on Main Street, which was the first major revitalization project on Main Street

**Words I live by:** Let your yes be yes and your no be no.



**JAKE  
NABHOLZ**

**PRESIDENT, SOUTH REGION**  
Nabholz Construction Services

Nabholz started in the family business as a laborer and joined full time after college. He has worked in a variety of roles including project management and business development. In 2018, he was named president of Nabholz' South region. Nabholz currently serves on the board of directors for Arkansas Children's Hospital Foundation, Philander Smith College, Conway Corporation and Conway Chamber of Commerce.



**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** University of Louisiana at Monroe

**Recommended reading:** I read the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and Arkansas Business for local, relevant and unbiased news.

**Dream job as a kid:** Construction work or policeman

**Proudest career moment:** Delivering a well-earned promotion to someone from within the company. Thankfully, this happens often.

**My biggest mentors in Arkansas:** While working in the field, my mentors were the craftsmen. I still rely on them for honest feedback.





**MARSHALL SAVIERS**

**PRESIDENT**  
Cushman & Wakefield / Sage Partners

Saviers is one of the top real estate brokers in the region with an extensive client list of Fortune 500 companies. He has completed hundreds of transactions across the country that total millions of square feet. Additionally, he has been involved in some of the largest investment sales transactions in the state of Arkansas totaling over \$150 million in the past 18 months.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**College:** Southern Methodist University

**Best career advice I ever received:** Don't worry about the job or title. Look at who you work with and who your boss will be.

**Favorite hobby:** Fly fishing in crazy spots all around the world

**Favorite places in Arkansas:** The Kings River in the spring, Beaver Lake in the summer, Fayetteville in the fall and the Delta in the winter are tough to beat.



**PATRICK SCHUECK**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Lexicon Fabricators and Constructors

Schueck is president and CEO of Lexicon Fabricators and Constructors, a leading provider of construction management, fabrication, erection, mechanical installation, golf course construction and plant management services. During his tenure, Schueck has overseen many of Lexicon's largest steel fabrication and erection contracts, including the expansion of the McCormick Center in Chicago and AT&T Stadium (formerly Cowboys Stadium).

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** Professional basketball player

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** I'm fortunate to have several, but my dad will always top the list.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** I love the two hours before sunset on Lake Hamilton and sunrises and sunsets at our duck club, Steel Wings.



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**LENORE TRAMMELL**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER,  
CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER  
AND GENERAL COUNSEL**  
Big River Steel

Trammell serves as compliance leader and general counselor presiding over adherence to regulations and standards at Big River Steel, a Flex Mill located in Osceola. She is experienced in large, complex commercial transactions, including a recent bond transaction with ADFA and an acquisition of 49.9% of their entity by United States Steel.

**Lives in:** Osceola

**Colleges:** Howard University (B.A.), Wayne State Law School (J.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Attorney

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Wilson Cafe & Tavern in Wilson

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** people with good ideas who are willing to work hard and invest in the future they want for this state.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** There's no place like home!



**GREG WILLIAMS**

**CEO & CHAIRMAN**  
Nabholz Construction Services

After working in public accounting, banking and energy, Williams joined Nabholz as a controller in 1991. Since then, he has guided the company to three consecutive years of revenue records and grown the company to now employ more than 1,200 employees across 14 offices spanning coast to coast.

**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading:** 1776 by David McCullough

**Dream job as a kid:** Law enforcement

**Words I live by:** Treat everyone with kindness and respect.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Greers Ferry Lake

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CFA, CPA, CCIM, CEO



**Thomas Schmidt**  
Partner, Co-Founder



**John J. Flake**  
CCIM, Chief Real Estate Advisor



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**Lee Hastings IV**  
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**Matthew M. Dearnley**  
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# 250

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**TIM ALLEN**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce

Allen joined the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce in 2011. He is responsible for economic development for the Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area, overseeing chamber staff and functions and working with community leaders to improve the regional quality of life.

.....

**Lives in:** Fort Smith

**Colleges:** Arkansas State University, University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute



**HOWARD M. BEATY JR.**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**  
Commercial Capital Bank

Beaty has worked nearly three decades in banking and economic development. He currently serves as EVP of Commercial Capital Bank and was president and CEO of First State Bank for the past 15 years. He serves as president of Crossett's Economic Development Foundation and Chamber. In 2019, he was appointed by Gov. Asa Hutchinson to the Board of the Division of Science and Technology of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

.....

**Lives in:** Crossett

**College:** Louisiana Tech University

**Proudest career moment:** Closing on the sale of First State Bank and knowing as president and CEO I had maximized shareholder return while partnering with like-minded bankers that value and respect my customers and community

**Words I live by:** The Rotary Four Way Test and the Golden Rule

**Favorite places in Arkansas:** In a duck blind, on a deer stand or in the rough of a golf course right here in south Arkansas



**STEPHEN BELL**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Arkadelphia Regional  
Economic Development Alliance

Bell has worked to promote the timber industry since his arrival in 2014. Recent accomplishments include an announcement by Georgia-Pacific that will lead to more than \$100 million in capital investments at its lumber and plywood mill at Gurdon. Bell also recruited a new company to Arkadelphia, Custom Cuts, a cut-to-size lumber operation.

**Lives in:** Arkadelphia

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.A.)

**Recommended reading:** How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie

**Dream job as a kid:** Political reporter at The Washington Post

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** DeGray Lake

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** My father, who was president and CEO of Riceland Foods. He had a lot of good business advice.



**JAY CHESSHIR**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce

Chesshir is president and CEO of the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce. Under his leadership, the chamber team has directly worked on projects representing over \$2.8 billion in new capital investment, 18,960 jobs and over \$690 million in new annual payroll for the metro Little Rock region. During the last 12 months, the Chamber announced 2,688 new jobs while serving its valued membership.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Just remember, you are the one who has to look in the mirror every day.

**Dream job as a kid:** To become a famous race horse jockey. With a 6-foot-4-inch father, I quickly outgrew that dream!

**Favorite hobby:** Retriever Field Trial training and competition with my labrador retrievers



**CLIF CHITWOOD**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPER**  
Mississippi County

Chitwood helped Mississippi County continue to grow its steel and steel-related manufacturing job sectors. Atlas Tube will invest \$150 million in the largest plant of its kind in North America. The area's expected to add 980 jobs in the manufacturing sector from 2018 to 2020. Additionally, Chitwood has been involved in workforce development education initiatives.

**Lives in:** Osceola

**College:** University of Arkansas



**GRAHAM COBB**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Greater Bentonville Area Chamber of Commerce

The Little Rock native grew up playing in bands and working in pizza shops where he learned teamwork and commerce that would later help him in his career working in both the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce and now at the Greater Bentonville Area Chamber of Commerce. When he's not working, Cobb spends time biking, dining with his wife Lisa and spending time with his children, William and Sissy.

**Lives in:** Bentonville

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock (B.S.), University of Oregon, University of Mississippi

**Recommended listening:** RTJ4 by Run the Jewels

**Best career advice I ever received:** You never get what you don't ask for.

**Dream job as a kid:** Pro freestyle biker or lead singer for a successful but left-of-the-dial rock band

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** That's really tough, but I could use some Sims Bar-B-Que ribs right about now.



**BRYAN DAY**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Little Rock Port Authority

Day, an active member in local government for over 30 years, has overseen operations at the port since 2014. Over the past year, he has worked with the Little Rock Port Authority Board, the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce and others to attract \$300 million in investment and add close to 3,000 jobs.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Best career advice I ever received:** My first boss at the City of Little Rock told me, "Treat everyone like they are the next mayor." I have tried to live by that advice and give all that I come into contact with the respect they deserve.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** It's relatively new, but I am enjoying Hill Station in Little Rock.

**Dream job as a kid:** A national park superintendent - maybe at the Grand Canyon or the Great Smoky Mountains

**Words I live by:** Live every day to the fullest extent possible and find time to play.



**LAURA FINE**

**STATE DIRECTOR**  
Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center

Fine leads a team focused on growing the state's economy by assisting with the startup and expansion of entrepreneurial ventures. In the past year, Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center's clients started 190 new businesses, created and retained 2,053 jobs and acquired \$72.1 million in capital.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Central Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.P.A.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** You never know what other people are going through. Be kind and cut people some slack.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Downtown Little Rock! A good Saturday is visiting the Old State House and Historic Arkansas Museum and eating at Flying Fish.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** high-speed broadband accessible to the entire state. This will positively affect entrepreneurship, commerce, education, health care and quality of life.



**JAMIE FUGITT**

**PARTNER**  
PPGMR Law

Fugitt represents entrepreneurs, investors and technology startups and recently helped secure a \$20 million investment for an Arkansas-based company. He helped launch venture capital fund Cadron Creek Capital after successfully lobbying for a change in Arkansas laws related to venture capital. Fugitt is also active in the entrepreneur, startup and film communities in Arkansas.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas, Harvard Law School (J.D.)



**EDWARD HADDOCK**

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR**  
Arkansas District

Haddock leads a dedicated team focused on increasing access to capital and support for entrepreneurs. The SBA Arkansas District Office most recently oversaw and guided the implementation of SBA COVID-19 relief funding efforts across Arkansas, securing over \$4.5 billion in economic relief and supporting the retention of over 375,000 jobs across the state.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** John Brown University, Rutgers University (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Soldier

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Lake Ouachita State Park

**To reach its potential Arkansas needs** to bring everyone along.



**MERVIN  
JEBARAJ**

**DIRECTOR**  
Center for Business and Economic Research,  
University of Arkansas

Jebaraj is arguably the foremost expert on how the state’s economy is performing. The former CBER intern became its director and makes presentations that share the center’s expertise directly to over 5,000 individuals annually. Jebaraj was selected in 2019 to a three-year term on the Community Development Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**College:** University of Arkansas (B.A. and M.P.A.)

**Recommended reading:** 100 Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

**Favorite hobby:** Hiking

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to invest in K-12 and higher education.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** White Rock Mountain



**CRYSTAL  
JOHNSON**

**CEO**  
Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce

Johnson started at the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce in June 2009. Under the guidance of president and CEO Crystal Johnson, the Batesville Area Chamber operates on a budget of \$608,000 as it serves Batesville and north-central Arkansas. In 2020, the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce was ranked as the 16th largest chamber in the state with 590 members.

**Lives in:** Batesville

**College:** University of Central Arkansas

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**BECKY WOMACK  
KEOGH**

**CABINET SECRETARY**  
Arkansas Department  
of Energy and Environment

Keogh, a longtime state agency director, was named one of the 13 cabinet secretaries following the reorganization of state government in Arkansas. She has served as president of the Environmental Council of the States and continues to play a pivotal role in the approval process for economic development projects in Arkansas.

**Lives in:** Roland

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** I always wanted to be an engineer. My father, who was an engineer, encouraged me to make the jump.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Petit & Keet in Little Rock

**Words I live by:** Everything looks better with a little sunshine on it.



**BRAD  
LACY**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Conway Development Corporation /  
Conway Area Chamber of Commerce

Lacy oversees economic development in one of the state's fastest growing cities. Under his leadership, the Conway Development Corporation ended 2019 with a robust economic development program that included a 1,200-person expansion of DXC Technology, a 75-person expansion of SFI of Arkansas and the establishment of Structurlam with 130 people.

**Lives in:** Conway

**Colleges:** University of Central Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.P.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Zookeeper or architect

**Favorite hobby:** Remodeling my 1924 Craftsman-style home

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** ZAZA Fine Salad + Wood Oven Pizza Co. in Conway



**CLINT  
O'NEAL**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
GLOBAL BUSINESS**  
Arkansas Economic  
Development Commission

After living in Kansas City for seven years, O'Neal rejoined the team at the Arkansas Economic Development Commission in 2018 to promote Arkansas as a great place to do business. As a project manager for AEDC, O'Neal worked with clients including Cooper Tire, Firestone Building Product and Southwest Power Pool, as well as the recruitment of Awesome Products and Saint Gobain.

**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** University of Central Arkansas (B.S. and M.S.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Be patient with career moves, talent will always be in demand.

**Dream job as a kid:** First baseman for the Chicago Cubs

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** great parents, teachers, coaches and mentors to serve as role models and teach the next generation of Arkansans to work hard and innovate, to live with integrity and to love one another.



**JOHN  
OWENS**

**PRESIDENT/CEO**  
North Little Rock Chamber

Owens is the president/CEO of the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce where he and his staff work to make the city and central Arkansas one of the most progressive communities in the Mid-South. He is a co-founder and former president of CROSSMARK, a sales and marketing outsourcing company with over 10,000 employees headquartered in Plano, Texas.

**Lives in:** North Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Dream job as a kid:** Fireman

**Proudest career moment:** Presenting Jerry Lewis a check for \$100,000 on the MDA National Telethon on behalf of the National Food Brokers Association

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to focus on education and literacy.

**My biggest mentors in Arkansas:** Austin Bell and Peter Powell



**NELSON PEACOCK**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Northwest Arkansas Council

Peacock and his team have worked on a variety of impactful projects to further build northwest Arkansas as a premier destination for life and work. Recently, the council has focused on EngageNWA, which is working to build more inclusivity within the growing diversity of the population. The council's Health Transformations Division has helped promote a coordinated, region-wide response to COVID-19.

**Lives in:** Rogers

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.), George Washington University School of Law (LL.M.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** When I started my job with then-Senator Joe Biden, he told me never to question the integrity or patriotism of those who oppose your political position.

**Dream job as a kid:** Lifeguard

**Proudest career moment:** Being sworn in as assistant secretary for the Department of Homeland Security



**MIKE PRESTON**

**SECRETARY OF COMMERCE**  
Arkansas Department of Commerce  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Arkansas Economic Development Commission

In addition to being executive director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Gov. Asa Hutchinson appointed Preston to be the secretary of the newly formed Department of Commerce in 2019. The new department includes the AEDC, ADFA, Office of Skills Development, Workforce Services, Waterways Commission, Department of Aeronautics, Insurance Department, Bank Department, Securities Department and the Wine Producers Council.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Florida

**Recommended reading:** The Great Influenza by John Barry

**Dream job as a kid:** Point guard for the Boston Celtics

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Any of our beautiful lakes or rivers

**Proudest career moment:** Ringing the New York Stock Exchange Opening Bell with Gov. Asa Hutchinson

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**JOE A. SMITH**

**MAYOR**  
City of North Little Rock

Smith, president of MetroPlan, recently completed his term as president of the Arkansas Municipal League. He helped attract more than \$100 million in private development to North Little Rock during his tenure as mayor and completed \$3 million in annual city and street drainage improvements.

.....

**Lives in:** North Little Rock  
**College:** University of Arkansas



**RYAN WATLEY**

**CEO**  
Go Forward Pine Bluff

Watley joined Go Forward Pine Bluff as the CEO-elect in May of 2017 and became CEO after the successful passage of the Go Forward Pine Bluff tax initiative on June 13, 2017. He is currently overseeing a 26-point plan for revitalizing Pine Bluff through governmental infrastructure, quality of life, economic development and education. Watley attributes his success to the core values of faith, family and responding to the needs of others.

.....

**Lives in:** Pine Bluff  
**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (B.S.), University of Oklahoma (Ph.D.)  
**Dream job as a kid:** National football player  
**Favorite hobby:** Cooking  
**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** J. Thomas May  
**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to distribute economic activity throughout the state.

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**MARK YOUNG**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce and Jonesboro Unlimited

Young has served as president and CEO of the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce since 2006. Jonesboro Unlimited is in its fourth year of implementation of a bold five-year strategic plan. Young is also currently serving on the Governor’s Economic Recovery Task Force.

.....

- Lives in:** Jonesboro
- College:** Arkansas State University
- Dream jobs as a kid:** I wanted to be either a fireman or a dentist.
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** The campus of Arkansas State University. Go Red Wolves!
- My biggest mentors in Arkansas:** My parents



**RANDY ZOOK**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce / Associated Industries of Arkansas

With 34 years of experience in the manufacturing world, Zook and the state chamber have spearheaded the Be Pro Be Proud workforce development initiative to grow technical education in the state. Zook, former deputy director of administration and finance for the AEDC, has been a part of the Arkansas State Chamber for over 12 years and has enjoyed understanding business members’ needs and advocating on their behalf.

.....

- Lives in:** Little Rock
- College:** University of Arkansas
- Best career advice I ever received:** Think like the customer, act like the owner. Act like you are interested until you are.
- Dream job as a kid:** History teacher or band director
- Proudest career moment:** Getting the chance to lead a statewide organization that unapologetically advocates for business interests
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** Delta farm country



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Congratulations to OAKLAWN GENERAL MANAGER WAYNE SMITH on being named to the Arkansas 250 – celebrating professionals making an impact in our state. We are grateful for Wayne’s leadership through the biggest expansion in our history and his support for the city of Hot Springs and the state of Arkansas. Thanks for helping us reach A NEW LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE.



ARKANSAS  
250

EDUCATION  
& HEALTH CARE



**CHRIS  
BARBER**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
St. Bernards Healthcare

Barber oversees operations at St. Bernards Healthcare, which recently opened its 245,000-square-foot tower in December 2019. The new building serves as the hub of all surgical and intensive care services, with 14 surgical suites, a 46-bed ICU and shelled space. St. Bernards also renovated and expanded its Heart Care and Cancer Care facilities, with a total cost for the project of \$137.5 million.

.....

**Lives in:** Jonesboro

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), Arkansas State University (M.P.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Professional football player

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Ben Owens Sr.

**Words I live by:** Treat others with respect.



**CURTIS  
BARNETT**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield

After joining the Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield in 1993, Barnett was named president and CEO in 2017. The company serves nearly 2 million members nationally and was recognized for the sixth consecutive year as a “Best Place to Work in Arkansas” and as the first company to be recognized twice by the Arkansas Community Foundation with a Smart Corporate Giving Award, given to companies that display philanthropic leadership.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Central Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas (M.P.A.), Northwestern University (Advanced Executive Program)

**Dream job as a kid:** Astronaut

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Bruno's Little Italy in Little Rock

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Tommy May. I come away inspired every time I'm with Tommy.



