

ALABAMA'S TOP FORTY OVER 40

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

We are pleased to recognize Alabama's top 40 men and women over the age of 40 whose lives and careers are characterized by great levels of giving and achievement.

The winners were nominated by someone in the Alabama community who felt they demonstrate honor, determination, reliability, hard work, and service in their everyday professional and personal lives.

Congratulations to our winners and all of the nominees. We thank you for your dedication to our sweet home Alabama!



LIEUTENANT GENERAL
ANTHONY COTTON
Montgomery

Cotton is the Commander and President of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base. He provides full-spectrum education, research, and outreach at every level through professional military education, professional continuing education, and academic degree granting. He leads the intellectual and leadership center of the U.S. Air Force, graduating more than 50,000 resident and 120,000 non-resident officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian personnel each year.

Additionally, he is responsible for officer commissioning through Officer

Training School and the Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Cotton entered the Air Force through the ROTC program in 1986. He has commanded at the squadron, group, and wing levels. He served as Deputy Director of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Air Force Executive Action Group as Senior Military Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Deputy Director of the National Reconnaissance Office. He was also the Vice Commander and Commander of the 341st Missile Wing, Malmstrom AFB, Montana; and the Commander of the 45th Space Wing and Director of the Eastern Range, Patrick AFB, Florida.

Prior to his current assignment, Cotton served as Commander of the Twentieth Air Force, Air Force Global Strike Command at Francis E. Warren Air Force Base.

DR. JOHN DINDO
Dauphin Island

Dindo moved to the coastal shores in Alabama after four and a half years of active duty in the U.S. Air Force, where he was trained in Morse code and stationed in Alaska to help intercept Soviet messages. He also spent nine months in Vietnam. More than 42 years ago, he took a job at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, where he was charged with enhancing a high school program there. While earning his master's degree and PhD from UAB, Dindo grew the Discovery Hall Program into one of



the largest K-12 teacher training marine science programs in the country. He helped design, raise funds, and oversee the building of the Estuarium—a public educational aquarium. Dindo is a lifelong member of the National Marine Educators Association, a founding member of the Mobile Bay Sierra Club and Alabama Coastal Foundation, and a board member of the Mobile Bay Audubon.



BILLY REID
Florence

Charming the fashion world with his luxury collections is Alabama's own internationally acclaimed fashion designer Billy Reid. He launched his first collection in 1998 after spending much of his career developing products for Australian golfer Greg Norman and freelance designing for Neiman Marcus, J.C. Penney, and Fruit of the Loom. His current business model includes a Billy Reid namesake chain of 13 shops, and an e-commerce site with full product offerings for men and women as well as footwear and accessories. In the U.S. his brand is sold in Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, and Bloomingdale's. He has won many awards including CFDA's Menswear Designer of the Year. *Vogue* noted his brand's "relaxed charm and rolled-up elegance." In 2017, *Observer Magazine* called Reid "perhaps the most likable player on the American menswear scene." *The Washington Post* has described Reid's aesthetic as "worn luxury," and *W* magazine named it "Southern Gentleman Sartorialism." Reid operates his design studio in the upstairs of his flagship store in Florence.

STEPHANIE BRYAN
Atmore

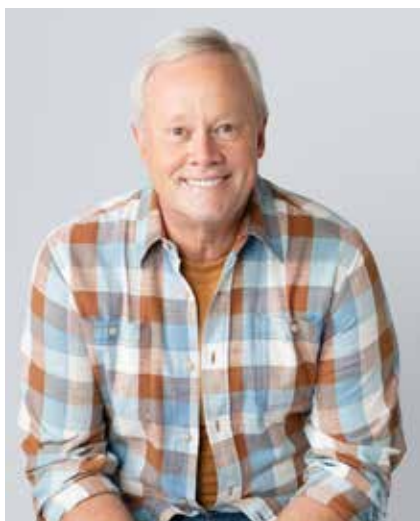
Among all of her accomplishments, Stephanie Bryan became the first female political leader elected to the position of Tribal Chair and CEO for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Overall for her career, Bryan worked for the Tribe and in the insurance industry for a combined 20 years. She advocated for extending health insurance to all Tribal members and employees. She worked to expand educational opportunities for every Tribal member and First Generation Indian Descendant. She values her elders and is passionate about instilling the importance of Creek culture and history into younger generations. Her accomplishments include overseeing all Tribal operations including Tribal Government, Creek Indian Enterprise Development Authority, and PCI Gaming Authority, as well as having served as vice-chair of the Tribal Council since 2006. On a national level, Bryan represents her community with her involvement in regulations affecting Indian gaming as well as legislation affecting the Tribe and Indian Country. She has worked with numerous legislative committees such as the National Indian Gaming Commission, National Indian Gaming Association, and United South and Eastern Tribes.



TENA PAYNE
Leeds

What started as a hobby has become quite an enterprise for ceramic artist Tena Payne. She was farming shiitake mushrooms and selling them to local restaurants in Birmingham when a chance conversation with famed chef Chris Hastings of Hot & Hot Fish Club changed the trajectory of her career path. They discussed her designs and he commissioned her to make unique dinnerware and serving pieces for his restaurant. From that, a succession of culinary and hospitality shows across the country followed, resulting in the launch of Earth-born Studios in Leeds. Today, Payne's works can be found at the finest restaurants and for sale at retail stores. She has shown and won awards at many invitational and juried shows and has works exhibited in galleries and private collections throughout the country. Her products are seen regularly in local and national cooking magazines with culinary creations presented on her custom pottery. She has won dozens of awards; in 2015 she was awarded Enterprising Woman of the Year, and in 2009 *Forbes* named her a top-five finalist in their Boost Your Business Contest.





