

# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

FEBRUARY 2022

## JO BONNER NAMED USA PRESIDENT



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# BUSINESSVIEW

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FEBRUARY 2022



## 14 ON THE COVER:

*Jo Bonner is the fourth president of the University of South Alabama. He poses here with the school's mascot, South Paw.*

*Read more on pages 14-17.*

*Photo by L.A. Fotographee.*



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## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

**BUSINESS VIEW** (USPS 952-700) is published 10 times a year, monthly, except for the June/July and December/January issues, by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

451 Government St., Mobile, AL 36602  
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Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652-2187  
or email [info@mobilechamber.com](mailto:info@mobilechamber.com) ©2022

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## PUBLISHERS NOTE:

## GREAT THINGS IN STORE FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Nancy Wall Hewston

As I write this note, it's the start of a new year, and I'm looking forward to more good things from the Mobile Area Chamber.

To begin, I am happy to bring you an interview with the new president of the University of South Alabama, Jo Bonner, who I had the privilege of working for during part of the time he served in Congress.

During the interview, we reminisced about the important work we did on behalf of southwest Alabama and for the state of Alabama, and he shared all the plans he has for his new position at South Alabama.

One time in particular we talked about was the inception of the USA Children's and Women's Hospital and their incredible work and how much progress they have made in the years they have been in

service. This type of commitment to the community from our state and local partners is one of the many economic development and workforce development initiatives we work on here at the Chamber.

To have someone who understands our work, the work needed in the community and the region is going to be an asset in Bonner's leadership moving forward.

In addition to Bonner's interview is the introduction of the Chamber's newly elected 2022 Board of Directors. Read about these remarkable volunteers and local business leaders starting on page 27.

This new year undoubtedly has great things in store and our team can't wait to share the stories with you.



# AUSTAL USA RECEIVES SHIP CONTRACT, USES STEEL FROM SSAB ON NEW CONSTRUCTION

In late 2021, the U.S. Navy awarded Austal USA a \$145 million two-ship Towing, Salvage and Rescue Ship (T-ATS) detailed design and construction contract. This contract award marks the first new steel ship construction program for the company.

“The Austal USA team is excited to get to work on this program and leverage our new steel manufacturing line to support the U.S. Navy’s and U.S. Coast Guard’s requirements for steel ships,” said Austal USA President **Rusty Murdaugh**. “Our consistent on-budget and on-schedule delivery of quality ships continues to lead the industry. Our highly skilled workforce prides itself on maintaining the excellence our customers have come to know and expect from Austal.”

T-ATS will provide ocean-going tug, salvage and rescue capabilities to support U.S. fleet operations and will be a multi-mission, common hull platform capable of towing heavy ships. These ships will be able to support current missions, including oil spill response, humanitarian assistance and wide-area search and surveillance. The platform also enables future capability initiatives like modular payloads with hotel services and appropriate interfaces.

Following this award, Austal contracted with local Alabama steel provider SSAB to provide steel for the new Navy ships. The supplier partnership directly supports hundreds of jobs in the greater Mobile area from both Austal and SSAB.

Austal will source various strength and sized steel plating from SSAB capable of being cut, shaped, welded and fitted, resulting in the construction of valuable support ships and potential combat ships for the U.S. military.

“SSAB not only provides us with quality steel, but also great flexibility due to its location adjacent to us here in Mobile,” Murdaugh said. “The ability to work quickly and in person with them on current and future steel requirements by the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard is an asset to Austal that will support our business and economic growth in our community.”

“Austal USA is a respected and valued partner to SSAB Americas,” said SSAB Americas Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer **Jeff Moskaluk**. “Our participation in such an important and vital project, that will strengthen both the economic and national security of our country, makes this partnership even more meaningful. We are proud to work closely with Austal USA and demonstrate the service, quality and value that is delivered from an interconnected and local supply chain here in Alabama.”

“This partnership between two major industries in the Mobile area shows how diverse our industries are and how they can work together to bring jobs and more industry to south Alabama,” said **David Rodgers**, the Mobile Area Chamber’s vice president of economic development.





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# SARRALLE OPENS NEW MOBILE HEADQUARTERS

With locations in more than nine countries worldwide, SARRALLE announced the opening of a new U.S. headquarters in Mobile. The company's new Mobile office will oversee operations in Alabama, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Initially, the company plans to start with 850 square feet of offices and then to grow through 2025.

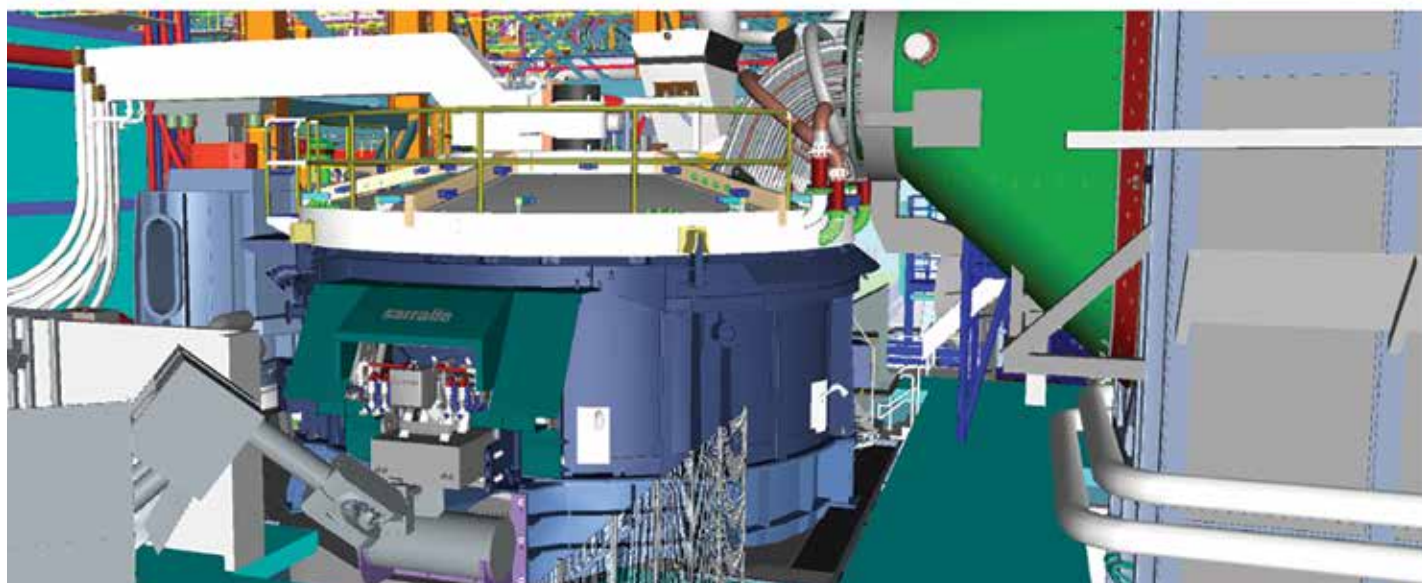
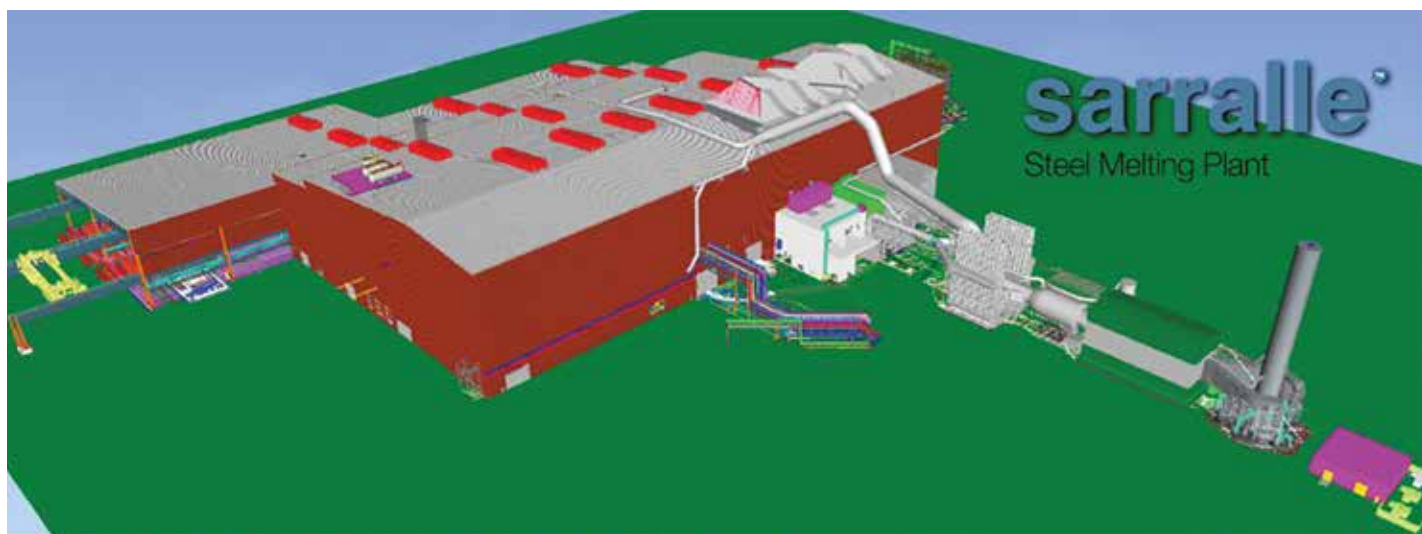
Founded in 1965, and with more than 50 years' experience on international projects, SARRALLE is a global industrial engineering and steel company boasting more than 650 employees worldwide.

According to the company, the new headquarters will strengthen SARRALLE's presence in the country and support its expansion by enhancing its team with wider heads of sales, site managers, project managers, site engineers, R&D engineers and more, for the four divisions of SARRALLE: steel melting plant, rolling mill, coil processing lines and energy and environment.

The company's locating in Mobile and new steel melting plant is a result of its contract with AM/NS Calvert.

SARRALLE chose Mobile to settle its headquarters because of its strategic geographical location, the existing airport connections, its ninth largest port by tonnage in the United States, the skilled workforce in a right-to-work state and the economic growth and development that Alabama has been experiencing.

"This new announcement and headquarters in the Mobile area strengthen the steel industry and show the great work by Team Mobile in attracting companies like SARRALLE here," said **David Rodgers**, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of economic development.



*This 3D image shows the new AM/NS Calvert Steel Melting Plant and its electric arc furnace.*

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# Silver Ships Awarded U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Orders



Aluminum workboat builder and the Mobile Area Chamber's 2021 Small Business of the year, Silver Ships Inc. was recently awarded an \$8.2 million delivery order by the Naval Sea Systems Command for the construction and delivery of up to 110 Naval special warfare surface support craft and U.S. Coast Guard special purpose craft, law enforcement vessels.

Over the past 20 years, Silver Ships has constructed more than 650 rigid hull inflatable boats for all branches of the U.S. military. The U.S. Navy uses many of these vessels to support ship, aviation and Naval Special Warfare training and operational needs. All of the boats are highly versatile, rugged and designed to be operated in open ocean and near-coastal environments. Silver Ships began building the surface support crafts for the Navy in 2007.

"We are very proud to help contribute to the readiness of our nation's Naval Special Warfare and Coast Guard forces," said **Shawn W. Lobree**, Silver Ships federal contracts manager. "Quality, customer service and teamwork are very important to us, and we look forward to working with Navy and Coast Guard teams to build and deliver the five variants." Lobree is a retired Navy captain and program manager for the project.

The new project entails construction of five different vessel variants and is based closely on Silver Ships' in-service surface support crafts developed by the company's in-house engineering design team, led by senior Naval architect **Clay Danielson**.

"We are honored to receive this contract. Being selected is a testament to the diligence and quality manufacturing that our small yet proud workforce produces," said **Steven Clarke**, co-owner of Silver Ships. "We are pleased to have been selected to continue to deliver the best possible vessels to support the needs of the U.S. Navy and now the Department of Homeland Security. We look forward to continuing to grow our business and manufacturing output in the years to come."

**We are pleased to have been selected to continue to deliver the best possible vessels to support the needs of the U.S. Navy and now the Department of Homeland Security."**

**Steven Clarke**, co-owner of Silver Ships





*The Mobile Downtown Airport was identified by the Federal Aviation Administration as a primary non-hub airport and part of its Military Airport Program.*

# MOBILE DOWNTOWN AIRPORT PART OF THE MILITARY AIRPORT PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) accepted the Mobile Downtown Airport (BFM) into the Military Airport Program.

By this selection, the Mobile Airport is eligible for grants to add civilian aviation operations to increase system capacity and reduce congestion at existing airports.

"Adding civilian flights to these airports increases their role in fostering economic growth and creating jobs in their communities," U.S. Secretary Transportation **Pete Buttigieg** said.