**RACHEL BUNCH**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Arkansas Health Care Association

September of 2020 marked 12 years that Bunch has been with the Arkansas Health Care Association, seven of which she has been the executive director. Bunch advocates on behalf of long-term care providers to various state and federal elected officials and agencies. AHCA represents more than 300 long-term care facilities, which is about 90% of the industry.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Dream job as a kid:** Pediatrician

**Proudest career moment:** Being named to my current position. I work for incredible people who provide care for our elders and have invested in local communities across our state.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to keep focusing on the future.



**ED CHOATE**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Delta Dental of Arkansas

Choate joined Delta Dental of Arkansas as president and CEO in 2000. During his tenure, the company was named the 2013 Arkansas Business of the Year and has been recognized seven times as one of the “Best Places to Work in Arkansas.” He currently serves on the boards of Baptist Health, Delta Dental Association and Conway Development Corporation. Choate received the 2020 Vision Award from the World Services for the Blind.

**Lives in:** Conway

**College:** Southern Arkansas University

**Dream job as a kid:** I wanted to be an architect so I could design and build great homes and buildings.

**Favorite hobby:** Fly fishing for trout, salmon, northern pike or bass

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** My home in Conway or cabin on the Little Red River



**MERRITT DAKE**

**CEO**  
Rock Dental Brands

Dake started his career as a CPA at Deloitte. Beginning in 2012, he has overseen the growth of Rock Dental Brands from two locations to 75. Dake strives to set a good example for his team that has grown from nine employees in 2012 to approximately 600 employees in 2018.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Southern Methodist University

**Dream job as a kid:** Police officer

**Proudest career moment:** Seeing our teams grow in number and in success

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** North Fork Lake

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a collaborative effort with private and public partnerships to recruit new people to the state through understanding Arkansas is a great place for opportunities.



**HOUSTON DAVIS**

**PRESIDENT**  
University of Central Arkansas

Davis is the 11th president of the University of Central Arkansas, with past leadership and academic roles at universities and at state system levels in Georgia, Oklahoma and Tennessee. During the last three years, UCA has set several university records for fundraising totals and number of donors and initiated capital expansion including the Integrated Health Sciences Building and the Windgate Center for Fine & Performing Arts.

**Lives in:** Conway

**Colleges:** University of Memphis (B.A.), Tennessee State University (M.Ed.), Vanderbilt University (Ph.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Don't do anything that you do not want printed on the front page, above the fold. And remember that the work is not about you; it is about the organization and the people that you serve.

**Dream job as a kid:** It was not a university president. I loved rocks and fossils and dreamed of being a geologist.



**MARCY DODERER**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Arkansas Children's

Doderer has served as President and CEO of Arkansas Children's for seven years. Under her leadership, Arkansas Children's has transformed into the state's only pediatric health system, with two hospitals, a research institute, a philanthropic foundation, and regional clinics and alliances. She was named the 2020 Women & Children First Woman of the Year for her work improving child health in Arkansas.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Trinity University (B.S.), University of Iowa (M.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** I wanted to be a doctor until I took high school chemistry – then quickly changed my mind.

**Proudest career moment:** Building Arkansas Children's Northwest to bring care close to home for more kids in Arkansas

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** My deck looking at the Arkansas River

**Words I live by:** We may not be perfect, but we can absolutely be excellent.



**CHRISTINA DRALE**

**CHANCELLOR**  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Drale serves as chancellor for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, serving as the 10th chancellor for the university. Prior to this appointment, she was the interim executive vice chancellor and provost at UA Little Rock. As the university's chief academic officer, she oversaw the administration, coordination and development of all academic functions of the university.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of California at San Diego (B.A. and M.A.)

**Recommended reading:** Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari and How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more investment in education in general, and in early childhood education in particular. We won't be able to increase the number of individuals with college degrees or other post-secondary credentials without starting earlier on educational preparation.

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**PHILLIP GILMORE**

**CEO**  
Ashley County Medical Center

Gilmore serves as president of the Arkansas State Board of Health and the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership and is a member of the Arkansas Hospital Association Board. He has served as a hospital administrator for over 40 years and is currently the CEO of Ashley County Medical Center in Crossett. Gilmore also served as assistant chief of clinical microbiology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center during the Vietnam War.

**Lives in:** Crossett

**Colleges:** University of Southern Mississippi (B.S. and M.S.), Washington University School of Medicine (M.H.A.), Louisiana Baptist University (Ph.D.)

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurants:** Country Vittles and Beech Street Bistro in Crossett

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My late wife, Frances Townsend Gilmore, of 40 years

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a generation of strong servant leaders.



**JERRILYN JONES**

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE**  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
**MEDICAL DIRECTOR FOR HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE**  
Arkansas Department of Health

Dr. Jones is an associate professor of emergency medicine at UAMS and is the medical director for preparedness and emergency response at ADH, where she led the team to develop the state's Alternative Care Facilities plan. She is on the Governor's Medical Advisory Committee for Post-Peak COVID-19 Response. This year, Dr. Jones joined the Little Rock School District's Community Advisory Board.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Howard University (B.S.), Harvard University (M.D.), Boston University (M.P.H.)

**Recommended listening:** Malcolm Gladwell's podcast, Revisionist History

**Favorite hobbies:** Dancing and group fitness

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Arkansas River Trail. It is an awesome place to co-mingle with runners, cyclists and other exercise enthusiasts who are strengthening their bodies while enjoying the wonders of The Natural State.

**Words I live by:** Philippians 4:6-8



**EVELYN E. JORGENSON**

**PRESIDENT**  
NorthWest Arkansas Community College

As president, Jorgenson oversaw the initial planning and the team of NWACC professionals who were responsible for the academic planning, design and construction of the NWACC - Washington County Center in Springdale. Under her leadership, the college also completed the Integrated Design Lab which brings together the practical arts and fine arts, creating a learning environment centered around thought, design, art and construction.

**Lives in:** Rogers

**Colleges:** State Fair Community College (A.A.), Columbia College (B.F.A.), University of Missouri (M.Ed. and Ph.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Integrity will provide you with all the leadership skills you will ever need.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Mount Magazine

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a better education population and overall more respect for the value and contribution of educated workers and citizens.



**JOHNNY KEY**

**SECRETARY**  
Arkansas Department of Education

Key previously worked at Baxter Healthcare Corporation in Mountain Home and served nearly 12 years in the Arkansas General Assembly. He joined Gov. Asa Hutchinson's cabinet as Commissioner of Education in 2015, and has had the opportunity to lead a team at the Arkansas Department of Education. Since transformation began on July 1, 2019, the ADE has realized over \$1.5 million in savings of taxpayer funds.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** First baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** KT's Smokehouse BBQ & Catering in Gassville

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to embrace a culture of literacy and ensure every student becomes a strong reader.



**TRISHA MONTAGUE**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR**  
Arkansas Children's Northwest

Montague serves as the chief administrator for Arkansas Children's Northwest. The hospital recently closed the second full year of operation and every expectation and metric was exceeded, including safety and excellence in patient care and experience and financial and growth metrics. ACNW has been embraced by this community and is living up to the Arkansas Children's mission, vision and values.

.....

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** Loretto Heights College (B.S.N.), University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (M.S.N.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Jazz singer

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Fred Scarborough

**Words I live by:** Be true to yourself and the rest will follow.



**SARAH MOORE**

**STATE BOARD MEMBER**  
Arkansas State Board of Education

Moore was appointed to the Arkansas State Board of Education in 2018 by Gov. Asa Hutchinson to represent Arkansas' first congressional district. A resident of Stuttgart, Moore taught elementary school in the Stuttgart School District. She served as the education policy adviser to Gov. Hutchinson during his first term in office.

.....

**Lives in:** Stuttgart

**Colleges:** Duke University (B.A.), University of Arkansas (Ph.D.)

**Recommended reading/listening:** Any book or podcast by Tim Keller

**Dream job as a kid:** Doctor or baker

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Ozarks in the fall

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to provide more education opportunities for all students.



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Ashley County Medical Center, under the guidance of CEO Phillip Gilmore, continues to define quality rural health care in Arkansas, thanks to partnerships with Arkansas Children's and CARTI.



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**ALI  
NOLAND**

**PUBLIC EDUCATION ADVOCATE**  
Our LRSD, Parents for Active Learning,  
and Volunteers in Public Schools

Noland, who is a Little Rock School District parent and an attorney at the Arkansas Court of Appeals, recently helped pass legislation guaranteeing Arkansas students an age-appropriate amount of recess time. She has been a central figure in Little Rock’s efforts to regain local control of its schools and is now running for Little Rock School Board. Noland also served on Mayor Frank Scott Jr.’s transition team for education.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.), American University (LL.M.)

**Recommended listening:** KUAR public radio and two morning news podcasts, Up First and The Daily

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Boxley Valley

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** Senator Joyce Elliott



**CHRISTIAN  
O’NEAL**

**VICE CHANCELLOR FOR  
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT**  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

O’Neal is the vice chancellor for university advancement at University of Arkansas at Little Rock. As a member of Chancellor Christina S. Drale’s cabinet, O’Neal is responsible for the strategic planning and oversight of fundraising, as well as development and execution of marketing and communications.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Dream job as a kid:** National political correspondent for network news

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Grand Promenade located directly behind Bathhouse Row, with scenic views of downtown Hot Springs

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** Bob Denman for the difference he’s made in long-term outlook for philanthropy at UA Little Rock



At the Sam M. Walton College of Business, EPIC is not just something we say. Excellence, professionalism, innovation and collegiality are our values. When leaders and community members embody these traits, it makes for a great place to live, work and play. We salute all of the Arkansas 250. Thank you for being EPIC!



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**MISTY ORPIN**

**FOUNDER**  
Arkansas Covid

In response to the novel coronavirus, Orpin launched Arkansas Covid as a personal project to help make sense of how the pandemic affected the state and her community. The platform focuses on trends and statistics related to the spread of the coronavirus. Orpin continues to work in marketing at her husband's company, Black Apple Crossing.

**Lives in:** Springdale

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Find a way to get to yes.

**Dream job as a kid:** A medieval historian

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Spring Street Grill in Springdale

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** Dale Bumpers, a man I never met

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to invest in creative solutions and to be less risk-averse. We need new technologies at the state level, along with people who can move us forward. It's expensive. It's worth it.



**KYLE PARKER**

**CEO**  
Arkansas Colleges of Health Education

Parker led efforts to open the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2017. Now Parker is organizing efforts for a \$25-million College of Health Sciences that will offer doctoral degrees in physical therapy and occupational therapy and house a physician's assistant school. In the past 12 months, the college has graduated its first class in the master's program and completed construction of the College of Health Sciences building.

**Lives in:** Fort Smith

**Colleges:** Arkansas Tech University (B.A.), Franklin Pierce Law Center (J.D.)

**Favorite hobby:** Photography

**My biggest role models in Arkansas:** My mother and father

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Miss Anna's on Towson in Fort Smith

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to retain and increase its culture of racial equality and diversity, keep it's graduates home, invest in its community, expand technology and serve the underserved.



**BRAD PARSONS**

**CEO & ADMINISTRATOR - BAPTIST-MEMPHIS**  
NEA Baptist Health System

As CEO of NEA Baptist, Parsons and his team were on pace with another record year in growth. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Parsons created a care system for screening, PPE use and testing to ensure safe environments for patients and their families. In May, Parsons assumed a new role as CEO of Baptist-Memphis, a 715-bed quaternary facility and flagship hospital in the Baptist Memorial Health Care system.

**Lives in:** Memphis

**Colleges:** Southern College (B.S.), University of Alabama (MBA and M.S.H.C.A.)

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Lost Pizza or Sai Thai in Jonesboro

**Words I live by:** "If you want to bring happiness to the whole world, go home and love your family." - Mother Teresa

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** On the lake in Cherokee Village

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to capitalize on the natural beauty of the state.



**CAM PATTERSON**

**CHANCELLOR**  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Prior to being named UAMS chancellor in 2018, Patterson was the senior vice president and chief operating officer of New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Under his leadership, UAMS has grown tremendously and was named for the second year as the "Best Hospital in the State" by the U.S. News & World Report and its ear, nose and throat program ranked among the top nationally.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Vanderbilt University (B.A.), Emory University School of Medicine (M.D.), University of North Carolina (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Cardiologist. I was inspired by Dr. Barney March, a family friend and cardiologist.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** I love to fly fish and my happy place is doing that on the White River or the Little Red River.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to provide high quality, equitable health care for all 3 million Arkansans.



**GALEN PERKINS**

**CEO**  
Express Rx

Perkins is CEO of Express Rx, a Little Rock-based pharmaceutical retailer. Under his leadership, Express Rx has steadily grown from eight retail pharmacies in three states to 23 store locations in eight states across the Southeast with more than 150 employees. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Express Rx continues to grow and remains committed to ensuring its patients, including those in rural communities, are able to access highly-qualified health care professionals.

**Lives in:** Maumelle

**College:** Southwestern Oklahoma State University

**Favorite hobby:** Camping

**Proudest career moment:** As a pharmacist, I've had the privilege of making a real difference in patients' lives. For me, it's more than simply providing products or services. It's about meeting their needs with compassion.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Buffalo River and the areas surrounding Ponca



**MIREYA REITH**

**FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Arkansas United

Reith is the founding Executive Director of Arkansas United, a nonprofit based in Springdale that is dedicated to empowering immigrants and their communities through immigrant rights advocacy and closing service gaps. Founded in 2012, Arkansas United boasts a network of over 200 immigrant organizers in 17 communities across Arkansas and operates five regional immigrant resource centers with partners.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** Williams College, Columbia University (Master's)

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**JOSÉ ROMERO, M.D.**

**SECRETARY**  
Arkansas Department of Health

Gov. Asa Hutchinson appointed Dr. José Romero as Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Health. Dr. Romero previously served as ADH's chief medical officer. He currently chairs the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which is providing guidance nationally on the development and administration of a COVID-19 vaccine. Dr. Romero previously served as the director of clinical trials research at Arkansas Children's Research Institute from 2008-2019.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara



**JAMES L. "SKIP" RUTHERFORD III**

**DEAN**  
University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Policy

Rutherford was an advisor to Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign in 1992 and was the first president of the Clinton Foundation. As dean of the nation's first school to offer a master's degree in public service, he is involved in scheduling a dynamic public lecture series at the college and serves on a number of boards around the state.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading:** The Long Southern Strategy by Angie Maxwell and Todd Shields

**Dream job as a kid:** Sportswriter

**Favorite hobby:** Collecting political buttons

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Batesville

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Mack McLarty

# Leaders in Medical Education

New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) at Arkansas State University is committed to training talented physicians who aspire to become servant leaders that positively impact their communities.

Located in Jonesboro, NYITCOM at Arkansas State is uniquely situated to improve access to health care and health education in the state and the greater Mississippi Delta region. NYITCOM students are eager and ready to address the region's significant health care needs through research, outreach, wellness initiatives, and superior patient care.

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## EDDIE SCHMECKENBECHER

COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST  
Arkansas School for the Deaf

For the last two and a half years, Schmeckenbecher has served as the interpreter at the governor’s press conferences. With the onset of the novel coronavirus, he was thrust into the spotlight at Gov. Asa Hutchinson’s daily press conferences. This honor has brought many opportunities to highlight deafness in Arkansas. Schmeckenbecher’s goal is to ensure that the deaf community has access and understands the happenings in the state.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock (A.A. and B.A.), University of Arkansas (M.Ed.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Working for the phone company

**Favorite hobbies:** Collecting ties, woodworking, home restoration

**Words I live by:** Be kind and have fun, laugh and enjoy life.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs to** trust God and be good stewards of the community He has given us.



## SHANE SPEIGHTS

DEAN  
New York Institute of Technology College of  
Osteopathic Medicine — Arkansas

Speights has seen NYIT, located on the campus of Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, reach a total enrollment of 460. The school’s first class of medical students began clerkships in 2019 and NYIT established a partnership with Baptist Memorial to train students throughout medical school and into residency.

**Lives in:** Jonesboro

**Colleges:** Henderson State University, University of Health Sciences

**Best career advice I ever received:** Take the high road.

**Dream job as a kid:** Airline pilot or astronaut

**Favorite hobbies:** Fishing, hunting, playing guitar

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Omar’s at the 501 in Jonesboro. I’ve had steak across the country and can’t find one better.

**Words I live by:** Always try to do the right thing for the greater good; and the truth is somewhere in the middle.

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**JOE  
STEINMETZ**

**CHANCELLOR**  
University of Arkansas

Steinmetz is a neuroscientist and chancellor of the University of Arkansas. Over the past year, the university has successfully transitioned a brick-and-mortar university to an online university in a matter of weeks and received a \$194.7 million grant from the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation to establish the Institute for Integrative and Innovative Research.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** Central Michigan University (B.S. and M.A.), Ohio University (Ph.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Never stop learning and never stop asking questions. Remain curious.

**Favorite hobbies:** Playing the piano and reading, although I don't have much time for either these days.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** I've always been partial to a burger and beer at Hugo's in Fayetteville.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to invest in education and incentivize college attendance. There is a direct correlation between education and your health, wealth and happiness. Arkansas deserves a little more of all three.



**MATT  
TROUP**

**CEO**  
Conway Regional Health System

Under his leadership, the Conway Regional Health System has reached milestones in 2020. The hospital launched a family practice residency program, hosted a site visit by the American Nurses Credentialing Center to become a Nurse Magnet facility, a designation that less than 10% of hospitals achieve. The hospital also added 11 new physicians to its staff and was recognized for the third straight year as a "Modern Healthcare Best Place to Work."