DANNY LIPFORD
Mobile

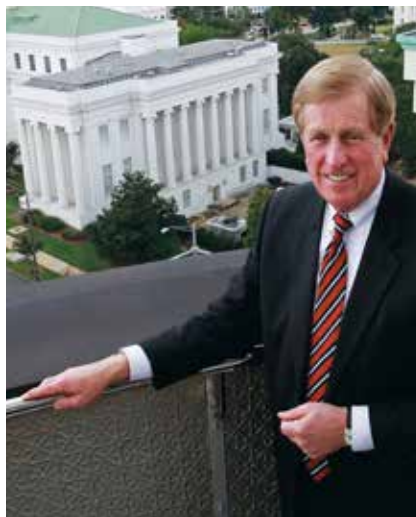
As host of the Emmy-nominated, nationally syndicated *Today's Homeowner* television and radio show, Danny Lipford has earned the reputation of America's Home Expert. He does it all from his home in Mobile, where he operates his remodeling firm, Lipford Construction, as well as his nationally known home improvement media company, Today's Homeowner Media. Lipford's career has taken him from major remodeling jobs to the national stage as the home improvement expert for CBS and The Weather Channel, as well as serving as an expert contributor to hundreds of other media outlets. He is currently preparing to launch the 21st season of his show, making it the second longest running home improvement show in history. He has used his success as a platform to impact communities in Alabama and nationwide. From his home improvement efforts at Manna House, a group home for young women, to his involvement with The Learning Tree, which offers residential and educational programs for children with autism, and serving on the project team for The Home Depot Foundation, which helps veterans with home improvements, Lipford makes a significant philanthropic impact. He has received numerous honors including Alabama Remodeler of the Year Chrysalis Award and Top 500 Remodelers in the U.S. from *Qualified Remodeler* magazine five years in a row.

DR. DAVID BRONNER
Montgomery

Dr. Bronner is best known as the CEO of the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA)—the pension fund for the employees of our state. History will show that he has been successful in drastically changing Alabama's image, transforming the state into one of the world's top golf meccas and watching tourism and corporate business grow exponentially. Since he took his position in 1973, Bronner's visions have generated enormous growth in RSA's assets, leading to the development of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and the PCH Hotels and Resorts.

"I think the success of the Trail has been better than I thought it would be," Bronner says. "I know it's frustrated a lot of enemies. I know when we started there were a lot of skeptics. There was a lot of 'Bronner's stepped off the edge of reality this time' kind of talk."

The Trail garnered immediate attention for its vision, value, and volume



of magnificent golf courses. Magazines, newspapers, and television stations all over the world reported about the new golf in Alabama, and the tourists began to pour in, coming to see Bronner's playground instead of driving to more costly golf resorts in neighboring Florida or Georgia. That created another problem for Bronner to solve—a lack of upscale hotels for visitors to stay when they played the Trail.

He added to the Trail's treasures, partnering with Marriott to add a splash of luxury to stay-and-play packages. Known today as the PCH Hotels and Resorts, the properties include The Grand Hotel, Ross Bridge, Grand National, Marriott Shoals, Capitol Hill, Riverview, The Battle House, and Renaissance Montgomery.

DAVID HARTLINE
Leesburg



Hartline was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1968 as a Private E1. He served for 23 years, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His military schools included Airborne, Pathfinder, Recon/Scout, and Jungle Expert. He served in Vietnam as a member and commander of a six-man Long Range Recon Patrol, a multi-forces Special Ops. He is also a veteran of the Persian Gulf War. He was wounded twice during his service and later received a direct commission into the U.S. Army Officer Corps. In his honor, the Alabama Senate and House named Highway 273 after him. TBS named him a "Super Citizen," and he is a best-selling author of four books: *Vietnam: What a Soldier Gives*; *Inner Thoughts*; *Definition of a Hero*, and *The Real Tarzan*. He is a former chief of police and college instructor. The Alabama American Legion named him Legionnaire of the Year and Veteran of the Year in 2014, and he served as State Commander of the American Legion in 2015–2016. He regularly gives motivational speeches around the country to churches, clubs, veterans groups, and active duty troops.



DAVID PURSELL
Sylacauga

Thousands of people have traveled to Sylacauga to enjoy exceptional experiences created by native son and visionary David Pursell that benefit Talladega County and Alabama at large.

Pursell's great-grandfather started the family's fertilizer business in 1904; by the time Pursell, a fourth-generation owner, took over in 1997, much had changed about the industry. Pursell's company, Pursell Technologies Inc., created a revolutionary, controlled-release line of products called POLYON.

Pursell moved the company's headquarters from downtown Sylacauga to land that his parents had lived on since the late 1970s. The land covered 3,200 acres of meadows, lakes, streams, and elevations up to 1,100 feet and offered a unique environment to showcase POLYON and Southern Hospitality. Pursell Farms was born.

Pursell master-planned the FarmLinks Golf Club, branding it the world's first and only research and demonstration golf course. He inked a partnership to bring global outdoor brand Orvis to Pursell Farms, giving Alabama one of only two Orvis Shooting Grounds in the country. Orvis at Pursell Farms creates visibility for Alabama and draws visitors from around the country to participate in one of the finest sporting experiences anywhere.

