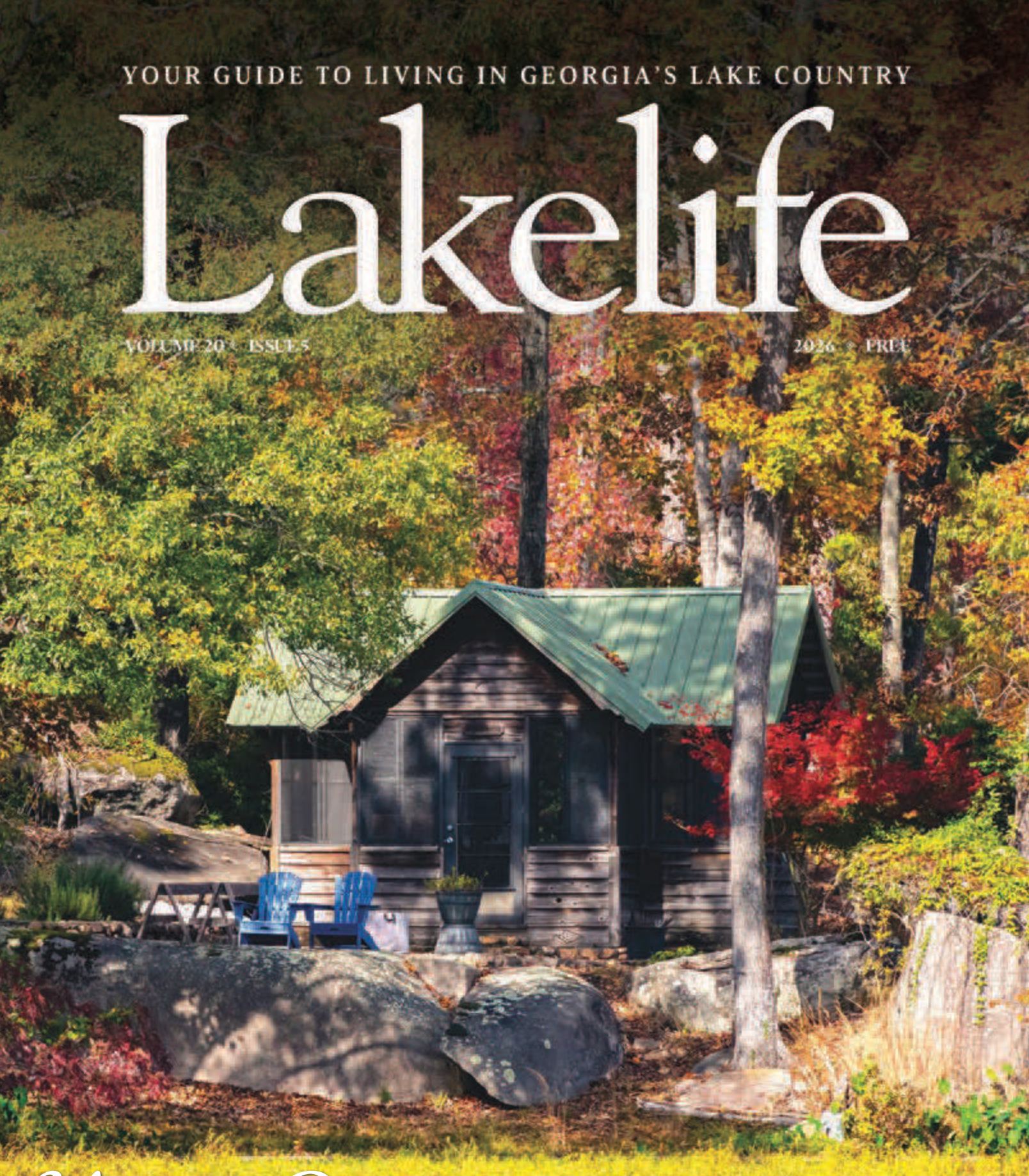


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From the Editor

Even though it's technically fall now, please allow me to talk about flowers and my mother. I was reminded of her this morning when I read a quote by Spurgeon, "Contentment is one of the flowers of heaven."

Mama was not an avid gardener, but she did have a few areas of flowers around the yard that she tended and enjoyed their beauty. Along the back fence was a glorious array of daylilies that were grown by her father. After his death, mama transplanted the daylily bulbs into our yard as a small way to hold onto him.

Beside the back door was a mini-plot of begonias. No sentimental value, but they just seemed to thrive there. My parents were not formal people, so everyone that visited were backdoor friends and appreciated the flourishing begonias. After mama died, my father dug up all the flowers because he didn't enjoy watering them and pulling weeds. The bare spot seemed to be a constant bleak reminder of change.

Nine years later, I went to see my dad on Father's Day and was pleasantly surprised to see that one of mama's begonias had popped up and was blooming prettily. It was truly a hug from heaven. Seeing how much it meant to me, daddy left it to grow. Each year, it still reminds us of mama and that "contentment is one of the flowers of heaven."

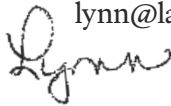
That is what I love about Lakelife—no weeds of controversy, discontentment or negativity—Just all the goodness of our lakes, our communities, our people, and the beauty of life flourishing around us.

It is my aim that you find pleasant surprises as you turn the pages.

Enjoy your fall season!

Lynn

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Dedication

MARK SMITH JR. (1965-2019)
Executive Editor 2018-2019

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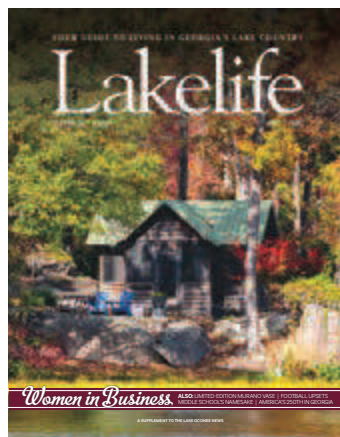
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ON THE COVER

Located on Lake Oconee just north of the dam, this cabin is a picturesque fall scene of lake life.

Photo by Casey Brady



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Meet multi-talented artist

Frances Pruitt

■ Story and photos by
Leigh Lofgren

It isn't often that you come across an artist who excels in more than one aspect of art; however, Frances Pruitt does.





Frances was born on the naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, where her father was a Navy Pilot. As anyone knows, in the military you get to move around. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, her then 32-year-old mother with five daughters, one of whom was only four days old, had to be evacuated to Nashville.

After graduating high school in Memphis, Frances went to the University of Memphis and then to the Memphis College of Art, with sculpture being her main interest. She studied clay and jewelry design in 1991, fused glass in 2005, painting since 2011, and has been doing linoleum “lino” blocks for 10 years. Her work has been featured in local galleries and exhibitions, and Francis has been a member of the Madison Artists Guild for eight years.

Based in McDonough, Frances’ work is deeply inspired by the beauty of nature and the playful spirit of cats. She loves all animals, especially cats, and together with her very distinctive artistic style that blends vibrant colors with intricate designs, Frances’ creations reflect the world around her. Her fused glass windchimes, in particular, show the beauty of nature and her largest commission for a windchime was 8 feet.

As an accomplished metalsmith, Frances designs and makes jewelry in silver, brass, gold, and copper. Rings, necklaces, and bracelets, along with all the jump rings used in these pieces and other works are handmade by Frances.

Take a visit to the Madison Artists Guild’s gallery (MAGallery) to view the large array of creations by Frances Pruitt. Fused glass windchimes and bookmarks, lino printed





linen tea towels, all handmade and created with oil based paints, one of a kind jewelry, metal spoons, pottery and ceramic creations. Don't miss getting her whimsical watercolor cards, many inspired by her 'clowder of cats'. There is something for everyone and Frances is there every Monday. For those looking for something special and unique, this gallery is worth a visit.

For more information or to contact Frances, you can visit her at the Madison Artists Guild website www.themadisonartistsguild.org or email francespruitt12@yahoo.com. The MAGallery is located at 125 West Jefferson Street in downtown Madison. ♦



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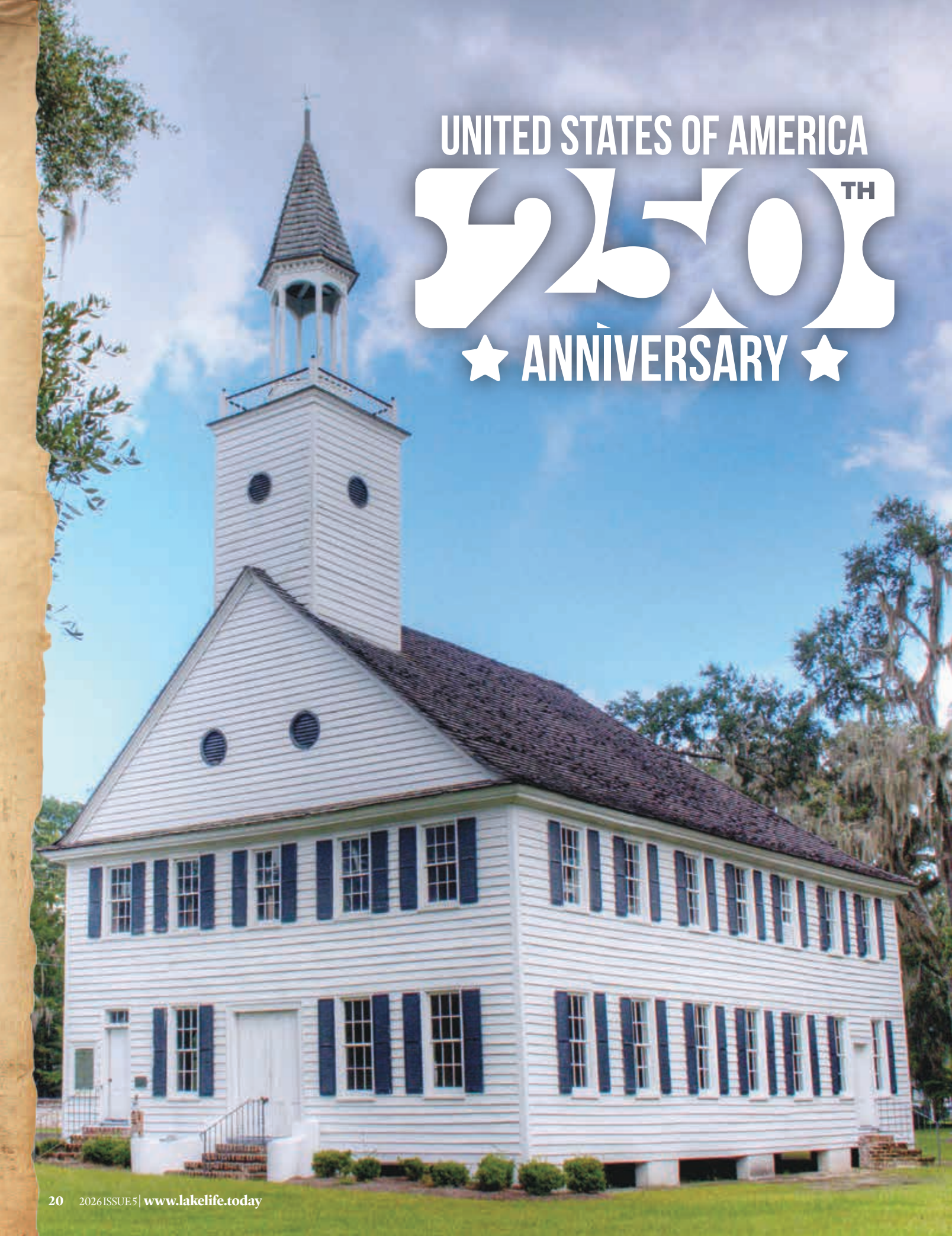
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Above: A 19th century engraving of Midway Congregational Church and the Darien Road where General Screven made his stand. Facing page: The Midway Congregational Church today. (Photo by Rick Joslyn)

"Come and take it!"

The Battle of Midway Church

Georgians and the Fight for Independence 250 years ago

■ Story by Mauriel Joslyn

Decades before 1776 and on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, British Army Officer James Edward Oglethorpe served in Great Britain's House of Parliament. There, he helped found the **British Colony of Georgia in the New World** as a new home for those he termed "the deserving poor."



Button Gwinnett

A staunch philanthropist, Oglethorpe thought Georgia would provide these people land and a chance at becoming prosperous, which their social status would never allow in England.

Oglethorpe spent his own money to buy vital supplies and sailed with the first 114 colonists on their voyage to what is now Savannah, where they landed on Feb. 1, 1733.

To protect the new colonists and the British interests in the last of the 13 colonies, Oglethorpe recruited the Scottish Independent Highland Company of Darien. They served in exchange for their fare to the New World. Among these 100 soldiers were John, William, and Lachlan McIntosh.

Then the Congregationalist (Puritan) planters migrated from South Carolina to Georgia, where they were offered 31,950 acres to settle as a frontier buffer against Indians and Spanish Florida. They and their 1,500 slaves established a new settlement on the Darien Road. Midway was “mid way” between Savannah and the busy port of Sunbury.

Congregationalist life revolved around the church. The sanctuary was built in 1752, and Michael



Dr. Lyman Hall



Gen. Lachlan McIntosh

from Savannah arrived—Button Gwinnett, a successful merchant in England until his fortunes changed, and Dr. Lyman Hall, Yale graduate from Connecticut. In Midway, their professions made them prominent in the community.

The French and Indian War ended in 1763, but left Britain in debt. To amend this shortfall, a series of taxes were laid on the colonists in North America and by 1770, discontent stirred in New England. Protests and clashes in Boston became “the shot heard round the world” on April 19, 1775 in the village green at Lexington, Massachusetts. British troops arrived to seize arms and powder held by the colonists. Seventy-seven farmers and townspeople met them with resistance. British soldiers fired, killing several civilians.

This sparked outrage in the Southern colonies.

In Midway, leaders emerged. Meetings were held in the church. Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett became ardent revolutionaries, a.k.a. Patriots. Yet Georgia had the highest percentage of Loyalists — supporters of the British — of all 13 colonies. Many had difficulty sympathizing with a revolution.



James Oglethorpe

and Joanna Bacon founded the Midway Society in the agricultural community of rice, indigo, and family trades.

On the coast, at the mouth of the Altamaha River, Sunbury became the lifeline for the new frontier, as the third largest port with a palisade fort expanded to protect it. By 1756 it was well fortified with more than 25 cannons. They called it Fort Morris, after its commander Captain Thomas Morris.

Midway thrived despite the hostile environment of marsh, heat, and alligators. Newcomers

Relations became strained between members of the church and even within families.

Patriots were in the minority, and Georgia sent no delegates to the First Continental Congress in 1775.

Another prominent Georgia revolutionary was Scotsman Lachlan McIntosh. In January 1775, he helped organize delegates to the Provincial Congress from the Darien District. On January 7, 1776, McIntosh was commissioned Colonel in the Georgia Militia. He raised the 1st Georgia Regiment, organized the defense of Savannah, and helped repel a British assault. He was promoted to Brigadier General in the Continental Army and charged with defending Georgia's southern flank from British incursions.

Though the war was in full swing in the North with Gen. George Washington already in the field with the Continental Army, life in Midway remained peaceful but uneasy. Frustrated by the lack of commitment to the Patriot cause, Dr. Hall and Button Gwinnett remained undaunted. Finally Hall persuaded his parish to send him as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia in 1776. He arrived in the middle of a divided Congress on the issue of a resolution of independence. Undecided whether to vote his conscience or the beliefs of his constituents, he abstained from voting until delegates Button Gwinnett and George Walton arrived. All three delegates readily signed the Declaration of Independence.

On February 5, 1777, St. John's





Descendants of Revolutionary War patriots in period dress at the annual event marking Col. John McIntosh's "Come and take it!" retort to British demand for surrender, Fort Morris Historic Site, Midway, Nov. 22, 2025. (Photo by Robin Kemp/The Current GA)



Above: Descendants of Revolutionary War patriots fire muskets. At left, A flag reads "Come and take it," marking Col. John McIntosh's 1778 retort to the British demand he surrender. (Photo by Robin Kemp/The Current GA)

Parish became Liberty County as a statement of support for the ideals of the Revolution.