**Lives in:** Conway

**Colleges:** Texas A&M University (B.B.A.), Trinity University (M.H.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Football coach

**Proudest career moment:** My mom telling me how proud she was when I became CEO at Conway Regional

**Favorite places in Arkansas:** Lake Sylvia and Petit Jean trail running and at home with family

**Best career advice I ever received:** By my high school football coach after I kept missing a defensive assignment: "Damn it Troup! If you're gonna screw up, do it at full speed!"



**MATT  
WALLER**

**DEAN**  
University of Arkansas Sam M. Walton  
College of Business

During his tenure as dean of the Sam. M. Walton College of Business, he has witnessed the launch of the Brewer Family Entrepreneurship Hub, the McMillon Innovation Studio and the Blockchain Center of Excellence. In addition, the college has introduced the endowment of the William Dillard Department of Accounting, five new master's programs and received recognition for its supply chain program.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** University of Missouri (B.S.B.A.), Pennsylvania State University (M.S. and Ph.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Carefully consider the needs and desires of others.

**Favorite places in Arkansas:** The Buffalo River and Beaver Lake

**Dream job as a kid:** Astronaut

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a vibrant, risk-taking, skilled and densely populated entrepreneurial ecosystem.



**CHARLES  
WELCH**

**PRESIDENT**  
Arkansas State University System

Welch and Arkansas State University merged ASU Mid-South, ASU Three Rivers and Henderson State University into the ASU System. The ASU System completed the Accelerate ASU efficiency study aimed at cost savings across its various campuses. Welch was elected as chair of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), George Washington University (M.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (Ed.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Governor

**Proudest career moment:** Every graduation day

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Arthur's Prime Steakhouse in Little Rock

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Dr. B. Alan Sugg

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more adults with a college degree.



**TROY WELLS**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Baptist Health

Wells, who joined Baptist Health in 2006 and was named CEO in 2014, oversees the largest nonprofit hospital system in the state with 843 beds. Wells, recognized by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock as a 2018 distinguished alumni, serves on boards for Goodwill Industries of Arkansas and the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.H.S.A.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Sometimes you have put a little touch on the pass.

**Dream job as a kid:** Paramedic

**Proudest career moment:** Having the opportunity to care for Arkansans during a global pandemic

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Grand Prairie in December and January



**MARK WILLIAMS**

**DEAN**  
UAMS Fay W. Boozman  
College of Public Health

Williams' public health career spans over 30 years, having published over 200 peer-reviewed articles and chapters. His research focuses on behavioral epidemiology, disease prevention and health promotion in underserved and minority populations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Williams and his team have developed and led mitigation efforts, one of the most important of which is the contact tracing call center at UAMS.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Iowa (Bachelor of General Studies and Ph.D.), University of Nebraska-Lincoln (M.A.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Do not let perfect inhibit taking action.

**Favorite hobby:** Gardening

**Proudest career moment:** Being named the M. Joycelyn Elder Chair

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** mass transit.



Kyle D. Parker, J.D.  
CEO, Arkansas Colleges of Health Education

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IN ARKANSAS AND BEYOND

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# WHERE THEY LIVE



Little Rock..... 131	Hot Springs ..... 3	Bearden..... 1	Morrilton..... 1
Fayetteville..... 17	Batesville ..... 3	Bethel Heights..... 1	Newport..... 1
Conway..... 13	Bryant ..... 2	Blytheville ..... 1	Paragould..... 1
Bentonville..... 9	Carlisle..... 2	Cabot ..... 1	Paron..... 1
Jonesboro ..... 9	Crossett..... 2	El Paso ..... 1	Pine Bluff ..... 1
Springdale..... 8	El Dorado..... 2	Harrison ..... 1	Sherwood..... 1
North Little Rock..... 7	Osceola ..... 2	Helena ..... 1	Sulphur Springs ..... 1
Rogers..... 7	Roland..... 2	Lakeview ..... 1	Texarkana ..... 1
Fort Smith ..... 6	Arkadelphia..... 1	Marianna..... 1	West Memphis..... 1
Stuttgart ..... 4	Arkansas County ..... 1	Maumelle ..... 1	



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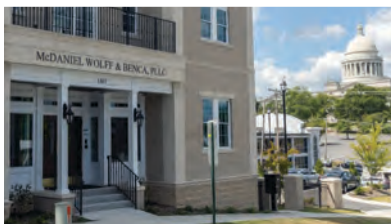
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- PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY



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GOVERNMENT  
& POLICY



**RICHARD  
BEARDEN**

**FOUNDING PARTNER**  
Impact Management Group

Bearden, who co-founded Impact Management Group over 20 years ago, represents national and state clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to regional and state-based corporations. He is the former executive director of the state Republican Party and a past appointee of President George W. Bush.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Hendrix College

**Best career advice I ever received:** Reach for the stars. My grandmother ended every letter to me with those words of encouragement.

**Proudest career moment:** Winning Arkansas for President Bush in 2000 in a critical swing state win and working to pass the Arkansas Trauma Legislation

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Fayetteville in the fall

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** education at all levels, which will help lift all citizens to better jobs and a better life.



**CHARLES  
BLAKE**

**CHIEF OF STAFF**  
City of Little Rock

Blake became Mayor Frank Scott Jr.'s Chief of Staff after he stepped down as minority leader of the Arkansas House of Representative and State Representative for District 36. Blake served three terms in the state legislature where he introduced a bill to remove the Confederate star from the Arkansas state flag, which failed to pass despite support from Gov. Asa Hutchinson. Blake is also the co-host of the podcast Rock the Culture.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Grinnell College

**Best career advice I ever received:** Prepare every day for the career you want, not the job you have.

**Favorite hobbies:** Podcasting and chess

**Proudest career moment:** Being elected to my first term as state representative

**Favorite places in Arkansas:** Little Rock Central High School and the Arkansas State Capitol



**IRVIN  
CAMACHO**

**BAIL DISRUPTOR**  
Bail Project

Camacho has been organizing immigrant communities in Arkansas since 2010. Throughout his career, he has helped organize Know Your Rights trainings, DACA Renewal Clinics, rallies, voter registration drives and fundraisers with organizations like the Arkansas Natural Dreamers. Camacho is also an ACLU of Arkansas board member.

**Lives in:** Springdale

**College:** NorthWest Arkansas Community College

**Recommended reading:** I recommend that everyone reads the Autobiography of Malcolm X. This book changed my life.

**Dream job as a kid:** My dream job as a kid was to be a news anchor.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** My favorite place in Arkansas is Springdale. Our diverse population is special.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs more** diverse folks in leadership. We're getting there and once we do we will thrive more.



**ROBERT  
COON**

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
Impact Management Group

Coon served as a strategist for the successful Arkansas casino amendment campaign during the 2018 election. He serves on several boards including the Little Rock Sister Cities Commission, Governor's Advisory Commission on National Service & Volunteerism and the Arkansas District Export Council. In 2019, he was appointed to the Governance Structure Study Group by Mayor Frank Scott Jr.

**LIVES IN:** Little Rock

**COLLEGE:** Presbyterian College

**Dream job as a kid:** For a time I wanted to be a marine biologist. Maybe I watched too much Flipper as a kid.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Heights Taco & Tamale Co. in Little Rock

**Words I live by:** "A man should never neglect his family for business."  
- Walt Disney

**Proudest career moment:** That even after 20 years I still love what I do



**BLAKE  
EDDINS**

**PRINCIPAL**  
Eddins & Associates

Eddins, a former Arkansas Razorback basketball player, has a client base including the Arkansas Health Care Association, the Arkansas Trucking Association, The Poultry Foundation, Stephens Production Company, Stephens Group, Arkansas Bankers Association and many more high-profile companies. He recently led the lobbying effort that resulted in the Gulfside Casino Partners of Gulfport, Mississippi, winning the casino license for Russellville.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurants:** Anything Ben Brainard is involved in; Wright's BBQ in Johnson; The Tamale Factory in Augusta; and Sims Bar-B-Que and Hill Station, both in Little Rock

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Fayetteville on any game day

**My biggest role models in Arkansas:** Nolan Richardson and U.S. Senator John Boozman



**TAMIKA  
EDWARDS**

**SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE CEO ON DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY, INCLUSION & ENGAGEMENT**  
Central Arkansas Water

Edwards, who joined Central Arkansas Water in August, served as the executive director of the Social Justice Institute at Philander Smith College for nearly two years. She has 20 years of experience in politics, public policy and program development. In 2019, she received the inaugural outstanding alumni award from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Department of Rhetoric and Writing and the Emerging Young Alumna from the Bowen School of Law.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Favorite hobbies:** Reading and Candy Crush

**Proudest career moment:** Partnering with several other outstanding organizations to host JusticeCon 2019 featuring Angela Davis and Ibram X. Kendi



## JOYCE ELLIOTT

SENATOR  
Arkansas State Senate

Elliott served in the state senate since 2009 and prior to that spent six years in the Arkansas House. Elliott, who spent 30 years as a high school English and speech teacher, focuses much of her attention on education and issues of racial and socioeconomic injustice. Elliott is currently running for Congress and her campaign policies hinge on her goal to “form a more perfect union” and remove barriers to our pursuit of happiness.

Lives in: Little Rock

Colleges: Southern Arkansas University, Ouachita Baptist University



## JON GILMORE

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER  
Gilmore Strategy Group

Gilmore’s lobbying firm has grown exponentially since its founding in 2016 and added a third partner, J.R. Davis. The firm has doubled its lobbying clients and went undefeated in their 2020 primary election races, including the Supreme Court. As the former deputy chief of staff, Gilmore continues to serve Gov. Asa Hutchinson in a consulting role as his chief strategist on political affairs.

Lives in: Little Rock

College: Louisiana Baptist University

Dream job as a kid: Arkansas Game and Fish Commission game warden

Proudest career moment: Election night of 2014 after managing the winning gubernatorial campaign for Asa Hutchinson

Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant: Capital Bar and Grill in Little Rock

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## JIM HENDREN

SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEAM  
Arkansas State Senate

Gravette native Jim Hendren served for eight years in the U.S. Air Force as an F-15 fighter pilot. Today, Hendren represents Arkansas Senate District 12 where he has sponsored legislation to reduce government spending and limit government regulatory authority. Hendren is also active in several organizations including the Kiwanis Club, the American Legion and Veteran's Airlift Command.

**Lives in:** Sulphur Springs

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), Air Command Staff College, Air War College

**Dream job as a kid:** Fighter pilot

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Gov. Asa Hutchinson

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The hills of northwest Arkansas

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Hard Luck Cafe in Gravette

**Proudest career moment:** Making a command decision that saved the city of Kobane, Syria, from being overrun by ISIS



## JIMMY HICKEY JR.

SENATOR  
Arkansas State Senate

Republican State Senator Hickey has been elected to serve as the next leader of the Arkansas Senate. The majority-Republican Senate elected the Texarkana lawmaker to serve as its president pro tempore starting in 2021. He represents District 11 in southwest Arkansas and has served in the Senate since 2013.

**Lives in:** Texarkana

**College:** East Texas State University

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## ASA HUTCHINSON

**GOVERNOR**  
State of Arkansas

Hutchinson was reelected to a second term in 2018 and quickly began working on what he refers to as the “four T’s.” Those priorities included a teacher pay increase, tax cuts, transformation of state government and transportation funding. This year, Gov. Hutchinson has led the state through an unprecedented global pandemic, giving near daily COVID-19 press updates to keep citizens and officials up to date.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Bob Jones University (B.S.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Farmer

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Spavinaw Creek, where I spent a lot of time during my childhood

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to recruit tech companies to use all the talent in our state.

**Favorite hobby:** Playing pick-up basketball



## FREDRICK LOVE

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
Arkansas House of Representatives

Fredrick Love is serving his fifth term in the Arkansas House of Representatives for District 29 and is the director of community services for Pulaski County Government. Love is also the vice chair of the Southern Legislative Conference, the House Minority Leader in the Arkansas House of Representatives. He has recently received the Black Male Empowerment Community Awareness Award and the Zeta Phi Beta Agent of Change Award.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock (B.A. and M.A.), Harvard Kennedy School (Certificate in Executive Management)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Disappoint people at the rate they can absorb it.

**Favorite hobby:** Landscaping

**Dream job as a kid:** Real estate mogul

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to invest in its human capital, digital infrastructure and small businesses.



## STEPHANIE BASS JACKSON

**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AND MEDIA RELATIONS**  
The Design Group; **COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR AND SPOKESMAN** Office of Mayor Frank Scott Jr., City of Little Rock

Bass Jackson serves as the director of public and media relations for The Design Group and as the communications director and spokesman for Mayor Frank Scott Jr. In the Office of the Mayor, Bass Jackson and her team have been intentional during the pandemic to create policies and initiatives that benefit Little Rock’s vulnerable populations and small businesses, including the distribution of more than 20,000 masks.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Dream job as a kid:** Television news anchor (thanks to the legendary Margaret Preston)

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** The Root Cafe in Little Rock

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** an equitable, adequately-funded educational system. We must prioritize K-12 and higher education in state and local budgets. That’s where Arkansas will see its biggest returns.



## MARCO MCCLENDON

**MAYOR**  
City of West Memphis

McClendon was sworn in as the 13th elected mayor for West Memphis, the city he grew up in, on Jan. 1, 2019. Prior to being elected mayor, McClendon was the youngest city council member in the state of Arkansas. McClendon’s goals for his city include high-performing schools, safe streets, clean neighborhoods, jobs that pay a livable wage and access to health care.

**Lives in:** West Memphis

**College:** Arkansas State University Mid-South



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**TED MULLENIX**

**PRESIDENT**  
Mullenix & Associates

Mullenix established Mullenix & Associates in 1999. Over the past year, the company has completed a number of economic development projects including an expansion at Atlas Tube, a phase 2 expansion of Big River Steel, an expansion of Highland Pellets and a huge project with GTL Americas in Pine Bluff. All of these projects will result in new jobs for skilled labor in the state.

**Lives in:** Little Rock and Hot Springs

**Dream job as a kid:** Own my own business, be my own boss. Always admired nice suits, beautiful ties – now I enjoy them.

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My father, Granville Mullenix, was modest, honest, grateful, hard-working and God-fearing

**Favorite hobbies:** Singing, playing pedal steel guitar, driving my antique cars and traveling



**KENDRA PRUITT**

**SENIOR ADVISER TO THE MAYOR**  
City of Little Rock

Pruitt became Mayor Frank Scott Jr.'s first appointment in January 2019 after more than six years as an attorney with Mitchell Williams law firm. She was tasked with implementing the mayor's policy initiatives. In 20 months, the administration has made significant strides in criminal justice reform, education policy and economic development, while navigating a pandemic and this generation's justice movement.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Pediatric cardiologist

**Proudest career moment:** Passing the Arkansas Bar Exam

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** My parents' backyard on the lake in Newport (minus the mosquitoes)

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**FRANK SCOTT JR.**

**MAYOR**  
City of Little Rock

Mayor Scott has overseen the creation of more than 2,700 jobs to date, a 100% increase over jobs created in 2018. Jobs growth and economic development will continue to play an integral role in ensuring Little Rock residents have the kind of local economy the Little Rock area deserves. New developments, such as Trader Joe’s, CZ USA, Costco and Amazon.com, highlight the city’s growth momentum.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Memphis (B.B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (MBA)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Focus on your strengths and make your weaknesses irrelevant.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to increase diversity in the marketplace.



**MATTHEW SHEPHERD**

**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**  
State of Arkansas

Shepherd, who is the Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives and the Arkansas State Representative for District 6, played a key role in leading the House through a special session and fiscal session, and in continuing to address issues arising out of the COVID-19 outbreak. He practices law at Shepherd & Shepherd in El Dorado.

**Lives in:** El Dorado

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Recommended reading:** The Film Doesn’t Lie by Jimmy Dykes

**Dream job as a kid:** Football coach

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Wood’s Place in Camden

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to cultivate and unlock the full potential of its most valuable resource: its people.



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**BILL VICKERY**

**FOUNDING PARTNER**  
Capitol Advisors Group

Vickery is a 20-plus year veteran of the Arkansas political scene who managed Tim Hutchinson’s successful U.S. Senate campaign. Vickery hosts the statewide radio program The Sunday Buzz, and a Wednesday morning TV show, Wednesday Wake-up Call. As a lobbyist, his client list includes the Arkansas Trucking Association and Winrock International.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Hendrix College

**Best career advice I ever received:** Sit down and be quiet.

**Dream job as a kid:** Starting quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Outside Razorback Stadium/War Memorial on game day

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Sheffield Nelson



**LARRY W. WALTHER**

**DEPARTMENT SECRETARY**  
Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration

After 30 years with SBC Communications, Walther began his public service career when Gov. Mike Huckabee appointed him as director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. In 2008, then-President Bush appointed him director of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. He went on to receive a second presidential appointment when then-President Obama nominated him to the Export-Import Bank Board.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Monticello

**Dream job as a kid:** To be a dairy farmer in Minnesota like my Uncle John Walther

**Proudest career moment:** Implementing the new pay plan for state employees. Through this, all state positions were carefully studied and classified to ensure employees receive the compensation they deserve.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** My backyard, sitting with my wife

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**JEFF  
AMERINE**

**FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Startup Junkie Consulting

Amerine is a leader nationally involved with the creation of lasting venture ecosystems. He has held senior leadership positions in nine startups and three Fortune 500 companies, and he has made more than 90 investments into new ventures either directly or through the funds he manages. Amerine now leads Startup Junkie Consulting, and co-leads Innovation Junkie and Cadron Capital Partners.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** U.S. Naval Academy (B.S.), University of Arkansas (M.S.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Astronaut

**Proudest career moment:** When my son Brett joined me at Startup Junkie Consulting in 2014. He has made all the difference in growing the business.