The FAA identified the Mobile Downtown Airport as a primary non-hub airport located on the former Brookley Air Force Base. With its participation in the program for five years, the FAA may be able to provide funds for utility construction, improving airport drainage, parking lot construction and an apron reconstruction project.

**Adding civilian flights to these airports increases their role in fostering economic growth and creating jobs in their communities."**

**Pete Buttigieg**, U.S. Secretary Transportation

"Working with local stakeholders, the Military Airport Program is an innovative and fiscally responsible way to help improve prior military facilities and make them an important economic driver for their communities," said FAA Associate Administrator of Airports **Shannetta Griffin**.

"We are very excited to be accepted into the program," said **Chris Curry**, Mobile Airport Authority president. "This program allows more flexible options as we continue to build and improve the infrastructure at the Mobile Downtown Airport."





# THANK YOU!

Because of your continued support in 2021, we were able to advance our mission to promote STEM education and make the excitement of scientific discovery accessible to the entire Gulf Coast region.

We have exciting exhibitions, programs, and events planned for 2022 and beyond, and we look forward to sharing these experiences with you.

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# NEW USA PRESIDENT: FIRST 100 DAYS TO BE SPENT 'LISTENING AND LEARNING'

For only the fourth time in its 58-year history, the University of South Alabama (USA) named a new president. Former Congressman Jo Bonner recently took the reins as the new president of USA following the resignation of Dr. Tony Waldrop. No stranger to the Mobile area, Bonner served in Congress, representing Alabama's First District in the U.S. House of Representatives for six terms. Most recently, he served as chief of staff to Alabama **Gov. Kay Ivey**.

Serving as a congressman for southwest Alabama worked to Bonner's advantage in moving forward when he was a candidate for the position at USA. "It clearly gave me a tremendous advantage going into this in the sense that I know south Alabama," he said. "I know the region. I know the university; it's my home. And this university has really been an important part of mine and Janée's lives. I gave my congressional papers here when I left Congress, having no idea I would one day be coming back here as president. When I was so fortunate to work with Congressman (Sonny) Callahan for those 18 years, and then the 10 years I worked for the people of Alabama, this university was ground zero of what we were doing. It was the center of our focus, and I knew in my heart this would be an easy place to love."

The relationships he's built over the years will make his transition an easy one, he said. "I hope to use it as an advantage, as I won't have to introduce myself to our governor and our senators or congressman and tell them about me, but I can tell them about what we are doing at South Alabama and how we are making an impact in the lives of our community and the lives in our state and our nation. We have so many good stories to tell, and I want to focus on those stories."

Working in the University of Alabama system also played a role in helping Bonner develop the confidence and skills he plans to lean on in the future. "My five years working with Dr. Robert Witt, and then with Ray Hayes, gave me the opportunity to look behind the curtain at a major economic player and a major educational institution and how they managed things like enrollment and student retention and faculty diversity and other issues."

"One of the commitments I made early on is, even though I know this university and I know this community, and it is my home; I promised the students and faculty and all the groups I met with that I was going to do a lot of listening and learning. My first 100 days, I intend to get out on this campus in a very

visible way. I want to go where the students are, and Janée will be an incredible part of our success. She's already planning on how she can get involved in the community. We promised we wanted to get out there into the classrooms with the faculty. I want to get to know them and find out what their needs are and how we can work together to advance their goals."

**“One of the commitments I made early on is... I promised the students and faculty and all the groups I met with that I was going to do a lot of listening and learning. My first 100 days, I intend to get out there on this campus in a very visible way.”**

**Jo Bonner, president,  
University of South Alabama**

Bonner says the groundwork laid by his predecessors will be key to building on his success as president. "My job will be to build on the success of those three presidents who helped give birth to the university, enhance the university and help take the academic and research mission to a new level. Our job will be to build on that success and continue to take this university to new heights," he said.

Bringing USA to the center of attention will be easy, Bonner said. He compared it to walking into an organization that already has a top-notch faculty of some of the world's leading scientists and researchers. "USA has a tremendously dedicated staff and one of the most impressive boards I've been around, and this is a group of South graduates who continue to give back. They love the community, and they love this university. They make tremendous sacrifice to help give a direction for the university that has gotten us where we are today. And then you have almost 90,000 alumni, and there's a real Jaguar pride in what South has become."



Photo by L.A. Fotographee

“One of the things I want to do in the coming months and years, is to make it very comfortable for people to love Auburn, Alabama and South Alabama. This is south Alabama’s university. It’s Mobile’s university and, quite frankly, we’ve got an opportunity to fill a void between Tallahassee and New Orleans to make this the Gulf Coast’s university.”

**We’ve got an opportunity to fill a void between Tallahassee and New Orleans to make this the Gulf Coast’s university.”**

**Jo Bonner, president,**  
University of South Alabama

Just like businesses in the community and other colleges and universities, USA also was impacted by the COVID pandemic. But Bonner has been impressed by the faculty and healthcare staff forming partnerships in the community, from testing and vaccination sites to playing a major leadership role in getting our community and economy running again.

“The role of the university is multifaceted,” he explained. “The effects on our classes and students going virtual and the financial aspect of COVID, has had a profound impact everywhere, but my observation is that the leadership team in place did a good job of trying to keep things steady.

The focus was always on making sure our students got what they need because it is a challenging time. The heart of any university is always about the student and making sure they have the pathway to success.”

Regarding workforce development in the community, Bonner says the work he and his colleagues were doing in Washington, D.C., planted seeds that are now bearing fruit. Those companies that were recruited to south Alabama know we have a pipeline of talent, whether it be an engineer, information technology specialist or someone who could one day be their president. “We want to become the academic center of excellence for the Austals, the Airbuses, the AM/NS Calverts and the SSABs and all the other great companies here in the area,” he said. “We have faculty, students and resources and so many talented people that I want to meet so I can be their ambassador for their good work.”

**The heart of any university is always about the student and making sure they have the pathway to success.”**

**Jo Bonner, president,**  
University of South Alabama

When asked about how workforce issues could affect USA’s academic offerings, Bonner said he recognizes some people would fare better with a certification or a two-year degree and that USA has many existing partnerships with local two-year



education systems in the area. He said while some companies may only require certain educational levels in their positions, more are looking for the extra advantages they can get from students who do obtain a degree. He says he wants USA to be known as a jobs university so that if students come to USA they will find a career path that is best for them and their family.

In addition, Bonner believes the USA healthcare system plays a major role in workforce and economic development. "USA Health allows us to help recruit companies here and address workforce issues because we have a Level 1 trauma center," he said. "Our burn center is one of the best in the nation. We have so many things that we can brag and focus on. Strong leadership and the growing campuses are a sign of progress related to our business."

**"I have been given an incredible opportunity and blessing to be part of a university that is 58 years young, but the best is in front of us and not behind us."**

**Jo Bonner**, president,  
University of South Alabama

Bonner sees a lot to build on and a lot of opportunity for growth. "I have been given an incredible opportunity and blessing to be a part of a university that is 58 years young, but the best is in front of us and not behind us," he said.

Photo by L.A. Fotographeer



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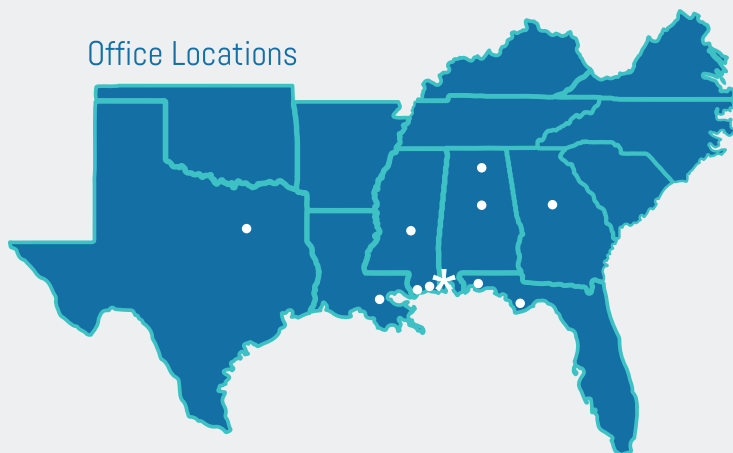
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# BUSINESS RESOURCES AT THE MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Mobile Public Library serves the citizens of the city of Mobile and Mobile County with 11 locations and a bookmobile. The library circulated more than 1.2 million physical and digital items and welcomed more than 468,000 visitors in 2020.

The Mobile Public Library System has a wealth of resources for the business community. Here is a sampling of what the library has to offer:

## Connection Center

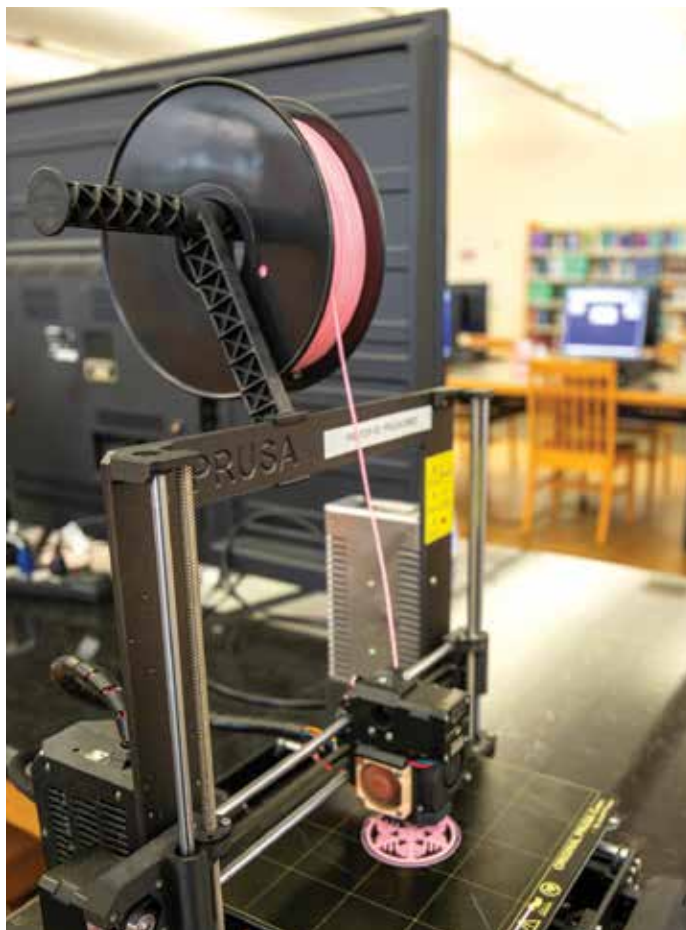
The Library Connection Center offers valuable business databases and tools for local companies and job seekers. Library card holders can access directories of business plans, legal forms, market research and industry profiles directly from the library website.

Job seekers have dedicated space on the second floor of the Ben May Main Library to use computers and printers to create resumes. The library also offers resume templates and job search assistance.

“Our staff is trained to provide support such as mock interviews, resume help, creating business plans and utilizing our databases for market research,” said Library Director **Margie Calhoun**.

## Universal Class

The library’s Universal Class is available online to help teach new skills that apply to any career interest. It includes more than 500 online courses on everything from marketing to accounting and office skills. Many of the courses also offer CEU credits.



## Maker Lab

Library cardholders have access to state-of-the-art technology tools in the Maker Lab such as the Prusa i3 MK3 3D Printer for creating prototypes and models. The library also has a Cricut Explore Air 2 cutting machine and EasyPress heat press for making logos, shirts, bags and more.

## Meeting Rooms

The Mobile Public Library has meeting room space available at each branch for public use. Ben May Main Library also has Bernheim Hall, which seats 230 with a stage and balcony area. To reserve a room or more information about capacity at each location, visit the library's website.

Evening hours are back at each Mobile area location. The West Regional Library and Ben May Main Library are open until 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Additional library locations offer at least one evening per week that they remain open until 7 p.m. or later.

"Evening hours give those working 9 to 5 more opportunities to visit the library and check out books, use our computers and free WiFi, conduct research and just relax and unwind in a peaceful environment," said Calhoun.