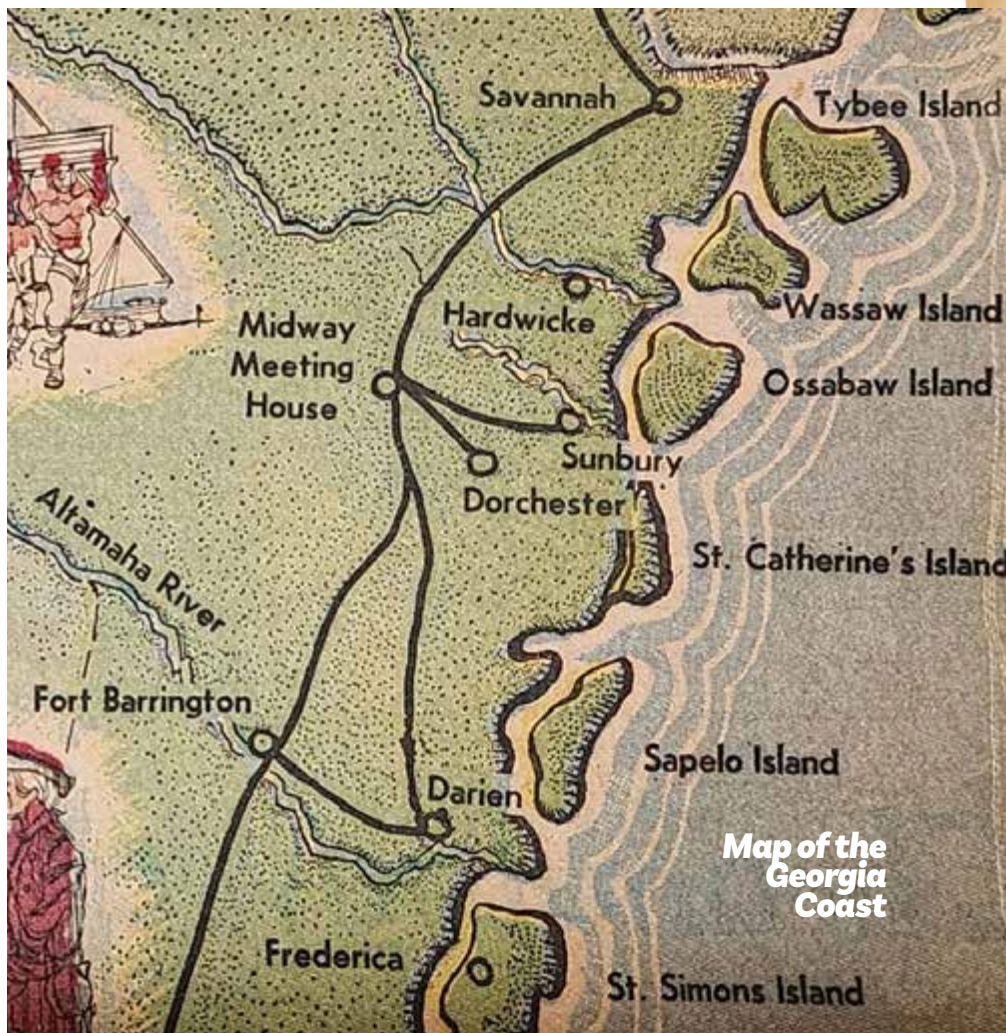
When battles in the North reached a stalemate, the British turned their attention South. The Loyalist majority in Georgia gave them hope it could shift the course of the war. However, Colonial Governor James Wright warned, "No partial sufferings or temporary distresses will induce the Southern colonies to submit. Nothing will do there but force." It would be a hard nut to crack. Undeterred, British Maj. Gen. Augustine Prevost attacked Savannah and Charleston. Both cities fell by 1778.

The Congregationalist Church at Midway was targeted as a known hotbed of revolutionary patriots. One column of British soldiers under Lt. Col. J.M. Prevost marched from Darien toward Midway, while another under Lt. Col. L.V. Fuser advanced against Fort Morris. Their goal—to annihilate all Patriot opposition. They advanced, creating chaos and destruction in their path, looting plantations and taking prisoners with little opposition.

In Midway, the war had reached the doorstep. On November 22, a scratch force of 100 Continental soldiers and 20 Georgia militia under command of Gen. James Screven formed a battle line across the road near the church, against 700 professional soldiers of the British Army. A valiant and bloody defense failed, but still fighting, Screven fell back to the church where he was mortally wounded. Prevost took his revenge, burning the church to the ground.

The Battle of Midway Church ended in defeat. The bustling wharves of Sunbury lay in ashes, leaving only the small garrison at Fort Morris as an island of rebellion.

On November 25, 1778, Lachlan McIntosh's nephew,



23-year-old Lt. Col. John McIntosh, was in command of Fort Morris with less than 200 men which included continental troops, local militia and Patriot citizens. Col. L.V. Fuser, with 500 seasoned British soldiers, battering cannon, light artillery and mortars, attacked the fort, laying siege by land and water.

Fuser sent a message, demanding McIntosh to surrender, promising that the mostly loyal citizens should be left in peaceable possession of their property, but McIntosh replied:

“Sir, we acknowledge we are not ignorant that your army is in motion to endeavour to reduce this state... We have no property compared with the object we contend for. We, Sir, are fighting the battles of America.”

As to surrendering the fort, McIntosh replied laconically: “Come and Take It!”

His defiant stand held. Fuser retreated, believing the impertinent reply must mean reinforcements were nearby. News of McIntosh’s bravery spread like a balm of courage across the colonies, inspiring all to hold out.

Eventually Fort Morris did fall in January of 1779 against overwhelming British firepower. But the tide had turned. Unlike New England, a civil war ensued across North and South Carolina with Americans fighting each other. Patriots defeated Loyalists in key battles, forcing the British to surrender at Yorktown, Virginia in 1781.

Today, the rebuilt 1792 church at Midway is a peaceful and welcoming place of worship. The Midway house museum has many displays and items from local history. Fort Morris State Park has an interesting interpretive museum, and is currently preserving the remnants of the fort’s parapet. An annual reenactment and ceremony is held each November and open to the public. ♦

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GO DAWGS!

Women in Business



Each year, Lakelife celebrates the women in Lake County who work to improve the economic vitality and quality of life in our communities and beyond.

The timing of this year's issue was poignant as we were reminded of one woman who was an amazing example of how women can rise above their circumstances and achieve success on their own terms without sacrificing their personalities or character. Dolly Parton had the rare ability of being famous and powerful while remaining approachable, kind and considerate. The only thing big about Dolly's head was her hair! She sought to make her world, which pretty much turned out to be almost the entire globe, a better place.

When you turn the pages of this Women In Business section, you'll find that Lake Country has many such women who are making our own little corner of the world a better place in their personally unique ways. You'll learn what inspires them, and what the non-business side of them is like. You may not only find someone you were seeking for a particular skill or need, but you may discover a new friend.



REYNOLDS
LAKE OCONEE PROPERTIES

Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties proudly celebrates this extraordinary group of businesswomen.

Just beyond Atlanta, an exceptional team of women is redefining what it means to experience real estate at Reynolds Lake Oconee.

With deep knowledge of the Club and community, a sharp eye for opportunity and an unwavering commitment to their clients, these women bring together experience, technology and creative marketing to make every step of the real estate journey feel seamless and personal.

As the exclusive real estate sales and marketing agency for Reynolds Lake Oconee, they offer something few others can: an inside perspective on the community they represent and a level of expertise built from being fully immersed in the Reynolds lifestyle. Over the past year, they have welcomed families from across the country, helping them discover the homesites and properties that align with the way they want to live while introducing more people to one of the country's premier lakefront communities.

Their influence also reaches well beyond the gates of Reynolds.

Giving back is woven into who they are. From delivering meals to seniors through Meals on Wheels and volunteering at local food banks to participating in Victory Train Pack Days, Habitat for Humanity and the Thillen Foundation, their commitment to the community takes many forms. They support the Greene County High School Career Center, Pete Nance Boys and Girls Club, Make-A-Wish, the Humane Society and Circle of Love, they are consistently finding ways to give their time, talents and energy to causes that matter.

For these women, success isn't defined solely by the properties they sell. It's reflected in the relationships they build, the families they welcome and the communities they strengthen along the way.

Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties proudly celebrates the remarkable women who represent its real estate community with integrity, commitment and full-time focus.

Integrity. Commitment. Full-Time Focus. Exclusively Reynolds Real Estate. We are the Women of Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties.



Office: 800.800.5250



1341 Linger Longer Road, Greensboro, GA 30642



www.reynoldslakeoconee.com



[@reynoldslakeoconeeproperties](https://www.instagram.com/reynoldslakeoconeeproperties)

Traci Johnson

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My Business: I am a full-time, licensed Real Estate Agent representing buyers and sellers exclusively at Reynolds Lake Oconee. As a dedicated Reynolds agent, I am proud to have been recognized as the Top Producing Sales Executive of the Year for 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 at Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties.

How would I describe myself as a businesswoman? I would characterize myself as a relationship-driven professional grounded in discipline and long-term thinking. My twenty years in pharmaceutical sales instilled a rigorous, client-first approach—one built on trust, consistency, and follow-through, which I have carried directly into luxury real estate. I do not view my work as a series of transactions, but rather as an ongoing series of partnerships, each cultivated with the expectation that the relationship will endure well beyond any single closing. This philosophy has shaped the trajectory of my career at Reynolds Lake Oconee, where I have had the privilege of being named Salesperson of the Year for four consecutive years. I attribute this recognition not to any singular achievement, but to a sustained commitment to excellence: showing up prepared, communicating



with integrity, and giving every client the same level of dedication, regardless of the size or scope of the transaction.

What's your favorite part of the day? My favorite part of the day is early morning. I have always been an early riser, and I firmly believe the early bird catches the worm—those first quiet hours, before the phone starts ringing and the day's demands take over, are when I do my best thinking. Whether I am reviewing a new listing, preparing for a client meeting, or simply setting priorities, there is a clarity to that time that I have come to rely on. At Reynolds Lake Oconee, watching the early morning light settle over the lake is its own kind of motivation—it reminds me why my clients fall in love with this community, and it set

the tone for how I want to show up for them each day.

Non Business Side: Outside of business, my life is centered on family. My husband, Jeff, and I are proud parents of six children and grandparents to eight, and while they are scattered across the country, they always seem to find their way back to Reynolds—usually gathered in the kitchen for a home-cooked meal. Those moments are what I treasure most. I am also a devoted University of Georgia Bulldogs fan, but I will admit my truest loyalties belong to my two Malt-Tzus, Zoe and Lily. In my free time, I enjoy painting, and I am proud to give back to causes that are dear to me—serving on the Advisory Board for Make-A-Wish Georgia and as the Title Sponsor for the Lake Oconee Youth Alliance.

Cecelia Miller

Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties

Sales Executive

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My Mission: My mission is to help people find more than just a home—I help them discover a lifestyle at Reynolds Lake Oconee where they can create lasting memories with family and friends while providing exceptional, personalized service and making every real estate experience

easy, enjoyable, and stress-free.

My Strengths: My strengths are building lasting relationships and putting people first. I take the time to truly understand my clients, listen to what is important to them, and guide them through the process with honesty, care, and attention to detail.

What is the best thing about being a businesswoman in Lake Country? The best thing about being a businesswoman in the Lake Country is the people and the incredible sense of community. There is a genuine spirit of connection and support, and I feel fortunate to work alongside so many wonderful people while helping families discover how much Reynolds Lake Oconee and this area has to offer.

Share the best piece of advice



anyone has ever given you that you follow. The best piece of advice anyone has ever given me that I follow is, "Do what you say you're going to do, be honest, listen carefully, and always put the client's best interest first."

Tell us about the non-business side of "you."

You'll most likely find me enjoying life at Reynolds Lake Oconee - dining at one of our spectacular restaurants, relaxing at the Lake Club or simply soaking in the views with my husband, Matt, and our Cream Golden Retriever, Finn. I also love spending time with my mom and volunteering in the community.

April Jaklitsch

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My Mission: My mission is to provide exceptional, personalized real estate service while helping my clients find not just a property, but a place they are proud to call home.

My Strengths: My greatest strengths

are my knowledge of the Reynolds Lake Oconee community, my commitment to my clients, and the relationships I build along the way.

I bring professionalism, experience, responsiveness, and attention to detail to every transaction. Most importantly, I listen. I take the time to understand what is important to each client so I can provide thoughtful guidance and create an experience that feels personal rather than transactional.

What makes your business unique?

What makes my business unique is the personal connection I have with my clients and the genuine care I put into what I do. I believe people can tell when you truly love your work and care about the people you serve. I strive to create an experience where clients feel valued, heard, and confident



that they are in good hands.

If you could go back and talk to your rookie self, what would you tell her? I would tell her to trust herself and not be afraid to make mistakes. You don't have to have everything figured out from the beginning.

Tell about the non-business side of "you."

Outside of business, I truly value my time with family and friends and the simple things that allow me to slow down and recharge. Activities with my kids, playing mahjong with friends, boating with family, and enjoying a good meal and great conversation with the people I love.

Micki Tanner

Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties

Associate Broker

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My Mission: To introduce Reynolds Lake Oconee to clients and help them fall in love with the wonderful lifestyle we enjoy so that they want to live here.

My Strengths: Product knowledge, integrity and ability to listen and learn about people and their needs.

What obstacles, if any, did you have to overcome as a woman in business? I

don't know that I have faced many obstacles being a woman in business. I have been fortunate to work with many wonderful people throughout my career, so I have never felt that being a woman prevented me from succeeding. Like anyone in business, I have had challenges and difficult situations, but I learned early on to work hard, know my business, treat people fairly, and let my integrity speak for itself. I have also been blessed with strong women—and men—who encouraged and supported me along the way.

What are your proudest moments?

I am proud of the many professional and community awards I have received, especially the 2021 President's Award from the Lake Country Board of Realtors. However, my greatest accomplishments are the relationships I have built over the years—the clients who have become friends, the people who continue to reach out to me, and knowing that I have made a positive difference in their lives.



Tell about the non-business side of “you.”

The non-business side of me is probably just as busy as the business side! Outside of my career, my family, faith, community involvement, and personal interests are very important to me. I enjoy supporting the arts, playing golf and bridge, following college football, participating in my church and Rotary, and volunteering with Meals on Wheels. My daughter, Cecelia Miller, has also recently joined me professionally at Reynolds Lake Oconee Properties, which is especially meaningful to me.

After more than 26 years, Reynolds Lake Oconee is truly home. I feel incredibly fortunate that my career, family, friendships, faith, and love of community have all come together in this special place.

April Evans

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What makes your business unique? My business is unique in that I specialize solely at Reynolds Lake Oconee. My everyday focus is not diluted through spreading my attention across multiple communities and counties. I have a very specific area of practice and that allows me to have a higher level of expertise. I am deeply connected to the inner workings of transactions here and I have the ability to understand values in a way that generalists

can not. With nearly ten years as a resident and a Member at Reynolds, I have personal connections to the most important resources; other Members, the leaders & directors here at Reynolds, the vendors we trust, and so much more. I bring an unrivaled skillset to the table.

What is the best thing about being a

businesswoman in Lake Country? I mean the obvious answer is the people here make it special, but there are nice people everywhere. I think it goes way deeper than that. This is a close-knit community of professional people who genuinely want to be able to hold their heads high because they keep their word, they're professional, and they get things done. This is who we all want to work with, and I feel very fortunate to play my part in this community.

If you could go back and talk to your rookie self, what would you tell her?

Relax. Give yourself grace and know that everyone's life has ebbs & flows, ups and downs. Trust your intuition and step back from time to time



to see the broader picture. You don't have to be perfect but make every effort to be present. Life, relationships and careers are marathons, not sprints, so things take time and it's meant to be that way to allow for your growth & for knowledge to grow.

Share the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you that you follow.

A wise woman once said, “When people show you who they are, believe them the first time.” This really hit me when I heard it. And to me, this is a simple and yet profound way to tell someone you should know you are worthy of all things, don't allow someone to tread on that or erode that in any way. Our true nature shines through any masks we may wear. And inversely, know that your actions and how you treat others says who you are and what kind of person you are on the inside. I never forget that.