**Words I live by:** Assume positive intent. Don't ask permission. Move at entrepreneur speed.



**TAD  
BOHANNON**

**CEO**  
Central Arkansas Water

Bohannon has spent the last four years as head of Central Arkansas Water, which provides water to the greater Little Rock-North Little Rock area. Recently, CAW introduced Vessel, the nation's first leak detection dog, to Arkansas. CAW has also started the renovation of the Ozark Treatment Plant, which is a huge endeavor for the utility and is expected to be completed in late spring of 2021.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.), Washington University (M.T.), Oxford University (MBA)

**Proudest career moment:** Consolidation of Maumelle Waterworks in CAW; so many people said it could never be done

**Dream job as a kid:** Fighter pilot or Broadway musical theater actor

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to realize that education is the silver bullet, pay teachers more and realize that every kid is not starting at the same place and some kids are going to need more resources than others.



**SANDY BRADLEY**

**CHIEF OF STAFF**  
The McLarty Companies

Bradley has spent more than a decade managing day-to-day operations of The McLarty Companies, a fourth-generation business representing a diverse set of interests. Bradley’s experience ranges from supporting capital campaigning to marketing to overseeing operations of large organizations. She was the chair of the American Heart Association Sweetheart Program in 2018-19.

- .....
- Lives in:** Sherwood
- College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- Dream job as a kid:** Holding an elected office
- Favorite hobby:** Cooking
- Words I live by:** Always be and do your best at every turn.
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** Greer’s Ferry Lake



**AARON BURKES**

**CEO**  
Northwest Arkansas National Airport

Burkes joined the Northwest Arkansas National Airport in November 2018. Under his leadership, the airport has grown passenger enplanements by 17% in 2019 and added a fifth major airline (Frontier) and four new direct destinations (Miami, Philadelphia, Nashville and Mesa/Phoenix) to serve XNA.

- .....
- Lives in:** Bethel Heights
- Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), Clemson University (M.A.), Baylor University (J.D.)
- Best career advice I ever received:** Figure out how to add value to your customer and you will do well.
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** Pinnacle Mountain
- To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to focus on creating a competitive tax and regulatory environment.



**LORI BURROWS**

**VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL COUNSEL**  
Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation

With 15-plus years of utility experience, Burrows is an Arkansas Women in Power founder, Historic Arkansas Museum’s Foundation board president and the Friends of KLRE/KUAR board vice president. She is a graduate of LeadAR, Leadership Greater Little Rock and named one of Arkansas Business’ 40 under 40. She will be honored this fall as one of Museum of Discovery’s Spark! Stars.

- .....
- Lives in:** Little Rock
- Colleges:** University of Central Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.), Harvard Business School
- Recommended reading:** How to Be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi
- Dream job as a kid:** To be the first woman on the U.S. Supreme Court. Kudos to Sandra Day O’Connor for beating me to it!
- Proudest career moment:** To date, having my daughters present when I spoke at the World Woman Summit, to an international audience in late 2019, about how women can help other women improve their careers and lives



**STEVE CLARK**

**FOUNDER & CEO**  
Propak

Clark has been ranked as one of Arkansas’ top business innovators and was named “Entrepreneur of the Year” by the Walton College of Business in April 2015. In 2019, he was awarded the Governor’s Arts Award for Community Arts Development by Gov. Asa Hutchinson. Clark is actively involved in the Fort Smith community and serves on the boards of the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith Foundation, U.S. Marshals Museum, Future School of Fort Smith and the Central Business Improvement District.

- .....
- Lives in:** Fort Smith
- College:** University of Arkansas
- Best career advice I ever received:** Excellence must be who you are, not what you do.
- Dream job as a kid:** Quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys
- To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to invest in amenity, infrastructure and workforce development, to keep the jobs we have and attract new employers. Economic development is a global, contact sport and we must act and invest accordingly.



**ASHLEY  
COLEMAN**

**CHIEF OF STAFF**  
Apptegy

Coleman began her career in human resources at Windstream, acting as a trusted partner to business leaders in all people-related matters. She joined Apptegy in 2017 and has been integral to doubling Apptegy’s workforce and building its recruiting and operations teams. Recently, Coleman was named Apptegy’s chief of staff and was selected as one of Little Rock Soirée magazine’s 2019 Women to Watch.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (MBA)

**Favorite hobby:** Staying active. Exercise keeps me balanced physically and mentally.

**Dream job as a kid:** I wanted to be an attorney like my dad.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Petit & Keet in Little Rock

**Best career advice I ever received:** Encouragement to persevere in the face of adversity has been a common theme in the guidance my parents, leaders and mentors have given me.



**JOSH  
DAVENPORT**

**CO-FOUNDER & CEO**  
Seal Solar

A top voice in Arkansas’ renewable energy industry, Davenport is a member of the Arkansas Advanced Energy Association Distributed General Task Force and former president of the Arkansas Chapter of Energy Engineers. He also serves on the boards of the Argenta Downtown Council, North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce and University of Arkansas at Little Rock Alumni Association.

**Lives in:** North Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock (B.S. and MBA), Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Pilot

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** My second office, Mugs Cafe in Argenta

**My biggest mentors in Arkansas:** My business partners, Heather Nelson and Ken Davenport

**Words I live by:** You are what you think you are.

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**BILL  
DILLARD III**

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Dillard's

Dillard joined the family business in 1994 and has worked his way through the company founded by his grandfather, William T. Dillard, in 1938. Dillard has been involved with Arkansas Baptist, Our House, Habitat for Humanity and the American Heart Association's Heart Walk.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Texas at Austin (B.A.), Northwestern University (MBA)

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Ristorante Capeo in North Little Rock

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** high quality educational options for every kid in our state.

**Favorite places in Arkansas:** Ouachita and Ozark Mountains

**Words I live by:** "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Proverbs 4:23



**STEVE  
EDWARDS**

**PRESIDENT**  
Edwards Food Giant / GES Inc.

GES Inc. operates supermarkets across Arkansas as Edwards Food Giant and Edwards Cash Saver. In addition to leading GES Inc., Edwards serves as a commissioner on the Arkansas State Police Commission and is a member of the board of directors of Armor Bank.

**Lives in:** Marianna

**College:** Arkansas State University

**Recommended listening:** Anything by The Eagles

**Proudest career moment:** When our company entered the Little Rock area market

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Janssen's Lakefront Restaurant in Edgemont



**KIM  
ESKEW**

**PRESIDENT, CEO & CHAIRMAN**  
Harps Food Stores

A part-time job while attending college at the University of Arkansas led to a flourishing career with Harps Food Stores. After a year of working and going to college, Eskew decided to pursue a career with Harps after graduation. Since then, he has held numerous positions with the company at both store and corporate level. He became CEO in 2016 and chairman in 2018.

**Lives in:** Springdale

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** Spy

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** The Blessings Golf Club restaurant in Fayetteville

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** great leadership and great people. We will never rise above the talent and expertise of our people. To accomplish this, we must keep our best people in Arkansas and not lose them to other states.



**JOHN  
FURNER**

**PRESIDENT & CEO, WALMART U.S.**  
Walmart

Furner started with Walmart as an hourly associate in 1993, at Store 100 in Bentonville. Today, he serves as CEO of Walmart U.S. where he is responsible for the strategic direction and performance of more than 4,700 stores and 1 million associates. Furner previously served as CEO of Sam's Club. During his time as CEO, Sam's Club had 11 consecutive quarters of positive sales comps, while increasing memberships.

**Lives in:** Rogers

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** Rock musician

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Hobbs MTB Trails

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to be a top destination for people from other states to relocate to and stay.

**Proudest career moment:** Seeing our associates step up and serve America during a crisis.



**ELIZA GAINES**

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Gaines was promoted to managing editor in March 2020. Her previous roles include vice president of audience development for WEHCO Media and executive editor of Hot Springs Sentinel-Record. Gaines is on the boards of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, CHI St. Vincent Foundation and Our House.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (B.A. and M.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Writer or chef

**Favorite hobby:** Tennis

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** My father, Walter Hussman

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a drastic improvement in K-12 public education.



**JESTON GEORGE**

**FOUNDER & CEO**  
Apptegy

Apptegy, a digital and marketing company for school districts, has been recognized as one of the country's fastest growing startups in the ed-tech sector. George has rapidly grown the company he founded in 2013, and in 2019 he guided Apptegy through a Series B investment round that secured \$13.2 million. Today, Apptegy serves more than 1,000 school districts from 49 states and employs 135 in downtown Little Rock.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Dropped out of college

**Dream job as a kid:** I wanted to run my own business.

**Favorite hobby:** Spending time with my kids and building Apptegy

**Proudest career moment:** I look at this a little differently. Like many companies, we challenge the status quo and often come up with counterintuitive answers to our problems. But unlike most companies, we push forward with these solutions, and this is probably one of the biggest reasons for our success.



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**BILL HALTER**

**CEO**  
Scenic Hill Solar

Halter is the founder and CEO of Scenic Hill Solar, Arkansas’ largest solar developer and the 29th-largest in the United States. Halter was named “Arkansan of the Year” by Arkansas Life and the Arkansas Times. Previously lieutenant governor of Arkansas and a trustee for Stanford University, Halter has been on the boards of 12 technology companies.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Stanford University (B.A.), Oxford University (Master of Economics)

**Dream job as a kid:** St. Louis Cardinal

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Home with family

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a world-class education system from pre-K through graduate programs and workforce training; flexible sources of capital for business formation; and to move faster than competitors in an era of rapid change.



**RANDY HENDERSON**

**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS**  
Nucor Steel Arkansas

A Blytheville native, Henderson began his career at Nucor Steel Arkansas nearly 24 years ago. Outside of work, he’s active in a number of organizations including the Delta Grassroots Caucus, Rick Crawford’s Delta Region Economic Advancement Mission Council and the Arkansas State Chamber’s Be Pro Be Proud initiative. Henderson is a graduate of the Arkansas State Chamber’s Leadership Arkansas program.

**Lives in:** Blytheville

**Colleges:** Arkansas Northeastern College (A.A.), University of Arkansas - Fort Smith (B.A.S.)

**Recommended reading:** The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham by Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley

**Dream job as a kid:** An educator serving at a school for under-privileged students

**Favorite hobbies:** Spending time with family and reading a great, inspirational book



**MYRON JACKSON**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
The Design Group

Jackson and The Design Group, a multicultural communications company founded in 2007, led strategic communication for the successful mayoral campaign of Frank Scott Jr. His firm also landed the coveted public relations and media buying contract for Saracen Casino Resort in Pine Bluff. Under his leadership, The Design Group has extended its multicultural marketing presence to Oklahoma and Mississippi.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Dream job as a kid:** Music mogul (anything that allowed me to get rich and out of poverty)

**Proudest career moment:** Laughing with my mom when she proudly stated, “I saw my baby boy on TV”

**Words I live by:** Walk boldly into the unknown.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a collective commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It’s time all were able to benefit from what this great state has to offer. Too often minority communities are marginalized or overlooked.



**JORDAN JOHNSON**

**OWNER**  
JPJ Consulting

With over 20 years of communications experience, Johnson provides consulting services to public and private companies, municipal entities, utilities and nonprofits. He is a spokesperson for several Fortune 500 companies as well as for the William J. Clinton Foundation. He specializes in crisis communications and public policy.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Recommended reading:** Any Arkansas newspaper, NPR and National Geographic

**Dream job as a kid:** Selling fireworks

**Proudest career moment:** Helping other people, nonprofits, companies and municipalities be their best

**Best career advice I ever received:** Do what you love to do and then find a way to get paid doing that.





**CHRIS JONES**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND LEAD MAKER**  
Innovation Hub

With graduate degrees in nuclear engineering and urban planning, and 20 years of experience in energy and infrastructure, diversity, community development, housing and management, Jones was appointed as executive director and lead maker for the Innovation Hub after joining in 2018. Jones holds five degrees, including bachelor's degrees in mathematics and physics from Morehouse College, where he received a full scholarship from NASA and served as student body president.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Morehouse College (B.S., B.S.) Mass. Institute of Technology (M.S., M.S. Ph.D.)



**JILL JOSLIN**

**PRESIDENT**  
CJRW

Joslin has been serving as president of the state's largest marketing firm since 2016. She has nearly three decades of industry experience with clients in industries including health care, economic development, tourism and public utilities. CJRW was recognized as one of the "Best Places to Work in Arkansas" for 2019.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Best career advice I ever received:** Make sure you understand a problem before you try to fix it.

**Recommended reading/listening:** Fast Company and Arkansas Travel Guide

**Proudest Career Moment:** Watching our team pull together and help businesses around the state adapt, adjust and move forward when the playbook totally changed in March.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The finish line at Oaklawn Park on a beautiful afternoon.

# Good Chemistry

At Express Rx, we combine old-fashioned service with the latest health care technology to deliver a personalized patient experience. With our new Arkansas headquarters, we are well positioned for growth.





**KENNY KINLEY**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Edafio Technology Partners

As president and CEO of one of the top-managed service providers in the nation, Kinley leads the charge to help, build and protect clients’ businesses through information technology and cybersecurity. He brings more than 20 years of operational, customer relation management and sales leadership experience to Arkansas’ largest and “Most Admired IT Company in Arkansas.”

.....

- Lives in:** Conway
- College:** University of Central Arkansas
- Favorite hobby:** Playing golf with my son and friends
- Words I live by:** Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.
- Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Mike’s Place in Conway
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** My back porch



**LAURA LANDREAUX**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Entergy

Entergy, under Landreaux’s leadership, is working through a three-year project to install advanced meters and increase digital customer engagement across the state. Entergy broke ground on a solar facility in Chicot County and were approved by the Arkansas Public Service Commission to build a solar project near Searcy. Its three solar projects can power 45,000 homes.

.....

- Lives in:** Little Rock
- Colleges:** University of Arkansas, University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)



**MARK MCLARTY**

**FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN**  
McLarty Automotive Group

McLarty, a fourth-generation automobile dealer, is the founder and chairman of McLarty Automotive Group, one of the top dealership groups in the U.S. with 18 franchises representing 16 brands across the Mid-South and Midwest. McLarty is also the founder and operator of leading auto dealerships in Brazil, China and Mexico.

.....

- Lives in:** Little Rock
- Colleges:** Georgetown University (B.A.), University of Pennsylvania (M.A.), Wharton University (MBA)
- Dream job as a kid:** Trucker
- Proudest career moment:** Still to come...
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** Hope
- My biggest role models in Arkansas:** Public school teachers from K-12



**DOUG MCMILLON**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Walmart

A former hourly distribution center employee, McMillon now sits on the board of directors for the world’s largest retailer and is the company’s fifth CEO. In 2018, the Bentonville-based retail giant made the biggest acquisition in its history, taking a 77% stake in India’s largest retailer Flipkart for \$16 billion.

.....

- Lives in:** Bentonville
- College:** University of Arkansas



**JUDY R. MCREYNOLDS**

**CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO**  
ArcBest

McReynolds joined ArcBest in 1997, becoming president and CEO in 2010. Under her leadership, ArcBest has evolved from its Less-Than-Truckload Freight roots to become a leading logistics company. In 2019, McReynolds won the Women in Trucking Association’s Distinguished Woman in Logistics Award and she is among Global Trade Magazine’s 2020 “Top 10 Women in Logistics.”

**Lives in:** Fort Smith

**College:** University of Oklahoma

**Dream job as a kid:** An Olympic gymnast

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** 21 West End in Fort Smith

**Words I live by:** Be a person of integrity and listen more than you speak.

**Recommended reading:** Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality by Dr. Henry Cloud



**HEATHER NELSON**

**CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT**  
Seal Solar

Nelson has been part of the rapid growth for the energy company, which has partnered with utilities, engineering firms, nonprofits and agriculture operations. In 2019, Nelson was awarded Entrepreneur of the Year by the Sam M. Walton College of Business. She is currently part of Leadership Arkansas Class XIV and serves on the board of directors for Junior Achievement of Arkansas and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Foundation fund board.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville and Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Teacher

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Cafe Bossa Nova in Little Rock

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Dr. Molly Rapert

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** education, innovation and leadership that clears the path to allow those things to flourish.

# WHY HYTROL?

Jonesboro, Arkansas is our home. It’s been that way since 1962. Today, we’re a leader in the material handling industry. Much of our success can be contributed to the dedication and hard work of our neighbors across the state. We celebrate everyone in our Arkansas communities and we each invest in them for a better tomorrow. Together, we lead the way.





**SHANNON  
NEWTON**

**PRESIDENT**  
Arkansas Trucking Association

Newton received the American Trucking Association’s President’s Trucking Association Executives Council Leadership Award for advocacy efforts in 2018. The following year, she spearheaded an effort to pass the largest highway funding package ever through the Arkansas legislature. She also serves as chair of Vote for Roads and on the Governor’s Economic Recovery Task Force.

- .....
- Lives in:** Bryant
- College:** University of Central Arkansas
- Dream job as a kid:** Teacher
- Favorite hobbies:** I love to color, play games and occasionally run
- My biggest mentor/role model in Arkansas:** My grandmother
- Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Larry’s Pizza in Bryant



**DAVID  
PEACOCK**

**PRESIDENT**  
Hytrol

Peacock oversees operations at the Jonesboro-based materials handling systems provider where over 1,300 people are employed. Hytrol has continued to grow its relationship as a vendor to global e-commerce companies and is one of the largest employers in northeast Arkansas.

- .....
- Lives in:** Jonesboro
- Colleges:** The Citadel (B.A.), Webster University (M.A.)
- Dream job as a kid:** Adventurer — and boy have I gotten the chance!
- Favorite place in Arkansas:** I love being inside the four walls of Hytrol. No matter my day, interacting with folks here lifts my spirit without fail.
- To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a vision. It is extremely difficult to coalesce something as large as a state around a single idea but without that vision, we will drift from initiative to initiative being less than we can.