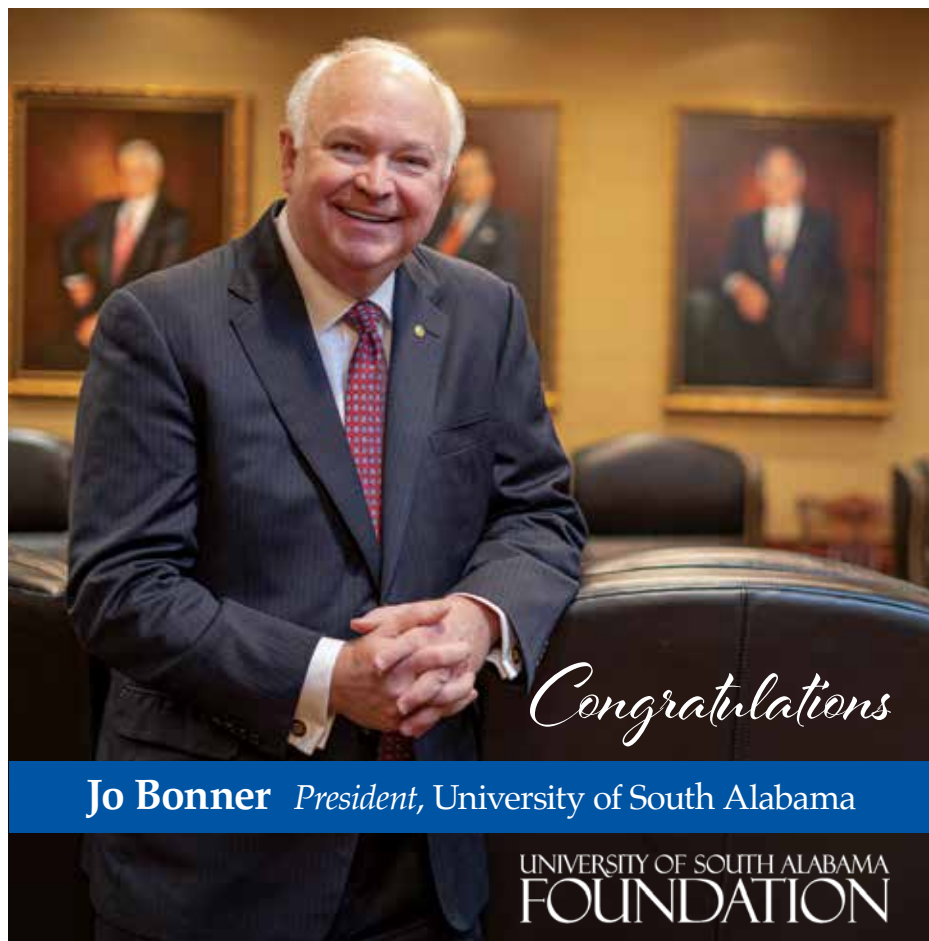
For more information on any of these resources, visit [mobilepubliclibrary.org](http://mobilepubliclibrary.org).





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For more than a decade, L.A. Fotographee has created memories and connected with the community from behind L.A. Alston's camera lens.

# L.A. FOTOGRAPHEE CAPTURES HAPPINESS

For some, photography is a hobby or, at best, a way to earn a few extra dollars while dedicating full-time attention to more stable professions. That might have been all **Lemaris “L.A.” Alston’s** association with the craft was meant to be, save for one thing: passion.

For more than a decade, the Theodore native has created memories and connected with the community from behind his lens. And though he has always been a dedicated employee – most recently working in the Mobile Area Chamber’s IT department for nine years – his client pool has steadily grown since 2011 and, just before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, he made the decision to strike out on his own.

L.A. Fotographee is the Chamber’s Small Business of the Month.

Although hanging his own shingle was a calculated decision, Alston said he wasn’t worried because a deep faith lies at the heart of his passion.

“God had already prepared me for the process,” he said. “I wasn’t scared because I’d already set the foundation of my plan in stone, and it was time for executing it.”

Being a Chamber employee who evolved into a Chamber member helped him with the structure of that plan, which manifested into L.A. Fotographee. Alston recently graduated from the Minority Business Accelerator program, born out of a partnership with the University of South Alabama Melton Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Alston’s days are as varied as his clients. One might be packed with back-to-back portrait sessions in his studio, while others might find him traveling to one of several industrial clients, such as Airbus, for corporate imagery.



He refers to his business as “capturing happiness,” and thanks to his easygoing, gregarious nature, he creates quite a bit of happiness along the way, as well. That’s one of several reasons he created the nonprofit Bounce Back Youth Leadership Foundation in 2008. The mentorship program teaches schoolchildren about technology as well as photography and how to start their own businesses once they graduate.

The genesis of the idea came from discussions between Alston and his wife, Jamelah, who is from Colorado and grew up witnessing the benefits of community involvement and philanthropy. They started the foundation together and have fostered it ever since.

Theirs is an all-consuming partnership, as the couple also works together and are currently building a new house which will include a separate studio for L.A. Fotographee and a graphic design company the two also created together.

“We hope to have it completed by March,” Alston said. “And I’m super ecstatic about that.”

**COMPANY NAME:** L.A. Fotographee

**OWNER:** Lemaris "L.A." Alston

**WEBSITE:** lafotographee.com

**PHONE:** 251.366.2426

**LENGTH OF CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP:** 10 years



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# BUSINESS AGILITY: REPOSITIONING YOUR BUSINESS FOR GROWTH

by Dr. Valerie D. W. James, chief efficiency officer, VisionSpot Enterprises

Kudos to a New Year! One of the biggest leadership lessons learned last year is there are truly no straight lines to running a business. Did you know that according to national business statistics more than 70 percent of small businesses shut down when the U.S. became the center of the pandemic and more than 60 percent of these closed permanently when the country went into lock down?

The magnitude of changes has forced CEOs to prepare for future situations before they actually occur to ensure increased sustainability and growth. Business agility and a clear framework that couples as a roadmap can lead you to greater levels of success.

Sustainable and recovery strategies will not emerge if you are not agile to reposition; or position your business for growth.

Today more than ever, agile and effective leadership, enterprise strategy, operational structure, and talent development are the most important tangible and intangible assets in every business when going through a transition or growth stage. In this environment of constant change, organizations seek to stand out with innovative client solutions and services while increasing agility, accelerating value delivery, customer and employee adaptability and mitigating risk.

Business agility is best achieved when employees share fundamental beliefs relative to success, both individually and collectively and grow. The ultimate goal of an agile leader is a form of repositioning your business model to rapidly respond to change while establishing a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

## LEADERSHIP

Start with you as the leader. A growing business requires the actions of an agile leader who is responsive and can stretch their skills, team and resources to take an organization from its current state to a future state - bigger, better and different. While at the same time pushing yourself to adopt agile ways of doing things that will allow you to work more on the business, not just within the business, and publicly demonstrate your own changing behaviors. Agile leaders never stop learning.

## STRATEGY

What are we doing that is strategically important and difficult to substitute? In addition to keeping a pulse on financial resources necessary to drive and achieve the mission, strategy involves establishing new standards in customer service, getting products to market before competitors, along with methods used within the company to set them apart from competitors to achieve the mission.

## STRUCTURE

What must shift in your business to increase productivity and performance outcomes? Structure increases efficiency and drives clarity around new, innovative and routine functions and develops workflow and changes in behaviors of the individuals that make up the team, and operations can be streamlined. Visualizing work, increasing transparency, identifying bottlenecks and minimizing hand-offs to improve the overall efficiency of an entire organization.

## TALENT

The success of your business is catapulted by valuing the strength of its members and talent attributes, and adaptability within the organization. Active talent agility and alignment hinges on precise and concise developed hiring, training and coaching programs to build common agile skills across technology and business functions. Have solid people management practices to assess and enhance employee skills, roles and goals are clearly aligned with the vision and strategic objectives of the organization to boost performance, productivity and the deployment of a world-class customer experience consistently. Advanced business objectives fully integrated will help create the talent alignment needed for success.

Is your business aligned to scale and grow? Efficiently identifying and correcting misalignment is critical to maintaining optimal performance and growth. Enhanced business agility determines how quickly a business - through the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of its leadership, strategy, structure and talent - can learn, pivot and bounce back from unexpected change without fully pausing or slowing down. Agility will help your business become more poised to do the best it can to recover, continue to excel and deliver a world-class customer experience.

Cheers to the New Year!

## ABOUT THE EXPERT

*Dr. Valerie James is chief efficiency officer of VisionSpot Enterprises. Founded in 1998, VisionSpot has a "Mission Possible" philosophy. For more than two decades, its award-winning business solutions have helped create, transform and accelerate the world's boldest businesses and leaders by teaching them how to work smarter, not harder. To contact James, call 866.970.1114 or visit [visionspotenterprises.com](http://visionspotenterprises.com).*



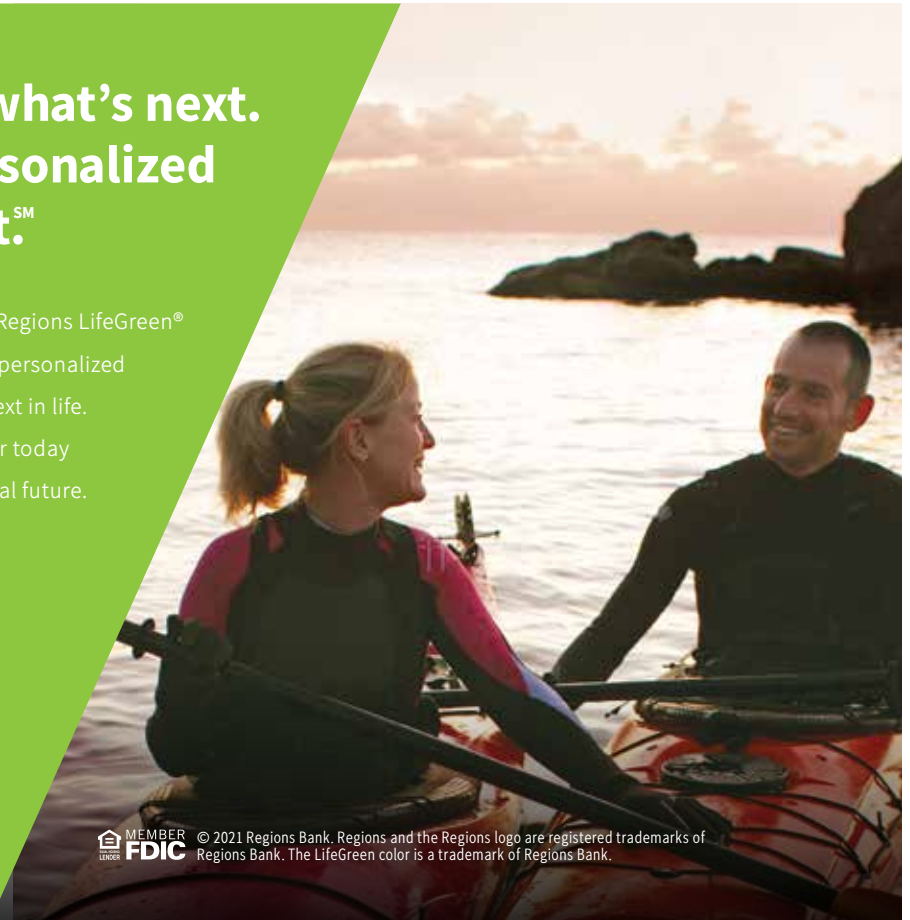
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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From taking a stand on legislative issues to supporting Mobile's business community and recruiting new jobs and capital investment, the Mobile Area Chamber's 2022 board of directors serves as the organization's governing and policy-making body. The board is comprised of 44 members representing a cross-section of the business community – 26 men and 18 women.

Approximately 70 percent of the companies represented on the board have fewer than 101 employees; 16 employ 1-10 individuals; six employ 11-25 individuals; six employ 26-50 individuals; three employ 51-100 individuals; and 13 employ more than 100. Of those companies represented on the board, eight are minority-owned and five are women-owned. On the following pages are profiles of the Chamber's 2022 board members.



★ The star indicates those whose companies are also investors in Partners for Growth, the Chamber's long-term economic and community development program.



**Matt White**

*White-Spunner Realty Inc.*



## BOARD CHAIR

**White** is principal of White-Spunner Realty Inc. Prior to his current role, he was president, controller and vice president of operations. He received a bachelor's degree in commerce and business administration from The University of Alabama. He is a member or former member of the boards of Prichard Preparatory School and Leadership Alabama. White is also a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.



**Diana Allen**

*The SSI Group*

**Allen** is the president and CEO of The SSI Group. She is a healthcare finance leader with more than 20 years of experience in health care revenue cycle management. In her role, she is focused on growing and enhancing the company's service and solutions, drawing on her experience in business development, quality improvement and strategic direction. Prior to joining SSI, Allen honed her revenue cycle skills with companies such as GE Healthcare, McKesson Corp., Meridian and Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians. Allen earned a doctorate degree from Colorado Technical University in healthcare administration and a master's degree in healthcare administration from Cambridge College. She is also a contributing author to industry publications, as well as a national conference speaker on healthcare process improvement strategy.



**Celia Mann Baehr**

*Mobile Symphony Inc.*

**Baehr** is president and CEO of the Mobile Symphony. She has more than 30 years of experience in financial services and is a Certified Financial Planner. She owns a small, registered investment advisory business. Baehr holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama (USA) and a bachelor's degree from The University of Alabama. She is a graduate of Leadership Mobile and a member of the Rotary Club of Mobile and the Gulf States Financial Planning Association. Baehr received the Impact Award from the USA Mitchell College of Business as one of its 50 most influential graduates. She is a member of Mitchell College of Business's Advisory Council and the Chamber's board of advisors.