Mary Balicki

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My Mission: My mission is to help my clients accomplish their real estate goals while making the experience as seamless and enjoyable as possible. I do that through prompt, consistent communication, a personalized approach to helping my client friends feel at home within the Reynolds Lake Oconee community and the tenacity and responsiveness necessary to succeed in today's real estate market. Ultimately, my goal is not simply to help clients buy or sell a home, but to help them confidently begin their next chapter at Reynolds.

My Strengths: For me, the client relationship extends well beyond the closing table. My business has been built and enriched by an ongoing commitment to my clients before, during, and long after a sale. I begin by understanding each client's short- and long-term goals and then draw upon my extensive, up-to-date knowledge of Reynolds Lake Oconee, its neighborhoods, amenities, lifestyle, and available inventory to help achieve those objectives. Clients can expect a highly personalized, responsive, and enjoyable real estate experience from beginning to end, along with a trusted resource they can continue to rely on afterward. Simply put, beyond selling, the success of my business is defined by helping my clients, the satisfaction of my clients and the relationships we build along the way.



How would you describe yourself as a businesswoman? I would describe myself as driven, relationship-focused, and genuinely invested in my clients. I have a strong work ethic, competitive spirit, and a natural bias for action, I believe in following through, solving problems and doing what I say I'm going to do. At the same time, I never want success to come at the expense of kindness, integrity, or enjoying the people and relationships that make the work meaningful. I'm also incredibly grateful to have built a successful career doing something I truly enjoy, in a community I love, alongside colleagues and clients who have become dear friends.

Why did you choose this type of business? I often say that real estate chose me. I am incredibly grateful that I had the opportunity to be a stay-at-home mom for 13 years and

devote that season of my life to raising our three daughters, my life's best work. When our youngest started kindergarten, the timing was right for me to begin a new chapter, and real estate was the perfect fit. What started as an opportunity grew into a career I truly love. I discovered that my strengths: connecting with people, building relationships, communicating, problem-solving and working hard on behalf of others, were naturally suited to real estate. One of the greatest gifts has been allowing my daughters to see both chapters of my life. They grew up knowing me as a mom who was there for them every day, and now they get to see me as a successful woman in business, pursuing work that challenges and fulfills me. I'm very proud of both roles and incredibly grateful that God gave me the opportunity to have each of them in its season.

Jordan Aycock

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My Mission:

My mission is to provide thoughtful, highly personalized real estate guidance while helping my clients discover not only the right home, but the Lake Oconee lifestyle that best suits them. I strive to make every transaction feel seamless, informed, and genuinely enjoyable—from our first conversation through closing and beyond.

My Strengths:

Building lasting relationships, understanding my clients' needs, creative marketing, attention to detail, and extensive knowledge of Reynolds Lake Oconee and the surrounding market.

Type of business:

Luxury residential real estate specializing in lakefront, golf-community, and lifestyle properties.

How would you describe yourself as a businesswoman?

I am relationship-driven, detail-oriented, and deeply invested in the people I serve. I combine a strong work ethic and extensive sales experience with a personal, intuitive approach. My goal is always to advocate for my clients, anticipate their needs, and deliver a level of service that earns their trust for



years to come.

What is the best thing about being a businesswoman in Lake Country?

The best part is helping people fall in love with a community that means so much to my own family. Lake Country offers an extraordinary combination of natural beauty, recreation, and genuine connection. I love welcoming new families, introducing them to this lifestyle, and continuing those relationships long after the closing.

Tell about the non-business side of “you.”

Outside of real estate, I am happiest spending time with my husband, Kevin, our children, Beauman and Grayston, and our growing family as we prepare to welcome another baby boy. We love traveling, entertaining at home, and enjoying life on Lake Oconee. I also have a passion for interiors, architecture, fashion, wellness, and creating beautiful, memorable experiences for the people I love.

Dr. Rivera

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Dentist

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🌐 [choiceonedentalcare.com/
location/greensboro](http://choiceonedentalcare.com/location/greensboro)

My Mission: As both a dentist and a specialist in medical aesthetics, my mission is to help people feel confident in their health, their smile, and their overall appearance. I believe beauty and wellness go hand in hand—when we feel good about ourselves, we carry that confidence into every part of our lives. My goal is to provide care that is not only professional and innovative, but also compassionate and personal. Every patient deserves to be heard, cared for, and supported on their journey to looking and feeling their best.

What makes your business unique, and why do customers love it? What sets my practice apart is the way we combine advanced dental care with medical aesthetics to treat the whole person, not just a smile or a single concern. Patients love that they can come to a space where health, beauty, and confidence all meet under one roof. Beyond treatments, they value the personal attention, the trust we build, and the feeling of being truly cared for. It's not just about results—it's about creating an experience where every patient feels listened to, supported, and leaves with a renewed sense of self.

What is one challenge you faced as a woman in business that shaped who you are today? One of the greatest challenges I faced as a woman in business was learning to balance high professional expectations with



my own voice and vision. Early on, I felt pressure to fit into traditional molds of healthcare and leadership. Over time, I realized that my strength lies in embracing what makes me different—bringing compassion, artistry, and a woman's perspective into a field that often focuses only on the technical. That challenge taught me resilience, confidence, and the importance of staying true to my mission. Today, it shapes how I connect with patients and how I lead my business with authenticity and heart. Dentistry has been my passion since I was just 14 years old, when I first started working in a dental laboratory. That early exposure inspired a lifelong commitment to oral health and aesthetics. I went on to earn my Bachelor of Science in Biology from Interamerican University, followed by my Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree from Marquette School of Dentistry in Milwaukee (1992). After graduation, I proudly served as a Dental Officer in the United States Army, where I had the privilege of caring for service members and their families at various military bases. My time in the Army sharpened my ability to provide care in high-pressure environments and instilled in me a strong sense of discipline, excellence, and service.



When I transitioned to civilian life, I founded Restore Skin and Smile, a practice dedicated to combining dentistry with advanced aesthetic treatments. Over the past 28 years, I have focused on helping patients achieve not only healthier smiles but also greater confidence in their overall appearance. My approach is always rooted in personalized care, innovation, and natural-looking results. I've also continued to expand my training with advanced education, including a certification in Orthodontics from the FORCE Institute in Michigan (2003) and a Postdoctoral degree in Expert Aesthetic Medicine and Surgery in Barcelona, Spain (2021). Staying up to date with the latest advancements is important to me, so I regularly attend continuing education courses, conferences, and seminars. Beyond clinical practice, I am passionate about giving back to the community. I've participated in health fairs, supported initiatives that bring dental care to underserved populations, and mentored dental students who are just beginning their careers. My military background continues to guide me, especially in supporting veteran-focused health and wellness programs. I am also proud to be an active member of the American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine (AAAM), the International Academy of Aesthetic, Cirujanos Dentistas de Puerto Rico, and the International Academy of Aesthetic. As I begin this new chapter with Choice One Dental Care, I'm eager to bring my experience in dentistry, orthodontics, and medical aesthetics to this wonderful team.

Most of all, I look forward to caring for this community, building relationships with my patients, and continuing to grow both personally and professionally.

With Alliance Home & Land Group you don't get just one Agent – you get the Entire Team

The Alliance Home & Land Group is a team of real estate professionals with KELLER WILLIAMS® Premier located in Greensboro that provides real estate services to clients all over Georgia. Founded on the values of honesty, integrity, work ethic, communication, professionalism, teamwork, and trust, their team works to provide top-notch service. “Nestled along Georgia’s Lake Country shores are a wide array of communities to call home for even the most discerning,” said Marybeth Hewatt, chief marketing officer. “Georgia’s Lake Country isn’t just a place, it’s a lifestyle. There is truly something for everyone.” Georgia’s Lake Country is also perfectly situated east of Atlanta for the convenience of a major airport and yet far enough to

“get away from it all”. Other notable nearby locations include: The home of the Georgia Bulldogs, the University of Georgia, in Athens; the winner of “Best Small Town in America,” the city of Madison; and the home to The Masters Tournament, the city of Augusta. “From land to lake homes... you will find a location that will ensure you love where you live,” said Hewatt. “Georgia’s Lake Country is all about strong community ties and enjoying life.” The Alliance Home & Land Group team was founded by Rich Johns, Chris Hewatt and Bob Miller to provide excellent real estate services throughout the Lake Country area and beyond. The team behind Alliance Home & Land Group is made up of award-winning REALTOR’s

and Luxury Specialists who are ready to serve you. “Our network of experienced, service-oriented professionals brings over 125+ years of experience and expertise to provide the best experience possible. Whether buying a home or selling one, you can be assured that you’re working with the best,” said Hewatt. “What sets us apart is you don’t get just one Agent, you get us all – a team of ten agents, a social media director, a marketing director and even a Transaction Coordinator to make the closing process a breeze.” To view properties, meet the team, or schedule a showing, visit Alliance Home & Land Group’s website alliancehomeandlandgroup.com or call 762-815-3073 or 706-485-0088 for more information.

Marybeth Hewatt

Alliance Home & Land Group

Chief Marketing Officer

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My Mission: Our Mission is to be the leading provider of real estate services in the lake country area and beyond. Our client relationships don’t stop at the closing table. We pride ourselves on being your “forever agent”. We have aligned ourselves with other industry



leaders that we are confident in for all your real estate and home needs. From lenders to renovators...Our alliances are your alliances! We focus on making a long-lasting impact on the community both through real estate and our charity program, Alliance Gives Back, we launched to bring recognition and donations to non-profits.

Tell about the non-business side of “you”: Marybeth and her husband, Chris have three children, Cody (29), Connor (24) an UGA graduate and teacher/coach at Gatewood Schools and Jackson (19) a sophomore at UGA. Their family is completed by 4 dogs – Dixie, yellow Labrador, Harley, German Shorthaired Pointer, Ruger, a Black Labrador – and a cat named Lily Pearl.

Adrienne Foster

Alliance Home and Land Group Realtor®

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My Mission: My mission as a woman in business is to build meaningful relationships within my community by leading with integrity, compassion, and a genuine desire to help others. I strive to become more involved through volunteering, giving back, and supporting those around me in any way I can. As I grow my career in real estate, my goal is to earn the trust and confidence of my community

by being someone people can depend on—not only as a real estate professional, but as a neighbor and advocate who truly cares about the people I serve.

My Strengths: My greatest strengths are my determination, empathy, and ability to connect with people. When I set a goal for myself, I am willing to work hard and continue pushing forward, even when the path is not always easy. I am naturally compassionate and genuinely enjoy helping others, which allows me to build meaningful relationships and earn people's trust. I am also someone who takes initiative rather than waiting for opportunities to come to me. I am always looking for ways to grow, learn, and become more involved. As a woman in business, I believe one of my greatest strengths is that I can be ambitious and driven while still leading with kindness, integrity, and a genuine concern for the people around me.



Looking ahead, one of my biggest goals is to continue growing my clientele while also becoming more involved in and giving back to the community that supports my business. I would love to volunteer more, support local organizations and causes, and build genuine relationships with the people in the area I serve. I also want to create a strong network of friends, mentors, and resources within the local real estate community. As I gain more experience, I would love opportunities to collaborate with other Realtors, including hosting open houses together, sharing knowledge, and supporting one another's growth. Ultimately, I want to build a successful real estate career that is based on relationships, community involvement, collaboration, and trust—not just transactions.

Rachael Dimon

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My Mission: My mission is to help clients find properties that can help them create long-lasting memories for the friends and families. Whether a primary residence where they balance the tasks of daily life, or a vacation home where they gather every

Christmas or 4th of July.

My strengths: My strengths are my ability to be part of multiple communities around the lake, my organizational skills and my genuine interest in cheering on the wins of other female realtors.

The best compliment that I've ever received about my business is that clients would miss me when our deal was finished. This really demonstrated that I made the deal an easy and positive experience for them when it could have been stressful or challenging.

I LOVE sports! I'm a spectator of most sports and in our house I'm the one who knows which team is playing when and how the rankings look. I also



love to see music acts live. Attending concerts has been such a fun experience to share with my daughters who are 12 and 16. Buying the ticket and going to the show is never a bad idea!

Sayward Johnson

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My Strength: I tend to make lasting friendships with my clients.

My Mission: to help people move through their real estate transactions as smoothly as possible.

How would you describe yourself

as a businesswoman? I would describe myself as a self made and enthusiastic businesswoman. I have a lot of motivation and drive for things that I am passionate about. When it comes to my clients, their best interest is my top priority.

Share the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you. The best piece of advice I have received was that “calm seas don’t make good sailors.” Sometimes you have to weather the storms to learn and grow as a human and as a businesswoman.

How do you achieve balance in your day-to-day living? I achieve balance in my life by making time for doing the things that I love. I enjoy my yoga practice 3 to 4 times a week. Breaking a sweat helps me relax and unwind. I also love getting out in nature



with my family whenever possible. Being outside helps me stay grounded and down to earth.

Susan Gatterfield

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Our Mission: My mission is to serve my community, clients, friends and family with honesty and integrity, while delivering an exceptional home buying or selling experience.

My Strengths: My strength lies within my deep roots in the community as well as my

commitment to serving and building long lasting relationships with clients, agents and partners.

Why did you choose this type of business? I got into real estate because I love helping people find their perfect homes and making a difference in the community. There’s something really rewarding about matching someone with a place they’ll love and watching neighborhoods grow and thrive. Plus, it’s awesome to be part of the changes that make a community even better, whether that’s helping families settle in or working on local projects. It’s a job that lets me do what I love and have a positive impact at the same time.

If you could go back and talk to your “rookie” self, what would you tell her? I’d say, “Trust the process and be patient with yourself. Real estate is a



marathon, not a sprint. You’re going to face setbacks and challenges, but each one is a learning opportunity. Don’t be afraid to ask questions or seek advice—no one expects you to know everything right away. Focus on building relationships and your reputation; these are what truly matter in the long run. And most importantly, remember why you started—stay passionate and keep your clients’ best interests at heart. Success will come with time and perseverance.

Sheila I.M. Smith

Castle Home Management

Owner

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My Mission:

Provide peace of mind to absentee homeowners by carrying out regular, thorough, professional in-person home watch visits providing detailed date and time stamped reports.

Our Strengths:

Local residents, 14 years in business, my husband is a Marine veteran and we have a wide spectrum of experience from Property Management, Disaster Management, Law Enforcement/ Security, service provider relationships, ongoing education, no distraction from VRBOs or Airbnbs.

Type of Business: Service business

How do I stay motivated:

I believe my team and I truly provide a unique and valuable service to both full and part-time residents by providing them with “peace of mind” when they are away, knowing we are confidential, experienced, knowledgeable and participate in ongoing training – we are sponges and are always soaking up knowledge, we never stop learning –



you don't know what you don't know!

Best compliment ever received:

Word of mouth referral as well as repeat business from clients who continue to place their trust in us – we do not take that trust lightly and it is only by being truly passionate about our service can we also sleep at night!

People might be surprised to know I have ridden my motorcycle around the around the British F1 Silverstone track!

Best piece of advice came from my mother who would regularly say to my siblings and I “there is nothing in this World that you cannot do if you put your mind to it.”

Kim Logan



Kim and Lin Logan Real Estate

Owner and Broker

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My Mission: When I set out to build our real estate company, I wanted to create something different—a team where agents genuinely work together, support one another, and celebrate each other's success. Real estate can be incredibly competitive, but I believe we are stronger when we work together rather than against one another.

Our agents share ideas, solve problems together, and cheer each other on when a client finds that special property. That culture creates a better experience for our clients and a better environment for our agents. We may be a team of real estate professionals, but we truly operate like a family.

Giving back is also at the heart of who we are. Every agent contributes a portion of their commission to Brittney Cares, allowing us to help people throughout our community when they need it most. I want our agents to know that success means more when you use it to make a difference. Together, we can accomplish far more than we ever could alone.

My Strengths: My work ethic is one of my greatest strengths, and I credit my parents for instilling that in me. I am also extremely competitive and driven, which has helped us build the #1 real estate team at the lake and maintain that success for nearly 20 years.