**DENVER  
PEACOCK**

**PRINCIPAL**  
The Peacock Group

Peacock, a 20-plus year industry veteran, provides communications, strategic counsel and event support for several companies, foundations, government entities and nonprofit organizations. Peacock’s past accomplishments include project management for the inauguration festivities of Gov. Mike Beebe, and behind-the-scenes efforts on behalf of the Clinton Presidential Library, the Big Dam Bridge and the arrival of the U.S.S. Razorback.

- .....
- Lives in:** Little Rock
- Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University, University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)
- Recommended reading:** The Vapors by David Hill and The Children by David Halberstam
- Dream job as a kid:** NBA Commissioner
- Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** The Tamale Factory in Woodruff County near where I grew up in McCrory and Bald Knob’s Bulldog Drive-in, where my parents met more than a half century ago
- Words I (try to) live by:** Micah 6:8



**GINA  
RADKE**

**CEO**  
Galley Support Innovations

Radke’s company serves as a manufacturing partner for aerospace industry heavyweights like Boeing, Gulfstream Aerospace and Dassault Falcon Jet. She has recently published her first book, More Than: How to be Bold and Balanced in Life and Business. In 2019, she hosted the 10th annual U.S.-E.U. Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Workshop in Little Rock that brought together 28 different countries and put them face-to-face with local and national SMEs.

- .....
- Lives in:** North Little Rock
- College:** Park University
- Best career advice I ever received:** Learn from everyone else’s mistakes.
- Dream job as a kid:** Federal judge
- Proudest career moment:** Giving my staff an across-the-board 10% raise
- To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** all hands helping lift one another up.



**APRIL  
SEGGEBRUCH**

**CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**  
Movista

Seggebruch left her corporate career in 2010 to pursue her dream of being an entrepreneur. She is the co-founder and CSO at Movista, where she is directly responsible for the strategic growth initiatives. Recently, Seggebruch and the team at Movista closed the acquisition of their largest competitor, spun out a novel product and closed over \$10 million of growth capital.

**Lives in:** Bentonville

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Jobs come and go; find individuals to work for who will invest in you.

**Dream job as a kid:** Sports agent

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurants:** Tusk and Trotter and Trash Creamery in Bentonville

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue focusing on entrepreneurship; both lifestyle and high-growth companies.



**MINDY  
SHERWOOD**

**PRESIDENT, GLOBAL WALMART**  
Procter & Gamble

Sherwood has spent over 30 years with Procter & Gamble and is responsible for all of the company's business with its largest customer, Walmart. Sherwood, who has worked across the globe for Procter & Gamble, is a member of the Northwest Arkansas Council and the Jones Center Development Council boards. She previously served on the Walton Arts Center board.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**College:** Aquinas College



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**SHELLEY SIMPSON**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER  
& PRESIDENT OF HIGHWAY SERVICES**  
J.B. Hunt Transport

Simpson’s 26-year career reflects the company’s continued progression as an innovative leader in transportation and logistics. Simpson is devoted to promoting the advancement of women and diversity. She serves on the board for multiple organizations. This year, she received the Power50 Award by the National Diversity Council.

**Lives in:** Rogers

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading/listening:** Good to Great by Jim Collins

**Best career advice I ever received:** Twenty-six years ago, I started in an hourly role and my dad told me, “Treat this job as if it were your last.” Turned out OK for me!

**Dream job as a kid:** Teacher

**Favorite hobby:** Spin



**JEFF STANDRIDGE**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Innovation Junkie

Standridge helps leaders accelerate the growth of their organizations through leadership, innovation, strategic growth planning and execution. Formerly a senior executive with Acxiom Corp., Standridge has led established and startup companies on five continents. He is a co-founder of Cadron Capital Partners and serves as managing director of Innovation Junkie and the Conductor.

**Lives in:** Conway

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (A.S.), University of Central Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.Ed. and Ed.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Rodeo clown

**Proudest career moment:** Launching the Conductor in 2016, in partnership with University of Central Arkansas and Startup Junkie

**My biggest role models in Arkansas:** My mom and dad. Dad is a man of few, yet wise words. Mom has the work ethic of a U.S. Marine.

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**BARBARA SUGG**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Southwest Power Pool

In January 2020, Sugg was elected president and CEO of Southwest Power Pool where she has worked since 1997. Sugg previously served as SVP of IT and chief security officer. She also participates in numerous community and philanthropic boards. In 2018, she became a certified executive coach and led the foundation of the Leadership Foundation for Women, a nonprofit focused on equipping women for success.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Louisiana at Lafayette (B.S.), Harvard Business School

**Dream job as a kid:** I wanted to be a math teacher. I always loved math and still do!

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Anywhere outside in this beautiful state! From the Arkansas River Delta to the Ozark mountains, this state is an absolute treasure.

**My biggest mentor/role model in Arkansas:** Carl Monroe for his humble leadership style and Nick Brown for his mentoring.



**SHARON TALLACH VOGELPOHL**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
MHP/Team SI

Vogelpohl guided the company to a number of notable accomplishments over the past year, including the launch of UPLIFTarkansas.com, a free resource to connect the community to companies struggling to keep their doors open in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The company has also opened a second office in Rogers with goals to identify and serve new clients in the area.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Centenary College of Louisiana

**Best career advice I ever received:** Do right. Success will follow. This is indelibly embedded in our company values.

**Dream job as a kid:** Be Magic Johnson or Larry Bird. Not their publicist. Them.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Our family farm in Perryville

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Easy. Taziki's. I could eat there every day.



**TED THOMAS**

**CHAIRMAN**  
Arkansas Public Service Commission

Thomas was appointed chairman of the Arkansas Public Service Commission by Gov. Asa Hutchinson in January 2015. He currently serves as president of the Organization of MISO States, which represents the collective interests of state and local utility regulators in the MISO region.

**Lives in:** Conway

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Dream jobs as a kid:** Garbage man, ice cream man, baseball catcher, utility regulator

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Buffalo National River

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Former State Senator and Director of the State Health Department Dr. Fay Boozman



**MINDY WEST**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
AND EVP OF FUELS**  
Murphy USA

West is the current executive vice president of fuels, CFO and treasurer for Murphy Oil USA Inc. Murphy USA, formerly a subsidiary of Murphy Oil Corporation, spun from its parent company in September of 2013. Since then, Murphy USA, is currently ranked 257th on the Fortune 500 list. The team at Murphy USA serves over 1.6 million customers daily and sells roughly three times the national average in per store fuel gallons.

**Lives in:** El Dorado

**College:** University of Arkansas



**CYNTHIA WESTCOTT**

**VP OF REGIONAL OPERATIONS**  
CenterPoint Energy

Westcott is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Arkansas, a member of the Red Cross Board of Greater Arkansas, the Advisory Board of the Arkansas Independent Colleges and Universities and the Junior Achievement of Arkansas State Board. She was inducted into the Arkansas Academy of Industrial Engineers in 2019 and named as one of the Museum of Discovery Spark Stars Class of 2019.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), Arkansas State University (MBA)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Set your own priorities or others will set them for you.

**Dream job as a kid:** Design engineer for an automobile manufacturer

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Yell County

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to reduce taxes, continue to focus on innovation and technology, grow the available trades workforce and be able to supply varying energy sources.



**GENE WHISENHUNT**

**PRESIDENT & COO**  
Hickingbotham Investments

Whisenhunt manages Hickingbotham Investments and its investments in real estate, automobile dealerships, Harley-Davidson dealerships, food service equipment sales and distribution and home furniture and accessory industries. Whisenhunt serves as chairman of the Ouachita President Advisory Board and the Baptist Health Extended Care Hospital Board.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.), Louisiana Tech University (MBA)

**Favorite hobby:** Cycling

**Proudest career moment:** Becoming the CFO of a public company

**Words I live by:** Always do what is right, regardless of the cost.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** continued strong leadership, improved education opportunities and expansion of major industries to create opportunity.

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Frank Hickingbotham



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of mind is your priority—  
providing safe, dependable  
service is ours.*



We continue to provide world-class, safe and dependable service for over 450,000 residents and businesses in central Arkansas. Our exceptional staff and outstanding leadership strive to be here when you need us the most.

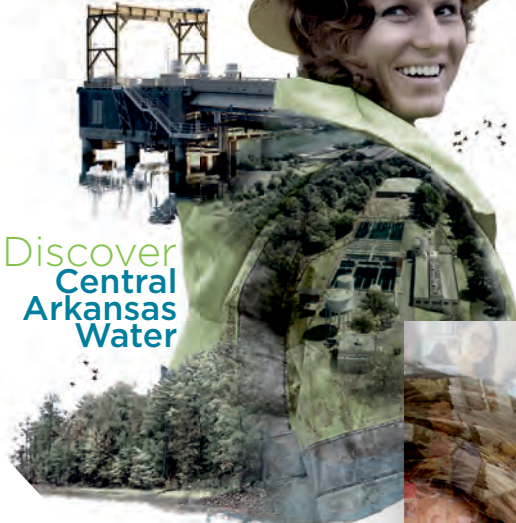
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FUTURE.



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# FORWARD

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We are committed to the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion in the law profession and in our own community. We are proactively engaged in local and national initiatives that support this objective.

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- Sponsor of Lawyers Beyond Siloes (UA Little Rock Bowen School of Law) & Summer Pre-Law Program (UA Law School).
- Educational programs offered to employees to increase awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion on social issues.

*To learn more about FRIDAY FORWARD and other efforts we are focused on in the future, visit [www.FridayFirm.com/Diversity](http://www.FridayFirm.com/Diversity).*

ARKANSAS  
250

LEGAL



**ROBYN  
ALLMENDINGER**

**MANAGING MEMBER**  
Rose Law Firm

Allmendinger, who practices in areas of real estate, corporate and securities, commercial financing and mergers and acquisitions, recently became a managing member at Rose Law Firm. She has been recognized for her work in real estate by Chambers USA and securities and capital markets by Best Lawyers in America.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Recommended reading:** The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Fayetteville in the fall

**Proudest career moment:** Being named first female managing member of Rose Law Firm in its almost 200 year history

**Favorite hobby:** Reading fiction



**MICHELLE  
ATOR**

**PARTNER**  
Friday Eldredge & Clark

Ator heads the Medical Malpractice Group at the Friday law firm in Little Rock, representing doctors, hospitals and other medical care providers in court. She also serves as chancellor for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church and provides legal consultation regarding proposed court rules and legislation affecting the practice of medicine and law in Arkansas.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Colorado (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Recommended reading:** The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg

**Dream job as a kid:** Forest ranger

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Senor Tequila every Friday night with our friends during high school football season

**Proudest career moment:** Receiving a private thank-you note years after a case where an abused child's life was changed for the better



**ADRIENNE  
BAKER**

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**  
Wright Lindsey Jennings

Baker has a commercial litigation practice focused on the finance sector and provides general counsel services. She has worked with Wright Lindsey Jennings management to implement initiatives that led to the firm being named as one of the “Best Places to Work” in Arkansas for the second year in a row. Outside of work, she is a passionate supporter of the American Red Cross Greater Arkansas and is in her eighth year on the board.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** Archaeologist

**Best career advice I ever received:** You won’t look back and wish you’d worked more. Find balance. You’ll be better at your job for it.

**Favorite hobby:** Traveling to far-flung places

**Proudest career moment:** Being asked to serve as COO

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Lodge at Mount Magazine in the fall



**TJUANA  
BYRD**

**ATTORNEY**  
Law Office of Tjuana Byrd

Byrd is a private practice attorney who primarily focuses on juvenile and family law. She serves on the Women’s Foundation of Arkansas board, the Pulaski County Council for Youth Services advisory board and as the assistant city attorney for North Little Rock. Byrd is a lifetime member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the NAACP. She has received numerous awards for service to her community and children’s advocacy.

**Lives in:** Sherwood

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Keep your overhead low.

**Dream job as a kid:** Pediatrician

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Little Rock

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** real systemic policy and legislative changes to create economic, educational, social, ethnic and racial equity for all Arkansans.



**CARA  
BOYD-CONNORS**

**OWNER & PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY**  
Law Office of Boyd Connors

Boyd-Connors was born and bred in Memphis, but she’s planted her feet in Arkansas. Her passion for social justice lies in her work as a criminal defense lawyer, where she attempts to eradicate any racial injustices or disparities she encounters. Boyd-Connors is an active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College, University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Favorite hobby:** Expensive shoes

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Judge Marion Humphrey

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more opportunities for people of color.

**Words I live by:** Success is not given, it is earned.



**J. R.  
CARROLL**

**PARTNER**  
Kutak Rock

Carroll serves as an engagement partner in the Fayetteville office focused on representing companies in all sizes from publicly traded Fortune 500 companies to small privately held companies in products liability and complex commercial litigation. He is a registered NFL contract adviser representing players and coaches in a variety of matters including employment and endorsement contracts.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**College:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A. and J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Surround yourself with successful people, as those individuals will truly be happy for you when you achieve success.

**Words I live by:** If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Horseshoe Canyon Ranch

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Herman’s Ribhouse in Fayetteville



## CASEY CASTLEBERRY

### PARTNER

Murphy, Thompson, Arnold,  
Skinner & Castleberry

Castleberry has proudly practiced law in Arkansas for 17 years. A native of Augusta, Castleberry currently works as a partner at the Murphy Law Firm in Batesville. Professional highlights include successfully litigating cultivation licensure before the Arkansas Supreme Court, arguing class certification before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit and representing an applicant for casino license.

**Lives in:** Batesville

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** My dream was to become a Razorback. I had a slew of aspirations, but that was the one that stayed.

**Proudest career moment:** Being asked to represent the Mitchell Williams firm in a matter. I was honored to represent such a prestigious firm and work with one of my mentors, Skip Henry, who has represented the firm for years.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** While I love any place on the water in Arkansas, my favorite has to be the Pintail Hole at Fowler's Point.



## KANDI CHITMAN HUGHES

### ATTORNEY

Southwest Power Pool

Outside of her day job working in Southwest Power Pool's corporate legal department, Hughes devotes her time to a wide variety of organizations. She is the chairman of the Central Arkansas Water board of commissioners, the secretary of the Tendaji Community Development Corporation's board of directors, president of the Chi Eta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and a board member of the Leadership Foundation for Women.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Duke University (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (J.D.), University of Central Arkansas (MBA), University of Oklahoma College of Law (LL.M.)

**Recommended reading:** Minority Leader: How to Lead from the Outside and Make Real Change by Stacey Abrams

**Favorite hobby:** Riding my Peloton

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Sims Bar-B-Que in Little Rock

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MitchellWilliamsLaw.com



## DAVID COUCH

**ATTORNEY**  
David A. Couch PLLC

Couch is an Arkansas lawyer and public policy advocate. He represents people who have been neglected or abused in nursing homes. Since 2001, he has represented individuals in Arkansas and in more than 20 other states. Over the past several years Couch has authored and worked on numerous ballot measures, including ones to legalize medical marijuana, raise Arkansas' minimum wage, enact campaign finance and ethics reforms and to modernize Arkansas' antiquated "partial prohibition" system.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)



## KEVIN CRASS

**PARTNER**  
Friday Eldredge & Clark

Crass is a member of the firm's management committee and leads its class action and business litigation practice group. He currently serves on the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Trojan Athletic Council, the Foundation Fund Board at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and is chairman of the War Memorial Stadium Commission, among other boards.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)



## KHAYYAM EDDINGS

**PARTNER**  
Friday Eldredge & Clark

Eddings is a member of the firm's management committee and a partner in the Labor and Employment Litigation Practice Group where he counsels employers in all aspects of the labor and employment laws. Eddings also represents school districts throughout the state of Arkansas. He has received recognition, based entirely on peer review, by Best Lawyers in America since 2014.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Morehouse College (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Remember to do good while doing well.

**Favorite hobby:** Collecting jazz and classic R&B albums

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to comport with its nickname, "Land of Opportunity," for each of its citizens.



## PRICE GARDNER

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
Friday Eldredge & Clark

In 2020, Gardner celebrated 31 years with Friday Eldredge & Clark and his second year as managing partner. He currently serves as trustee of the Arkansas State University System and as a board member of The Arkansas Rep as it tries to emerge from COVID-19. Lately, he is most proud of how the firm has adapted to the unprecedented changes in business and working environment since March 1.

.....

**Lives in:** Roland

**Colleges:** Arkansas State University (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.), University of Florida (LL.M.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Find something you love and you will never work a day in your life.

**Favorite hobby:** Duck hunting

**Words I live by:** Mr. Friday would always say, "We will take the high road," which, to me, means doing the right thing.



### ALEX GRAY

MEMBER  
Steel Wright Gray

Gray is an attorney with an emphasis on election law and administrative law focusing on gaming and cannabis. In 2018, he drafted a proposed constitutional amendment to expand casino gaming in Arkansas and successfully managed the historic statewide campaign resulting in the passing of Amendment 100 to the Arkansas Constitution.

Lives in: Little Rock

Colleges: University of Tennessee (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

Best career advice I ever received: Play chess, not checkers.

Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant: Trio's Restaurant in Little Rock

To reach its potential, Arkansas needs greater connectivity to rural areas and lower state income tax.



### JULIE GREATHOUSE

MANAGING PARTNER  
PPGMR Law

Greathouse is a litigation attorney and managing partner of the business-oriented law firm with offices in Little Rock, El Dorado and Stuttgart. She has been recognized among Best Lawyers in America numerous times and was named to the Pulaski Academy board of trustees. This year, Greathouse completed the last jury trial in federal court in the Northern District of California before the pandemic closed down courtrooms across the country.

Lives in: Little Rock

Colleges: Harding University (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

Best career advice I ever received: Don't forget who you are on the way to where you're going!