He also serves on the board of directors for Vapor Ministries, which

is housed at Pursell Farms. He makes regular trips to Vapor Ministry centers in Haiti and Africa with the goal to build sustainable sports centers in third-world countries, help alleviate poverty, provide humanitarian aid, and build disciples for Christ.

Pursell created The Pursell Institute in 2004, which makes it possible for qualifying nonprofit organizations to utilize FarmLinks Golf Club and Pursell Farms for golf tournaments and retreats. To date, these nonprofits have raised more than \$10 million through fundraising efforts at the club and farm, and hundreds of groups have enjoyed meaningful retreats. Almost 600 organizations have benefitted from this philanthropic resource.

DEBRA JENKINS
Huntsville

In 2006, Debra Jenkins and her husband decided to pair their financial resources with their passion for the arts to develop a historic building as their family's gift to the community of Huntsville. In 2007, Merrimack Hall Performing Arts Center became a central hub of activity for people with physical and intellectual disabilities.



Jenkins's program, called The Happy Headquarters, has provided substantive and meaningful experiences in the arts for more than 500 individuals each year and has been recognized regionally and nationally for the unique nature of its elements. In her efforts to make Huntsville the gold standard for inclusion in Alabama, she received the prestigious Classic Woman Award in

2009, presented by Meredith Publishing Company. Jenkins was one of six women chosen through a nationwide search who were recognized for their volunteer service to their communities. *The Huntsville Times* selected Jenkins as one of the Top 10 Most Influential People in North Alabama in 2014. She has also received awards from the Women's Economic Development Council of Huntsville, The Girl Scouts of North Alabama, and Delta Zeta National Sorority. She and her husband were chosen as Philanthropists of the Year in Madison County and received the Philanthropy Award from the Huntsville Community Foundation. Additionally, Jenkins and her program were profiled in a two-part feature on CNN in December 2012, and she and Merrimack Hall were chosen to be featured in the prestigious PBS telethon "American Graduate Day."



TASIA MALAKASIS
Elkmont

Tasia Malakasis is CEO and president of Belle Chevre, an award-winning goat cheese creamery located in Elkmont. She is also the author of two cookbooks: *Tasia's Table* and *Southern Made Fresh*, published by *Southern Living*. She works passionately to promote the state of Alabama and its exceptional qualities in the culinary sphere. Malakasis and the cheeses she produces have been recognized from industry pundits all over the globe—from Switzerland's International Dairy Innovation Awards to the *New York Times*. She has also been featured in the "O List" by *Oprah* magazine. The Alabama Tourism Department featured her as a "maker" in their Conde Nast campaign to encourage visitors from around the country

to enjoy our rich culinary traditions and heritage. Large international brands have also chosen Malakasis to help tell their story by featuring her passionate pursuit of making and marketing a product made in Alabama, thus widening the circle of influence and promoting the best of Alabama.

GARRETT WILLIAMSON Mobile

With a passion for fitness, Garrett Williamson built Personal Edge Fitness, a personal training facility. He has grown his company to 150 clients with six full-time, degreed and certified personal trainers. His business achievements include being a featured speaker for Diet Spotlight, a member of Mobile Chamber of Commerce, and an evaluator for the Accreditation Council for Independent Colleges and Schools. He is a USAT National Championship Qualifier: Sprint Triathlon, Aquathlon, and Aquabike. He is also a TEAM USA Member with six world championships. Williamson has been actively involved with various animal rescue organizations for 23 years. He is public relations director and a foster caregiver for Save a Stray, past board member of Mobile SPCA, and board adviser for Dauphin Island Sea Club.



GARLAN GUDGER Cullman

Garlan Gudger is the owner and CEO of Southern Accents Architectural Antiques in Cullman—the largest dealer of its kind in the Southeast. What started with 20 employees in 1969 is now a worldwide operation headquartered in downtown Cullman. Gudger has been awarded both bronze and gold medals as Alabama Retailer of the Year by the prestigious Business Council of Alabama in recognition of his hard work. His involvement in the Cullman community is defined not only by his lengthy résumé of board memberships and elected service positions, but also by his active involvement in the revitalization of Cullman following the devastating tornadoes that ripped through the area in 2011. As a city official he was able to help facilitate the inaugural Rock the South concert to raise money for the rebuilding efforts. This concert has become an annual event drawing visitors from all over the state and beyond, and *Billboard Magazine* has named it as one of the top festivals in the nation. In 2012 he was awarded a Hero of the New South Award from *Southern Living* for his efforts to find ways to repurpose rubble and avoid sending it to landfills. He was involved in the startup and now owns the Southern Makers event, which is an annual celebration of the best in creativity and design with artists that live and work in the South. This year, Gudger has traveled twice to Uganda to help people in need, and he also spearheads a nonprofit with his wife to help the less fortunate in Cullman.

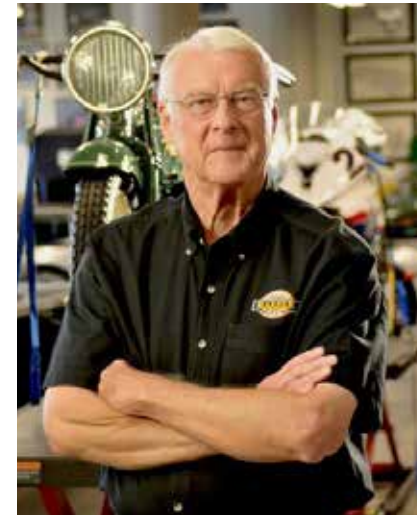
Be on the lookout for the duo this holiday season as they make their annual caravan dressed as Santa and Mrs. Claus with toys for the kids of Head Start.