I am fortunate to work alongside family and close friends, but when it comes to



business, I know how to separate the two. At the end of the day, our clients come first. Their goals become our goals, and I want every client to know that we will work tirelessly on their behalf.

The Biggest Challenge I Have Faced:

The greatest challenge of my life was losing my daughter, Brittney. She was 11 years old when she passed away in a lake accident here at Lake Oconee. After experiencing something so devastating, I knew I wanted to find a way to create something meaningful in her memory. As Kim and Lin Logan Real Estate grew, we were blessed with the opportunity to start Brittney Cares. What began as a way to honor Brittney has grown into something that has touched countless lives throughout the lake community. Today, Brittney Cares gives back more

than \$50,000 each year, helping families affected by cancer, fires, accidents, unexpected hardships, and many other circumstances.

Since its beginning, Brittney Cares has given more than \$250,000 back to our lake community. Being able to turn an unimaginable loss into a legacy of helping others is something that means more to me than I could ever put into words.

What Would I Tell My Younger Self?

Believe in yourself, work hard, and never underestimate what you are capable of. You have more control over the direction of your life than you realize. If you want something to change, be willing to make it happen.

You hold the pen. Make sure you write a story you're proud of.

Madison Zak



Kim and Lin Logan Real Estate

Realtor®

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My Mission: My mission is to carry on and expand the legacy of Kim and Lin Logan Real Estate, a family business built on over 20 years of dedication, integrity, and results. Our family values real estate not just as a business, but as a mission to help people find homes where memories are made. We are committed to serving the Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair community with honesty, energy, and passion. I strive to bring that same drive and dedication to every client, ensuring that each home we help someone find is truly a place they can call their own.

My Strengths: My biggest strength in real estate is my deep-rooted connection to Lake Oconee. Growing up here has given me extensive knowledge of the market and a genuine passion for this community. That background allows me to connect with clients on a personal level and help them truly understand what makes this area so special. For me, it's more than just selling homes—it's about sharing my hometown and ensuring my clients find a place where they feel the same sense of belonging that I do.

How would you describe yourself as a businesswoman? Driven and Ambitious! I have a passion for this career and a desire to be the best I can be. I have worked in the service industry since I was 15 years old, which introduced a strong work ethic and taught me how important it is to be detail oriented. You've got to push



boundaries in order to provide the best customer service. There isn't a day that goes by that I am not deeply committed to achieving my goals and constantly seeking new challenges to push my limits!

If you could go back and talk to your "rookie" self, what would you tell her? If I could talk to my younger self, I'd remind her that it won't be easy, but it will be worth it. Progress takes patience, consistency, and a willingness to keep learning. I've realized that hard work by itself doesn't always equal success. The real difference comes from listening, adapting, and showing up for others— even on the tough days. It's not about being perfect; it's about staying committed and trusting that the small steps forward will add up over time. **Share the best piece of advice**

anyone has ever given you. The best advice I've ever received is to never give up, take risks, and never let ego get in the way of growth. Every day is an opportunity to push yourself to do more than what's expected.

In real estate, there's no such thing as a strict 9–5—you've got to stay motivated, present, and available.

I've learned that true success isn't about chasing numbers; it's about showing up for people with consistency, care, and integrity. Whether it's answering that late-night call, digging deeper to find the right solution, or going the extra mile for a client, it all comes back to putting people first. That's what creates trust, long-term relationships, and ultimately the kind of career worth being proud of.

Autumn Bragg



Kim and Lin Logan Real Estate

REALTOR®

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Type of Business:

Real Estate specializing in Lake Oconee, luxury, lakefront, and residential properties.

My Mission:

To provide exceptional real estate guidance through local expertise, genuine relationships, and a level of service that extends far beyond the transaction.

My Strengths:

Deep knowledge of the Lake Oconee market, strong relationships, responsiveness, attention to detail, creative problem-solving, and an unwavering commitment to my clients.

Why did you choose this type of business?

For me, real estate is much more than opening doors and negotiating contracts. I want to be the person my clients can call for anything they need before, during and long after a transaction. I know Lake Oconee because I live here, work here and genuinely love this community. Whether I'm helping someone find the right property, preparing a home for market, coordinating contractors or simply answering the questions that come with moving to a new area, my goal is to make the entire experience feel effortless for my clients.



What makes your business unique?

My goal is to become one of the most trusted and recognized resources for Lake Oconee real estate. I want people considering a move here to know they can come to me not only to find a home, but to truly understand the lake, the communities and the lifestyle. I'm constantly looking for ways to grow, innovate and create an even better experience for my clients while building a business and reputation that will last for generations.

If you could go back and talk to your rookie self, what would you tell her?

Bet on yourself sooner. You don't have to have every step figured out before you take the first one. Some of the biggest opportunities in my life have come from being willing to work hard, trust my instincts and step into something before I felt completely ready. I've learned that confidence doesn't always come first, sometimes you build it by doing the thing you were afraid to do.

Brooke Adams

Kim & Lin Logan Real Estate

Realtor®

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My Mission: My mission is to make real estate **personal, intentional, and highly individualized**. Buying or selling a home is often one of the biggest financial and emotional decisions someone will make, and I want my clients to know they have

someone fully invested in their goals and firmly in their corner from beginning to end.

How do you stay motivated and focused on your goals when things get tough? I've always been incredibly driven, and I set big goals for myself - but what keeps me going is knowing that the work I put in directly impacts the people who have trusted me to represent them. I'm competitive by nature, especially when it comes to my clients. **I want to see them win.** Whether that means negotiating the right deal, positioning a home to stand out, finding an opportunity others may have overlooked, or simply being the steady voice when things get complicated, I take their goals personally.



I also believe success is built through consistency. A reputation isn't created by one great year or one great sale - it's built by showing up, doing what you say you're going to do, and giving people your best over and over again. **That standard is what keeps me motivated, even on the hard days.**

Colby Fournier

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My biggest goal is to continue growing, learning, and rising to the top of the real estate industry. I want to become the best real estate agent I can possibly be and build a career that I'm proud of. I also know I wouldn't be where I am today without the women who took the time to teach and mentor me. When I first joined

the Kim & Lin Logan team, Madison Zak became my mentor and truly taught me how to be a great real estate agent. She took me under her wing, showed me the ins and outs of the business, and helped give me the confidence and knowledge I needed to grow. Between Madison's mentorship and everything I've learned from Kim Logan and her years of experience, I've been incredibly fortunate to learn from two successful women in this industry. I wouldn't be where I am today without either of them, and I hope to continue learning from their example.

Share the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you. I wouldn't say there is one specific piece of advice that stands out. Instead, the greatest thing I've been given is the example set by my parents, Chris Peters and Kisha Combs. They raised me to be a strong, independent woman and taught me from an early age how far hard work can



take you. My dad, Chris Peters, has built an incredibly successful electrical business here at Lake Oconee, so I grew up watching firsthand what determination, consistency, and a strong work ethic can create. Those are lessons from both of my parents that I'll carry with me throughout my entire life and career.

Share a little about the non-business side of you! Outside of real estate, I'm definitely a dog person! I have two dogs, Goldie and Winnie, who are a huge part of my life. One of my favorite hobbies is embroidery. After a long, busy day in real estate, I love coming home and embroidering. It gives me a chance to slow down, be creative, and unwind.

Vinece Pastor

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Lake Oconee Properties

Managing Broker, REALTOR®

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Our Vision: To build lasting relationships and help each client achieve their real estate dreams.

Our Core Strengths: Integrity, value and service to our clients, local market expertise and global reach as part of the most well-known and respected real estate brand in the world – Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices.

What makes your real estate office unique: Some people think all real estate firms are the same – not



BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY
HOMESERVICES | LAKE OCONEE
PROPERTIES



true at all! Our brokerage is unique in that we value and treat each client as an individual and we prioritize our relationship with them above all else. We go above and beyond every day

to ensure our clients receive the best value possible with the most superior level of service and expertise every step of the way. We want our clients to be delighted with how their transaction happened – every step of the way!

How do you stay motivated and focused when things get tough? I tell our agents “No two transactions are alike – but each one is a chance to impress a client and out-perform the competition!”. At our office we love a challenge – and being creative problem solvers. I think this aspect of our approach really sets our agents apart, particularly in tough times or in those really challenging situations.

What is the next big goal for your business? We have grown quite a bit in the last couple years and we’ve done it while maintaining a very cohesive group of agents dedicated to their clients and to each other. My goal is to continue this momentum, while distinguishing ourselves as a truly unique brokerage, focused on building relationships with our clients and delivering an exceptional level of value, expertise and service at the same time.



Nan Keipper

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Lake Oconee Properties

Realtor®

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My Mission: Helping clients find the perfect home to build long term memories.

My Strengths: I am intuitive and read people very well, I'm creative and think

outside of the box which makes me a creative problem solver and I honestly just love working with people.

What inspired me to sell real estate? As a young girl, my mother would pick me up from school on Fridays and we would go look at new homes under construction and chat about the floor plans and finishes. Then when my husband Doug and I married we began to invest in real estate. Real estate has been a much loved part of my life since childhood. It still fascinates me how each home can be so unique with design and layout changes. And I still love the home tours and keeping in touch with the newest trends.

Describe a defining moment in your business journey: A defining moment for me was around "Don't take no for an answer." I learned in this situation – you really need to find out what the reason is for



the "no" and then be creative to solve for it! In real estate, creative problem solving is a skill I use every day to help my clients be successful in their transactions.

Something about me most people don't know: A fun fact about me and my mother, when I was born at the Upson Regional Hospital in Thomaston, Georgia, we held the record for many years as the "oldest mother with a live birth".

Lisa Hartzler

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Lake Oconee Properties

Realtor®

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My Mission: Every client knows they are my top priority each step of the way and I will deliver for them the best possible value for their purchase or sale.

My Strengths: I am focused and

determined, patient in any situation and maintaining my ethics and values all along the way.

Type of Business: Real Estate Brokerage

The best piece of advice anyone ever gave me: My dad was my hero and motivator! He instilled in me my morals and my standards, my values and to always do the right thing for people. He taught me to always think of others and keep my ethics and credibility at the forefront of all that I do.

What inspired me to start in real estate: I started working at the age of 17, and I've always loved working with people. After a successful career in government, my mother encouraged me that real estate was a logical next step for me to be able to connect with people on a personal level, and to help them in a very important part



of their life – their homes!

What makes me unique in real estate: I think I have a very special ability to connect with people in a way that conveys I understand their situation and will be totally dedicated to supporting them and helping them on their real estate journey. When we make that connection – they realize I do really care and am there for them every step of the way.

Connie D. Standifer

PUSH Publishing Inc.

CEO & Author

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My Mission: P.U.S.H. Publishing Inc. founded in August of 2020 stands for Pray Until Something Happens. Our name was given to us by the Late Altheia Ellice Smith-Parham affectionately known to P.U.S.H. Publishing's CEO as Niece Pooh. Altheia lost her fight with Sarcoidosis. Her last words and throughout her battle with Sarcoidosis was to continue to pray until something happened, hence the birth name of my publishing company today. Just weeks before her passing, she conversed with me about her belief in our mission. Here at PUSH we believe that everyone has a story to tell and it is necessary that the opportunity is afforded to you in effort of helping those coming along long after you have a viable navigation tool for moving forward through life.

My Strength: Our publishing strength lies in providing clear, streamlined guidance at every stage of the process—from the beginning of your manuscript to the moment your book reaches readers worldwide. We deliver a professional, high-quality product that authors can take pride in for years to come. Our commitment is reflected in the care we bring to every detail, from front cover to back cover.

What challenge you faced as a woman in business that shaped who you are today? Although I was educated and possessed the skills necessary to succeed in the roles before me, I allowed myself to internalize the beliefs of those in positions of decision-making power. I became convinced



that, in order to be seen as qualified and ultimately included, I needed to make myself smaller. Instead of showing up as my authentic self, I chose to shrink who I was to make those around me feel more comfortable and less threatened by my presence. Over time, that experience shaped the woman I am today. Through it all, I learned that I am enough. More importantly, I discovered that the gifts God has blessed me with are not merely for me—they can serve as lifelines for someone else somewhere in the world. I also learned that when God gives you a gift, He has already prepared the recipients for it. Therefore, I no longer need to worry about whether someone will value, understand, or be interested in what I have to offer. My responsibility is simply to be faithful to the gift God has entrusted to me. Knowing who I am and understanding the value I bring is no longer a burden I carry. It is a responsibility I embrace, a gift I honor, and a purpose I refuse to shrink.

If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be? If I could give my younger self one piece of advice, it would be to be proud of who you are and never be afraid to love yourself fully. Never diminish your knowledge, skills, abilities, or self-respect simply to make someone else feel comfortable—especially at the expense of your own well-being or self-worth. This is a big world, and there is room for all of us. Our differences are not weaknesses; they are part of what makes us unique and valuable. We need one another, and learning to respect, embrace, and coexist with our differences is essential to creating a better world and, ultimately, to our survival.

How do you stay motivated and focused on your goals when things get tough? I stay motivated and focused on my goals when things get tough by remembering that my business brand is symbolized by the blue butterfly. To fully understand the significance of the blue butterfly, you would have to read my book, “When the Bough Breaks,” or my most recent anthology and international best seller titled, “Becoming: A Decision – An Anthology of Lived Transformation.” However, the butterfly itself represents transformation, new beginnings, and the courage to embrace necessary change. When life gets difficult—as we all know it inevitably does—I intentionally look for the silver lining and opportunities to grow, evolve, and become better, regardless of what is before me. I stay motivated by remembering the victories I experienced during previous seasons when circumstances appeared to be at their bleakest. The caterpillar is the perfect analogy. Just when its environment changes and its existence seem to be coming to an end, it undergoes a remarkable transformation and emerges as a beautiful butterfly, soaring to higher heights and new possibilities. That is how I choose to see life: difficult seasons are not the end; they can be the beginning of something greater.

Meigan Miller

Dr. Meigan Miller, Family Dentistry

Dentist/Owner

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Our Business: We are a general dentistry office located in the heart of downtown Eatonton. Our mission is to establish life-long relationships with our patients, providing total patient oral care and preventative care. We also empower patients to take care of their own health. It is truly an honor to serve patients and their families!

Our Strengths: We are a multidisciplinary practice and offer a wide range of dental services tailored to patients' oral needs. Our team is amazing, and each person brings a different strength to the practice every day. Team members take rigorous coursework, staying up to date on everchanging technologies, treatments and advancements in dentistry. One of the advancements and new treatments in dentistry has been in dental sleep medicine. Dental sleep medicine has become an important part of our practice, providing patients with another option in treating sleep apnea. Patients with sleep disorders have an increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and weight gain just to name a few.

What inspired the idea for your business, and what keeps you passionate about it today?



Growing up, I always wanted to be a psychiatrist! It was during college that this focus shifted to dentistry. I saw how my biggest role model, my father, changed lives and formed relationships through the field of dentistry. The impact that his dental practice in SW GA had on me was tremendous. I love practicing dentistry in a small town and truly doing life with my patients simultaneously. We pass each other at the grocery store, we see each other on the ball field. Our patients bring us veggies from their garden in the summer and sweet treats at Christmas; they are family. **How do you stay motivated and focused on your goals when things get tough?** There will always be ups and downs in life that effect business. During these times, I like to lean into my “why” and remember that God is still working through the mud. Not

every season in life was meant to be a productive season or even an easy season. Flowers are not produced in a day and there is much that goes on underneath the surface before the beauty is produced. Persevere, focus on your why and remember that there is still much to be gained in the tough seasons.

Share a little about the nonbusiness side of you—family, pets, hobbies, favorite music or food, or anything fun our readers should know! Clint and I are still busy with three children (one in middle school this year!) but they are our greatest joy and blessing for sure. We love to travel but also cherish our downtime at home as a family. During the fall, you'll find us at Sanford Stadium cheering on the Dawgs on the weekends and at the Rec Department on the weeknights cheering on one of our kids!

Missy Swicord

Exchange Bank

Vice President/Lender
Lake Sinclair Office
Branch Manager

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Our Mission: Exchange Bank has served Middle Georgia since 1903, providing personalized banking services and supporting the communities it calls home. Guided by its commitment to being a place Where Community Matters, the bank continues to invest in initiatives that promote growth, education, and long-term success.