**Brent Barkin**

*Shoe Carnival*

## CHAIR ELECT/VICE CHAIR FINANCE

**Barkin** is senior vice president of new business for Shoe Carnival. He is a third-generation footwear retailer from both sides of his family. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and is a graduate of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy. Barkin is a member of the board of directors of the United Way of Southwest Alabama and the University of South Alabama Mitchell College of Business Advisory Council. He is also a former board member of St. Luke's Episcopal School.



**Raymond Bell**

*Maynard Cooper & Gale PC*



**VICE CHAIR, LEGAL COUNSEL**

**Bell** is a shareholder in the law firm of Maynard Cooper & Gale. His practice focuses in the areas of governmental relations and ethics, and compliance law. He has practiced law since 1999 and is admitted to practice in state, federal, district, circuit and appellate courts. Bell is a graduate of the University of Montevallo and Theodore Goode Jones School of Law. Prior to practicing law, he served as special assistant to the president pro tem of the Alabama State Senate, special assistant to the Alabama lieutenant governor and appointment secretary to the governor of Alabama. Bell serves as a special district court judge for the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Alabama.



**Kel Boisvert**

*Evonik Corp.*



**Boisvert** is the vice president and site manager at Evonik in Mobile and has held multiple positions throughout USA, Canada and Germany in his 32-year career with the company. He has worked in hydrogen peroxide, organic peroxide, quaternary ammonium based chemicals, oil additives, pharmaceuticals and several business functions during that time in various roles ranging from operations, process technical, change management and EHSSQ to senior management. Boisvert is engaged in multiple community, state and regional boards/organizations.



**William Bryant**

*Mobile Area Boy Scouts of America*

**Bryant** is the scout executive/CEO of the Mobile Area Council, Boy Scouts of America. He is the immediate past revenue and membership growth coach for the National Office of the Boy Scouts of America. Bryant holds a master's degree in business administration and nonprofit administration from Oglethorpe University and is a graduate of LEAD Atlanta, a leadership program of executives from across the state of Georgia. He has received the Atlanta Urban League's Rising Star Award, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Man of the Year Award, Grambling State University's Distinguished Alumnus Award and the National President's Award through the Boy Scouts.



**Ty Bullard**

*Bullard Automotive Group Inc.*



**Bullard** is the president of Bullard Automotive Group, a third-generation family-owned business. In 2013, he became the principal of the dealership, which includes the franchises of Cadillac, Infiniti, Acura, Jaguar, Land Rover, Ford, Lincoln and Chevrolet. Bullard graduated from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in business management. He is active in the Mobile Touchdown Club and many religious/spiritual activities throughout the Mobile area.



**Joe Calagaz**

*Calagaz Printing*

**Calagaz** is the president of Calagaz Printing. He has served in this role for more than 30 years, in addition to being the business owner of IMMIX Strategic and Phins Apparel. Following in his father's footsteps, Calagaz joined the military and subsequently attended Tulane University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and management. After college, he served in the U.S. Army as a field artillery officer with the 11th Armored Cavalry in Germany. Calagaz is a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.



**W. Allen Carroll**

*Wilkins Miller LLC*



**Carroll** first joined Wilkins Miller in 1987 and serves as its managing partner. He has a degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama (USA). He is a certified public accountant and a member of the Association of International CPAs and the Alabama Society of CPAs. He serves on the board of directors for the University of South Alabama Foundation and the executive advisory council for the USA Mitchell College of Business. He has served St. Luke's Episcopal School as both its treasurer and chairman of the board of trustees. Carroll is a past member of the national board of directors for Distinguished Young Women. He is also on the Chamber's board of advisors.



**Cindie Carter**

*Walks and Wags Inc.*

**Carter** is president of Walks and Wags. What began as a hobby in college has grown throughout the years into a successful enterprise: a pet resort and training center for dogs. Prior to working with dogs, she worked in the automotive business and raced cars for 13 years. She founded Mobile County P.A.L.S. (Protecting Animals' Lives Society), a nonprofit for a local animal shelter, and is a member of the advisory board for the Mobile County Animal Shelter. Carter started a first-of-its-kind dog therapy program for underprivileged children ranging from 8 to 18 years old, teaching them the skills of dog language and how to feel empowered with their animal friends so they can transition more successfully into their adult lives.



**Bob Chappelle**

*Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce*

**Chappelle** serves as the interim president and CEO of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce. He is a graduate of Leadership Alabama and Leadership Mobile and holds bachelor's and master's degrees from The University of Alabama. He earned a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) designation from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in 2008. Chappelle is a board member of the Downtown Mobile Alliance and serves on the Mobile Human Relations Commission. He is a past president of the Rotary Club of Mobile and presently serves as the club's permanent secretary.



**Janet Cobb***USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park*

**Cobb** is the executive director for the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park. She enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve where she was commissioned a Second Lieutenant, Signal Corps in The University of Alabama ROTC program and named a Distinguished Military Graduate. Cobb earned a master of strategic studies from the United States Army War College and a bachelor's degree from The University of Alabama. She is president of the Historic Naval Ships Association and serves on the board of The Lee Foundation, the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission Board of Trustees and the Veterans Initiative Advisory Council of the Community Foundation of South Alabama.

**Melissa Cross***McAlee's Office Furniture*

**Cross** is president of McAlee's Office Furniture. She earned an undergraduate degree from The University of Alabama and a juris doctorate from Pepperdine University School of Law in Malibu, Calif. In her role as a Chamber board member, Cross chaired the 2020 and 2021 Chamber Chase campaigns. She also serves as a board member for the University of South Alabama Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. She has participated in the following programs: Small Business Administration's Emerging Leaders, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses and RAMP (Real Advice Mentoring Program). Cross is a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.

**John Driscoll***Alabama State Port Authority* ★

**Driscoll** began serving as the director and CEO of the Alabama State Port Authority in June 2020. Prior to that, he was maritime director at the Port of Oakland in Oakland, Calif., and vice president of export sales for CMA CGM (America). He started his career with Sea-Land Service and later joined Maersk Line. Driscoll earned a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Maryland (College Park). He is a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.

**Cora Eatmon***Client First Solutions Inc.* ★

**Eatmon** is the chief operations officer of Client First Solutions. A native of Dothan, she earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Tuskegee University. Self-employed for more than 25 years, Eatmon's businesses include Bonafide Business Service, a bookkeeping/accounting and tax service business, and Client First Solutions Inc., offering practice management and medical billing services to private medical practices.

**Jan Greer Endfinger***Autry Greer & Sons Inc.*

**Endfinger** is the vice president of human resources and marketing for Autry Greer & Sons. She attended The University of Alabama and graduated from the University of West Florida with a bachelor's degree in business management. She is a member of Dauphin Way United Methodist Church, Murphy High School Alumni Association, Kappa Delta Sorority Alumni, National Grocers Association, Women Grocers Association and Alabama Grocers Association. She is a Dale Carnegie Training graduate and is a member of Harold Lloyd's national retail HR and marketing share groups. Endfinger is a past member of the Mobile Rotary Club, the Junior League of Mobile and several other organizations. She serves on the Chamber's board of advisors.

**Tommy Faust***Trustmark Bank* ★**VICE CHAIR, MEMBERSHIP**

**Faust** is the president of the Mobile and Baldwin County markets for Trustmark Bank. He is a veteran banker with more than 32 years of experience in both consumer and commercial lending. Faust earned a bachelor's degree in business management, specializing in accounting, from the University of South Alabama (USA). He is an active alumnus of USA, serving as the former chairman of the Baldwin County Chapter of the USA National Alumni Association. He is also a graduate of the Community Banking School of Alabama at Samford University. Faust is a past president of the Baldwin County Education Coalition and serves on the board of directors for the Fairhope - Point Clear Rotary Youth Club.

**RaShawn Figures***Dortch, Figures & Sons Inc.*

**Figures** is CEO/owner and creative engine room of Dortch, Figures & Sons Inc. Having grown up in the industry, his grasp of construction fundamentals is innate, enabling him to instill a long view of best practices while injecting a historical sense of good old-fashioned hard work. Figures earned a bachelor's degree from The University of Alabama. Dortch, Figures & Sons is the largest minority-owned general contracting firm in the state.

**Steve Franklin***Airbus* ★

**Franklin** is the head of site services and supply chain operations for the Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility. Named to the position in January 2018, he is a member of the senior leadership team. Franklin serves as a principal interface with key strategic partners and operational management, providing strategic planning, leadership and coordination with his counterparts in Europe. Prior to joining Airbus, he served as commodity manager at Austal USA and supply chain manager at International Paper Co. He is a military veteran, having served for 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. Franklin is an active member of the Institute of Supply Management.



**Kim Garrett**

*Victory Health Partners*

**Garrett** is the director for Victory Health Partners. She previously worked with Buckner International in Dallas. Garrett earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Abilene Christian University. She is a volunteer and mayoral appointee for the Mobile Human Relations Commission and a member of the Rotary Club of Mobile. She is dean of the 2022 Leadership Mobile class, a 2014 Leadership Mobile graduate, a board member for Mobile United and Project Outreach and is active with the Church of Christ the Redeemer.



**Terry H. Harbin**

*Affordable Homes*

#### IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

**Harbin** is the owner of Affordable Homes. He has 40 plus years' experience in all phases of sales, marketing, technology and banking management. He also started two technology related business ventures which have been sold and continue to operate successfully and has been a private real estate investor for the past 20 years. He held various sales and marketing positions at QMS, and served in executive positions with Regions Bank and BankTrust and Bancorp South and has served on the boards of United Way of Southwest Alabama, University of Mobile, WHIL, Child Advocacy, Family Promise, Housing First, Coastal Alabama Partnership.



**William Hunter**

*Hunter Livery*

**Hunter** is the CEO of Hunter Livery (formerly Hunter Limousine). The company started in 2013 with the goal of becoming the finest limousine and executive car service in the country. He is a veteran of the United States Army, having served three tours of combat duty in Iraq in a 12-year career. Hunter is a member of the National Limousine Association, the Mobile Area Chamber and is locally accredited by the Better Business Bureau of South Alabama. A native of Birmingham, Hunter is an Eagle Scout and graduated with a bachelor's degree from Troy University.



**Valerie D.W. James**

*VisionSpot Enterprises*

**James** is the founder of VisionSpot Enterprises, a global operational efficiency and management firm and home of the Solutions Maximizing Brilliance School of Leadership. VisionSpot was recognized in 2020 by *HR Magazine* as one of their top 10 leadership development consulting and training services organizations. She is a leadership and business practitioner with over 20 years of executive-level corporate experience in finance, communication and healthcare. James is a Harvard trained leader, has studied leadership abroad, is the author of four works, including three on leadership, and holds a doctor of education degree in Organizational Leadership from Pepperdine University.



**Brian Jordan**

*Fusion Point Media Inc.*

**Jordan** is the president of FusionPoint Media. He has worked in the video production services industry for more than 30 years, serving as the marketing/digital manager for QMS and then venturing out to own his own video production company. Jordan received a bachelor's degree in communications from Spring Hill College. He is a former board member of the Distinguished Young Woman and the United Way of Southwest Alabama (UWSWA). He was named the UWSA Volunteer of the Year in 2014.



**Cliff Kennedy**

*Frios Gourmet Pops*

**Kennedy** is the owner of Frios Gourmet Pops. He worked in the family business, Gulf Supply Co., for 13 years before purchasing Frios Gourmet Pops in December 2018 and moving its headquarters to Mobile. Kennedy earned a bachelor's degree from Millsaps College. He is a board member for the Child Advocacy Center.



**Sidney King**

*Commonwealth National Bank*

#### VICE CHAIR, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**King** is president and CEO of Commonwealth National Bank. Before returning to Commonwealth, he was Kansas City regional president for Liberty Bank and Trust. He worked previously as president and CEO at Commonwealth and as president and CEO at First American Bank in Jackson, Miss. He is a graduate of DePaul University in Chicago, where he received a bachelor's degree in accounting.



**Jenny Beam Klein**

*Austal USA*



**Klein** was raised in Birmingham with roots in Louisiana. She moved to the Eastern Shore in 2006 for a position at The Grand Hotel during its rebuilding phase after Hurricane Katrina. Klein received a bachelor's degree from Loyola University in New Orleans and is a graduate of the Protocol School of Washington Protocol Officer Training. In spring 2015, Klein joined the Austal USA team as Manager of Events and Protocol. She brings more than 20 years of experience from the hospitality and event industry with a background in planning corporate events, music festivals, weddings and charity events.



**Carita Koen***Green Magic Landscape LLC*

**Koen** is the chief operations and marketing officer for Green Magic Landscape. She is also the creator of "Sista's Link," a private community via social media created to offer inspiration, empowerment and best business practices for women in business. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Mobile and a master's degree in business administration from the University of West Alabama. Koen is involved with the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force, the National Association of Landscape Professionals, Women in Landscape Network and the National Association of Women Business Owners.