RAY SCOTT Hope Hull

Growing up in Montgomery, Ray Scott found his love for fishing. At 15 years old, he organized the Blue Gill Fishing Society for his friends, where he would have a cane pole and a can full of worms ready at all times. As Scott grew older, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served in Germany. When he returned from war he finished his degree at Auburn University through the GI bill. With a successful career booming, Scott still had fishing on his mind. His original idea of creating a bass fishing tournament evolved into a greater vision of bass fishing as a national sport. The Bass Anglers Society (B.A.S.S.) now has more than 600,000 members. Scott owns a lake called President's Lake, which is widely known for hosting



Presidential fishermen George W. Bush and George H.W. Bush. Scott has received many honors including the Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame Ray Scott American Trailblazer Award and the Fisherman's Best Friend Award; he was also inducted into the International Games Fish Association Hall of Fame.



GEORGE BARBER Birmingham

George W. Barber Jr., born and based in Birmingham, is a businessman, real estate developer, and philanthropist. After graduating from Auburn University, Barber worked at Barber Dairies, the family business, and also raced sports cars—mostly Porsches—winning 63 first-place trophies. In 1970 Barber became the sole owner and chairman of the board of Barber Dairies. He later purchased Birmingham Realty Company. In 1998, he sold the dairy to Dean Foods.

In 1988, Barber began collecting cars and motorcycles. In 1994, he established the nonprofit Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum, located in a warehouse in downtown Birmingham. In 2003, the new Barber Museum opened at the 880-acre Barber Motorsports Park, located near Leeds in eastern Birmingham.

In 2014, Guinness World Records certified the Barber Museum as the largest motorcycle museum in the world. The museum is currently 230,000 square feet and contains more than 1,600 motorcycles. The museum also houses the largest collection of Lotus racecars in the world, and the Barber Park is the home of the Porsche Experience, the largest of Porsche's 15 driving schools around the world. The Barber Museum and Park has won many national and international awards and is consistently described as one of Alabama's premier tourist attractions.

GARY PARISHER MARY MARTHA PARISHER Birmingham

Gary and Mary Martha Parisher are the minds behind the green boxes of cheer being delivered to children's and veterans' hospitals nationwide. In 2011 they created a charity-based business focused on team building for corporations and providing gifts for those suffering in hospitals. The business is named Cheeriodicals. Mary Martha conceptualized the business as an online site for consumers to purchase and send gifts including magazines to hospital patients. After the launch, Gary joined his wife in the venture and the two expanded the company by partnering with major corporations to lead socially responsible team-building activities. During these activities, teams of dozens to thousands of people assemble the green boxes of cheer filled with magazines and toys. A coordinated effort is then made to ship these boxes to the hospital and to personally deliver each box to a child in the midst of a long hospital stay. The effort has expanded to include veterans' hospitals. In 2014, the Parishers won the Alabama-based entrepreneurship contest Alabama Launchpad. They were also selected



for Auburn University Montgomery's Top 50 at 50 Awards in 2017, and in 2018 they were joint winners of Auburn University Montgomery's Alumni of the Year Award. They have hosted team-building activities for more than 100 of the largest corporations in the U.S. and Canada and have delivered to more than 100 of the largest and most renowned hospitals internationally.



JASON WILSON Gadsden

Jason Wilson is a fifth-generation Alabamian and native of Gadsden. As the founder and CEO of Back Forty Beer Company, he was one of only two licensed brewers in the state when he opened his doors in 2009. He was a pioneer in an industry that now has an estimated \$750 million economic impact on Alabama and provides numerous local jobs. Over the past 10 years, Wilson's facility has been through three major expansions, representing more than \$15 million in economic impact for Gadsden alone. His craft beers have not only broken city lines, but state lines; grocers and restaurants from all over the Southeast offer his renowned Naked Pig Pale Ale, Truck Stop Honey Brown Ale, Freckle Belly IPA, Paw Paw's Peach Wheat Ale, and Cart Barn Light. Seasonal offerings as well as contract and private label brewing are also available. Wilson serves on numerous boards, has won a plethora of awards, and supports several charitable causes. One of his most recent accomplishments is partnering with Stouffer's and their Urban Bistro line—their Beer Glazed Meatballs are made with Back Forty Beer.



FRANK STITT
Birmingham

Nearly 35 years ago, chef Frank Stitt changed the culinary landscape of Birmingham and beyond. With three restaurants in Birmingham—Highlands Bar & Grill, Bottega, and Chez Fonfon—he has mastered the art of French and Southern fusion, Italian, and authentic French cooking, respectively. He has published two cookbooks that have been widely recognized, has won numerous national culinary awards, and has made Birmingham a culinary destination. Most recently his Highlands Bar & Grill won the prestigious James Beard Foundation Award as the Most Outstanding Restaurant in America. Stitt was named Best Chef in his region in 2001 and was a finalist for Most Outstanding Chef in the Country in 2008. In 2011, he was inducted into the foundation's Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America, and in 2009 he was inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor. His first cookbook, *Frank Stitt's Southern Table*, was named Best Cookbook in 2005 by the Southern Bestsellers Association. He has trained some of Birmingham's best chefs who have gone on to start their own restaurants and has propelled the Magic City's culinary scene to national acclaim.