Favorite hobby: Tennis

My biggest mentors in Arkansas: My sister and so many other amazing female lawyers

ARKANSAS  
250

Mike Rainwater      Bob Sexton

**RAINWATER HOLT & SEXTON** P.A.  
INJURY LAWYERS

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**JUDY HENRY**

**PARTNER**  
Wright Lindsey Jennings

Henry has been practicing law for more than 30 years. Her most recent legal accomplishments include the successful defense of class action cases, the successful defense of a wrongful death claim and the recovery of a \$9.4 million federal court verdict in a health care related business dispute. Henry is a National Football League Players Association certified contract adviser and is the firm’s sports law group leader.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Central Arkansas (B.S.E.), University of Arkansas (M.S.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Elizabeth Stephens Campbell is the epitome of grace, generosity and compassion. She has the best listening ear, and among others, the gift of discernment.



**STEVE LANCASTER**

**MANAGING PARTNER**  
Wright Lindsey Jennings

Lancaster is the managing partner at Wright Lindsey Jennings. Under his leadership, the company has been named as one of the “Best Places to Work” in Arkansas for two consecutive years. Earlier this year, the company was awarded the 2020 Olivia Farrell Gender Equity Leadership Award for ongoing efforts in that area.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A.), University of Texas (MBA and J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Recruit for attitude, train for skill.

**Favorite hobby:** Splitting firewood

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Our off-the-grid cabin on the North Fork of the Saline River

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to truly value and utilize the skills and talents of all its citizens.



**DUSTIN MCDANIEL**

**PARTNER**  
McDaniel Wolff & Benca

McDaniel continues to work for major tech clients on privacy and antitrust issues and has been working to help Cherokee Nation businesses build a resort hotel and casino in Russellville. In 2020, McDaniel completed a law firm merger and moved into a new building near the Arkansas State Capitol.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Police officer

**Proudest career moment:** Arguing and winning a case before the U.S. Supreme Court

**Words I live by:** Work hard, be honest and serve others.



**J. CLIFF MCKINNEY II**

**ATTORNEY**  
Quattlebaum, Grooms & Tull

McKinney, a transactional attorney whose primary practice is real estate law and business and regulatory matters related to real estate, represented Amazon in its recent purchase of land at the Port of Little Rock. He was named the 2020 Little Rock Lawyer of the Year – Land Use and Zoning Law by Best Lawyers.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Baylor University (B.S.), University of Arkansas (M.P.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.), Southern Methodist University (LL.M.)





**THOMAS  
A. MARS**

**ATTORNEY**  
Mars Law Firm

Mars is an accomplished trial lawyer, a nationally recognized advocate in collegiate sports and an experienced crisis consultant for companies, executives and public officials. In the 1990s, Mars' high-profile clients included the Governor of Arkansas. In 1998, the governor asked Mars to join his leadership team as director of the Arkansas State Police. He served in that capacity for nearly three years before returning to private practice as a trial lawyer in northwest Arkansas.

**Lives in:** Rogers

**Colleges:** Arkansas State University (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)



**ANTWAN  
PHILLIPS**

**PARTNER**  
Wright Lindsey Jennings

Phillips' primary practice includes transportation defense, dental malpractice, municipal finance and local governmental relations. He was instrumental in the election campaign of Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. Phillips is active in education and other community initiatives within Little Rock. He was a candidate for the Little Rock City Board of Directors and graduated from the Arkansas Business Executive Leadership Academy.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Bowdoin College, University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand.

**Dream job as a kid:** Sportscaster

**Recommended reading:** Jay-Z: Made in America by Michael Eric Dyson



**MIKE  
RAINWATER**

**PARTNER**  
Rainwater, Holt & Sexton

Rainwater has been representing Arkansas citizens, cities and counties for 40 years. He co-founded Rainwater, Holt & Sexton in 2006 with help of Bob Sexton and the late Stephen Holt. Rainwater counts moving 80% of the staff to a remote status in two weeks as one of the biggest accomplishments over the past year.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Louisiana Tech University, South Texas College of Law (J.D.)

**Recommended reading:** The Color of Compromise by Jemar Tisby

**Dream job as kid:** I wanted to be a soldier.

**Proudest Career Moment:** Favorably settling a case we worked on for 10 years.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Cedar Bluff on Lee Creek at the old Rainwater home place in Crawford County

**Words I live by:** You solve problems (and find opportunities) through dialogue.



**BRIAN  
ROSENTHAL**

**MEMBER**  
Rose Law Firm

Rosenthal handles acquisitions, refinancings, investments and other matters for clients ranging from contract mail carriers to poultry, manufacturing, energy and agriculture companies. Rosenthal served as president of the Arkansas Bar Association from 2019-2020 and worked to establish a Public Service Academy co-presented by the Clinton School of Public Service, which welcomed its inaugural class in 2019-20.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.S.B.A.), University of Missouri (J.D.)

**Recommended listening:** How I Built This podcast with Guy Raz

**Dream job as a kid:** Comedian

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Fayetteville

**Proudest career moment:** Serving as the 122nd president of the Arkansas Bar Association



## BOB SEXTON

**PARTNER**  
Rainwater, Holt & Sexton

Sexton has been practicing law in Arkansas for over 20 years and in 2006, alongside Mike Rainwater and the late Stephen Holt, Sexton founded Rainwater, Holt & Sexton. Today, it is the largest plaintiff's firm in Arkansas with 30 attorneys, a support staff of more than 100 and five offices statewide.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University, University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Best career advice:** Always have a five-year plan.

**Dream job as kid:** Lawyer. In seventh grade I took an aptitude test that said I should be a lawyer or doctor. Even though I had never talked to or even met a lawyer, I began telling people that was my plan. By the time I got to college I had already told so many people I figured I had to back it up!

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** It really depends on the time of year. I love the rivers and streams in the summer, the Buffalo River area in the fall, and the Arkansas Delta in duck season.



## NATE STEEL

**PARTNER**  
Steel Wright Gray

Steel, a sixth-generation attorney, specializes in business litigation and administrative law. His work on the casino gaming amendment paved the way for a casino in Pine Bluff and gaming expansions at Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort. His clients have included Bear State Bank, CenterPoint Energy, Mississippi County and the Medical Marijuana Association.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas (B.A. and J.D.)

**Recommended listening:** Hidden Brain podcast on NPR

**Dream job as a kid:** Pilot

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Lost Forty Brewing in Little Rock

**Words I live by:** Act like you've been there before.



## DERRICK SMITH

**MEMBER**  
Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Gates & Woodyard

Smith is a member of the firm's insurance regulatory and government relations practices. He represents clients in their dealings with state insurance departments throughout the United States and Arkansas governmental entities. Smith is a member of the firm's board of directors, chairs the Little Rock Citizen Review Board and is a trustee for Hendrix College and Pulaski Academy.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Hendrix College campus

**Words I live by:** Our family saying is, "You have to make your own grass green."

**Dream job as a kid:** U.S. Senator

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurants:** As a Lee County native, Jones Bar-B-Q Diner in Marianna and Cypress Corner Bar-B-Q in Lexa are hard to top.



## ROBERT TELLEZ

**FOUNDER & OWNER**  
Tellez Law Firm

Tellez was awarded the LULAC 750, La Esperanza Award and Alumni of the Year for Public Service Award from the Hispanic Law Students Association at the William H. Bowen School of Law. He was also named a Super Lawyers in Criminal Defense. Since March and the pandemic, he is most proud of his law firm family and the way they have managed to be there for each other and their clients.

**Lives in:** North Little Rock

**Colleges:** Duke University (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Favorite hobby:** I enjoy spending time with my wife, Mary, and kids Lucy and Eli. I also enjoy golfing.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Star of India in Little Rock. My friend and former law clerk Deepali's family owns it.

**Dream job as a kid:** As a kid, I knew I wanted to go to professional school. I'm glad the law found me.



**JEFF THOMAS**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Gates & Woodyard

Thomas serves as managing director at Mitchell Williams. His practice focuses on insurance regulatory law where he leads and manages complex regulatory and compliance issues for Fortune 100 companies nationally. His regulatory relationships and breadth of experience across lines of insurance make him an effective advocate and trusted adviser on business and public policy issues.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Count Porkula in Little Rock

**Words I live by:** Be impeccable with your word. Don't make assumptions. Always do your best.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** My favorite place used to be Razorback Stadium and I remain hopeful it will be again.



**PERRY WILSON**

**MANAGING MEMBER**  
Barber Law Firm

Wilson concentrates his practice on corporate and business law, mergers and acquisitions and construction law, and he serves as general counsel for several Arkansas companies. Barber is the state's fifth-largest law firm. Wilson is chairman of the Lyon College board of trustees, and he is on the boards of the Dorothy Snider Foundation, Economics Arkansas and the Economics Arkansas Foundation.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Southern Methodist University (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Recommended reading:** The Secret of Teams by Mark Miller

**Favorite hobby:** Bow hunting

**Words I live by:** "That's the way we've always done it" is never the right answer to anything!

**Proudest career moment:** Every time I have the honor of being involved in something that changes someone else's life for the better



**WLJ** By the Numbers

- 120 years of history
- 69 attorneys in Arkansas
- 60 practice areas and industry groups
- 36 *Best Lawyers in America*®
- 9 Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch
- 4 in the Arkansas 250
- 2020 Olivia Farrell Gender Equity Leadership Award Winner
- Best Places to Work in Arkansas Honoree

*Innovation for the Future*

- 2020: Established partnerships with the Social Justice Institute and ReMix Ideas to promote equity and equality
- 2019: Launched Woman-Run, an initiative supporting women and minority business owners and leaders
- 2018: Established WLJ Tech Law and opened an office in the Little Rock Tech Park
- 2018: Introduced WLJ e-Discovery Solutions to help clients manage electronically-stored information

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**WRIGHT LINDSEY JENNINGS**

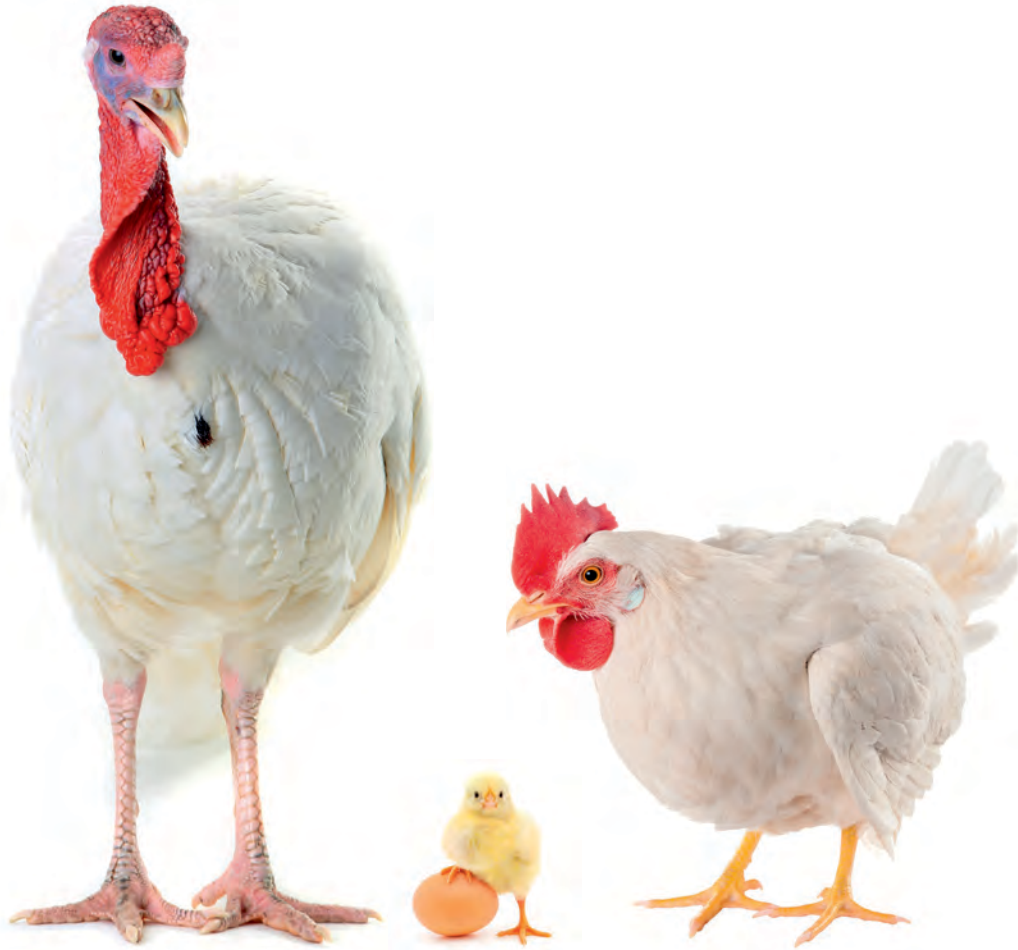
Rogers Little Rock wlj.com



# POULTRY IS THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN ARKANSAS.

Poultry is the largest agricultural product produced in Arkansas in terms of cash receipts, providing over 50% of the state's total agricultural cash receipts.

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## ARKANSAS STATISTICS

**3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in the value of broiler production.**

In Arkansas 1.10 billion broilers were raised with a production value of \$3.61 billion.

**3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for turkey production.**

In 2019 Arkansas raised 30 million turkeys. That is equal to 10 turkeys per person in Arkansas.

**5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for egg production value.**

In Arkansas, 3.6 billion eggs were produced in 2019 with a production value of \$504 million.

**Over 6,500 farms in Arkansas produce poultry.**

Benton County is the number one poultry producing county in the state.

ARKANSAS  
250

POULTRY &  
AGRICULTURE



**STEVEN  
ANTHONY**

**PRESIDENT**  
Anthony Timberlands

Anthony heads one of the state's largest privately owned companies and serves on the board of directors at Bank of Bearden and the executive committee of the Arkansas Forestry Association. Anthony is a past chairman of the Arkansas Forestry Commission and the Southern Forest Products Association.



**Lives in:** Fordyce

**Colleges:** Washington & Lee University (B.S.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Favorite hobbies:** Golfing, traveling and reading

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Alotian Club

**Words I live by:** Make Joe Hurst proud.

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Sushi Cafe in Little Rock



**RON  
CAMERON**

**OWNER**  
Mountaire Farms

Cameron has been at the helm of the Mountaire, one of the nation's 10 largest poultry producers, since 1978. He is largely known, however, for his willingness to invest in politics. Cameron donated approximately \$10 million in the 2016 presidential election. Mountaire donated an estimated \$7.5 million to candidates and political action committees during the 2018 election cycle.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas



**MARVIN CHILDERS**

**PRESIDENT**  
The Poultry Federation

Childers is president of The Poultry Federation, a trade organization representing the poultry industry in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri. He has served in this capacity since January 2007. Prior to that, Childers served as an Arkansas State Representative from 2001 through 2006 and has practiced law with Friday Eldredge & Clark since 2000. Before he joined the firm, he served as a deputy prosecuting attorney.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Mississippi (Bachelor of Accountancy and J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Be the first one to work and the last to leave.

**Dream job as a kid:** Farmer

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** West Little Rock

**Proudest career moment:** Serving in the Arkansas House of Representatives



**MARK COCHRAN**

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR AGRICULTURE**  
University of Arkansas  
System Division of Agriculture

Cochran is responsible for leading the university's coordinated agriculture program including the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agriculture Experiment Station. This year, the Division of Agriculture has rapidly revamped their extension education programs to improve health and wellbeing and maintain agriculture as an essential industry. Cochran and his team have expanded the commercialization of IP, grew 4-H programs and modernized critical infrastructure for research.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** New Mexico State University (B.S.), Michigan State University (M.S. and Ph.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Do something that you enjoy where you can make a contribution to improve your world and stay true to your principles.

**Dream job as a kid:** Forest ranger

**Proudest career moment:** Probably seeing so many of my students finish degrees and graduate



**MISTY DRENNAN**

**OWNER**  
BOLD Cultivation/Suite 443

A Rose Bud native, Drennan graduated with a degree in dietetics from the University of Central Arkansas before diving into a career that has included HR, real estate and construction. In 2017, Drennan and her partners applied and were awarded a medical marijuana license to cultivate in Cotton Plant. In 2019, Drennan and her husband purchased the first medical marijuana dispensary to open in Arkansas.

**Lives in:** El Paso

**College:** University of Central Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Know what you don't know. It's OK to say that you don't have an answer. Don't pretend to be an expert if you're not.

**Favorite hobbies:** Being outdoors, hiking, traveling and spending time with our new grandbaby, Beckett.

**My biggest role model in Arkansas:** My mom. She's the most kind hearted, hardest working woman I know. She keeps me grounded.



**GEORGE DUNKLIN JR.**

**OWNER & FOUNDER**  
Five Oaks Duck Lodge

Dunklin, owner of one of the state's most legendary hunting and conservation operations, has been inducted into the Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame and Arkansas Waterfowler Hall of Fame thanks to his commitment to conservation. Dunklin currently serves as chair of the Arkansas Policy Foundation and was part of Gov. Asa Hutchinson's Transformation Advisory Board.

**Lives in:** Arkansas County

**College:** University of Memphis



**ED  
FRYAR**

**CEO & CO-FOUNDER**  
Ozark Mountain Poultry

Fryar is the founder of Ozark Mountain Poultry, which was acquired by George’s Inc. of Springdale in 2019. He started OMP in 2000, after working for 13 years as a professor of agricultural economics at the University of Arkansas. The business, which provides antibiotic- free and non-GMO chicken products, has grown to more than 1,800 employees, processing more than 1.2 million chickens per week and more than \$280 million in annual sales. Fryar was inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2019.

**Lives in:** Rogers  
**College:** University of Arkansas



**GARY  
GEORGE**

**CHAIRMAN**  
George’s Inc.

George is chairman of the family business, one of the nation’s largest poultry producers. George and his wife, Robin, are longtime advocates and supporters of Arkansas Children’s and their family donated the 37 acres of land on which Arkansas Children’s Northwest was built. George’s purchased Ozark Mountain Poultry of Rogers in 2019.