**Kate Luce***Mississippi Export Railroad Co.* ★**VICE CHAIR, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

**Luce** is president and CEO of Mississippi Export Railroad Co. Luce holds a bachelor's degree in supply chain management from Auburn University and a master's in business administration from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. She is a recipient of the Keohane Leadership Award for exceptional leadership and currently serves on the board of visitors at Duke's Fuqua School, the board of directors of the North American Shippers Association, the board of governors at the Mississippi Economic Council and is a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.

**John Marymont***University of South Alabama* ★

**Marymont** is vice president for medical affairs and dean of the College of Medicine at the University of South Alabama (USA). He graduated from Northwestern University and obtained a medical degree from Vanderbilt University. Marymont earned a certificate in medical and healthcare management as well as a master's in business administration from the Jones School of Business at Rice University. He serves on the Jones Health Care Advisory Board at Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business and as the Council of Deans liaison to the Association of American Medical Colleges' Group on Business Affairs.

**Gina McKellar***Crow Shields Bailey PC* ★

**McKellar** is the managing shareholder at Crow Shields Bailey PC, an accounting and consulting firm with offices in Mobile, Daphne and Gulf Shores. She is a graduate of the University of South Alabama and specializes in tax planning and consulting for businesses, estate tax work and business valuation services. McKellar has been involved on boards of numerous organizations including the McGill-Toolen Foundation, University of South Alabama Planned Giving Council, and the Smart Home Alabama Board. She is also a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts. McKellar is a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.

**Judy Mitchell***Franklin Primary Health Center Inc.* ★

**Mitchell** is the chief operations officer for Franklin Primary Health Centers Inc., a nonprofit, federally qualified health center founded in 1975 to address the need for quality healthcare in the underserved Davis Avenue community (now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue community). Mitchell graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in nursing. She has served as a professional nurse for more than 38 years and is certified by several professional boards. Mitchell has been instrumental in assisting with incorporating 41,000 Medicaid recipients in the Mobile area, including the Aged Blind and Disabled, into a managed care environment including formation and implementation of Primary Care Provider homes.

**Eliska Morgan***Thompson Engineering* ★**VICE CHAIR, ADVOCACY**

**Morgan** is government relations/business development manager for Thompson Engineering. Previously, she was executive director of the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council, leading efforts to develop plans to support more than \$315 million in RESTORE funds to projects throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties. She serves as chair of the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee and on the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program's executive committee and business resources committee; the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation board of trustees; Alabama School of Mathematics and Science Foundation board; and the Alabama Water Resources Commission.

**Patrick Murphy***Alabama Power Co.* ★**VICE CHAIR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION**

**Murphy** is vice president of the Mobile division for Alabama Power Co. Before assuming his current position, he was vice president for marketing and economic development and vice president of economic and community development. He began his career with Alabama Power in 2011 as a senior project manager in the economic and community development department. Prior to joining Alabama Power, he was the senior vice president of economic development for the Birmingham Business Alliance. Murphy is past president of the Economic Development Association of Alabama. He is also a member of the Chamber's board of advisors.

**McCrary Otts***Lyon Fry Cadden Insurance Agency*

**Otts** is vice president for Lyon Fry Cadden Insurance Agency, and has been with the company since 2002. He is a graduate of The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business. Otts is a member and past officer of Spring Hill Presbyterian Church and he has been involved with the Waterfront Rescue Mission and the United Way of Southwest Alabama.



**Enoch Smith**

*Easy Heating & Cooling Inc.*

**Smith** is CEO of Easy Heating & Cooling Inc., founded in 2005. He is a two-term president of the platinum business builders BNI Chapter and a graduate of the SBA Emerging Leaders program, MAWSS Mentor Protege Program and Minority Business Accelerator. He is also a participant in the RAMP program and a member of the Chamber's board of advisors. He graduated from Universal Technical Institute with a concentration in HVAC and refrigeration technology, earned an associate's degree in information technology from Bryant & Stratton College and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at the University of South Alabama.



**Elizabeth Stevens**

*Downtown Mobile Alliance*

**Stevens** has served as president and CEO of the Downtown Mobile Alliance since its formation in 2005. She has worked in downtown development since 1985 in her native South Carolina as well as Alabama. She started the Main Street Program in Conway, S.C., and then moved to Mobile to run the Main Street Program for the City of Mobile. In 2017, Stevens was appointed to serve as a trustee to the Alabama Department of Archives and History. She is president of the Barton Academy Foundation and serves on the board of directors of Springboard to Success, Visit Mobile and Mobile Rotary. Stevens is a graduate of Leadership Alabama.



**Richard Stimpson**

*Leavell Investment Management* ★

**VICE CHAIR, MILITARY AFFAIRS**

**Stimpson** is chairman/investment counselor for Leavell Investment Management. He received a bachelor's degree in pre-law from The University of Alabama and subsequently served in the U.S. Marine Corps as an infantry officer. Stimpson is a member of Leadership Alabama, the Downtown Mobile Alliance and the Alabama Policy Institute, where he serves as the chair of the board.



**George Talbot**

*Volkert Inc.* ★

**VICE CHAIR, COMMUNICATIONS**

**Talbot** is the director of governmental relations for Volkert Inc. Before serving in this role, Talbot was the director of communications and external affairs for the City of Mobile and a state and national political reporter for al.com. Talbot received an executive education from the Harvard Kennedy School and earned a bachelor's degree in English from Rhodes College. He has served on the boards for Housing First, the Mobile Area Chamber and the Society Mobile-La Habana Inc.



**Thomas McRae "Mac" Taul IV**

*Merchants Transfer Co.* ★

**Taul** is president of Merchants Transfer Co., and has been with the company for 25 years. He is a graduate of Birmingham Southern College. Taul is a partner at Point Logistics, Southern Intermodal Xpress and Hardwoods Unlimited. He is also involved in the JH Outback Ministry, Southeastern Warehouse Association and the Young Presidents Organization.



**Tamara Weinert**

*Outokumpu Stainless USA* ★

**Weinert** is the president and CEO of BA Americas for Outokumpu. Previously, she was the senior vice president for sales for South Europe & Overseas, after being the CFO for Outokumpu in Europe from 2013 to 2016. She has served as head of corporate and structured finance at Vattenfall Group, treasurer and director of credit risk management at Nuon Energy and head of credit risk and contract management at Mirant Europe. Prior to joining Mirant, Weinart worked 17 years in various financial positions for Deutsche Bank. Weinart earned a master's degree in finance from Manchester Business School and a master's degree in protected landscape management from University of Greenwich. Weinert serves on the Chamber's board of advisors.



**Christian White**

*Regions Bank* ★

**White** is Regions Bank's market executive and commercial banking leader for south Alabama. He began his banking career with Regions in 2003. He is involved with several local nonprofits, including Wilmer Hall and the United Way of Southwest Alabama. White has a bachelor's degree in economics from Hampden-Sydney College and is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. He serves on the Chamber's board of advisors.



**Gia Wiggins**

*Morale Resources*

**Wiggins** is president of Morale Resources, a boutique human resources consulting firm. She received a bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology from Grambling State University, a master's in business administration from California State University and a doctorate degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama (USA) with a concentration in management. Wiggins is an adjunct instructor at USA and the University of Mobile. She has held executive HR positions at AT&T, Cintas, Target and BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards. Wiggins serves on a number of committees and organizations, including the Daphne Kappa League advisory board and Gulf Coast Dementia Services.



# CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW MEMBER ANNA GOLDMAN



Warren Averett, one of the largest public accounting and business consulting firms in the Southeast, is pleased to announce the promotion of an exemplary professional to Member of the Firm in Mobile. To learn more about Anna and our other new Members across the Firm, please visit our website: [www.warrenaverett.com/newmembers](http://www.warrenaverett.com/newmembers)



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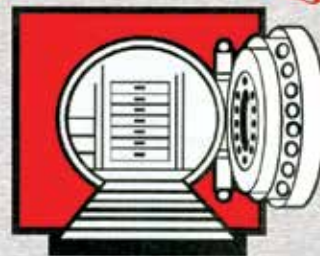


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# CHAMBER MEMBERS APPOINTED TO ALABAMA INNOVATION CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Two Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce members will serve on the Alabama Innovation Corporation Board of Directors, a public-private partnership responsible for implementing initiatives and policies to grow Alabama's economy through innovation and technology.

Dr. Michael Chambers, assistant vice president for Research Innovation at the University of South Alabama and Abe Harper, president of Harper Technologies LLC, were selected by Governor **Kay Ivey**.

The selection comes after both served on the Alabama Innovation Commission, charged to develop forward-thinking policy recommendations and ideas to create a more robust, inclusive economy that supports entrepreneurship, innovation and technology.

"The Alabama Innovation Commission has done incredible work, and I'm excited to see how we as a state can implement smart policies that will foster innovation and develop a talented workforce for the future," said Ivey. "I'm



inspired by the promising growth for Alabama's economy, and I look forward to working with the Alabama Legislature and the Alabama Innovation Corporation to help Alabama reach new heights."

The policy recommendations work to foster entrepreneurship, create jobs,

build a talented and diverse workforce and support economic development opportunities.

For more information or to view the commission's full report, visit [innovatealabama.org](http://innovatealabama.org).

## Morale Resource's Gia Wiggins Named to *Forbes* Next 1000 for 2021



Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce board of advisors and board of director member **Gia Wiggins** was named by *Forbes* magazine a Next 1000 honoree for 2021.

The Next 1000 is a year-round initiative from *Forbes* to spotlight bold and inspiring entrepreneurs who are redefining what it means to run a business.

Wiggins is the founder of Morale Resource, a boutique human resources consulting firm specializing in providing a fresh, unique and innovative way to help client workforces operate at maximum effectiveness.

She founded her firm with \$500 in 2015 while completing a doctorate in business management. Today, she helps small companies navigate challenges with professionalism and evidence-based management you'd typically find at large corporations like AT&T, Cintas and Target, where she spent most of her 21-year human resource management career.

Wiggins was selected for the Next 1000 by *Forbes* editors and a panel of top business minds and entrepreneurial superstars from thousands of nominations.





# INVESTOR FOCUS SPRING HILL COLLEGE

**College officials:** **Dr. E. Joseph Lee**, president; **Dr. Kenneth England**, executive vice president; **Dr. Nathan Copeland**, vice president for enrollment; **Kevin Abel**, vice president of student affairs; **Dr. Racheal Banks**, vice president for advancement; **Dr. Lisa Hager**, interim provost; **Laura Burton**, chief marketing officer; **Joseph Niland Jr.**, director of athletics; and **Chris Hughes**, director of information technology.

**Address:** 4000 Dauphin St.

**Website:** shc.edu

**Years in business:** 192

**Brief company description:** Founded in 1830, Spring Hill College is the oldest Catholic College in the Southeast and the third oldest Jesuit college in the United States. Spring Hill combines the Jesuit tradition of excellence in education and a commitment to caring for the whole person – mind, body and spirit – with innovative educational experiences. Spring Hill’s mission is to form leaders engaged in learning, faith, justice and service for life. As a result, Spring Hill students are engaged, inspired and transformed by their experiences.

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s Partners for Growth Initiative?** “Spring Hill College provides state-of-the-art education with degree programs that are relevant to the needs of today’s industry and business,” said Lee. “We develop the people and community assets through education that supports the economic growth and future of the city of Mobile. Our partnership with the Chamber and local

businesses sustains the growth of Mobile’s future and ensures our own growth as future generations of leaders continue to seek education for personal and professional development. It’s a win-win for the college, the City of Mobile, our partner businesses and the community.”

## About Partners For Growth:

Growing Global, Investing Local 2018-2022, Partners for Growth is a five-year, public-private initiative of the Mobile Area Chamber to grow and diversify Mobile’s economy. Its five pillars include: 1) new business recruitment and investment attraction; 2) existing industry support, innovation and entrepreneurship; 3) workforce attraction, retention and development; 4) diverse business development; and 5) business advocacy and quality of place.



Join the Chamber’s economic development investors by contacting **David Rodgers**, vice president, economic development, at **251.431.8657** or **drodgers@mobilechamber.com**.



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**Friday, March 18**

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**7:30 a.m.**

**Registration & Breakfast**

**8:30 a.m.**

**Shotgun Start**

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# DISCOVER AND EXPLORE RHINE RIVER CRUISE



## 10-DAY TRIP INCLUDING 7 NIGHTS ABOARD THE NEW AMADEUS CARA CRUISE SHIP - OCT. 9-18, 2022

Zurich | Lucerne | Strasbourg | Rüdesheim | Koblenz | Cochem | Cologne | Amsterdam

**T**he Mobile Area Chamber has chartered the Amadeus Cara for a glorious cruise up the Rhine River, Oct. 9-18, 2022. Over the course of this 10-day trip, you will discover the many beautiful facets of “Father Rhine” along one of Europe’s most important and attractive rivers.