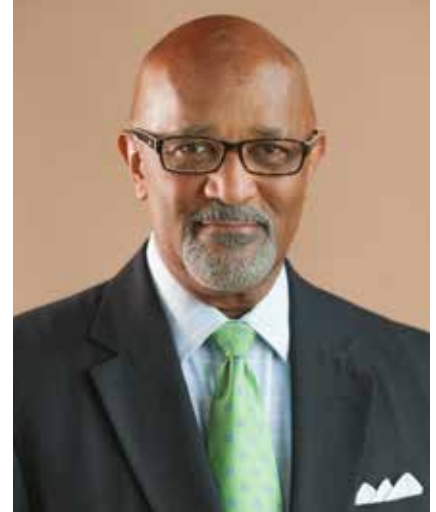
EMMA CLAPP
Gadsden

Emma Clapp is the mother of two children with special needs. A few years ago, she immersed herself in a county-wide study regarding special needs bullying and parental involvement. From this research an idea was born, and in 2016 she hosted the first annual Night For Our Stars Prom for special needs teens and adults in Gadsden. This prom is for those who are unable to attend a regular prom and now have the opportunity to have one of the best nights of their lives. It is a very formal event sponsored by the Children's Policy Council executive board. The event is free to all attendees and in a sensory-friendly environment. There is a red carpet walk and a presentation of prom king and queen, with Disney princesses on hand to crown them. There is enough food and entertainment not only for the children and their "dates," but for their families as well. The first year started with 80 special needs children at the local community center. This year there were almost 230 special needs children in attendance, and the event has been moved to the Gadsden Convention Hall. Clapp passes out dresses to the girls who don't have one and provides a hair day on the day of the prom.

Clapp is a member of the Children's Policy Council and volunteers regularly with them. As a result of the prom on a state level, she won an Excellence in Service Award. She is on the boards of Mental Health America and the Easter Seals of Etowah County, which helps raise money to send special needs children to Camp ASCCA. She teaches financial, parenting, and relationship classes at local jails and



drug rehabilitation centers. She is on the board of a Long Term Recovery group, which helps those who have been affected by disasters. Clapp works behind the scenes to change other people's lives and is doing so all while raising her own children.



JERROD BROWN

AUBREY MILLER
Birmingham

Aubrey Miller is a proven leader in nonprofit, corporate, governmental, and educational settings. His career achievements include transforming the YMCA of Greater Birmingham into a highly successful nonprofit organization, significantly increasing unrestricted giving for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), and successfully leading the Baptist Health Foundation from a \$2.5 million deficit to a \$2.7 million surplus. He currently serves as the president of the Shelby County Board of Education and is a member of the Edward Lee Norton Board of Advisors, The Kiwanis Club of Birmingham, and The Lakeshore Foundation. From 1995 to 1999, Miller served in a key cabinet position with the Alabama Bureau of Tourism in Montgomery, promoting Alabama as a tourist destination. With the expertise he has demonstrated in economic, fundraising, and donor development, Miller has positively impacted the financial health and general well being of various organizations and communities in Alabama.



JAMIE BURNETT

JODY FULLER
Birmingham

Jody Fuller is a motivational speaker, writer, comedian, and soldier with a lifelong stutter. His parents divorced when he was 2, his dad was blind and died when Jody was just 8. Born and raised in Opelika, Fuller had two goals in life: to overcome poverty and stuttering. After high school he enlisted in the Army and served for almost 25 years; he was deployed to Iraq for three tours. This is how he handled the poverty situation. As for the stutter, he decided to use that to his advantage. Fuller gives speeches all over the U.S. for a wide range of groups from schools to corporations to disability groups as well as troops at home and abroad. He has a column that runs in 10 newspapers, and he's been published seven times in the popular *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series with essays including "A Lifetime of Stuttering: From Lemons to Lemonade," "Embracing My Uniqueness," and "Miracles in Uniform." He is a member of two NSAs: The National Stuttering Association and the National Speakers Association.

NALL HOLLIS
Fairhope

Known simply as "Nall," this internationally recognized artist maintains studios and galleries in Vence, France, and Fairhope, Alabama. His signature dinnerware porcelain has been produced by Havelind and Parlon, Royal Limoges, The Tunisian Porcelain Company, and Monaco Porcelain Company. He has participated in international porcelain fairs including Caroussel du Louvre in Paris; Stuttgart, Germany; Château de Bagatelle; Podium boutique in Moscow; and New York's Arts and Crafts Museum and Murano Memories group show. He has had four postage stamps produced by the Principality of Monaco.

Nall has created commissioned works for specific spaces, exhibitions, and figureheads including New York's National Arts Club; Cathedral of Saint-Paul de Vence; and His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco. He designed the sets and costumes for the Puccini operas *Girl of the Golden West* and *Le Rondine*. His monumental *Peace Frame* is permanently installed as the doorway to Pietrasanta, Italy, and in Monaco, overlooking the harbor, voted the most photographed site in the city. His latest monumental sculpture, *Japanese Magnolia*, is permanently installed in Monaco.

Many international museums have his works in their permanent collections. He has been awarded the Mary Ellen LoPresti ARLIS/Southeast Publishing Award for Best Art Book for his creation of *Alabama Art* and has been instrumental in promoting



CLAUDIA ALBUQUERQUE

other Alabama artists by curating their works into the RSA Hotels in Alabama. He was awarded a Doctorate Honoris Causa from Troy University and Alabama's Distinguished Artist of the Year Award from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. There have been numerous hardcover books published on his work.

Nall is currently being inducted into the Alabama Humanities Board of directors.