Strengths:

- Over 120 years of community banking experience in Middle Georgia
- Personalized service rooted in local relationships
- Local decision-making that keeps customers' needs front and center
- Commitment to innovation, offering state-of-the-art banking technology alongside hometown service
- Ongoing investment in community growth, education, and outreach
- Trusted hometown partner for both personal and business banking

Industry: Finance

How would you describe yourself as a businesswoman? I am extremely passionate about who I am and what I do for each of my customers. Sometimes that's just talking to them,



encouraging them, and just being a listening ear.

How do you motivate yourself when something goes wrong? Or, how do you decompress after a busy or stressful day? We all make mistakes, little hiccups in life that we can't get back, but what we can do is pick ourselves up, make sure we understand the mistake, and grow from it. Take the error as a motivator to be better, to do better, to make better decisions. It's ok to be imperfect.

Share the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you that you follow.

My father told me always and consistently. "Baby girl never forget where you came from and never forget those who helped you get to where you are."

Tell about the non-business side of "you" A collegiate gymnast – 6 time all American and National Champion! Proud to be an alumnus of Georgia College... Go Colonials!

Jennifer Vaughan

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Jennifer Vaughan is a Realtor and Associate Broker with Dwell Real Estate, specializing in connecting clients with exceptional opportunities and timeless experiences while delivering results beyond expectations for buyers, sellers, and real estate investors across Lake Oconee, Madison, and Lake Sinclair.

What drives your motivation?

I thrive in a competitive environment, so my motivation comes from challenging myself, knowing what my goals are, and knowing that I'm helping my clients with the largest asset they will ever buy or sell.

What has been a highlight of your year, personally?

This year I have a senior at Lake Oconee Academy, and I've loved every bit of it — the school events, the activities, and helping him plan for the next chapter ahead.

How do you give back to the Lake

Oconee community? Larry and I are avid supporters of the businesses and



organizations that make Lake Oconee such an amazing place to call home. We're proud to support education, healthcare, and the charities that serve our community.

What are your goals as you look ahead? Our goals evolve year after

year, and this year we were excited to see our first spec home completed. I'm looking forward to new projects in 2027 and beyond, and I'll keep striving to be the best real estate professional for the clients who choose me to help them buy and sell at Lake Oconee.

Kay Stevens

**Coldwell Banker
Lake Oconee Realty**

Realtor®

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My Mission: To use my experience, knowledge, and commitment to service to guide buyers and sellers through every step of their real estate journey with honesty, professionalism, and personal attention.

My Strengths: With 47 years of experience representing buyers and

sellers, my greatest strengths are my knowledge of the Lake Country market, strong community relationships, and dedication to providing knowledgeable, dependable service to my clients.

Type of Business: Real Estate — Assisting Buyers and Sellers with Residential, Commercial, and Land Real Estate Transactions.

What is/are your proudest moment(s)? After 47 years in real estate, I'm most proud of the relationships I've built and the opportunity I've had to serve both my clients and my community. Helping generations of buyers and sellers make important decisions about their homes has been incredibly rewarding, but my career has always been about more than real estate.

I'm grateful to have served as



President of the Lake Country Board of REALTORS® and the Eatonton-Putnam Chamber of Commerce, as well as on the Putnam Development Authority and with other community organizations. Being inducted into the Lake Country Board of REALTORS® Hall of Fame and receiving the Robert S. Stubbs Guardian of Ethics Award are especially meaningful honors.

Looking back, I'm proud to have built a career based on relationships, service, professionalism, and a genuine love for the Lake Country community I call home.

Susan Powers

**AssetGrade
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Co-Founder & COO

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You've Built Something Worth Protecting.

For the women building businesses, careers, families, and legacies throughout Lake Oconee, your investment portfolio is only one piece of your financial picture. A comprehensive financial plan looks at how everything works together, including your investments, retirement, taxes, estate, family, business, and the life you want to live. Because the most important question isn't simply, "How is my portfolio performing?" It's "Is my money helping me build the life I want, and am I prepared for whatever comes next?"

Ask Yourself: If my life changed tomorrow, would my financial plan be ready?

Retirement. Selling a business. Divorce. Widowhood. An inheritance. A growing



family. Life changes, and your financial plan should change with it.

I want the women I work with to understand their financial lives, not simply be told what to do with their money.

You've worked hard to build your wealth. Let's make sure you have a plan for it.



Certified Financial Planners (CFP®) are licensed by the CFP® Board to use the CFP® mark. CFP® certification requirements include: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, completion of the financial planning education requirements set by the CFP® Board (www.cfp.net), successful completion of the CFP® Certification Exam, comprised of two three-hour sessions, experience requirement: 6,000 hours of professional experience related to the financial planning process, or 4,000 hours of Apprenticeship experience that meets additional requirements, successfully pass the Candidate Fitness Standards and background check, agree annually to be bound by CFP® Board's Standards of Professional Conduct, and complete 30 hours of continuing education every two years, including two hours on the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct. Chartered Financial Analysts® (CFA®) are licensed by the CFA® Institute to use the CFA® mark. CFA® certification requirements: Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution or have equivalent education or work experience, successful completion of all three exam levels of the CFA® Program, have 48 months of acceptable professional work experience in the investment decision-making process, fulfill society requirements, which vary by society. Unless you are upgrading from affiliate membership, all societies require two sponsor statements as part of each application; these are submitted online by your sponsors. AssetGrade is an investment adviser registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Registration does not imply a certain level of skill or training. More information about AssetGrade's investment advisory services can be found in its Form ADV Part 2, which is available upon request. A Certified Financial Planner (CFP) is a financial planner that has met rigorous education, training, and ethical standards. The CFP certification is granted by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board). CFP Board owns the mark CFP® in the U.S. AG-26-24

Kimberly Acworth | Alex Crawford

Owner and Master Stylist

Salon Manager and Stylist

Indulge Salon



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www.IndulgeSalon.com

Our Mission: always to be “180 degrees from Ordinary”. It’s stated in our logo!

Our Strengths: The ability to get to the “root” of the problem and solve it at that moment. We carefully listen to our clients to find out what they really want. We continually strive to perfect our craft, so when that one person in the chair needs us, we are delivering many years of study and technique in that one moment.

Type of Business: full-service beauty salon

What makes your business unique, and why do customers love it?

For me, I get to work with my daughter Alex, who manages our Lake Oconee salon (we also have a salon in York, PA) and is a fabulous stylist. Together we make a great team because:

- We love adapting to change. We love supporting women and helping them make different choices as to how they want to live their lives and how they want to look. Personalities blossom when multi-dimensional color and cut are customized to a client’s face shape and lifestyle, and highlights placed to enhance skin tone and face structure. Appearance speaks volumes without words.
- Our goal, always, is to deliver the highest level of service. Attending advanced training as much as my team and I have done means new



conversations about what we can do for our clients to make a real difference.

- We are expert problem solvers, especially when it comes to color correction, hair smoothing techniques, creating volume in fine/thin hair, adding volume and length (or camouflaging the lack of hair due to stress or a medical condition) with undetectable hair extensions.
- We’re certified in seven hair extension brands and all installation techniques and offer the area’s most extensive selection in natural human hair.
- We personally test all our haircare and spa products to ensure they meet our own tough standards. Most recently, Indulge took a new direction as Lake Oconee’s only salon that has been trained to offer Nutrafol hair growth supplements.

What is the best compliment you’ve ever received about your business? Honestly, Indulge gets

wonderful compliments every day, at both salons. Every client gets a follow-up contact asking about their experience, so we get excellent feedback. My personal favorite comes from Dineane, who posted on our website...

“Brilliant stylist and colorist. Over 30 years with this talented woman! My hair is coarse, curly/wavy-ish and thick. If done wrong I look like a broom or a bad perm. With Kim I never worry. I get so many compliments on both the color and the style every time.”

If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Don’t let fear of the unknown get in your way. You will have challenges in life that will knock you down. Think on it, act on it and let it go. Give it back to God and move on with what God has intended for your life. Stay away from negative people and surround yourself with people that are better than yourself.

Susan Campbell

Oconee Springs Park

Manager

The Edgewater on Lake Sinclair

Assistant Manager

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TheEdgewateronLakeSinclair.com

🌐 Oconeespringspark.com

The Mission: Our tenure at Oconee Springs Park began in 2013 and from the beginning our goal was to make the park a destination where families could gather, spend quality time away from the hustle and bustle of life and enjoy a relaxing weekend or vacation on beautiful Lake Sinclair. Building lasting relationships that span generations has been one of our goals since the beginning.

Our strengths: The team members that are our work family is our biggest asset. We all “wear many hats” as they say! My philosophy is our job is to meet the needs of our patrons and guests and take care of each other to the very best of our abilities. All of us have this mindset and it shows every single day. I might be working on financials in the office on Monday, but on Thursday the grass may need to be cut, or a wall could use a coat of paint, Saturday may find me setting up for a wedding and reception in the Edgewater...you just never know. Of course there are certain managerial issues that only I can do, but for the most part, we’re all working in the same direction. It’s humorous in a way because the picture you see



associated with this article is not who you will see 99% of the time when I’m in the park!

What keeps us passionate: Our summer months are our busiest time of the year. School is out and kids want to play in the water and on the Inflatables, and boy, do they have a good time!! After the winter months where there isn’t much interest in boating, fishing or camping, it’s always delightful to hear the noise of kids laughing, riding bikes and skateboards, music playing, boats and jet skis coming in for gas at the marina, campfires crackling while smores are being devoured – there’s just something about it! Lots of hard work completing major projects takes place during those months while things are quiet, so spring and summer remind us why we do what we do. When folks are making memories here, Oconee Springs becomes part of that legacy.

In 2020, we added The Edgewater on Lake Sinclair – a lakeside venue – and it’s reach continues to grow as word about its capabilities shared and experienced. Since its opening there have been numerous lakeside weddings held. In addition, receptions, parties, baby showers, church gatherings, celebration of life services, are just some of the gatherings that have taken place within its walls. Open air concerts have been a big hit this past summer, with plans for more in the future. Corporate picnics and meetings are also being held. Such a lovely facility that meets so many community needs with a peaceful and charming view of Lake Sinclair.

Best Compliment: In my opinion, one of the best compliments we ever receive is when we are asked how long or if we (Lonnie and I) are the owners of the park or The Edgewater. It implies that our (meaning all the employees) work ethic and commitment to our customers is so much that we must be doing it for our personal gain. I won’t deny that we conduct the business as if it was our own – we sacrifice like it was, we engage like it was, and we worry like it was - but it always gives us great pleasure to say that Putnam County owns and operates the facilities – and we are all county employees. Some mouths drop open, some say, “wow – y’all do a great job” and have had several “thank you for what you do for us”. Our desire in 2013 was to make our mark on the park, and when the time comes to move on, to leave it in better condition than when we found it – we continue to pursue that desire.

There is a sign that hangs near the entrance to the retail store that reads “May all who enter as guests, leave as friends”. If you’ve not visited us, please venture out this way...we don’t think you can ever have too many friends!

Raquel Torres

Jalisco Mexican Grill

Owner

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Greensboro, Georgia 30642
- ✉️ JaliscoMexicanGrill1@gmail.com

My Mission: My mission and passion are to serve and inspire others. I want to be an inspiration to my only daughter and to the many other women who may be looking for the courage to pursue their own dreams.

I come from a small town in Jalisco, Mexico, and I am the tenth of eleven children in my family. When I came to the United States as a teenager, I quickly realized that this was a country full of opportunity. Coming to a new place where I didn't know the language was difficult, but I was determined to find my way and build a better future.

As the saying goes, "In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."

Now, almost 30 years later, I am a proud U.S. citizen and successful business owner. My journey has taught me that challenges can become opportunities when you are willing to work hard, believe in yourself, and keep moving forward.

Type of Business: Food Service

In what ways does your business give back to or impact the local community? Whenever the community asks Jalisco for help or support, we do our best to be there. Whether it's providing gift certificates for local raffles, donating meals to local schools, or supporting after-school programs, Jalisco believes in giving back to the community that has supported us.

Being part of the community means more to us than simply running a business. It means being there for



our neighbors, supporting local organizations, and doing whatever we can to make a difference.

What makes your business unique, and why do customers love it? Jalisco is a family-run business. Aside from our fast service and flavorful food, we take pride in building genuine relationships with our customers.

I have customers who have known me and my children for more than 20 years. We also have customers who are just getting to know us, but before long, they become part of the Jalisco family.

We do more than what's on the menu. If you want a traditional Mexican meal like pozole, we've got you. If you need help with meal prepping and want to learn how to make traditional albóndigas, I'll walk you through the steps. There isn't much our customers have asked of us that we haven't tried to help with.

For me, food is about more than simply feeding people. It's about sharing my culture, creating connections, and making people feel at home.

How do you stay motivated and focused on your goals when things get tough? My children are my motivation.

I have four boys and one daughter. It's a mother's instinct to protect and care for her children. Everything I do is for them. They were the main reason I opened my own business. I wanted to create a life where they would have everything they needed, but more importantly, I wanted to teach them the value of hard work, perseverance, and having a strong work ethic.

Building a business has not always been easy, but knowing that my children are watching me keeps me going. I want my daughter to see that it is possible to start with very little, overcome challenges, and build something meaningful through determination and hard work.

If my journey can inspire my daughter or even one other woman to believe in herself and pursue her dreams, then everything I have worked for has been worth it.

Riezl Baker

Luxury Lake Oconee Real Estate Group

Realtor®, Founding Principal

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What makes your business unique, and why do people love working with you? I have been a Realtor in the Lake Country area for more than 25 years, and I have never believed that my job is simply to sell homes. My role is to help people transition into the next phase of their lives. I listen carefully, provide honest guidance and always put my clients' interests above everything else. The transaction may end at closing, but the relationships often last a lifetime.

What is the best compliment you have received about your business? The greatest compliment is when clients tell me that I made a meaningful difference in their lives. Awards and sales achievements are wonderful, but knowing that someone trusted me during an important life transition and that I helped them means far more to me than any recognition.

What challenge have you faced as a woman that helped shape who you are today? When I entered the corporate world in the early 1990s after graduating from college, it was still very much a man's world. Workplace harassment was rarely discussed, and I witnessed men make inappropriate and demeaning



comments about women. Those experiences taught me resilience and the importance of believing in my own abilities. Women have made an extraordinary difference in the world because of the way we care for others and the passion, determination and strength that come from within. We have broken barriers, and we must continue opening doors for the

women who follow us.

Share the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you? My grandfather was a World War II veteran and a survivor of the Bataan Death March. He worked a blue-collar job during the day while attending law school at night and eventually became one of Manila's most respected legislators. He was also an amputee who swam with only one leg for exercise. His life was a powerful example of courage, discipline, generosity and perseverance. He always told me, "Never feel sorry for yourself. Find passion and purpose in everything you do, and success will follow." He also taught me to leave my community better than I found it. Those lessons have guided my life, my business and my commitment to serving the Lake community.

What is something about you outside of business that people may not know?

I used to love fishing! My maternal grandfather was a commercial fisherman, and I would wake up at three in the morning to go fishing with him. Those early mornings on the water gave me some of my most treasured childhood memories. Perhaps that is one reason I have always felt such a strong connection to life on the lake.

"Successful women earn their seat at the table through hard work, confidence, and perseverance, but true success is reflected in how we carry ourselves. Always lead with grace and never sacrifice your character. Confidence may open the door, but class is what leaves a lasting impression." — Riezl Baker

Luxury Lake Oconee Real Estate Group



**Betty
McHan**



**Elisa
Frechter**



**Emily
Norris**



**Karen
Salter**



**Kerry
Minster**



**Kristen
Blascovich**



**Leslie
Clark**



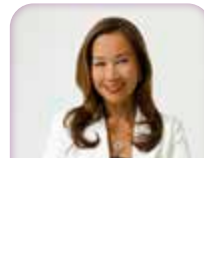
**Molly
Stec**



**Nicole
Richard**



**Rachel
Deal**



**Riezl
Baker**



**Robin
Richardson**

The women of Luxury Lake Oconee Real Estate Group

play an integral role in the firm's success, bringing together deep local knowledge, industry expertise and a genuine commitment to the Lake Oconee community. Their client-first approach allows them to provide thoughtful guidance, personalized service and strategic insight throughout every step of the real estate journey.