Along the way, you will pass the Dutch IJsselmeer and take a detour along the winding Moselle River. Delight in the panorama of the myth-enshrouded Middle Rhine Valley with its winelands, the prominent Lorelei rock and the highest density of castles in the world.

Other highlights of this trip include visits to the historic river cities of Basel, Strasbourg, Cologne and Amsterdam.

Start the trip in Lucerne, Switzerland, then spend seven nights aboard the new five-star Amadeus Cara Cruise Ship featuring 73 spacious deluxe cabins and 12 suites.



The cost of the tour starts at \$3,899 per person, based on double occupancy, if booked by April 9, 2022. The price includes round trip airfare from Mobile, hotel and cruise accommodations, city tours and all meals aboard the ship.

To learn more about the tour or to book the trip, contact Brooke McIngvale at 251.431.8640 or [bmcgingvale@mobilechamber.com](mailto:bmcgingvale@mobilechamber.com).

### TRIP AMENITIES

- Round trip scheduled airfare
- 1 night in Lucerne, Switzerland
- 7 nights aboard the new five-star Amadeus Cara cruise ship
- Superb dining with all meals included during your cruise (buffet breakfast, lunch, dinner, midnight snack)
- 24-hr. coffee and tea stations
- Quality red and white wines from Europe’s great wine regions with every dinner onboard the ship

# How to Get in the BUSINESS VIEW

The *Business View* is published 10 times a year by the Mobile Area Chamber. It features activities and accomplishments of the Chamber and its member businesses. If your business is a member, keep reading – this feature is designed to outline how member companies can be highlighted.

For those who are not members and who want to learn more about joining, contact Molly Tillman, the Chamber's director of membership, at 251.431.8649 or [mtillman@mobilechamber.com](mailto:mtillman@mobilechamber.com) or Michael Galvin, senior vice president of member engagement, at 251.431.8628 or [mgalvin@mobilechamber.com](mailto:mgalvin@mobilechamber.com).

## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

This article introduces people filling the highest staff position in member companies. Some are chief executive officers, while others hold the title of president or manager.

## MEMBER NEWS

One of the publication's most popular columns, Member News reports management-level new hires and promotions; business endeavors, such as new products, new locations, major projects, etc.; management-level awards, certifications, board officers, national and regional industry awards and annual company awards.

Weekly headlines and events sponsored by member organizations are promoted through the Chamber's weekly electronic newsletter sent to more than 7,000 recipients. Available to anyone free of charge, e-mail [info@mobilechamber.com](mailto:info@mobilechamber.com) to subscribe to the *Business View Weekly*.

News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional headshots and must be 300 dpi at full size in an eps, tif or jpg format.

Information may be sent to [news@mobilechamber.com](mailto:news@mobilechamber.com). Those submitting events to the weekly electronic newsletter must use the automated form on the website at [mobilechamber.com/calendar/submit-news-events/](http://mobilechamber.com/calendar/submit-news-events/).



### ADELE HAPWORTH

THE AMERICAN EQUITY UNDERWRITERS INC. (AEU)

**TITLE:** CEO  
**HOMETOWN:** Vienna, Va.  
**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Virginia  
**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** After spending 10 years in the insurance industry, Adele joined AEU in 2005. Prior to her current position, she worked in various capacities for the company.  
**WHO OR WHAT INSPIRES YOU?** Positive people  
**HIDDEN TALENT:** I am a great cook  
**WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF?** I am a CEO  
**SECRET TO SUCCESS:** Stay focused on the goal  
**FAVORITE FOOD/STAPLE:** I love Italian food  
**WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR LONG-TERM PROFESSIONAL GOALS?** To help companies grow and prosper  
**WHAT IS ONE THING YOU COULD NOT GO A DAY WITHOUT?** Coffee  
**YOUR GREATEST INSIGHT:** Stay focused  
**WHICH QUALITY YOU MOST LIKE IN PEOPLE?** Kindness  
**WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CHARACTERISTIC?** I am a hard worker  
**BEST PLACE TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?** Colorado  
**BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** The amazing people I work with  
**TOP BUCKET LIST TRIP:** Hawaii, London  
**BRIEF COMPANY DESCRIPTION:** The American Equity Underwriters Inc. (AEU) is an insurance company, which is a program administrator for American National Mutual Insurance Co. A group of insurance companies owned by the U.S. Department of Labor for waterfront companies in 20 states under the U.S. Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act. Based in Virginia, AEU provides claims handling, loss control, longshore (remedial and other) support.

## CALENDAR

The calendar printed in the *Business View* outlines only activities of the Mobile Area Chamber.

Events sponsored by Chamber members must be submitted using the online form found at [mobilechamber.com/calendar/submit-new-events/](http://mobilechamber.com/calendar/submit-new-events/) to be included in the weekly electronic newsletter.

## BUSINESS NEWS

The business briefs featured in this section of the magazine are centered around positive economic development headlines such as company expansions, business-changing contracts, significant hiring initiatives, new investments and more. Occasionally, there is room to accommodate major community news and initiatives.

### MAY 2021

#### 11 MILITARY APPRECIATION LUNCH

When: Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
Where: U.S. Armed Forces Retirement Home  
Sponsor: Chamber of Commerce  
Cost: \$10 per person  
Contact: Chamber of Commerce, 251.431.8649  
Sponsor: Chamber of Commerce

#### 12 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

When: Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
Where: Chamber of Commerce, 251.431.8649  
Sponsor: Chamber of Commerce  
Cost: \$5 per person  
Contact: Chamber of Commerce, 251.431.8649  
Sponsor: Chamber of Commerce

#### 18 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

When: Tuesday, May 18, 2021  
Where: Chamber of Commerce, 251.431.8649  
Sponsor: Chamber of Commerce  
Cost: \$50 per person  
Contact: Chamber of Commerce, 251.431.8649  
Sponsor: Chamber of Commerce

#### THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF OUR MAY EVENTS

### WHO'S NEW

#### Armenian Bank Names Branch Manager - Leading

Armenian Bank has named a new branch manager for its new branch in the Mobile area. The new manager is a highly experienced professional with a strong background in banking and customer service.

#### USA Press Names Director of Staff Development

USA Press has named a new director of staff development. The new director is a highly experienced professional with a strong background in staff development and training.

#### US Navy Names Captain of USS Zumwalt

The US Navy has named a new captain for the USS Zumwalt. The new captain is a highly experienced professional with a strong background in naval operations and leadership.



## SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

A volunteer committee reviews applications and selects a business to be featured in each issue as Small Business of the Month. Criteria includes employing less than 100 people, a member in good standing of the Mobile Area Chamber and sales or profit growth.

For more information on how to nominate a company or apply, contact Danette Richards, the Chamber's director of small business development, at 251-431-8652 or drichards@mobilechamber.com.



**EFFICIENCY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE MAKE MOSLEY BUILDING SYSTEMS**

In the most decades since **James and Mitch Mosley** took the reins of the company they founded, **Mosley Building Systems** has thrived by integrating innovation with cutting-edge technology. The Mosleys were named in the industry leading business, which has helped them by applying their expertise in steel fabrication to the concept of building assembly.

This team has honed their signature efficiency and customer service, helping expand Mosley Building Systems from its roots in general contracting. The company's pre-engineered buildings are now found among the steel structures, manufacturing, agricultural and aerospace industries all along the Gulf Coast.

By Chris Horton, MBS Solutions

## GUEST COLUMNS

Chamber staff invite or select management-level employees to write articles addressing a specific topic primarily aimed at small businesses. Members have expressed an interest in a number of topics including marketing, international trade, employee management and legislative issues.

**CYBERSECURITY: WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS**

By Chris Horton, MBS Solutions

During the summer as a technology professional, I've attended countless training sessions, seminars and webinars on security. Solutions include the purchase of services that expense and require a major disruption do not occur.

Today, businesses are looking for ways to protect their data. It is a natural concern that the President of the United States signed an executive order in May of 2016 for all government agencies to increase their security posture and develop a response plan.

I have searched for a robust solution and have not found one. In fact, most of my experience has found that there are three factors for cybersecurity.

A major misconception is that cybersecurity is an IT responsibility. A business organization now takes general responsibility for their own cybersecurity.

**Insurance**

The first recommendation is to ensure your cyber insurance policy is properly covering your business. Do your policy have the right riders to cover your concerns such as a breach of your data, a breach as a third party requiring your business, cyber extortion or fraud. Sometimes this is insurance and best cyber mitigation limit your threat vectors and reduce your overall liability.

**Backups**

The second is backups, backups and backups. Every online session, I've attended in the last few years indicates it is not if you are compromised, but when and the recovery options are based on your backup retention capabilities. The key is to be able to alert when an incident happens and respond quickly and restore your data as efficiently as possible.

The virus might penetrate beyond protecting the environment to longer term. The perimeter is no longer enough. Communication has given rise to users accessing corporate resources on desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones that may be corporate or personal. Corporate assets are no longer only located behind the corporate firewall but are now located in Amazon, Azure, Google and other cloud vendors.

**ABOUT THE EXPERT**

Chris Horton is the President of MBS Solutions. Over the past 20 years, MBS has provided with numerous customers from Supermarkets to the U.S. Department of Defense the specialized use of computer technology for strategic planning and implementation. To contact MBS, call 251-202-2222 or visit mbsolutions.com.

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Mark E. Hays

## DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS

The *Business View* recognizes the governing board of directors annually. The Chamber also has a board of advisors consisting of leaders whose companies make significant dues investments. Profiles of advisors are featured monthly, and a list of the entire group run annually.

For more information on how to join the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Mallory Tyson at 251.431.8655 or mtyson@mobilechamber.com.

## ADVERTISING

Part of the *Business View*'s mission is to serve as an affordable advertising outlet. It is not a profit-driven publication. Advertising offsets the cost of printing and mailing. The *Business View* is mailed to members and businesses in Mobile County listed on a Dun & Bradstreet list, and has a circulation

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of nearly 22,000 business owners and managers. In addition, the online electronic version is emailed to more than 7,000 recipients and posted on the Chamber's website with articles posted on the Chamber's blog and social media sites, including Facebook and LinkedIn.

Frequently, advertising space sells out months in advance. The advertising contract and guidelines can be found on the Chamber's website, mobilechamber.com.

To check availability, contact the publication's advertising executive, René Eiland, at 251.431.8635 or reiland@mobilechamber.com.

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## EDITORIAL STAFF

Each month, the Chamber's communications and advocacy team holds an editorial meeting to discuss ideas, information, stories and photographs for the next issue. Stories are written and edited by the communications team and freelance writers.

## HOW TO PITCH A STORY

There are several ways to pitch a story for the *Business View*: e-mail the who, what, where, when, why and how to news@mobilechamber.com or any member of the Chamber's communications and advocacy team:

Nancy Hewston, 251.431.8618 or nhewston@mobilechamber.com

Ashley Horn, 251.431.8623 or ahorn@mobilechamber.com

Denise Curtis, 251.431.8641 or dcurtis@mobilechamber.com

Carolyn Wilson, 251.431.8606 or cwilson@mobilechamber.com

# CHAMBER AT WORK



**1 A NEW LEADERS RECEPTION** was held to recognize new area leaders to the Chamber's board of directors, board of advisors and Partners for Growth investors. The reception was held in November in Regions Bank's Pharr Room. More than 34 new leaders were invited and recognized.

**2 VETERANS DAY COMMISSION** Chamber staff volunteered at the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission Veteran's Day Luncheon at Fort Whiting. It was our privilege to honor our local veterans by serving those who served our nation.

**LEADERS EXCHANGE** The Mobile Area Chamber's Leaders Exchange was held in Charleston, South Carolina, in November. More than 86 people participated in the trip that included discussion topics such as aligning community assets, ensuring

results in community problem solving, urban transportation, investing in infrastructure and growing tech startups.

**3 BUSINESS EXPO** Mobile's largest business-to-business trade show, Business Expo was rescheduled to November 18 at the Mobile Convention Center, where more than 1,500 people attended and visited 176 exhibitors' booths.

**ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION** Chamber staff participated in the United Way of Southwest Alabama Engaging the Next Generation Volunteer Fair. The United Way invited young leaders between the ages of 21 and 40 seeking further involvement in the community to visit local nonprofits to find out about their missions and seek new volunteer opportunities.



#### 4 THE CHAMBER AWARDED ITS 2021 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD TO SILVER SHIPS INC.

A volunteer committee selected Silver Ships as the 2021 Small Business of the Year winner based on business growth, operations and impact; innovation and entrepreneurship; business strategy; customer service and market strategy; and community involvement. Other finalists included Bama Pest Control and Easy Heating & Cooling.

#### 5 ANNUAL STATE OF THE CITY AND COUNTY

The Chamber held its annual State of the City and County breakfast featuring City of Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson along with Mobile County Commissioners Connie Hudson and Randall Dueitt and Commission President Merceria Ludgood. More than 650 people attended the event which featured the local leaders in a discussion moderated by WKRG's Peter Albrecht.