NATALIE CHANIN
Florence

Natalie Chanin is the founder and creative director of Alabama Chanin and its family of businesses. Starting with just three employees, Chanin has maintained a commitment to ethical and responsible production as well as promoting the value of community. The company that has become what Alabama Chanin is today began in 2000 as a DIY enterprise creating hand-sewn garments made from cotton jersey T-shirts. Over the years, the business expanded and the hand-manufacturing operation grew to include machine manufacturing with the launch of Bldg. 14. The machine skills needed to be honed, so Chanin had her design team develop a new language for stitches and machine parts. Rededicating themselves to their own education brought about a partnership with the nonprofit organization Nest. This partnership is appropriately called The School of Making Project, which is an overseeing body that directs and innovates Alabama Chanin's learning initiatives and educational programs. The Factory is home to the flagship store and a full-service café, along with the Alabama Chanin design and production studios and Bldg. 14 Design + Manufacturing division. Natalie's designs are sewn by a team of local Alabama seamstresses using primarily salvage material.

MARGO GILBERT
Mobile

Margo Gilbert's first job in the hotel/restaurant industry was as a dishwasher. In the years to follow she would be the general manager that brought Mobile's battered Battle House Hotel back to life after being closed for more than 30 years. "Mobile's Living Room" had been dark for decades, but through the leadership of Gilbert, the Battle House has regained its glory.

Gilbert won Renaissance General Manager of the Year, and her hotel has been ranked in the top 10 in customer satisfaction in North America for the past 10 years. A once boarded-up building now houses a Four Diamond hotel and a Four Diamond restaurant.

Battle House is now honored by designations such as *Travel + Leisure's* "Top 500 Hotels in the World" and many more. Gilbert serves on several boards including Mobile's Downtown Alliance and Visit Mobile. She works with the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Mobile SPCA. She played a leading role in the MoonPie Drop initiatives and the quirky celebration has been praised by *USA Today*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, the *Today Show*, and beyond.



TOM LUCKIE
Birmingham

Tom Luckie is the chairman and CEO at marketing solutions firm Luckie & Company. Privately owned and fiercely independent for 65 years, his company headquarters is in Birmingham with offices in Atlanta, Dallas, and Raleigh. Through times of economic decline and revival, Luckie has turned double-digit profits by growing the business organically through mergers and acquisitions, all without debt or outside funding. In 2013, Luckie & Company was named the top agency in Alabama by *Adweek*, a national advertising publication. In partnership with longtime client Alabama Tourism Department, the agency has made a lasting impact on the citizens of Alabama by helping grow the tourism economy from \$4 billion to \$10 billion. Luckie has also partnered with the Alabama Tourism Department for the 2018 launch of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail (USCRT), a first-of-its-kind tourism trail that connects 14 states and more than 100 landmarks of the Civil Rights Movement.

Luckie is also involved in numerous philanthropic organizations. He sits on the board of the Crippled Children's Foundation and the Mountain Brook Board of Education. He lends his leadership skills and helping hands to the Monday Morning Quarterback Club, USGA, Auburn University's Raymond J. Harbert College of Business, his church, and various other organizations.



NICK SABAN
Tuscaloosa

Not only is Nick Saban known for being one of the greatest head football coaches of all time, leading the Alabama Crimson Tide to 17 National Championships and counting, but he has maintained a large involvement in philanthropic efforts. In 1998, Saban and his wife, Terry, founded the Nick's Kids Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness and resources for deserving organizations located throughout the Southeast. Nick's Kids has distributed more than \$6 million throughout the nation to deserving organizations and causes. The foundation has helped support the Tuscaloosa River Walk Playground, renovate the STTEP Building of Brewer Porch Children's Center, and build 16 Habitat for Humanity homes and the Alberta School of Performing Arts Playground.





CHARLES ANDERSON
Florence

Chairman Emeritus of Anderson Companies, Charles C. Anderson Sr. was born and raised in Florence. He graduated from the University of North Alabama with a bachelor's degree in marketing, and went to work at his father's newspaper stand. Anderson grew the family business to carry more periodicals, and under his leadership four companies emerged—Anderson Media, TNT Fireworks, Books-A-Million, and Anderson Press. Today, Anderson serves on numerous boards and has received many awards. He was inducted into the Alabama Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Alabama Academy of Honor in 2011. He received the prestigious Horatio Alger Award in 2015, which is a national award honoring the achievements of outstanding individuals and encouraging youth to pursue their dreams through higher education. In 2016 he was named Shoals Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year.

DR. JACK SCHAEFFER
Birmingham

Dr. Jack L. Schaeffer is the president, CEO, and chief of optometry at Schaeffer Eye Center. More than 30 years ago, he started building a business that now spans 17 locations throughout Alabama and has become a leader in ocular health for our state. He is a member of dozens of professional organizations, two of which he founded—The Alabama Eye Network and the Contact Lens and Anterior Segment Society. He co-founded the Ocular Surface Society of Optometry and the Coalition for Enhanced Eye Care. He has numerous honors and awards under his belt, including Retailer of the Year by The Southern Women's Committee of 50, Business Man of the Year by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Entrepreneur of the Year nominee by Ernst & Young LLP, and the President's Council Award by the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. Dr. Schaeffer has been invited to speak at various conferences internationally and has been involved in dozens of investigative assignments for worldwide companies such as Bausch & Lomb and Varilux. To provide eye care services to the uninsured, he started a program called SchaefferVision, which helps organizations including the Jefferson County Department of Health, Sight Savers of Alabama, and Project Homeless Connect.