From innovative marketing strategies to strong community relationships, these women continually find new ways to elevate the experience for their clients and deliver meaningful results.



Their professionalism, integrity and collaborative spirit reflect the high standards that define Luxury Lake Oconee Real Estate Group and have helped establish the firm as a trusted leader in the market.

At the heart of their work is a shared philosophy: "At Luxury Lake Oconee

Real Estate Group, our mission is to serve with excellence, lead with integrity, draw upon our deep knowledge of the community we love while always putting our clients' interests first. We believe that as Women in Business, our success is defined by how we serve others and the professionalism, grace, and class we demonstrate along the way."

For these women, success goes beyond the outcome of a transaction. It is reflected in the relationships they build, the trust they earn and the standard of service they bring to every client and every interaction.

Kendra Young

Squared Away Construction

CEO & Co-founder

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Proud Veteran. Skilled Builder. Woman in Business.

A lot can change in a year.

Since her last Women in Business feature, Kendra Young, CEO and co-founder of Squared Away Construction, has entered a new chapter both personally and professionally. In December 2025, Kendra married her longtime partner in life and business, Dustin Young. Together, they continue building a family, a future, and a construction company that has reached some of its biggest milestones yet.

Over the past year, Squared Away Construction has signed its first million-dollar-plus construction contracts, closed on multiple luxury custom homes now being built from the ground up, expanded its fleet of company trucks and vehicles, and continued growing its



residential and commercial capabilities throughout Georgia.

For Kendra, however, success is about much more than the size of a contract. “Signing a million-dollar contract is exciting, but what it really means is that someone trusts us with a million-dollar responsibility. Our name is attached to every project, and that matters to me.”



A U.S. Army combat veteran and Purple Heart recipient, Kendra has carried the discipline, resilience, leadership, and accountability she learned in uniform into the construction industry. Those values helped shape Squared Away Construction and remain at the center of how the company operates today. Based in Monticello, Georgia, Squared

Away Construction is a licensed residential and light-commercial contractor specializing in luxury custom homes, major renovations and additions, commercial construction and build-outs, steel buildings, and specialty projects.

The company’s growth can now be seen both on the road and on the jobsite—more trucks, larger projects, stronger capabilities, and custom homes rising from previously untouched ground.

For Kendra, being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated industry has never meant changing who she is to fit the industry.

“I don’t walk into a room thinking I have to prove I belong there because I’m a woman. I walk in knowing my company, knowing my numbers, knowing construction, and knowing what we can deliver. The work speaks for itself.”

Last year’s feature introduced a proud veteran building a construction company. This year’s story shows what happened next.

The contracts got bigger. The fleet grew. Luxury homes began rising from the ground. Kendra became Kendra Young. And the vision for Squared Away Construction became even bigger.

The goal isn’t simply to build a larger company. It is to build a company—and a legacy—designed to last.

Myrna Taylor

Taylor Floral Design & Gifts

Owner

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My Mission: To bring creativity, business and community together in Downtown Eatonton

My Strengths: Seeing great potential everywhere I look. My strong drive to make things better is fueled by a strong entrepreneurial and community minded instinct.

Over the last six years, I have built more than a business in Downtown Eatonton. This community has welcomed my family and I, with open arms! Through creativity, an eye for design, and a strong connection to my community, I have created a place where flowers, gifts, and Southern hospitality come together. My husband and I started investing in commercial buildings in Downtown Eatonton in 2020. What started with the renovation of two buildings that would house our own retail stores, has grown into a dedication to keep bringing buildings back to life on our beautiful Square. It has brought me great joy to welcome new businesses and loft apartments to town in buildings that we lovingly saved.

As the owner of Taylor Floral Design & Gifts, I have developed a business centered on making everyday moments, both happy and sad, more memorable. From fresh



floral arrangements and luxurious wedding designs to carefully selected gifts, fragrances, candles, and home accessories, the shop reflects my belief that beautiful details can evoke meaningful memories. Located in downtown Eatonton across from the courthouse, my store has become part of the character of the Historic Downtown district. I am continuously looking for creative ways to make shopping an experience and to give my customers a reason to regularly visit downtown.

What are some things you are excited to be a part of? For the last year, I have been actively exploring concepts that can contribute to the

continued growth of Downtown Eatonton. Before the end of 2026, I will be opening two retail stores in Downtown. Eatonton Antique Mall will boast over 10,000sqft of vintage and antique finds, sure to satisfy the most discerning collector's taste. Eatonton Trading Company will be a boutique mall bringing over 20 small businesses, mostly female-owned, together under one roof. My vision for both these spaces combines an appreciation for the historic surroundings with a desire to create spaces that feel fresh, attractive, and relevant to today's shoppers.

Why is community so important to you? I was raised in a big city, where it is easy to feel like an island. Being a part of a strong community is a gift most people don't realize they have! Rather than viewing downtown businesses as isolated stores, I see the value of creating experiences that encourage people to move from one business to another. I have always had a Community over Competition mindset and believe that we are stronger together. Together, we are finding ways to bring neighbors back to the Square to discover all the amazing things that are happening in Downtown.

What are some community events that you've been involved in this year? For several years, I have been in charge of the floral design for ArtiGras. It is a Gala Fundraiser for the Artisan's Village with over 200 people in attendance. In March of this year, I had the honor of bringing the Golden Gala to benefit Putnam General Hospital to life, serving as the Gala Director. This July, I hosted Downtown Eatonton's Christmas in July at The Plaza Arts Center. It was a day filled with fun, family, and community.

Sandy Dillard Terri Burner

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Our Mission: Our foundation is built on dedication, commitment, and honesty. We believe in doing things the right way, keeping our clients informed, advocating fiercely on their behalf, and always acting with integrity.

Our Strengths: Negotiating, knowledge of the market, communication, dedication and always acting with integrity.

What makes your business unique, and why do customers love it? Two top-producing real estate agents. Two strong women. One friendship built on something much deeper than real estate.

Sandy and Terri came together to form S&T Real Estate at Keller Williams Lake Oconee, but the foundation of their partnership began with a shared love for their mothers, who have both since passed away. A simple red bird became a meaningful reminder of their moms—and a symbol of the friendship and

S&T Real Estate – Keller Williams Lake Oconee

Realtors®



connection that brought them together. That bond became the foundation for S&T Real Estate. Built on friendship, trust, honesty, integrity, and a genuine commitment to others, we believe in doing things the right way and treating every client and transaction with the same care and dedication. To us, the red bird represents where we came

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from, the women who shaped us, and the lasting relationships that matter most.

Share a little about the nonbusiness side of you! Sandy has been married to her husband, Van, for 28 years. Together, they have four children, two grandsons, and three of the most amazing fur babies ever. She loves to read, but only at the beach, which is her favorite place in the world and the one place where she can truly relax. She loves spending time with her family and friends, and she and her family attend Bible Fellowship Church. Terri has been married to her husband, Troy, for 25 years. Together, they have four children and two grandchildren. Work is her hobby, but outside of real estate, her passion is working with clients through her profession in physical therapy and helping others in any way she can. She is a member of the Greene-Putnam Rotary Club and loves spending time with her family and friends.

Valerie Lipscomb Beeson

ValsCo Marketing House

Marketing Strategist

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Your marketing shouldn't feel this complicated.

You have a website. You're posting on social media. Maybe you're running ads, sending emails, or working with a few different marketing partners. But do you know whether it's all working together, or what you should do next? That's where I come in.

I ask a lot of questions. The kind that get to the heart of who your customer is, what they care about, why they should choose you, and what your brand really needs to say. Then I take those answers, pull the marketing pieces together, and turn them into a clear message and an actionable plan. My favorite part? The messaging. I love uncovering the problem a business solves for its customers and building the message around that. Give me a brand story to write or a homepage to wireframe, and I'm in my happy place. When it's time to bring the strategy to life, I tap into a network of trusted experts I love working with to execute the right marketing initiatives. After nearly two decades in marketing, I started ValsCo to work closely with a



limited number of clients and get back to what I believe makes marketing work: **Understand your customer. Get the message right. Build the strategy. Then choose the tactics.** Not sure where your marketing needs work? Scan to get my free Marketing Clarity Checklist to uncover what's working, what's wasting money, and what to fix first.



Lauren Coyne

Boatright Realty Group at Coldwell Banker Lake Oconee Realty/Lake Country Realtor®

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My Mission: By combining local knowledge, resources and relationships, Boatright Realty Group creates a customized real estate experience that welcomes clients to “Come Live the Dream”.

My Strengths: Listing Agent & Buyers Agent

Has new technology enhanced your operational excellence? If so, how?

As REALTORS® with Boatright Realty Group at Coldwell Banker Lake Oconee Realty/Lake Country, we have embraced the ways technology can enhance how we do business. Through partnerships with leading, user-friendly platforms, our new and improved website, and access to valuable tools and resources, we are able to stay connected, work efficiently, reach a broader audience, and create greater opportunities for our Buyers and Sellers! For me, the key is finding the right balance between technology and personal service. Technology can begin a property search and showcase a home, but it can't replace local knowledge, strong relationships, or truly understanding the Lake Oconee community and market.

For Buyers, I enjoy becoming a “tour guide” of Lake Oconee, helping them find not only the right property, but also the community that feels right for them. There is so much more to finding a home in Lake Country than an initial online search. What a Buyer is looking for can evolve once they begin



touring homes, experiencing different communities, learning about memberships and amenities, and getting a true feel for the Lake Oconee lifestyle. Helping them navigate those differences and find the right fit is one of my favorite parts of the process.

For Sellers, that same combination of technology and local knowledge is just as important. It allows me to thoughtfully position their property, showcase what makes it unique, and create exposure beyond simply putting a home on the market. Understanding the different communities, amenities, memberships, and what Buyers are looking for helps me tell the story of a property and connect it with the right audience. My goal is to make sure each home is presented in a way that reflects both its value and the lifestyle that comes with it.

I use technology as a tool to help me perform at my best and provide my clients with the highest level of service possible. At the end of the day, though, genuine, personal, and professional service is what I

want my clients to remember most!

Tell us about the non-business side of “you.” This summer, my husband and I welcomed a special new member to our family, our first daughter, Cambri Lynne Coyne, born July 2! We are so excited to begin making memories together as a family here at Lake Oconee.

Family, friends, and community have always been an important part of our lives, and I believe so many of our best memories are tied to the places we call home.

Whether it's spending time on the lake, visiting a local farmers market, shopping local, meeting friends for dinner, or simply running into familiar faces around town, those everyday moments and connections are a big part of what makes Lake Oconee so special to us.

Even before Cambri arrived, we felt an incredible amount of excitement and support from friends, clients, and members of the community who celebrated this special season of life with us. That support has only continued since welcoming her, and it has made us even more grateful to call this area home!

Why did you choose this type of business?

Before entering real estate, my background was in education, specifically mathematics. Teaching taught me the importance of creating personalized pathways because no two students learn in exactly the same way. I've found the same to be true in real estate. No two clients, properties, searches or goals are exactly alike.

When I began in the industry, I saw an opportunity to apply many of those same skills in a new way by listening closely, solving problems, simplifying decisions, and helping people find a path that fits their individual goals.

That is what makes real estate so rewarding to me. It brings together problem solving, relationships, and community, while giving me the opportunity to advocate for my clients through some of life's biggest decisions. Ultimately, I love helping people find their place in Lake Country, an area my family and I are incredibly proud to call home!

Traci Nelson

Ansley Real Estate/ Christie's International Real Estate

Realtor®

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For Traci Nelson, real estate has never been about simply buying or selling homes. It's about guiding people through some of life's biggest transitions with confidence, expertise, and exceptional service.

Over the past twelve years, she has built a reputation as one of Georgia's most respected luxury real estate advisors by combining deep market knowledge with a genuine passion for helping clients achieve their goals.

In 2026 alone, Traci has already surpassed \$20 million in pending and closed sales, a reflection of the trust her clients place in her and the results she consistently delivers.

As a three-time member of the Ansley Real Estate | Christie's International Real Estate Circle of Excellence, Traci has earned recognition among the brokerage's top-producing agents and luxury advisors. The Circle of Excellence honors professionals who demonstrate exceptional sales performance, industry leadership, outstanding client service, and expertise in Georgia's luxury real estate market.



ANSLEY | CHRISTIE'S | Traci Nelson
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LAKE SAVVY
by TRACI NELSON

Traci is widely recognized as a Lake Country specialist, serving buyers and sellers throughout Lake Oconee, Lake Sinclair, and Madison, Georgia. Having grown up on Lake Sinclair and witnessed the evolution of Lake Oconee into one of the Southeast's premier luxury destinations, she brings unmatched local knowledge to every transaction. Whether representing waterfront estates, historic homes, equestrian properties, or luxury residences, she understands the lifestyle, value, and unique character that make each community special.

As part of Ansley Real Estate | Christie's International Real Estate, the #1 luxury real estate brand in the Southeast, Traci offers her clients something few agents can: hometown expertise backed by an international network. Through Christie's International Real Estate, Luxury Portfolio International, and

Leading Real Estate Companies of the World, every listing receives exposure to affluent buyers across the globe while every client benefits from personalized, local guidance.

Known for her innovative marketing strategies, strong negotiation skills, and relationship-first approach, Traci's business is built almost entirely through referrals and repeat clients. Her commitment to professionalism, integrity, and exceptional service has made her a trusted advisor for families, investors, and luxury buyers throughout Georgia's Lake Country.

Whether helping a family purchase their dream waterfront home, marketing a luxury estate to an international audience, or guiding clients through life's next chapter, Traci believes every transaction deserves the highest level of care, creativity, and expertise.

Megan Fitzgerald & Mallory Fried

Three Rays Boutique | Head Spa

Owners

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Instagram:
threeraysboutiqueheadspa

The idea for our business came from wanting to create a single space where women could shop, relax, and feel genuinely cared for. As sisters, we wanted to build something together that combined our love for fashion, beauty, wellness, and bringing people

together. That vision became Three Rays Boutique | Head Spa.

Our customers and the community we've built are what keep us passionate today. Whether it's helping someone find an outfit they love, watching a head spa client leave feeling refreshed, or simply connecting with the people who walk through our doors, we're reminded why we started. Being able to grow something we're passionate about together as sisters makes it even more meaningful.

Looking ahead, one of our biggest dreams over the next three years is to build our own space here at Lake Oconee that gives us the opportunity to grow and expand. We envision multiple head spa rooms, salon services, a full boutique in the front, and enough space to keep our inventory stocked while



continuing to grow our online sales. More than anything, we want to create a business that provides opportunities for others to grow with us and build careers doing something they love. We hope to continue expanding Three Rays within our community and, eventually, open a second storefront in a surrounding city. Our goal is to build something that is bigger than just our business and create a space where both our team and our community can thrive.

You'll never do a
whole lot unless
you're brave
enough to try.

– Dolly Parton





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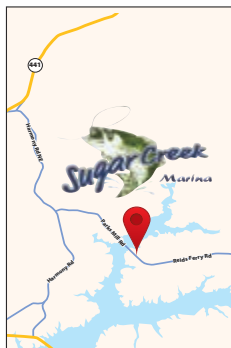
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A Lasting Legacy

■ Story by **Lynn Hobbs**

■ Photos contributed

It was 1952. Decades before Lake Oconee and gated communities transformed Greene County's landscape, a young Black woman nervously stepped off a bus in downtown Greensboro.

She had just moved from the strictly segregated, tight-knit community of Rosedale in Birmingham. Although she had studied at Clark College in Atlanta, Anita White had transferred back to Birmingham, where she earned her B.A. degree from Miles Memorial College in 1950. She spent the next two years teaching school in a small, rural Alabama community.

Knowing it was time to spread her wings, Anita accepted a teaching position across the state line in Greene County, Georgia. Her mother and father bade her goodbye as she climbed aboard the bus. As the laws back then required, she walked to the back of the bus and took her seat.