**Lives in:** Springdale  
**College:** University of Arkansas  
**Dream job as a kid:** Join my father in the family business  
**Favorite hobby:** Snow skiing with my grandchildren  
**Proudest career moment:** When my sons, Carl and Charles, were announced as co-CEO/president of our fourth generation family business  
**Biggest mentor/role model in Arkansas:** Gene George, my father, who is now deceased

**Our business is helping  
you do better business.**

**Providing research-based, non-biased information:**

- Community & Economic Development
- Strategic Planning & Leadership Training
- Entrepreneurship & Government Contracting
- Voter Education, Government & Policy

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**KEITH GLOVER**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Producers Rice Mill

Glover has spent 30-plus years overseeing the farmer-owned cooperative with approximately 2,200 members. Producers is one of the world’s largest rice milling organizations with milling facilities located in Stuttgart and in Greenville, Mississippi, plus 10 satellite drying and storing facilities throughout Arkansas and Mississippi. He serves on the USA Rice Federation board.



**Lives in:** Carlisle  
**College:** Arkansas State University



**R. TRENT GOINS**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
OK Foods

Goins has worked to extend the OK Foods footprint from Arkansas and Oklahoma into Georgia and Alabama. He is co-founder of the Peacemaker Music Festival in Fort Smith and has been instrumental in quality of life improvements there. He serves on the executive committee for the National Chicken Council.



**Lives in:** Fort Smith  
**College:** University of Arkansas



**ANDREW GROBMYER**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**  
Agricultural Council of Arkansas

Grobmyer represents the interests of member businesses and farms on state and federal policy matters affecting the row crop agriculture industry of the state. He has been an advocate for Arkansas’ top industry for more than 15 years, first as a legislative assistant to then Sen. Mark Pryor in Washington, D.C. Grobmyer also serves on the boards of the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame and Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance.



**Lives in:** Little Rock  
**College:** Southern Methodist University  
**Recommended reading:** Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari  
**Best career advice I ever received:** Hard work will be rewarded.  
**Dream job as a kid:** Pro golfer  
**Proudest career moment:** Moving back home to Arkansas  
**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Raduno Brick Oven & Barroom in Little Rock



**STANLEY HILL**

**VICE PRESIDENT,  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**  
Arkansas Farm Bureau

Hill oversees the lobbying functions of the state’s largest agricultural advocacy organization and its approximately 90,000 members. Hill, whose family has owned Hot Springs County farm for four generations, is a member of the Arkansas Good Roads Council and serves on the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Foundation board.



**Lives in:** Little Rock  
**College:** University of Arkansas





**RICH HILLMAN**

**PRESIDENT**  
Arkansas Farm Bureau

A sixth-generation farmer, Hillman raises rice, soybeans and wheat in Lonoke County. He is vice chairman of the Riceland Foods board of directors and a past chairman of the Arkansas Foundation for Agriculture. Hillman is serving his first term as president of the Arkansas Farm Bureau as the 11th person to serve as president in the 85-year history of the organization.

**Lives in:** Carlisle

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Words I live by:** Remember who you are. My parents always taught me to remember those words. That phrase simply means, to me, always remember to do things the right way.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** It has to be sundown on the Grand Prairie. Going home after working all day on the farm, rolling down the window and just taking in the sunset is a magic moment. That is really kind of simple, but it is so special to me.

**Recommended reading:** I try to read my Bible app every night. The last (best) books I've read were Traveler's Gift by Andy Andrews and Beautiful Outlaw by John Eldredge.



**MATT HYNEMAN**

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Hyneman & Associates

Hyneman is the vice president of Hyneman & Associates, a family farming company in northeast Arkansas. He is currently serving as president of the Agricultural Council of Arkansas and is a member of the Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Committee. He also serves on the Jonesboro Municipal Airport Commission and is a licensed pilot.

**Lives in:** Jonesboro

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** For a deal to be a good deal, it has to be good for everybody involved.

**Dream job as a kid:** I always wanted to be a veterinarian and take care of animals as a kid.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Arkansas Delta during harvest time and hunting season

**Words I live by:** Life is a puff of smoke. Enjoy it while you can and take nothing for granted.



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food for families & pets we love

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**JENNIFER JAMES**

**OWNER**  
H&J Land Co.

James was elected to the Riceland Foods board of directors in 2019, the first woman to hold that position. The fourth-generation farmer operates a 6,000-acre soybean, rice and corn operation, plus an affiliated grain warehouse and container-loading facility. She was recognized as a USA Rice Farmer of the Year and as an honoree during the World Woman Hour by the World Woman Foundation.

**Lives in:** Newport

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading:** Anything by Brene Brown

**Dream job as a kid:** U.S. Senator

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Smokin Joes BBQ in McCrory

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to embrace its diverse agricultural industry and promote it throughout the U.S. and around the world.



**JOHN KING III**

**OWNER**  
King Farms

King is a lifelong conservationist who works on his family farm. King Farms use minimum and no till whenever possible. They also flood the farmland in the winter for waterfowl. To stay in business, King and his team have raised yields almost every year for the last 5 years. He is a board member on the Arkansas Rice Council, USA Rice Council, the Helena Health Foundation and the Helena Airport Commission

**Lives in:** Helena

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Best career advice I ever received:** Work harder than you think you need to.

**Favorite hobby:** Windsurfing

**My biggest mentor/role model in Arkansas:** My Dad

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** The Tavern in Helena

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** hard-working people and great leadership.



**MAGALY LICOLLI**

**CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR**  
Venceremos

Licolli co-founded Venceremos, a worker-based organization centered on ensuring the human rights of poultry workers, in 2019. She has collaborated with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to expand the worker-driven social responsibility model to the poultry industry and has participated as steering council member of HEAL Food Alliance and co-chair at the National Steering Council of Interfaith Worker Justice.

**Lives in:** Springdale

**College:** University of Arkansas at Fayetteville

**Best career advice I ever received:** Follow your heart regardless of what others tell you to do.

**Dream job as a kid:** Archaeologist

**Favorite hobby:** Swimming

**Proudest career moment:** When we officially launched Venceremos as the only grassroots organization in Arkansas to ensure human rights for poultry workers.



**CARTER MALLOY**

**FOUNDER & CEO**  
AcreTrader

Malloy founded AcreTrader in 2018 to increase transparency and liquidity in farmland investing and has been a part of its rapid growth since the beginning. Before AcreTrader, he was part of an equity investment fund for five years and was previously a managing director with Stephens Inc.

**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Our family farm in Humphrey

**Dream job as a kid:** Surgeon

**Favorite hobby:** Producing music

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more technical education and career training.



**BEN NOBLE**

**EVP & COO**  
Riceland Foods

Noble serves as executive vice president and chief operating officer for Riceland Foods. Riceland and its family farmers have provided the world with wholesome, nutritious rice since 1921. Grown in the United States, Riceland’s rice is known for its high quality and versatility, which is why Riceland has become a trusted brand around the globe.



**Lives in:** Stuttgart  
**College:** University of Arkansas



**DENNIS OAKLEY**

**PRESIDENT**  
Bruce Oakley Inc.

Oakley heads the commodity trading, distribution and transportation company his father founded with one truck in 1968. Today, the company generates \$930 million in revenue annually, with operations that include the largest private port on the Arkansas River, Johnston’s Port 33 near Tulsa, and a trucking operation reaching from Canada to Mexico.



**Lives in:** North Little Rock



**ROBERT (BOB) SCOTT**

**SENIOR ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT  
EXTENSION & DIRECTOR  
OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**  
University of Arkansas  
Systems Division of Agriculture

After graduation, Scott worked in the agriculture industry until 2002, when he accepted the job as extension weed specialist and was named director of the Lonoke and Newport Extension Centers in 2013. He served in those roles until 2018, when he was hired as director of the Rice Research and Extension Center and he currently serves as director of the Cooperative Extension Service.



**Lives in:** Cabot  
**Colleges:** Oklahoma State University (B.S. and M.S.), Mississippi State University (Ph.D.)  
**Best career advice I ever received:** Go ahead and get your Ph.D., you will never regret it.  
**Favorite hobby:** I have been a lifelong avid lover of all things outdoors, from yard work to hunting and fishing.  
**Proudest career moment:** Hosting and speaking to over 800 growers/consultants from 12 states at the first “Pigposium”  
**Words I live by:** It’s not about the destination, it’s the journey.



**TODD SIMMONS**

**CEO & VICE CHAIRMAN**  
Simmons Foods & Affiliates

Simmons has guided the company to accomplishments that include the recent completion of a \$60 million pet food facility and a facility that will add an additional 1,500 jobs to Arkansas. Simmons Foods eclipsed \$1 million in total scholarship support for children of employees. Simmons is a major contributor to TheatreSquared in Fayetteville.



**Lives in:** Fayetteville  
**College:** Georgetown University



**WENDELL STRATTON**

**CEO**  
Stratton Seed Company

Since 1981, Stratton has overseen day-to-day operations at the company his father co-founded in 1948. Stratton Seed Company deals wheat, soybean and rice in Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri and Louisiana. The company continues to adapt to changes in agriculture and has a number of new soybean genetics coming that look promising.



- Lives in:** Stuttgart
- College:** Arkansas State University
- Favorite hobby:** Fishing in Florida and Maine with friends
- My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** My father, Leland Stratton
- Words I live by:** Always do the right thing.
- Proudest career moment:** Working with a new generation of leaders in our company



**JOHN H. TYSON**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**  
Tyson Foods

Tyson, grandson of the company’s founder, has been with Tyson Foods his entire working career. He had a hand in the company’s growth and today Tyson has more than \$40 billion in annual sales. Tyson brands include Jimmy Dean, Hillshire Farm, Sara Lee, Ball Park, Wright, Aidells and State Fair.



- Lives in:** Springdale
- College:** Southern Methodist University



**JOHN R. TYSON**

**CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**  
Tyson Foods

Tyson represents a fourth generation involved in the family business and joined the company as in 2019. His duties include implementing the company’s sustainability strategy as well as managing the sustainability, animal welfare, environmental and social responsibility teams. Previously he worked in investment banking for J.P. Morgan and as a private equity and venture capital investor.



- Lives in:** Springdale
- Colleges:** Harvard University, Stanford University (MBA)



**WES WARD**

**ARKANSAS SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE**  
Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Ward, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, was appointed to his post by Gov. Asa Hutchinson in 2015. He is currently serving as the president of the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture. The former field coordinator for Rep. Rick Crawford has also been an adjunct law professor in Fayetteville.



- Lives in:** Little Rock
- Colleges:** Arkansas State University (B.S.), University of Arkansas (M.S., J.D. and LL.M.)
- Best career advice I ever received:** Bloom where you are planted.
- My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Butch Calhoun, predecessor and former Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture
- To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue supporting our state’s agriculture industry which is made up of the best farmers and ranchers in the world who provide the food, fiber and shelter that we depend on every day.

ARKANSAS  
250

QUALITY  
OF LIFE



**CORY  
ANDERSON**

**CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER**  
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

As the chief innovation officer at Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Anderson is charged with supporting the development, testing and scaling of future-focused solutions to the state's most intractable problems. He helps lead WRF's relentless pursuit of economic, educational, social, ethnic and racial equity for all Arkansans. Most recently, he served for nine months as the interim executive director of ForwARd Arkansas.

.....  
**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Kansas

**Dream job as a kid:** International businessman

**Words I live by:** Don't just talk about it. Be about it.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to commit to all Arkansans earning a living wage, living in a thriving community and being able to build generational wealth. We should build new systems that produce equitable outcomes for all.



**STEVE  
ARRISON**

**CEO**  
Visit Hot Springs

Since 1998, Arrison has been the CEO of Visit Hot Springs. Prior to that, he was the executive director at the Pine Bluff Convention and Visitors Bureau. In the past 12 months, Visit Hot Springs has broken ground on Majestic Park, a new baseball complex on the site of one of the original Major League Baseball spring training sites. Arrison and his team have also continued to improve the Northwoods Trail System by opening a new trailhead that connects the system to downtown Hot Springs.

.....  
**Lives in:** Hot Springs

**Colleges:** University of Tulsa, New Mexico State University, Oral Roberts University

**Recommended reading:** The Vapors by David Hill

**Favorite hobby:** Cruising Lake Hamilton

**Proudest career moment:** The two expansions of the Hot Springs Convention Center

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to work together as a state from corner to corner.



## LIEVEN BERTELS

**DIRECTOR**  
The Momentary

Bertels is the director of The Momentary, the contemporary arts satellite to Crystal Bridges Museum that opened successfully in February 2020. Prior to moving to Arkansas, Bertels was the festival director for Sydney Festival in Australia, and the artistic coordinator at the Holland Festival. In 2013, he was made Knight in the Belgian Order of the Crown.

**Lives in:** Bentonville

**Colleges:** University of Leuven (B.A. and M.A.), University of Durham (M.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Farmer

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Alice Walton

**Words I live by:** In the arts it is not about the institutions, but about the connection between artists and audiences.



## TIM CAMPBELL

**SECOND YEAR STUDENT**  
University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service

During this year of racial unrest spurred by the killing of George Floyd, activists in Arkansas have rallied together advocating for police reform and a better future for people of every color. In response, Campbell led a series of peaceful protests at the State Capitol, which led to an appointment by Gov. Asa Hutchinson to be on the taskforce to advance the state law in Arkansas. After graduation from the Clinton School of Public Service, he plans to continue working in community politics.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas - Pine Bluff (B.S.), Clinton School of Public Service

**Dream job as a kid:** NFL

**Proudest career moment:** Completing a two-year Peace Corps service

**Words I live by:** I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to allow the citizens to allow our youth access to spaces that inspire pursuits of equitable justice and social responsibility.



## CLINT GASTON

**PRESIDENT/OWNER**  
Gaston's White River Resort

Born and raised in the Ozarks, Gaston grew up in the hospitality industry working for his grandfather Jim Gaston at the family business from a young age. As the years went on, he absorbed many roles within the company, which has led him to become the president and owner. Today, Gaston's is an international tourist draw with 79 cottages sitting on 400 acres of scenic White River property.

**Lives in:** Lakeview

**College:** Short time at Arkansas State University - Mountain Home. Life's experiences have taught me more than any school ever could.

**Dream job as a kid:** Professional wakeboarder

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Whispering Woods is a favorite whenever I'm not eating at Gaston's.

**Words I live by:** Do the right thing even when no one is looking. It's called integrity.

**Proudest career moment:** Keeping the family business going. I'm the fourth generation and with the birth of my son, we are now a fifth-generation business.



## AMBER HATCHETT BREWER

**BRANDING & MARKETING DIRECTOR**  
Yellow Rocket Concepts

Brewer manages the creative direction and marketing of Yellow Rocket Concepts' nine restaurants and the state's largest brewery. Before joining YRC, she was an art director for Arkansas Business Publishing Group, CJRW, SHOWCreativity and HatchWorkStudio. A recipient of many American Advertising Awards, she was most recently awarded a PRISM for "PR on a Shoestring Budget" and was recently featured in New Brewer magazine. Brewer also serves on the Arkansas Cinema Society board.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Savannah College of Art and Design

**Best career advice I ever received:** People don't get promoted for doing their jobs really well. They get promoted by demonstrating their potential to do more.

**Favorite hobbies:** Working out with friends, reading, raising orchids and combing through antique stores and junk yards

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Eden Isle at Greers Ferry anytime of year and The Momentary

**Dream job as a kid:** Set designer for Broadway or product designer



**SANDRA KEISER EDWARDS**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR**  
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Edwards has served as deputy director for Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art since 2007, playing a vital role in the conception, planning, building and opening of the museum. This year, highlights include the opening a new contemporary art space, The Momentary, welcoming the 5 millionth visitor, closing and safely reopening and actively responding to the COVID-19 crisis with robust online education, a social connecting campaign, meal distributions and more.

.....

**Lives in:** Bentonville

**Colleges:** Lenoir Rhyne College (B.A.), Western Illinois University (M.S. and Honorary Doctorate)

**Proudest career moment:** I recall every detail of opening day on Nov. 11, 2011, as our communities enthusiastically gathered to experience Crystal Bridges.

**Best career advice I ever received:** Over the course of 50 years, the best advice has always included the importance of listening, dreaming and trusting intuition.



**GRETCHEN HALL**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau

Hall was recently named board chair-elect for Destinations International, the world's largest resource for official destination organizations. Because tourism has been hard hit by the COVID-19, Hall's time in 2020 has been spent mitigating revenue losses, advocating for the tourism industry and planning recovery efforts to position Little Rock for post-pandemic success.

.....

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Lyon College (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (MBA)

**Dream job as a kid:** Architect or luxury travel planner

**Proudest career moment:** Working on the team to oversee the Robinson Center renovation and expansion and delivering the project on-time and within budget.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Little Rock, of course! I love our trails, sculpture garden, performing arts options, the view atop Pinnacle Mountain, our amazing culinary scene and our many attractions and cultural institutions.



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**GABE HOLMSTROM**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Downtown Little Rock Partnership

In the five years he has served as the executive director, Holmstrom has added several new Downtown Little Rock Partnership revenue-producing events including the Barkus on Main Mardi Gras Dog Parade, Downtown Alley Parties, East Village Jam music festival, Between the Rocks river party, '80s Mall Mash-Up Party and the Bright The Night holiday tree lighting. In 2019, he successfully spearheaded three large-scale public art projects downtown.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**Best career advice I ever received:** A good excuse is worth nothing.

**Proudest career moment:** Being part of the team that passed the Private Option in 2013

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Marion Berry

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to stop the regional turf battles, both locally and regionally.