JEFFREY DUNGAN
Birmingham

Jeffrey Dungan is a renowned architect who discovered a love of drawing and art while growing up on a family farm in rural Alabama. He is recognized for his clean and modern approach to traditional vernaculars and classical architecture. With his business headquarters of Jeffrey Dungan Architects in Mountain Brook, his creative work can be seen throughout North and Central America. Over the years, he has been honored with numerous awards from the American Institute of Architects as well as the 2017 Southeast Architect of the Year award by *Veranda* magazine and ADAC. The Institute of Classical Architecture and Art named him a Shutze fellow in 2015 and presented him with two awards in 2014 and another in 2018. Also in 2018, Dungan received the prestigious Palladio Award, the only national award for classical architecture. His works have been featured in many books and magazines, and in September of this year he produced a book of his own, *The Nature of Home: Creating Timeless Houses*, published by Rizzoli.

JODY SINGER
Huntsville

Jody Singer is the director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, the first female in 58 years to hold this position. A native of Hartselle, she earned a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Alabama in 1983. Appointed in September 2018, Singer manages one of NASA's largest field installations, with nearly 6,000 on- and near-site civil service and contract employees and an annual budget of approximately \$2.8 billion. During her 32-year NASA career, Singer has held leadership roles of increasing responsibility in human spaceflight, technology, and science flight missions programs and projects and was appointed in 2002 to the Senior Executive Service, the personnel system covering top managerial positions in federal agencies. She began her NASA engineering career in 1985 through the professional intern program in the mission planning and development office.

Singer has been recognized with numerous awards during her NASA career, including NASA Outstanding Leadership Medals and two Presidential Rank of Meritorious Executive Awards, the highest honor for career federal employees. She received the Space Flight Awareness Leadership Award and the NASA Exceptional Service Medal. For her dedication and commitment to excellence and achievement in support of the human space program, she was awarded the Silver Snoopy Award by the NASA astronaut corps, and was named a Space Flight Awareness Launch Honoree.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN KILPATRICK
Mobile

Lieutenant Colonel John F. Kilpatrick is a combat veteran, father, business owner, entrepreneur, and advocate for those seeking to recover from alcohol and drug abuse. John began his 31-year military career as a U.S. Marine Corps Reservist Intelligence Analyst for 12 years before serving the past 19 years as a Medical Service Corps Officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. His deployments include Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Kosovo, and Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He also served an 18-month mobilization to the Pentagon, where he worked in the Office of the Surgeon General at Headquarters, Department of the Army. Kilpatrick's personal experiences in recovery, his leadership attributes, and his determination to address barriers to mental wellness have spawned the creation of Veterans Recovery Resources in Mobile. "There were roughly 60,000 veterans in the southwest portion of the state. A recent needs assessment revealed that one in two veterans in the area reported a previous mental health diagnosis, such as post-traumatic stress and/or recent thoughts of suicide and problem drinking. Yet there was not one veteran-specific residential substance abuse treatment program to serve them nearby," says Kilpatrick. Over the past four years, he has led the development of Vets Recover, a unique, comprehensive outpatient and inpatient residential mental wellness program. Leveraging his military and personal experiences, Kilpatrick has developed an operational and clinical team capable of addressing the unmet mental health care needs of our veterans.

KEITH RICHARDS
Birmingham

In 1998, Keith Richards opened his first restaurant in Birmingham: Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe. The eatery was housed in 1,100 square feet of space and the menu was built on his memories of authentic Greek cuisine and a few family recipes. He rapidly expanded his brand and today he has more than 86 restaurant locations spanning 17 states. His niche is made-from-scratch food with no need for fryers, freezers, or microwaves. Richards serves on the Shelby County Chamber board and is deeply involved in advancing the cause for employing special needs students in Birmingham and across the country. His company currently employs more individuals with special needs than any other company in Alabama. The business's signature charity is HOPE (Herbs Offering Personal Enrichment). Through this program, students are taught to grow and maintain an herb garden; their products are then used by 41 Taziki's restaurants in 10 states. Richards has received the Down Syndrome of Alabama's Champion Award as well as the Large Employer Award presented by the National Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). The APSE award is given to employers who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to hiring and fully integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce.





SARA EVANS
Birmingham

Multi-platinum entertainer Sara Evans is at the top of her game. She has five number-one country singles, and “A Little Bit Stronger” was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America. Evans performs nearly 100 shows each year and in 2018 she headlined the CMT Next Women of Country Tour. She has earned the prestigious Academy of Country Music Top Female vocalist accolade as well as numerous American Music Awards, Billboard Music Awards, and nominations from the Country Music Association, CMT, and Grammy Awards. In addition, the CMA awarded Video of the Year honors for her chart-topping single “Born to Fly” from the double-platinum album of the same name. Evans’s discography also includes platinum-selling studio albums.