Nervousness, timidity, or fear are not usually—if

ever—associated with Anita, who became well-known in Greene County by her married name, Anita White Carson. But on that first day traveling to and arriving in Greene County, Anita had been suspiciously befriended by some white people and, according to her daughter, Sheila Carson

Drake, she worried she was about to be thrown off the bus or even hanged.

Telling the story recently, Anita's children, Sheila, her

brother Stanley Carson,

and younger sister

Sarah Carson Hughes,

all laughed as they

described how the

“white” people were, in

fact, light-skinned Blacks

with straight hair, who quickly

became lifelong dear friends of

their mother after she realized her

mistake.



She was one of those people that always got calls any time of the day, any time of the night. And just as much as she gave us, she would give to the community. She did all those things because she always wanted to make sure everybody had some type of exposure to as many different things as possible.

— Stanley Carson

So, on that first day, instead of being mobbed or hanged, Anita was accompanied by her new friends to Leila Bickers' boarding house.

"When she got to Miss Leila's house, Ma Leila was fair-skinned, too," Sheila said. "All of it worried mama; so she called her daddy the next day and said, 'Daddy, I can't do this.' And granddaddy told her to give it a year and said if you want to come home after that year, you can. But during the year, mama fell in love with Greene County."

Anita loved it so much that she remained and spent the rest of her life in Greensboro until her death at age 95. She married and raised her children, as well as several of her nieces and nephews, in her house which ironically had at one time been a boarding house.

"The Black teacher and community were a close-knit family," Sheila said. "The children all knew each other, and the grown-ups were all a family, a unit, because they looked out for each other because of the times."

As an active, faithful member of the Historic Springfield Baptist Church in Greensboro, Anita served as a Sunday school teacher, Sunday school superintendent, and a member of the mass choir and senior mission.

She also remained true to the mission of her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, by daily putting into action its founding principles of leadership, scholarship, and service to all mankind. The local community projects she

volunteered in, directed, or co-sponsored include the Family Violence Council, Community Service Board, Action Incorporated, the Christmas Stocking organization, Friends of the Library and a member of the Greene County Library Board, Chamber of Commerce, Habitat for Humanity, and education committee.

She did all this while working 37 years for Greene County School System as a teacher, and later as the district's school social worker before she retired in 1990. Schools and classrooms were segregated when she first began, and she remained steadfast throughout the controversial desegregation process, during which she went from teaching high school language arts to middle school math.

Sheila and Stanley were students during desegregation and Sarah said she was a pupil in the county's first Head Start program.

"Mama said that when schools integrated, it wasn't like a family unit anymore with the kids and the parents," Sarah said. "Things evolved and things changed. ... Mama was all for progress, but she grew up in a time when standards were standards, and everyone in the unit held to those same standards and held the kids to those standards."

Stanley chuckled as he recalled one time as an adult when he and his mother were walking in downtown Greensboro and

overheard an adolescent girl talking to her grandmother. The girl was complaining about a teacher, "Mrs. Carson," who had made her check her spelling on a math test, which wasn't fair because it was math. The older woman told her "Well, I had a teacher like that, but her name was Miss White."

"And then we met them coming around the bend and the grandmother was excited to see Mom, but the granddaughter wasn't too happy. And she said 'There's that teacher right there,'" he laughed.

Sheila and Sarah each had her for math when they were in seventh grade. On the first day, an awkward situation arose. "We said, 'What do you want me to call you?'" they said. "I just didn't call her because 'Mrs. Carson' didn't sound right, so I didn't call her anything," Sheila added. "I just tried to stay out of the way, tried to disappear," Sarah admitted.

Anita's dedication to her students' education extended beyond the lessons and homework. Sheila and Sarah recalled when their mama was over the school's majorettes.

"She wanted everybody to be cohesive," Sarah said. "She'd buy material and she'd be up early in the morning sewing clothes, making their uniforms. Everybody depended on her, even her sisters and brothers, because she was just their rock and everybody trusted her."

"When I go back and look



Anita White-Carson with her daughters, Sheila and Sarah.

at it, to be her child was a joy,” Stanley added, nodding his head in agreement with Sarah. “Then we understood how the schools worked. They had to grade papers at night and turn in lesson plans on Monday mornings and grade papers in the evenings. And she was one of those people that always got calls any time of the day, any time of the night. And just as much as she gave us, she would give to the community. She did all those things because she always wanted to make sure everybody had some type of exposure to as many different things as possible.”

Because many of their neighbors rarely went outside of the county, Mrs. Carson would “pile all the neighborhood kids into the car,” and take them to Atlanta every Christmas season to ride the Pink Pig and visit Santa Claus. (The Pink Pig was an iconic monorail train ride for children that circled the roof of the downtown Atlanta’s Rich’s department store during the holiday season.)

Anita was proud of her own children, and the feeling was obviously mutual. When Stanley joined the Navy, he first served as a computer operator. Then, when he became a commissioned officer, he asked his mother to be the speaker at his commissioning ceremony.

“Everyone else on the base thought it should be one of the officers, so when I said, ‘my mother is with me, and that’s who I want to speak,’ they thought I didn’t know what I was doing,” he said. “But after she spoke, from that time on, everybody wanted to know when was she coming back to speak. And a few of the guys I’m still in contact with from Germany, still remember her coming over and her beating them in playing cards.”

Anita visited Stanley everywhere he was stationed during his 20 years in the Navy.

“Wherever we went, even while we were in Germany, she would go tour the schools,” he said. “And they would tell her what they were doing and she’d tell them what our schools were doing.”

Through her sorority, a Greene County travel group, and her son and other family members who lived elsewhere, Anita was an avid traveler. She went to Africa four times, Egypt, France, East Berlin, Czechoslovakia and Holland, as well as all over the North American continent.

“Wherever she went, she would always take pictures that she’d share with the students at Carson Middle,” Sheila said. “And members of the travel group would always go to the school and



Stanley Carson with his mother, Anita White Carson.

do presentations on their trips, to stretch the students’ horizons.”

A couple of those trips to Africa were to visit the school Morning Star in Ghana, where a scholarship was named in her honor, Sarah said.

Anita never stopped her own personal and professional development. She continued studies at Earlham College, Ohio Wesleyan University, and Grambling College. She earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Georgia, and the School Social Worker Certification from Atlanta University.

“For her, promotions came slower because ...segregation was gone, but they were still overlooking her,” Stanley said. “That’s why she had to get the social certification and those other certifications and degrees.

“Looking back, I can see how hard it really was because she was putting the hard work in, but she was not getting any recognition, she was not getting the pay increases,” he continued. “There were things she wasn’t doing because she was a woman of honor. There were ways other people would get around it, but she never lost her honor, never lost her integrity to get past it.”

Despite those struggles, the community proved they noticed



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her hard work when they elected her to a seat on the Greene County Board of Education where she served from 1996 until 2000.

An incredible surprise came when then-Board of Education Chairman Mike Jones submitted Anita's name as the name of Greene County's new middle school. Sheila said some people were against it because they thought other Blacks were more worthy of the honor. Their mother started receiving threats, and she worried about the division the situation was causing.

"So, Mr. Jones pulled out a 'report card' for her, of all that she had done," Stanley said. "And he went down the line and laid it out, point by point, of what she had done. And he stacked it up beside all the suggestions of the people who were making all the noise. And he said Mrs. Carson's report card speaks for her."

Members of the Greene County Board of Education voted in 1999 to name the new middle school in her honor—The Anita White Carson Middle School.

"She said, 'My mama and daddy would be proud of me,'" Sheila said. "That's why she wanted her full name, with White, on it. She kept saying, 'Oh, I wish my daddy could be here to see it.' She never stopped caring, sharing, or doing anything for this county until she literally could not anymore. She always told me, 'You need to do this, and don't forget where you come from because this is home.'"

"Ms. Carson's legacy is woven into the fabric of our school system," Greene County School Superintendent Dr. Aaryn Schmuhl said when she died in August 2025. "She dedicated her life to helping young people succeed and to building a better future for our community. Her name on our middle school is a daily reminder of her service, compassion, and belief in the power of education." ♦

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Bok Tower Gardens

■ Story by **Phyllis Woods**

There's a lovely feeling of serenity and tranquility that becomes a reality for anyone who has the privilege of wandering through Bok Tower Gardens.

Edward Bok, whose vision inspired this gracious and lovely place, once gave the advice that anyone can "make the world a bit better or more beautiful because you have lived in it." He himself achieved this goal in this 250-acre "contemplative garden" on Iron Mountain near Lake Wales, Florida. The beauty of nature is everywhere. The setting gracefully features azaleas, magnolias, sabal palms, live oaks, and many different native and exotic plants.

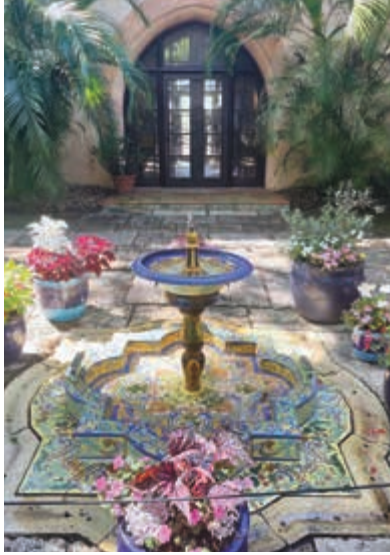
It is also a refuge for more than a hundred bird species.

And, of course, there is the Singing Tower. Bok decided the perfect centerpiece to this exquisite garden would be "the most beautiful tower in the world." It is built on one of the highest points in peninsula Florida and features a 60-bell carillon at its top. There are concerts daily at 1 and 3 p.m., which add an almost ethereal musical beauty to an already inspiring environment.

Edward William Bok (1863-1930) was born in the Netherlands. His family immigrated to Brooklyn, New York when Bok was 6 years old. He took various

jobs growing up and had to quit school as a teen to help support the family. His first full time job was with the Western Union Telegraph Company as an office boy. His other jobs led him increasingly to a literary career, and after moving to Philadelphia in 1889, he became editor of *Ladies Home Journal*, a position he held for 30 years. Under his leadership, the *Journal* became the first magazine in the world to have one million subscribers. His autobiography, *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, was written in 1920 and won the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for Biography or Autobiography.

Bok married Mary L. Curtis



in 1896. She was a woman who shared many of his interests and became active in cultural and musical events and philanthropy. They had two children. One of their grandsons, Derek Bok, would later become a Harvard University President. Another, Gordon Bok, became a folk singer.

The Boks began construction on Bok Tower Gardens in 1927 near their home in Lake Wales, Florida. It was dedicated in 1929 by President Calvin Coolidge. Today it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic Landmark.

Bok is one of the men Dale Carnegie mentioned as an example in his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Bok was known for encouraging young people and would freely give advice such as this: "Find your place and hold it; find your work and do it. And put everything you've got into it."

Bok had hired Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957) to transform what was once an arid sandhill into "a spot of beauty second to none in the country." Olmsted, well known for projects in Yosemite and the Everglades, spent the next five years carefully planting native and exotic plants that would give a tropical feel to the area and provide food for birds and wildlife.

Olmsted's long career also included landscape design projects in the nation's capital: The National

Mall, the Jefferson Memorial, and the White House grounds. He also created landscape designs for the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina.

The heart of Bok's gardens was always intended to be the Singing Tower. Construction on this 205-foot-high Tower began in 1927 and continued for two years. Designer Milton R. Medary (1864-1929) was later awarded the Gold Medal by the American Institute of Architects for the Singing Tower and for the Mountain Lake Sanctuary.

The style of the tower is Gothic Revival and one of the reasons its appearance has a kind of soft, gleaming quality is that it is built of pink Etowah marble and gray Creole marble, mined in Tate, Georgia, and coquina stone from St. Augustine, Florida. A team of artisans who were well known in their fields also contributed their work to the Tower.: Lee Lawrie designed and executed the architectural sculpture depicting Florida flora and fauna, Samuel Yellin designed and executed the iron interior staircase and the Great Brass Door at the entrance (which features thirty scenes from the Book of Genesis), and J.H. Dulles Allen designed and executed the ceramic mosaics.

The awe-inspiring 60 Bell Carillon is at the top of the Tower. It was cast by the John Taylor Bell Foundry in Loughborough, England, and the total weight of the bells is 62 tons. Interestingly,

the bells do not swing, only the clappers move to sound them, and they are operated by a clavier or keyboard. All of this is overseen by a Carillonneur.

A dedication on the back of the Tower reads: "This Singing Tower with its adjacent sanctuary was dedicated and presented for visitation to the American people by Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States, February the first, nineteen hundred and twenty-nine."

It is truly a remarkable and delightful experience to wander through the gardens listening to the almost angelic music from the Tower while surrounded by the unique and colorful beauties of nature. Edward Bok's goal in the creation of the Gardens was to leave an area of lasting beauty for people to enjoy and be refreshed and inspired by. He had once written "The making of money, the accumulation of material power, is not all there is to living, and the man who misses this truth misses the greatest joy and satisfaction that can come into his life....service for others."

Bok himself loved walking through the beautiful gardens. He died of a heart attack on January 6, 1930 within sight of his beloved Singing Tower. His family saw to it that he was buried in a site at the base of the Tower. Among other awards, the World War 11 Liberty Ship SS Edward W. Bok was named in his honor. ♦



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A Snip in Time

■ By Mark Smith Jr.

A month after September 11th, smoke was still smoldering from the rubble at the World Trade Center. That is when we sat down with Urologist, Dr. Grumpy (not his real name) to discuss an “elective procedure.” Not that the attack had anything to do with our decision, but our youngest child did quit nursing that day. The days and weeks following the attack brought uncertainty and nervousness across the entire country. A man tried to blow up a plane with his shoes, someone sent Anthrax in the mail. These were tumultuous times, but we were not making a statement to the terrorists; we were just happy with the size of our family and wanted to keep it that way. Hannah brought a pad and pen to the meeting, I brought myself.

“Maybe after the surgery, I will stop chasing cars and peeing on the shrubs.” Nothing. Not even a smile. Stoically, he just stared back at me through his thick, framed glasses. Dr. Grumpy was not a conversationalist, but rather a serious man for serious business. He was frank “You do understand this procedure is considered permanent and cannot be reversed?” I wanted to point out all the billboards in Florida that advertised vasectomy reversals; but instead, I just answered, “Yes sir.” He thoroughly described what all was involved with the outpatient surgery: The pre-op preparation, the incision, the cauterization, the post-op recovery time.



Incision? Cauterization? Up until this point, I had a mandate: No sharp objects, open flames, or hot liquid was allowed in that region of my body. But there I was, paying someone to break at least two of my rules.

Most vasectomies are scheduled on Fridays. This way, the guy can lie around the house all weekend, watch football, feel sorry for himself and be waited on while he recovers. It was a clear, cool Fall morning when we arrived at the office for my surgery. An attractive blonde lady behind the glass checked us in. She was very young. In contrast to Dr. Grumpy, she was very talkative and pleasant. I think she was a deliberate hire to counteract some of the good doctor's dour demeanor. Almost as soon as I sat down and picked up a magazine, the same young lady called my name. It was time.

Together, Hannah and I were shown the way to the examination room. She would have to leave before the

procedure. There would be just me, Dr. Grumpy and his surgical assistant in the room when the cutting began. I was told to undress completely and put on the flimsy gown. I could leave my socks on if I was worried about my feet getting cold. Cold feet? Not I. I elected to go sans socks, no regrets there.

The usual monitors and intravenous contraptions were attached to my body while I sat on the examination table. I would be awake for the entire operation. A local anesthesia and mild sedative drip would be the only drugs used. They assured me this would be all I needed; I was skeptical. Hannah left the room and immediately thereafter, the doctor and his surgical assistant (a serious, stern woman herself) walked in and they were ready to begin.

I was told to put my legs up in the stirrups. Yes, ladies, I get it now. Nothing in the world is more humiliating. Grumpy sat down on a stool directly in front

of me and pulled a surgical mask up over his mouth and nose. I asked him, "Are you any good at this?" I could see his right cheekbone rise slightly. There it was, I finally got him to smile even if it was a crooked little grin. He shot a sarcastic look over to his assistant and added, "Am I any good? Can you believe this guy?"

The stinging prick of the needle, and we were underway. I could not see what was going on and that was a good thing. My team was a well-oiled machine. We were several minutes in and everything was going well and as planned.