**6 A TRIP TO ITALY** The Chamber hosted a group travel trip to Italy. The 50 travelers were on the Amalfi Coast and visited the Isle of Capri and the ruins of Pompeii.





# CHAMBER AT WORK

## Ribbon Cuttings



For information on how the Mobile Area Chamber can help your business with a ribbon cutting or grand opening, contact Molly Tillman at 251.431.8649.



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Banks



## CHAMBER NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS



**Denise Curtis** is the new director of communications in the Mobile Area Chamber's communications and advocacy department. Curtis is responsible for seeking out innovative ways to reach audiences, engaging them and keeping them engaged. She serves as a media spokesperson and actively develops a good working relationship with all media to ensure coverage surrounding events, programs and projects.

A seasoned public relations professional, Curtis comes to the Chamber from the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce in Fairhope, where she served as communications director. There, she managed all communications while maintaining consistent messaging and branding through all the Chamber's media outlets. She led the rebuild of [eschamber.com](http://eschamber.com) finance-free, and she designed and built [exploreeasternshore.com](http://exploreeasternshore.com) and [thejubileefestival.com](http://thejubileefestival.com).

Curtis graduated with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from Troy University. She is a Leadership Baldwin graduate and currently serves as president-elect of the Mobile Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama.

After years of working in Baldwin County and living in Mobile, she is enjoying her short commute. "I call Midtown home, and I'm thrilled to support my local business community by sharing Mobile's stories, members' achievements and opportunities for growth," she said.

"Denise's reputation, communications acumen and experience leveraging multi-platform storytelling will be integral to our continued work to promote the Mobile region as a premier location for businesses and to attract and retain talent," said **Nancy Hewston**, vice president of communications and advocacy.

Curtis replaces Susan Rak-Blanchard, who retired after 26 years of service with the Chamber.

Curtis can be reached at 251.431.8641 or [dcurtis@mobilechamber.com](mailto:dcurtis@mobilechamber.com).

## CHAMBER HIRES SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST



The Mobile Area Chamber hired **Chase Webster** as social media specialist, a new position in the communications and advocacy department. Webster's duties include administering and maintaining the Chamber's social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Webster earned a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of South Alabama.

After starting his career as a freelancer working in videography, photography and web design, he joined the Kalifeh Media Group as a creative director. Most recently, he opened his own business, Emulous Creative, where he helped clients with creative and digital marketing.

"Chase's experience in social media will help us elevate the Chamber's reach and to generate momentum and positive impact for our members' businesses," said **Nancy Hewston**, vice president of communications and advocacy.

"Becoming the social media specialist at the Mobile Area Chamber was a can't-miss opportunity for me," said Webster. "I am incredibly grateful to be able to engage and support our community while doing what I love."

Webster can be reached at 251.431.8621 or [cwebster@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cwebster@mobilechamber.com).

## CHAMBER HIRES NEW BUSINESS ANALYST



The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce named **Jakayla Ford** business analyst in the economic development department. Ford is a recent graduate of Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She is currently pursuing a master's degree, also in business administration.

Prior to her graduation, Ford interned with the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, a nonprofit organization that partners with state, local and private entities involved in Alabama's economic development efforts.

"Jakayla brings what all organizations look for – a fresh new perspective – to the table. Her skills and abilities will enhance our efforts to continue moving forward," said **David Rodgers**, the Chamber's vice president of economic development.

Ford will oversee the information and research needs of the Chamber's economic development department. She will be charged with collecting and analyzing data, developing and publishing a wide array of community and state research documents, updating marketing materials and responding to information requests.

"Working for the Chamber so far has been an amazing experience," she said. "Being a part of an organization that values the economic well-being of its community inspires me to continue its efforts in making Mobile the best place to live."

Ford can be reached at 251.431.8629 or [jford@mobilechamber.com](mailto:jford@mobilechamber.com).

## CHAMBER ADDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR



**Jennifer Brinkman** joined the Mobile Area Chamber's economic development department as its economic development coordinator. Her primary role will be to coordinate and administer the department's programs, schedules, events and meetings. She will provide support for business development, workforce and education, international trade and business retention and expansion.

Brinkman earned an applied science degree in administrative office management from Virginia College.

"I am confident that we are in good hands," said **David Rodgers**, vice president of the Chamber's economic development department. "Jennifer's experience in project management and administration will be a valuable addition to our department."

Before joining the Chamber staff, Brinkman was an administrative assistant at Neel-Schaffer Inc., where she served as an administrative assistant assisting engineering management on projects, and keeping relationships with local organizations.

"I am excited to be joining the economic development team and thankful that I am able to work with an agency that makes such a positive impact in our community and surrounding areas," said Brinkman.

Brinkman can be reached at 251.431.8650 or [jbrinkman@mobilechamber.com](mailto:jbrinkman@mobilechamber.com).



# Around Town



## 2022 Mardi Gras Parade Schedule

A partner with the Mobile Area Chamber, *Mobile Mask* has been reporting 365 days a year on all the happenings of Mobile's Mardi Gras. This year is no exception and we are happy to share the parade schedule as it is now. *NOTE: These dates and times are subject to change. Visit mobilemask.com for the latest information on all things Mardi Gras and remember to pick up your copy of Mobile Mask coming soon.*

### Saturday, January 29

1 p.m. - Krewe de la Dauphine (Dauphin Island)

### Saturday, February 5 (Senior Bowl)

1 p.m. - Dauphin Island People's Parade (Dauphin Island)

### Friday, February 11

6:30 p.m. - Conde Cavaliers (Mobile, Route A)

### Saturday, February 12

2 p.m. - Order of the Rolling River (DIP)

2:30 p.m. - Bayport Parading Society, Mystic DJ Riders (Mobile, Route A)

6:30 p.m. - Pharaohs, Conde Explorers (Mobile, Route A)

### Thursday, February 17

6:30 p.m. - Order of Polka Dots (Mobile, Route A)

### Friday, February 18

6:30 p.m. - Order of Incas (Mobile, Route A)

6:45 p.m. - Apollo's Mystic Ladies (Daphne)

### Saturday, February 19

2 p.m. - Mobile Mystics, Mobile Mystical Revelers, Mobile Mystical Friends (Mobile, Route A)

6:30 p.m. - Knights of Ecor Rouge (Fairhope)

6:30 p.m. - Maids of Mirth (Mobile, Route G), Order of Butterfly Maidens, Krewe of Marry Mates, Order of Hebe (Mobile, Route A)

## STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS



February is National Library Month and this month, we've decided to ask the Mobile Area Chamber staff which books they are currently reading and would recommend to our *Business View* readers. Here are a few choice suggestions:

***A Time for Mercy*** by John Grisham

***Big Magic*** by Elizabeth Gilbert

***The Golden One*** by Elizabeth Peters

***The Body Keeps the Score***

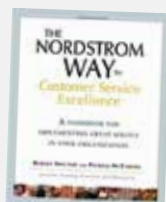
by Bessel van der Kolk

***The End of Membership***

by Sarah L Sladek

***The Nordstrom Way***

by Robert Spector and  
Patrick D. McCarthy



### Sunday, February 20

6:30 p.m. - Neptune's Daughters, Order of Isis (Mobile, Route A)

### Monday, February 21

6:30 p.m. - Order of Venus, Order of Many Faces (Mobile, Route A)

### Tuesday, February 22

6:30 p.m. - Order of LaShe's (Mobile, Route A)

### Thursday, February 24

6:30 p.m. - Mystic Strippers Society (Mobile, Route A)

### Friday, February 25

6:30 p.m. - Crewe of Columbus, Krewe de Second Line (Mobile, Route A)

6:45 p.m. - Maids of Jubilee (Fairhope)

### Saturday, February 26

11 a.m. - Foley Parade (Foley)

Noon - Floral Parade, Knights of Mobile, Order of Olympia, Mobile Mystical Ladies, Order of Angels, Joy of Life (Mobile, Route A)

Noon - Krewe of Goats, Prichard Carnival Association (Prichard)

Noon - Krewe of Sparta (Saraland)

2 p.m. - Krewe of Mullet Mates (Mullet Point)

5:45 p.m. - Mystics of Time (Mobile, Route H)

6 p.m. - Mystics of Pleasure (Orange Beach)

6:45 p.m. - The Shadow Barons (Daphne)

### Sunday, February 27 (Joe Cain Day)

1 p.m. - Fort Morgan Parading Society (Fort Morgan)

2 p.m. - King Elexis I Motorcade (Mobile, Route E)

2:29 p.m. - Loyal Order of the Fire Truck (Daphne)

2:30 p.m. - Joe Cain Procession (Mobile, Route A)

5 p.m. - Le Krewe de Bienville (Mobile, Route A)

6 p.m. - Krewe du Cirque (OWA, Foley)

### Monday, February 28 (Lundi Gras)

Noon - King Felix III, Floral Parade (Mobile, Route A)

3 p.m. - MLK Business and Civic, MLK Monday Mystics, Northside Merchants (Mobile, Route D)

6:45 p.m. - Order of Mystic Magnolias (Fairhope)

7 p.m. - Infant Mystics, Order of Doves (Mobile, Route F)

### Tuesday, March 1 (Fat Tuesday)

10 a.m. - Gulf Shores Parade (Gulf Shores)

10:30 a.m. - Order of Athena (Mobile, Route A)

12:30 p.m. - Knights of Revelry, King Felix III, Comic Cowboys (Mobile, Route A)

2 p.m. - MAMGA Mammoth Parade (Mobile, Route B)

2 p.m. - Orange Beach Parade (Orange Beach)

6 p.m. - Order of Myths (Mobile, Route C)

## Read the Business View IN PRINT AND ONLINE

Enjoy articles from this issue on the Mobile Area Chamber's website – [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) – through our blog and under Chamber Publications.

The Chamber also shares magazine features through our social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Visit [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) to find all our links. Share our digital magazine with your customers on your website and social media channels.



# FEBRUARY 2022

For more information on Chamber events, visit [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com)

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## COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

*Start your day with the Chamber and network with other business attendees.*

**When:** 8 to 9 a.m.

**Where:** Innerspace Architectural Interiors, 201 St. Joseph St.

**Contact:** Molly Tillman at 251.431.8649 or [mtillman@mobilechamber.com](mailto:mtillman@mobilechamber.com)

*No charge.*

**Sponsor:** S&S Sprinkler Co.

**Hosted by:** Innerspace Architectural Interiors and PJ's Coffee

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## EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

*\*Members Only*

*A monthly forum for Chamber-member small business owners and managers featuring speakers on important business topics.*

**When:** 8 to 9 a.m.

**Where:** Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

**Speaker:** Rusty Murdaugh, president, Austal USA

**Topics:** Austal USA Updates and news

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251.431.8607 or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com)

*Registration requested.*

**Sponsor:** BancorpSouth

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## CHAMBER CLOSED FOR MARDI GRAS

### THANK YOU TO FEBRUARY EVENT SPONSORS



Lagniappe is now Alabama's  
**LARGEST**  
Weekly  
**NEWSPAPER**

**77,000 READERS\***  
\*NIELSEN RESEARCH

LAGNIAPPE

Mobile's Newspaper

**SAVE**  
*the*  
**DATE**

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Pork & Politics**  
Thursday, March 24  
5:30 to 7 p.m.  
USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

Register online at [www.mobilechamber.com](http://www.mobilechamber.com)  
or call 251-431-8606



## WHO'S NEW

### Neel-Schaffer Hires Senior Environmental Manager



Covington

**Neel-Schaffer Inc.** announced **Buddy Covington** has joined the firm as a senior environmental manager. Covington has more than 25 years of experience and

has completed more than 75 National Environmental Policy Act documents. He holds a bachelor's degree in geology and a bachelor's degree in marine science from The University of Alabama.

### Bellator Welcomes Six New Realtors



Cobb



Harrison



Huxtable



Keesee



Mahan



Payne

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** hired six new Realtors including **Janet Cobb**, **Colleen Harrison**, **Pam Huxtable**, **Rachel Keesee**, **Kerri Mahan** and **Alicia Payne**.

### Carr, Riggs & Ingram Announces Staff Changes

**Casey Rodden** and **Will Nguyen** joined **Carr, Riggs & Ingram LLC**. Rodden, a manager, graduated from the University of Memphis with a bachelor's degree in accountancy, received CPA accreditation and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). Nguyen, a staff accountant, is currently a senior at the University of South Alabama, where he will graduate with a bachelor's degree in accountancy and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

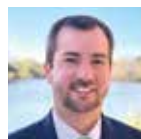
**Alex Kanaverskis** and **Lil Edwards** have joined the firm as senior accountants. Kanaverskis is a graduate of the University of Georgia with bachelor's and master's degrees in accountancy. He also received a CPA accreditation.