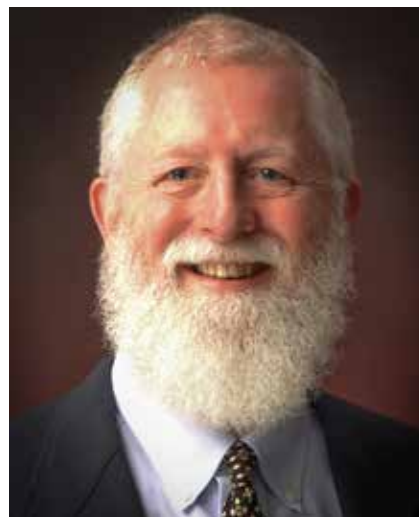
Evans has been honored for her philanthropic work and in 2018 was presented the NAB Education Foundation’s Service To America Leadership Award. A Red Cross ambassador, Evans received the national Crystal Cross award for her work with the disaster-relief organization and recently raised more than \$10,000 for the CMA Foundation and music education from the sale of her ONEHope Sara Evans Signature Series 2014 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

DR. MARTIN OLLIFF
Troy

Dr. Martin Olliff is a professor of history at Troy University and creator and director of the Wiregrass Archives at Troy University-Dothan. He has significantly contributed to the preservation and dissemination of Alabama’s history through his ardent endeavors at protecting historic documents and oral histories of enduring value. Thanks to Dr. Olliff’s efforts, the Troy University History Department created a new Minor in Archival Studies—the first and only program of its kind for undergraduates in the state of Alabama. He also led the creation of the public history concentration in the history department.

Dr. Olliff has served as president of the Alabama Historical Association, during which time he instituted a series of podcast interviews with authors of historical books. He has written books as well as published pieces in *The Alabama Review*, *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, and *Agricultural History*.

He has co-directed Black History Month programs at Troy-Dothan and directed the speaker series for Alabama Illustrated: Nineteenth Century Magazine Engravings of the State. He was the principal investigator in support of the Demographic Study of the Alabama Historical Society and director in support of the Veterans Oral History Project. He is an active member of the Alabama Historic Commission, Historic Chattahoochee Commission, Dothan Landmarks Foundation, Society of Alabama Archivists, and more. His efforts promise to spark further preservation and propagation of Alabama’s history.



SUSAN STEFFENS
Attala

Susan Steffens is the founder and executive director of Untamed Mountain, an exotic animal wildlife preserve in Attala. Equipped with degrees in accounting and business, she followed her heart’s calling to be a powerful voice for animals. With former positions including director of development at the Palm Beach Zoo, she recognized the need to provide health care and homes for abandoned and retired exotic animals. In 1999 she founded the nonprofit Tigers for Tomorrow while living in Florida. After surviving several hurricanes, she and her husband decided to move themselves and the animals to 140 acres in North Alabama. They aptly named it Untamed Mountain. The project has grown and the care for the animals is so supreme that many of the animals outlive their life expectancy. Lions, tigers, bears, cougars, wolves, birds, horses—more than 160 creatures are cared for on the property. When she’s not assisting her team with the animals, Steffens is grant writing, fundraising, coordinating environmental educational tours, coordinating international rescues, and planning growth and enhancement to the property for the animals’ continual well being. Recently she was able to rescue six of 40 big cats from Guatemala that were in a traveling circus and were suffering from abuse and neglect. In honor of the first cat she rescued, Kazuma, the government and the people of Guatemala have recognized the heartbreaking situation in which these animals live and have paved the way to pass laws to prevent further abuse.

CHRISTY JORDAN
Birmingham

With her popular blog, “The Southern Plate,” Christy Jordan is known for her love of Southern homestyle cooking. She is a ninth generation Alabamian who has made a name for herself gathering and sharing recipes from her mother and grandmother. She has published three cookbooks: *Southern Plate*, *Come Home to Supper*, and *Sweetness*. All feature family recipes passed through the generations along with her original concoctions. Her website has been named one of the top 25 in the country, drawing millions of viewers each month. Jordan features a variety of recipes including low-carb dishes, sides, desserts, main courses, and more.



DR. WILLIAM BARRICK
Mobile

Dr. Barrick has been the executive director at Bellingrath Gardens and Home since 1999. Under his direction, the facility has become a major tourist destination on the Gulf Coast, attracting 110,000 visitors each year.

He was a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army from 1970 to 1972, earning the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service during his tour of duty in Vietnam with the 69th Signal Battalion.

Today, he promotes tourism locally and statewide by serving on numerous



boards of civic and community organizations, including the board of Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau, the board of the South Mobile County Tourism Authority, the Providence Hospital Foundation and the Festival of Flowers, and the Downtown Mobile Alliance. He is also a member of the Rotary Club of Mobile. He is a graduate of Leadership Georgia, Leadership Mobile, and Leadership Alabama.



WILLIAM FERNIANY
Birmingham

Chief Executive Officer of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System, Will Ferniany has helped many in need of health care through leadership and programs he has introduced in the health care field. At UAB, he invented a type of

wheelchair called a Mobi, which makes it easier for nurses to lift people in and out. All of the funds Ferniany received from the wheelchair were donated back into the hospital system. He obtained his PhD in healthcare administration from the University of Alabama. He has served on dozens of boards for the state of Alabama including the Alabama Hospital Association, Society of Health Services Administrators, The United Way, American Heart Association, Hospice, and Rotary Club. He also won the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the Graduate Program in Health Administration at UAB.



VALERIE JONES
Huntsville

The tragic loss of her daughter, Darby, to leukemia in 2013, prompted Valerie Jones to start a nonprofit organization in her honor. Darby, who had Down syndrome, was passionate about dance, and Jones wanted to create the opportunity for children with special needs all over the United States to be able to enjoy dance just as Darby did. Her vision was to share her daughter’s gift of acceptance, inclusion, and love with as many families as possible. Jones is the founder and president of Darby’s Dancers, a nonprofit headquartered in Huntsville. The organization has grown to include 50 groups located in 24 states. In addition to Jones’s philanthropy, she is the director of Epworth UMC, owner of Dogwood Manor Bed & Breakfast, and school counselor and special education teacher for Madison County Schools.