**STACY HURST**

**SECRETARY**  
Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism

Hurst was elected to the Little Rock Board of Directors from 2003-2014. In 2015, she was appointed by Gov. Asa Hutchinson as director of the Department of Arkansas Heritage and as secretary of the Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism in 2019. She also serves on the Buffalo River Conservation Committee, the Governor's Economic Recovery Task Force and chairs the Tourism, Healthcare & Community subcommittee.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Recommended reading:** Where the Crawdads Sing is beautifully written.

**Dream job as a kid:** Lifeguard

**Best career advice I ever received:** "Handle a piece of paper once," from my first boss, Larry Woodard at Children's Hospital. It helps me be productive.

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** The Buffalo National River



**HEATHER LARKIN**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
Arkansas Community Foundation

After joining the foundation in 1998, Larkin has guided Arkansas Community from \$19 million in assets to \$450 million and annual grantmaking from \$1.5 million to \$40 million. Under her leadership, when the COVID-19 pandemic descended on Arkansas, the foundation was issuing charitable grants within six days. Over the course of two months, the foundation raised and deployed \$3.5 million across the state.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Veterinarian

**Proudest career moment:** In one week, working with a donor who saved for three years to make a \$10,000 gift, and then working with a donor who wrote a \$1 million check in a few minutes. I get to be a part of that generosity.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** a common belief that, as wonderful as our state is, we can do better and we should do better.



**MARTA LOYD**

**CEO**  
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

The Winthrop Rockefeller Institute brings people of diverse viewpoints together around complex issues. As CEO, Loyd and her team guide them through a customized, collaborative process to move them closer to the solutions they seek. Recently, the institute has helped partners launch the Rural Health Association of Arkansas, form a university research collaborative, convene a Rural Workforce Development Summit and provide student civility training.

**Lives in:** Morrilton

**Colleges:** University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (B.S.), University of Arkansas (M.Ed.), University of Missouri

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Shangrila Resort. I love Mrs. Carr's homemade coconut cream pie.

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Joel Stubblefield, former chancellor of University of Arkansas - Fort Smith

**Favorite hobby:** Photography





**MIKE MALONE**

**VP, CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**  
Runway Group

Malone heads regional quality of life efforts for Tom and Steuart Walton, grandsons of Walmart founder Sam Walton. Prior to joining the team at Runway Group in 2016, Malone worked at the White House as the deputy assistant to the president for management & administration from 1994-2000 and as the president and CEO of Northwest Arkansas Council for a decade. Malone has spent the bulk of 2020 focused on many COVID-19 related response and recovery initiatives.



**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Minnesota (M.P.P.)

**Favorite hobby:** Pinball tournaments

**Proudest career moment:** One of my proudest moments was when I had the opportunity to keynote a naturalization ceremony for new Americans

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** The Preacher's Son in Bentonville



**MIKE MASTERSON**

**INDEPENDENT COLUMNIST AND CORRESPONDENT**  
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Masterston is the editor of three Arkansas dailies and reports for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Sun-Times and The Arizona Republic. Throughout his journalism career, he has received more than two dozen national awards for reporting and writing since 1971, including twice being a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in National and Specialized Reporting.



**Lives in:** Harrison

**College:** University of Central Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** To write for a living

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Wading Crooked Creek with a spinning rod

**Words I live by:** Evil flourishes in direct correlation to the extent truth is violated.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** education, honesty and honor.

CEO Heather Larkin and the team at Arkansas Community Foundation are leading a powerful network of charitable giving, financial tools and partnerships with the shared purpose of making communities stronger. Since March, the Foundation mobilized over \$3.3 million in grants to more than 800 Arkansas nonprofits for pandemic relief.

This is why the Community Foundation exists — to engage people, connect resources and inspire solutions to build Arkansas communities.

The work continues. With a statewide affiliate network building local solutions and smart giving options, the Foundation is here to help. Learn more at [arcf.org](http://arcf.org).



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**MONTINE  
MCNULTY**

**CEO**  
Arkansas Hospitality Association

McNulty is an emeritus member of the Arkansas Parks, Heritage & Tourism Commission. She has been active in both state and national organizations. During the last six months, McNulty has been an appointed member of the Governor’s Economic Recovery Task Force working to communicate health directives and build support for Arkansas businesses and especially the hardest hit hospitality industry.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** University of Arkansas

**Dream job as a kid:** The one dream job I had was to be a Radio City Rockette.

**Favorite hobbies:** Growing beautiful flowers and plants and collecting art by our talented Arkansas artists

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Our condo on Lake Hamilton

**My biggest mentor in Arkansas:** Pat Lile, a neighbor and dear friend, got me involved in everything from volunteering to politics.



**KAREN  
MINKEL**

**HOME REGION PROGRAM DIRECTOR**  
Walton Family Foundation

Minkel is responsible for work with grantees focused on quality of life initiatives in northwest Arkansas and the Delta region of Arkansas and Mississippi. Recently, the Home Region program helped launch The Momentary, a contemporary visual and performing arts space, and supported families, nonprofit organizations and small businesses affected by COVID-19.



**Lives in:** Fayetteville

**Colleges:** Northwestern University (B.S.), University of California at Berkeley (M.P.P.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Pilot

**Proudest career moment:** Working with my team at the Walton Family Foundation to provide \$7.6 million to nonprofit organizations in northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas Mississippi Delta for COVID-19 relief

**My biggest role models in Arkansas:** My parents



**MARQUITA  
LITTLE NUMAN**

**LEADERSHIP OFFICER**  
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Numan has spent her career tackling social issues. Her passion for public policy systems change recently led her to the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. She also owns a consulting firm that builds nonprofit capacity and shapes equitable community solutions. Numan previously served as CEO of the Urban League of Arkansas leading the revitalization of this historic civil rights organization.



**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Hendrix College (B.A.), University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service (M.P.S.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Art teacher

**Proudest career moment:** Spending a summer working with students on the campus of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy in South Africa. I was stretched in many ways and learned so much about being a good global citizen.

**Words I live by:** Develop enough courage so that you can stand up for yourself and then stand up for somebody else.



**TALICIA  
RICHARDSON**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
64.6 Downtown

Richardson, a Fort Smith School Board member and former development officer for the Fort Smith Housing Authority, was named the new executive director of 64.6 Downtown in 2018. 64.6 Downtown is a nonprofit organization founded in 2015 by Fort Smith entrepreneur Steve Clark with the purpose of creating vibrant spaces in downtown Fort Smith to further economic development. The nonprofit is responsible for Garrison Commons, the award-winning short documentary I Am We and the award-winning arts festival, The Unexpected.



**LIVES IN:** Harrison

**COLLEGES:** University of New Mexico, University of Central Arkansas



**RHONDA SANDERS**

**CEO**  
Arkansas Foodbank

As CEO of the Arkansas Foodbank, Sanders led AFB to record distribution numbers in 2019 and has managed a 40% increase during the COVID-19 response of 2020. AFB adjusted its distribution model within weeks of the pandemic starting to reach thousands of additional people in need. Sanders is highly engaged in her community and is unopposed to become a city council member in Bryant on January 1, 2021.

**Lives in:** Bryant

**Colleges:** Ouachita Baptist University (B.A.), University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (M.P.A.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Flight attendant

**Proudest career moment:** The past five months seeing staff and partners of the Arkansas Foodbank rise to the occasion and meet the needs of many people in Arkansas

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Fidel & Co. in Little Rock



**NATHAN SMITH**

**STATE BROADBAND MANAGER/RESEARCH DIRECTOR**  
Arkansas Department of Commerce

Smith's career began at the World Bank, where he helped study and improve school finance in poor countries. Next, he worked at the Cato Institute where he learned libertarian theory. Smith went on to publish his take on the theory in his 2010 book, Principles of a Free Society. After teaching college economics for four years, he moved to state government and most recently led the governor's broadband initiative, Arkansas Rural Connect.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** University of Notre Dame, Harvard University (M.P.A.) George Mason University (Ph.D.)

**Dream job as a kid:** Fantasy fiction writer

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Asia Buffet in Little Rock

**Favorite place in Arkansas:** Lake Norrell in Benton

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**WAYNE SMITH**

**GENERAL MANAGER**  
Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort

Smith, who took over in 2016, oversees all operations and strategic decisions at Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort, including the massive expansion project that will include a hotel, spa, fitness center, event center and more. Smith is active with multiple community and charitable organizations including Fifty for the Future, the Hot Springs and Arkansas Chambers of Commerce and the Hot Springs Advertising and Promotion Commission.

**Lives in:** Hot Springs

**College:** Northeastern University

**Favorite hobby:** Golf

**Dream job as a kid:** Firefighter like my dad

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurant:** Deluca's Pizzeria in Hot Springs

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** to continue to focus its efforts on tourism and economic development.



**STEUART WALTON**

**CO-FOUNDER**  
Runway Group

Walton is the co-founder of Runway Group, a holding company that invests in real estate, hospitality and other businesses in Northwest Arkansas. He is the founder and chairman of Game Composites, a company that designs and builds small composite aircraft. He serves on the board of directors of Walmart, Flipkart, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

**Lives in:** Bentonville

**Colleges:** University of Colorado, Georgetown University Law Center



**TOM WALTON**

**MANAGING PRINCIPAL**  
RopeSwing

Walton is the managing principal of RopeSwing, a Bentonville-based hospitality company dedicated to creating unique culinary, entertainment and cultural events. Walton has been involved in notable projects in Bentonville such as the 21c Museum Hotel, responding to the demand for downtown hospitality driven by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and business travel. He also worked on the collaboration with NorthWest Arkansas Community College to provide world-class culinary arts training in the area.

**Lives in:** Bentonville

**College:** Northern Arizona University



**JIMMY WARREN**

**COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**  
Pulaski County Government  
Department of Youth Services

Warren serves as the communications coordinator for Pulaski County Government. He is also the committee chair for training and positive race/community relations on Gov. Asa Hutchinson's Law Advancement Task Force. He was recently awarded the Conway Chamber's Young Minority Professional of the Year and created ArkanTalk, a digital talk show in partnership with the Arkansas Times that showcases interviews with movers and shakers around the area.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**College:** Arkansas Tech University

**Dream job as a kid:** As a kid I wanted to be a Ninja Turtle, then it progressed to an astronaut. I always had big dreams!

**Favorite locally owned Arkansas restaurants:** Spud Love and PattiCakes Bakery both in Conway

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** consistent investment in our talent here. Cultivate the startups and minority small businesses that are organizing. Find creative ways to lead the younger generation to confidence and resources.

ARKANSAS  
250 

CONTEMPORARY  
LEGENDS

FROM RETAIL AND LAW TO BANKING  
AND PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVORS, THE FOUR LEADERS PROFILED  
AS PART OF THE CONTEMPORARY LEGENDS SECTION ARE PIONEERS  
IN THEIR CHOSEN FIELDS AND BEYOND. THEIR LIFETIME OF WORK  
CONTINUES TO IMPACT THE STATE OF ARKANSAS AND ITS CITIZENS.



## SISSY JONES

Founder | Sissy's Log Cabin

When Sissy Jones decided to change her business focus from antiques to jewelry, she studied the subject at some of the country's best schools including the Gemological Institute of America in California. Since she founded the company in 1970, Sissy's Log Cabin has become an iconic, family-owned jewelry store known for its diamonds, jewelry, estate jewelry, fine gifts, antiques and exceptional customer service. Today, Sissy's spans 12,000 square feet of store space, with five locations including Pine Bluff, Little Rock, Jonesboro, Memphis and Conway. The story of Sissy's Log Cabin began when Jones noticed a log cabin for sale driving down U.S. Highway 79 in Pine Bluff. Jones began renting the cabin and stocked it with antiques from her attic and home. Word spread quickly around the state about the unique finds in Sissy's log cabin, and the rest, as they say, is history.

**Lives in:** Pine Bluff

**Colleges:** Gemological Institute of America, McCarthy Jewelry Design School, Trenton Jewelry/Goldsmith School, University of Arkansas Monticello

**Best career advice I ever received:** Rule No. 1 - The customer is always right. Rule No. 2 - if the customer is wrong refer to Rule No. 1. This is our store motto and you will find this in front of every store. Another motto we treasure is to always treat others the way you would like to be treated.

**I wish more people knew:** Our Savior, who provides comfort and love with the power of prayer and forgiveness

**Proudest career moment:** When my family joined my business



## RICHARD L. MAYS SR.

Founding Partner | Mays, Byrd & Associates, P.A.

Richard L. Mays Sr. has been practicing law for more than 50 years. He was an early civil rights attorney during the struggles to integrate public facilities and end bias among the Arkansas courts and law enforcement. He was in the first group of African Americans to be elected to the Arkansas General Assembly in the 20th century and became the second Black justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court when he was appointed by Governor Bill Clinton in 1979. He was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame in 2016. Other major career milestones included serving as a member of the U.S.-South Africa Business Development Committee under the late U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and working as senior vice president of Cassidy & Associates, one of the largest public affairs firms in Washington, D.C. Today, Mays continues to champion for the civil rights among the legal communities.

**Lives in:** Little Rock

**Colleges:** Howard University (B.A.), University of Arkansas School of Law (J.D.)

**Best career advice I ever received:** Listen more than you speak.

**Proudest career moment:** My proudest career moment was being sworn-in as a justice on the Arkansas Supreme Court.

**To reach its potential, Arkansas needs** more people working together for the common good as opposed to working for their own benefit.

# A SPECTACULAR *half-century*

When Sissy Jones opened our doors 50 years ago, we began our tradition of extraordinary service – both to our customers and to our communities. We look forward to continuing our legacy of spectacular experiences for years to come.



*Sissy's Log Cabin* **50**  
*Because Life's Too Short For Ordinary Jewelry* years

DIAMONDS | CUSTOM CREATIONS | EXCLUSIVE DESIGNERS | BRIDAL | REPAIRS

As COVID-19 first gripped the state, we didn't wait for someone else to help. Within mere days, our teams created and launched **UpliftArkansas.com** as a free statewide resource for hundreds of businesses and communities to locate and share critical information. We're grateful to the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau for sharing our vision, and we hope everyone will continue to share the resource that is **UpliftArkansas.com** for as long as it is needed.



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**UpliftArkansas.com** was just named "2020 Best Directory or Search Engine Website" by the Web Marketing Association.



## REYNIE RUTLEDGE

Chairman | First Security Bancorp

Reynie Rutledge is the chairman of First Security Bancorp. With over 40 years of experience in banking, he has been involved with all aspects of finance and management while leading First Security Bancorp to become the fifth-largest bank holding company based in Arkansas with over \$6 billion in assets and 79 locations throughout the state. A graduate of the University of Arkansas, Rutledge is a past chairman of the Arkansas Bankers Association. He is a member of the Arkansas Academy of Industrial Engineering and a member and past chairman of the Dean's Executive Advisory Board for the Sam M. Walton College of Business. Rutledge's multitude of achievements include the University of Arkansas Volunteer of the Year award and receiving the University of Arkansas Distinguished Alumni award.

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**Lives in:** Searcy

**College:** University of Arkansas



## CAMERON SMITH

President | Cameron Smith & Associates

Cameron Smith is the president of Cameron Smith & Associates, recognized as one of the most successful executive search firms in the United States. Since founding CSA in 1994, Smith and his team have been credited with bringing hundreds of Walmart supplier offices into northwest Arkansas, creating thousands of high-paying jobs. Today, CSA recruits for companies all over the world to fill executive positions including vice president, general manager, C-suite and public board seats. Smith currently serves on the board of directors of Signature Bank, Greater Bentonville Area Chamber of Commerce and Cancer Challenge. In 2014, he was recognized by Arkansas Business as the Business Executive of the Year. As a former professional fast-pitch softball player, Cameron spearheaded converting girls' softball from slow-pitch to fast-pitch in the state. Smith is married to Monica Smith, who is also the CFO of CSA.

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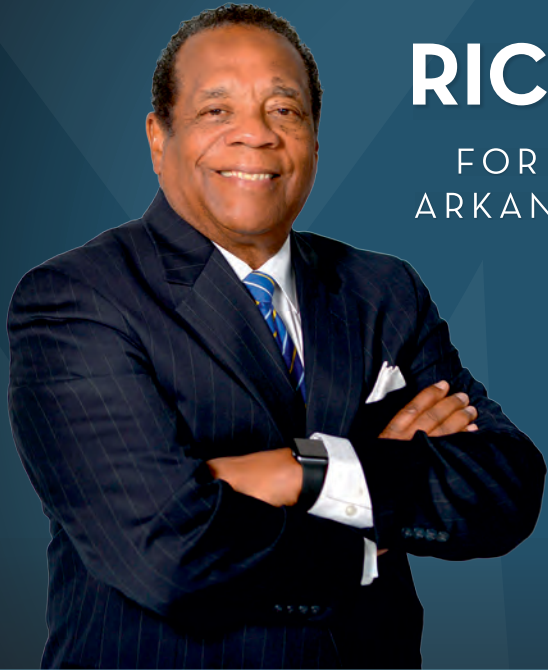
**Lives in:** Rogers

**Colleges:** El Camino Junior College, California State University Long Beach

**I wish more people knew:** Even though my firm has had great success, I have had some failures along the way. I never felt like a failure, I just had not succeeded yet.

**Proudest career moment:** My proudest moment happens every time someone calls to say, "You helped me find a job. I took your advice, and now I'm excited about my work and the future for our family." I never get tired of hearing stories of how lives change when people land good jobs.





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Aug. 10, 1938-June 30, 2020

**JOHN FLAKE**  
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**JOHNELLE HUNT**  
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2018

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Founder  
The Arkansas Repertory Theatre  
Sept. 13, 1947-Sept. 6, 2018

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Engineer  
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Little Rock

2017

**ANNIE ABRAMS**  
Activist  
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**MARY GOOD**  
Dean Emeritus  
College of Engineering  
& Information Technology  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
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