Edwards is a graduate of The University of Alabama with bachelor's and master's degrees in accountancy. She also received a CPA accreditation.

**Evelina Jones** joined the firm as staff accountant. She graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in accountancy. She also received CPA accreditation.

In other news, **Micah Pointer** was promoted from supervising senior to manager and **Christian Day** from senior accountant to supervising senior.

### River Bank & Trust Adds Senior VP



Roe

**Wayne Roe** joined **River Bank & Trust** as senior vice president and relationship manager. Roe earned a bachelor's degree in finance and economics from The University of Alabama. He also graduated from Alabama Banking School and Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University.

### Foot and Ankle Surgeon joins USA



Mullens

The **University of South Alabama's (USA)** department of orthopaedic surgery expanded with the addition of **Jess Mullens M.D.**, a foot and ankle orthopaedic surgeon. Mullens earned a medical degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine in Birmingham. He completed a residency in orthopaedic surgery at the USA College of Medicine and a fellowship in the foot and ankle specialty at The Steadman Clinic at Vail Health Hospital in Vail, Colorado.

### Mobile Infirmary Names New COO



Hansert



Breal

**Ben Hansert**, the former president of North Baldwin Infirmary, has accepted the

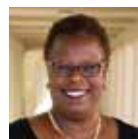
title of chief operating officer at **Mobile Infirmary**. Hansert will bring his clinical expertise and strong management skills to the largest hospital in Mobile and Baldwin counties, partnering with Mobile Infirmary President **Susan Boudreau**.

In addition, **Infirmary Health** named **Kenny Breal** as the new president of North Baldwin Infirmary. Breal joined Infirmary Health as executive director of Imaging Services in 2015 and was promoted to vice president of clinical operations in 2017.

### Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama Announces New Board Members



Goldsmith



Coleman



Hanes



McMullan



Sanders

The **Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama** new board members are: **Bruce**

**Coldsmith**, **Angela Coleman Ph.D.**, **Robin Hanes**, **Dr. Eddrice M. McMullan** and **Nick Sanders**. The members will serve a three-year term.

### Roberts Brothers Hires Agents, Staff



Bowen



Edmondson



Gaudet



Guarisco



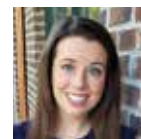
Hubbard



McCarron



Neff



Sprinkle



Taggart



Thompson



A. Williams



R. Williams



Webb



King

**Roberts Brothers** hired new agents, including **Chane Bowen**, **Karen Edmondson**,

**Crystal Gaudet**, **Patrick Guarisco**, **Karisa Hubbard**, **Marsha McCarron**, **Jessica Neff**, **Meghan Sprinkle**, **Ginger Taggart**, **Katrina Thompson**, **Antoinette Williams** and **Robert Williams**.

**Megan Webb** is the new executive assistant and **Matt King** is the new graphic designer.

### Burr & Forman Expands Mobile Office



Kirkland



Crownover

**Burr & Forman LLP** announced the addition of **Catherine "Cat" Kirkland** as partner in

the firm's Mobile office healthcare practice group. Kirkland received a law degree from The University of Texas School of Law and a bachelor's degree in political science and government and journalism from the University of Texas at Austin.

Joining the firm's 13 additional associates, **Joshua M. Crownover** is a new associate in the firm's Mobile maritime and transportation practice group. He earned an undergraduate degree in finance from the University of South Alabama and a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

### New Associate Joins Wilkins Miller

**Wilkins Miller LLC** accounting and advisory firm hired **Robyn Reed** as an associate. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and public accounting from the University of Mobile.

## Spring Hill College Names New VP for Enrollment



Copeland

Spring Hill College welcomed **Nathan Copeland Ed.D.** as its new vice president for enrollment to focus on driving student enrollment. Copeland holds bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration at Harding University and earned a doctorate of education at The University of Alabama.

## EXIT Realty Welcomes New Team Members

Local **EXIT Realty** affiliated offices announced the addition of the following individuals to their teams: **Noelle Howerin**, **Shanae Ingram**, **Gene Ramsey** and **Melissa Janes**.

## BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

### Roberts Brothers Inc. Announces the Acquisition of Mannich

**Roberts Brothers Inc.** acquired the property management division of Mannich Real Estate. Roberts Brothers Property Management now manages nearly 400 rental properties in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

## USA Health Promotes Nutrition, Healthy Living

**USA Health** has been admitted into a global network of 35 teaching kitchens, the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative (TKC), through a competitive selection process. The TKC is an invitational network of thought-leading organizations using teaching kitchen facilities and concepts as catalysts for enhanced personal and public health across medical, corporate, school and community settings. Its focus is to help patients learn how to make modifications in their eating habits to either prevent or alleviate diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer and are encouraged to participate in collaborative research efforts to advance healthy lifestyles.

In addition to hands-on culinary medicine classes, **USA Health** has a demonstration kitchen in its University Commons facility, with another planned for the Mapp Family Campus currently under construction in Fairhope.

### Image360 Relocates

**Image360 West Mobile** announced the company's move to a new facility at 915 Hillcrest Rd. Image360's expansion into the new space creates a one-stop shop to meet customers' needs for all types of display, signage and design projects. For more information visit [image360westmobile.com](http://image360westmobile.com).

## Ascension Providence's New Surgical Technology is First of its Kind

**Ascension Providence** is now the first facility in Mobile to offer the O-arm system with StealthStation navigation, which gives surgeons real-time 3D images during surgery. The O-arm system can be used in a variety of procedures including spine, brain and orthopedic cases. The O-arm combines low-dose x-ray imaging and fast image processing to provide live 3D navigation during surgery. It enables the surgeon to obtain highly detailed images of the surgical site in seconds, all without moving the patient. This results in more accurate placement of spinal hardware, often with smaller incisions, shorter surgical time, less pain and faster recovery. This unique technology is now in use at Ascension Providence, Mobile's leader in spine surgery volumes.

## USA Health, Monroe County Enter Management Agreement

**USA Health** and **Monroe County** have entered into a management services agreement related to the hospital in Monroeville and its related ancillary operations. **Elizabeth Kirby**, assistant administrator at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital, will serve as administrator and chief executive officer for Monroe County Health. Kirby earned a bachelor's degree in biology, a master's degree in science in health administration and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

## WELL DONE

### Leavell Investment Management Receives Top Ranking Three Years in a Row

For three consecutive years, Alabama-headquartered **Leavell Investment Management Inc.** has been included in the CNBC FA 100, a list of top-rated U.S. financial advisory firms. In 2021, Leavell Investment Management ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> and is the top-ranked advisory firm headquartered in Alabama.

### Mobile County Commission Receives Sea Lab Award

Dauphin Island Sea Lab honored the **Mobile County Commission** with its 2021 Gulf Coast Marine Environmental Leadership Award. The award recognizes an organization whose efforts have resulted in the improvement of marine environmental sustainability in the Alabama Gulf Coast Region. The Mobile County Commission obtained \$8.24 million in RESTORE Act funding for the Mobile County Blueways Trail, which will provide recreational paddling experiences throughout the county.

**CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

THIS MONTH, WE RECOGNIZE OUR ALUMNI WHO BROKE BARRIERS TO BECOME THE FIRST BLACK AMERICANS TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS. ALUMNUS DENZEL WASHINGTON, KNOWN FOR HIS BLOCKBUSTER MOVIES, ATTENDED THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MOUNT VERNON. "EVERYTHING YOU'VE SEEN OR HEARD ABOUT ME BEGAN WITH LESSONS I LEARNED TO LIVE BY AT THE CLUB."

- DENZEL WASHINGTON

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF SOUTH ALABAMA



## Ascension Providence Recognized with 'A' Grade for Safety

**Ascension Providence** in Mobile once again was awarded an 'A' from The Leapfrog Group's Hospital Safety Grade for fall of 2021. The national designation recognizes the hospital's efforts in protecting patients from harm and meeting the highest safety standards. The Leapfrog Group is a national organization committed to improving healthcare quality and safety for consumers and purchasers.

In 2020, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama also recognized Ascension Providence as a Blue Distinction Center+ for total hip and knee surgery, spine surgery and cardiac care.

The hospital was also rated as a 4-star hospital in the 2021 ratings program of The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

## C Spire Business Wins Trio of Regional Partner Awards from Cisco Systems

**C Spire Business** was honored with three top regional information technology and networking sales, service and performance awards from Cisco, the San Jose-based tech and networking giant. The business services division of C Spire was selected by Cisco for the Gulf States Partner of the Year award, the Gulf States Enterprise Networking Partner of the Year award and the Gulf States Public Sector Engineer of the Year award.

## Teacher and Chickasaw High School Share \$50,000 Award

**Brian Copes**, a construction and manufacturing teacher at Chickasaw High School, was named a winner of the 2021 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence, winning \$15,000 for himself and \$35,000 for his program.

The mission of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools is to increase understanding, support and investment in skilled trades education in U.S. public high schools.

## Alabama Sports Hall of Fame Inductees Announced

The board of directors of the State of Alabama Sports Hall of Fame announced newly elected inductees for the Class of 2022: **Doyle Alexander, William Andrews, Keith Askins, Rusty Greer, Patrick Murphy, Jake Peavy, Philip Rivers** and **Justin Tuck**. This will be the 54<sup>th</sup> class inducted.

## USA Health Gives 100,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Doses

**USA Health** is marking a milestone on the Alabama Gulf Coast, giving the 100,000<sup>th</sup> dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to a patient at its drive-through site at Expo Hall. USA Health partnered with the City of Mobile to open a drive-through vaccine clinic at the Mobile Civic Center arena where thousands more residents have been vaccinated against COVID-19 through a two-dose series of shots. Employees also worked with area pastors, local businesses, elder care facilities and United Way agencies to pinpoint where vaccine pop-up clinics would help the most people.

## Real Estate Agent Recognized Internationally for Outstanding Achievement

**Lamoura Nettles**, sales representative with EXIT Realty Lyon in Mobile, was honored with the Silver Award by EXIT Realty Corp. International. The award was given in recognition of closing between 50 and 74 real estate transaction sales during the production year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

## COMMUNITY

### Africatown Project

**Africatown Heritage House**, a \$1.3 million project spearheaded by Mobile County Commission President **Merceria Ludgood**, is a collaborative community effort that will eventually house a History Museum of Mobile exhibit about 110 enslaved West Africans; the ship that brought them to Alabama; and the unique community of Africatown. Six modular units that will become Africatown Heritage House arrived in segments for on-site assembly.

Submission deadline for Member News is two months prior to publication. News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional headshots labeled with the person's first and last name, and must be 300 dpi at full size and saved in an eps, tiff or jpg format. Send your information to [news@mobilechamber.com](mailto:news@mobilechamber.com).




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As of 12/30/2021

Know a company interested in benefiting from Chamber membership? Contact Jackie Hecker at 251.431.8642 or [jhecker@mobilechamber.com](mailto:jhecker@mobilechamber.com). Also, find a membership directory at [web.mobilechamber.com/search](http://web.mobilechamber.com/search).

#### CONNECT with us



#### FOLLOW us



[mobilechamber.com/blog](http://mobilechamber.com/blog)



The Mobile Area Chamber was awarded the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's highest designation. Of the 6,936 chambers in the United States, only 3 percent achieved five-star distinction.

## BECOME A MOBILE AREA CHAMBER MEMBER

Membership with the Mobile Area Chamber offers many opportunities to be involved, help our community, receive education and professional development and, most of all, attend networking events to get to know members like you. Join us.

Visit [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) or scan the QR code for an application.



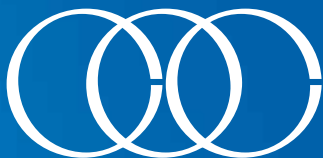
## FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

L.A. ALSTON

L.A. FOTOGAPHEE

Lemaris "L.A." Alston is a husband, dad and photographer who prides himself in capturing happiness for clients on location and in his studio in Mobile. Since he started his photography business in 2011, Alston has completed more than 2,500 photo shoots and has photographed some of his clients' most important life moments, from awards and graduations to engagements and weddings to newborns and families. Alston says photography is his passion, job and creative outlet. He has a bachelor's degree from Alabama State University and a master's degree and a doctorate from the University of Phoenix in computer information systems. He and his wife, Jamelah, live with their three children in Mobile. In this issue, Alston's work can be seen on the cover and in the feature on University of South Alabama President Jo Bonner. To see more of his portfolio, visit [lafotographee.com](http://lafotographee.com).





MOBILE AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SEE YOU  
THURSDAY,  
MARCH 10

## 185<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars for the Mobile Area Chamber's  
2022 Annual Meeting. It's in a new place  
with a new format!

Thursday, March 10, 2022  
5:30 to 8:30 p.m. | 23 East at Brookley

Tickets: \$60 - Members | \$75 - Guests  
\$550 - Package of 10 tickets

Register online: <https://bit.ly/Mobile2022AM>



Meeting Presented By



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