Then, all hell broke loose.

The shrieking, ear-piercing sound of the building's fire alarm broke the serenity of our sterile and mildly sedated setting. The doctor looked up from his work. All three of us exchanged glances. The alarm was unrelenting. He took a deep breath and got back to work. A short time later, the door opened and the young blonde poked her head in the doorway. Staring directly at the job site I couldn't see, she immediately averted her gaze to the ceiling as she spoke. "The fire marshal said it is a bomb threat and we have to leave the building, what should we do?" Grumpy answered, "I do not know, I am kind of busy right now." She left and closed the door.

A bomb threat in the middle of my vasectomy - My mind raced with a hundred thoughts, none of them good. Who would blow up a medical center? Why call in a threat if you really wanted to kill people? Where was Hannah and how freaked out was she? If I got up and left now, would I bleed to death? If I had to come back at a later date to finish this operation, would I have to pay another deductible?

The alarm kept blaring. Again, the young blonde entered the room, this time not staring at the ceiling. "The fire marshal says we have to evacuate the building NOW!"

Dr. Grumpy said sternly, "I am not going anywhere!" I added, "Neither am I!"

He looked at me, incredulous and confident at the same time, I could see that same crooked grin behind his mask once again. Again, the blonde left the room and, again, the doctor got back to work. The alarm continued to blare.

I do not know for certain, but I am reasonably confident that mine was the fastest vasectomy he has ever performed. Upon completing the last suture, he told me to "get dressed, we've got to go." For some reason, getting dressed in front of people is just about as awkward as getting undressed in front of people. I was trying to determine what was the least amount of clothing acceptable to wear for an evacuation. It was at that point I regretted the earlier socks decision. Barefooted, pants and shirt on, I decided to carry the rest.

"In case of emergency, use stairs." I have read those words all my life and never thought twice about them until that day. We exited through the empty office into the empty hallway of the medical arts building. I think we were the only ones in the building. We were on the second floor and shuffling at a brisk pace toward the stairwell at the end of the hall.

At the door to the stairs, there was an abandoned wheelchair. We opened the door to find the chair's former occupant and his attendants struggling with the stairs. He had an oxygen tank on wheels and an IV stand. He

was still wearing his gown. Each step was painstakingly slow; the alarm seemed even louder in the stairwell.

When they finally reached the landing at the midway point, I resisted the temptation to pass them on the right side. Team vasectomy did seem more mobile than team emphysema. Together, the six of us took the final steps to ground level. The metallic thump of the exit door opening allowed in the morning sun and revealed a parking lot full of evacuees fifty yards away. They cheered and applauded our emergence. We made it out and finally away from that damned alarm.

I was as relieved to see Hannah as she was to see me. There would be no post-op recovery time and no additional paperwork. Dr. Grumpy told me to go home and stay off my feet for a couple of days. We shook hands and parted ways right there in the parking lot.

Hannah drove me to the house, where I immediately ignored the doctor's order. I went to the office that afternoon to help get the Sunday paper done. I felt great, dare I might even say, invulnerable. This turned out to be a huge mistake. By Sunday, I felt as if someone had beaten me with a baseball bat. I should have listened to Dr. Grumpy. He is really good at what he does. ♦

Mark Smith Jr. (1965-2019) was the Executive Editor of Lakelife magazine and a Vice President of Smith Communications, Inc. The winner of the 2018 Joe Parham Trophy, 1st place for humor columns in the Georgia Press Association, Mark's humor columns appeared in each edition of Lakelife in 2019 and were popular with our readers. This is one he wrote in August 2018 for the Lake Oconee News.

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The Journey to Murano Island

Turning a Greensboro photographer's work into priceless, unique art

■ Story by **Sam Dick**

■ Photos by **Kevin Maggiore**

A Murano Glass Master carefully grips a hollow steel pipe at one end and maneuvers the other end with a globe of molten glass inside a stone furnace.

The 2,000-degree heat is intense. At 1,500 degrees, it can melt glass. Master glassblower Damiano Carrer keeps rotating the pipe for no more than a few minutes inside the furnace before pulling it out. Dressed in black jeans, a short sleeved shirt, tennis shoes and safety glasses, Carrer works at the Original Murano Factory, a short boat ride from

Venice, Italy.

The 52-year-old Carrer is following in the footsteps of generations of glass artists going back to the 10th century in Venice. Today, the glass art made by Murano Masters is known worldwide as the benchmark for handcrafted glass sculptures, chandeliers, jewelry and vases.

This is the story of how a



Greensboro, Georgia man's photo of the Northern Lights outside of Fairbanks, Alaska was transformed into glass art by a Murano Glass Master in Italy.

Seventy-year-old Kevin Maggiore has traveled the world as a professional photographer. The walls of the University of Georgia graduate's (ABJ '79) home are lined with photos of nature's wonders from Africa to Alaska. Last September, Maggiore spent five nights photographing the Northern Lights in Fairbanks, Alaska.

"We saw them three out of five nights. You don't know what you'll see-what the intensity, color or speed will be, as they're constantly moving and changing shape," Maggiore said.

Noting that it's easy to be overwhelmed with the beauty taking place above you, Maggio took hundreds of photographs as the light show of colors moved in waves across the night sky. When he returned to his hotel room to review his work, one photo stood out.

"At the bottom is a tree line in a forest, and out of it shoots a whirlwind of bright green light with a deep blue sky as the backdrop," he described. "The green light resembles a twister spinning out of the treetops. When I looked at the photograph, it struck me that the shape of it looked like a vase, and I just couldn't get it out of my mind."

Maggiore, who is an admirer of Murano glass, went to their online store and purchased a vase called "Fantasy Lava." When it arrived at his home, it included contact information for Gianluca Rossi with the Original Murano Glass Factory. It sparked an idea for Maggiore that involved the photograph he took of the Northern Lights.



“I sent him the photograph and asked him what he thought of possibly turning it into a Murano vase called the Northern Lights,” Maggiore said. “Of the 3,000 items available online, not one features the Northern Lights.”

Four months later, Maggiore got his answer. The Original Murano Glass Factory agreed to use the Northern Lights photo and create a vase. Maggiore says he was stunned and immediately planned a trip to Murano to watch and photograph the Master making a vase from his photograph.

On April 28, he arrived in Venice and took a short boat ride to Murano.

“You can see Venice from Murano—it’s only a 15 minute boat ride across the water,” he said. “There are many water taxis that are constantly moving from island to island. I stayed in Murano.”

That’s where he met Damiano Carrer, the Master glassblower who would make the vase from Maggiore’s photograph. He says Carrer’s spoken English was limited so Rossi served as translator for the Master.

“He’s very quiet,” Maggiore recalled. “I met him, and we communicated more with eye contact. He listened to me talk to Gianluca.”

Carrer began his glassmaking apprenticeship at 15, and by the age of 21 he was a Master. Most glassmaking apprenticeships last 10 to 15 years. Rossi said that the Master got into the glassblowing world because he likes and is fascinated by how the material can be shaped and molded by his hands. He likes to think that what he has in his mind can be translated into glass pieces.

To say the Master doesn’t work from a photograph is an understatement. So far over his illustrious career, it is estimated he has created over 18,000 pieces of art. He has only worked from a photograph less than 50 times.

As Maggiore stood by and took



Kevin Maggiore, left, proudly shows his photograph that inspired the vase, which is being held by Murano Glass Master glassblower Damiano Carrer at the Murano Glass Factory on Murano Island in the Venetian Lagoon.



The Master glassblower rolls the heated blob of molten glass into green glass granules.

photographs, Carrer went through the process of turning a blob of molten glass into a vase. Maggiore says Carrer had several assistants, and for the next hour the men rarely talked. They communicated with their eyes and gestures.

"It's like watching a ballet," Maggiore said. "Everybody knows what they're supposed to do. They don't have to be asked, they know the expectations of the Master even though they haven't seen the finished product."

Carrer constantly heated and shaped the molten glass, starting with the bottom of the vase. He rolled the heated glass in colored glass granules. The Master created layers of colors, using a technique the Italians call "submerged". This gives the optical illusion that the colors are immersed and floating. After an hour of heating and shaping, the new vase cooled, and Maggiore saw the finished vase for the first time.

"I was blown away," he said. "I thought he was going to create a green vase that would look almost identical to the photograph. He actually took the elements of the Northern Lights and created a piece of art."

A photo shows Maggiore holding his original photo of the Northern Lights and standing next to Carrer with the 31-pound vase. It's 4.5 inches at the base, 11 inches across the top, and 15.5 inches high.

A deep blue colored mass of glass sits at the bottom of the vase. Part of the middle of the vase is clear, and a green colored mass of glass looks like it's been dropped into the open top of the vase.

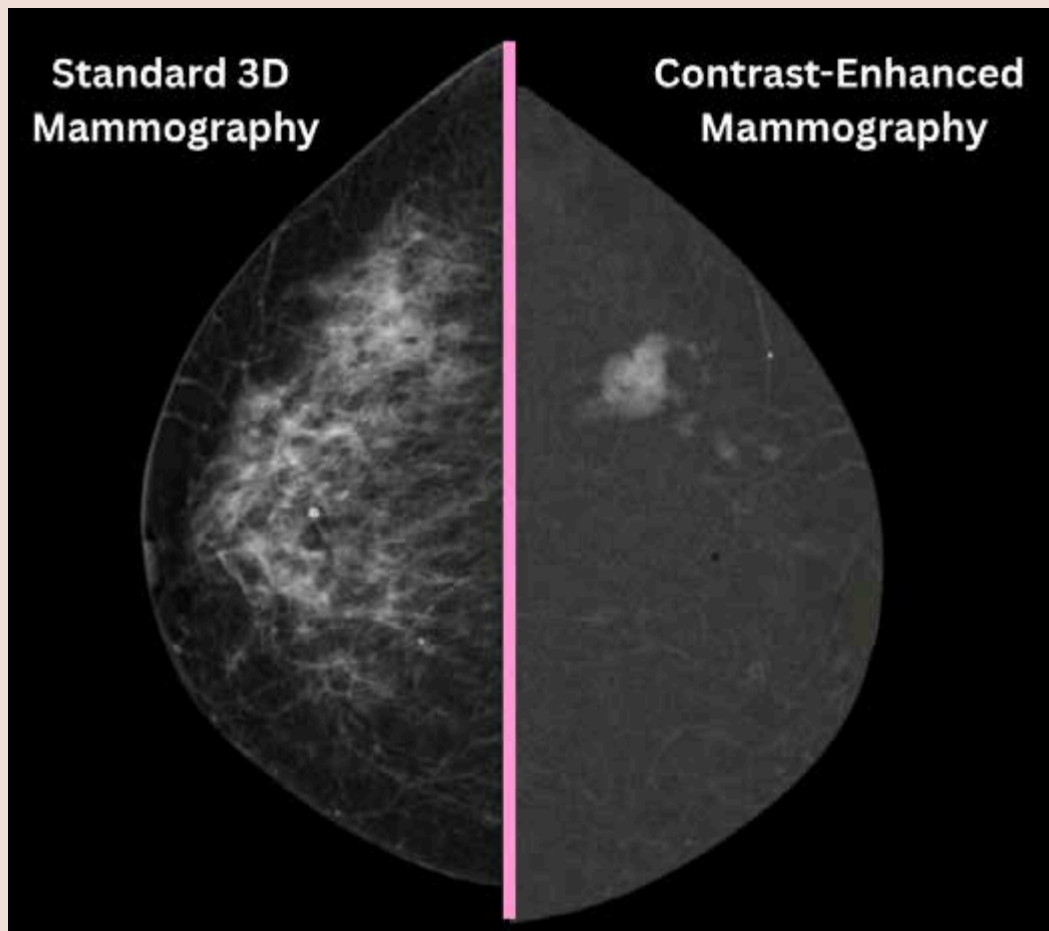
Maggiore said that the Master was very humble about his creation, and smiled when asked about the finished glass piece. After completing the vase, the Master agreed to make this a very limited edition. There will be only 10 made and sold from the Original Murano Glass Factory. As for Maggiore, he bought the original No. 1 out of 10 and had it shipped to his home in Greensboro. He says the entire experience from Alaska to Italy puts a bow on an outstanding career of Photography.

"It's amazing that this has happened this late in my career," he said. "To put it in simple terms, this thing is the Academy Award, the Oscar, the Emmy, any award in television. I will put this vase right up there with any of them. That's how much this vase means to me."

If you would like to purchase one of these vases go to info@originalmuranoglass.com and request the Northern Lights Vase. ♦

Sam Dick is a friend and fellow UGA alumnus of Kevin Maggiore. They both received their Bachelor of Arts in Journalism in 1979.

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“It’s a testament to what can happen when a community comes together to serve its neighbors with compassion.”

Our Father’s Kitchen

■ Story and photos by **Leigh Lofgren**

I heard of Our Father’s Kitchen at an event by the East Georgia Chorale earlier this year and was curious to learn more.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with several board members and volunteers as they made sandwiches and packed over one 100 bags of food for those in

need at the Family Life Center in downtown Greensboro. Once all was done and bags ready, people arrived to pick up their food.

This weekly meal distribution is free to all in need at this facility from 11 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. Post Covid, the ministry was hoping to encourage more guests to eat

indoors in order for people to reconnect and deepen the sense of community, but many continue to prefer a takeaway service.

The meals consist of casseroles, sandwiches, soup, fruit and a light sweet item. Our Father’s Kitchen has mastered the art of cooking 120-150 meals weekly and strives



to make holidays joyful by creating a decorative atmosphere and traditional holiday menus.

One of the most pressing problems in the United States is hunger and, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, approximately 47 million people—7 million of which are children—go hungry or simply do not get enough to eat. Considering that the U.S. is a superpower, those numbers are shocking.

Our Father's Kitchen has an annual budget of around \$25,000 and is totally dependent on the generosity of donors with financial and/or food donations. And, of course, volunteers are always welcome.

“Our Father's Kitchen is more than just a meal—it's a testament to what can happen when a community comes together to serve its neighbors with compassion,” said former Board Chairwoman Beth Lewis, a representative of the ministry. “This ministry is sustained by the generosity of so many, and we are grateful for the opportunity to make a difference.”

This wonderful ministry began in 2021 during the crisis of Covid. Recognizing the isolation and food insecurity brought on by Covid, several churches started serving Saturday lunches periodically. Realizing the impact they could have together, they pledged the significant seed money over two years' time and launched Our Father's Kitchen. Those churches were Church of the Redeemer, First Methodist Church of Greensboro/Lake Oconee, Historic Springfield Baptist, and First Presbyterian Church. The Rotary Club gave Our Father's Kitchen leadership to help establish the board, write bylaws and get them established as a nonprofit. Rotary's Second Harvest agreed to provide



freezer and refrigerator space; student volunteers from Lake Oconee Academy and Greene Country High School give their time and energy in volunteering; and the First Methodist Church offered the use of its Family Life Center's commercial kitchen and storage space, and a safe haven to provide meals every Saturday morning.

After four years, the ministry has expanded with the support of the Second Harvest School Backpack Program. They now serve the young people of the community and are committed to providing a quarterly after-school meal for the Pete Nance Boys and Girls Club.

Our Father's Kitchen is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to make a difference and believe in the power of community and the impact that each person can make. Every dollar donated goes directly towards their goals in ensuring that essential support is continued. Also, by showing support, you help raise awareness. Their mission statement is very simple—to provide free and healthy meals to all who come.

This ministry, as I saw firsthand, is definitely powered by a volunteer labor of love—those who donate their time every week to prepare meals. Meals are also taken to those in need who are unable to get out.

For many involved, the experience is deeply rewarding. As one volunteer described it, those who serve are “fed while feeding others.” The ministry's mission extends beyond simply addressing hunger, it is about building relationships, fostering dignity, and creating a welcoming space where everyone feels seen and valued. I met new friends that Saturday, and offer a very special thank you to board members Beth Lewis, Joan Antoine and Anthony Smith.

Neighbors young and old come together as volunteers and this ministry creates a sense of community in helping others in need. If you would like to get involved, make a donation or learn more, please visit www.ourfatherskitchenga.com. ♦





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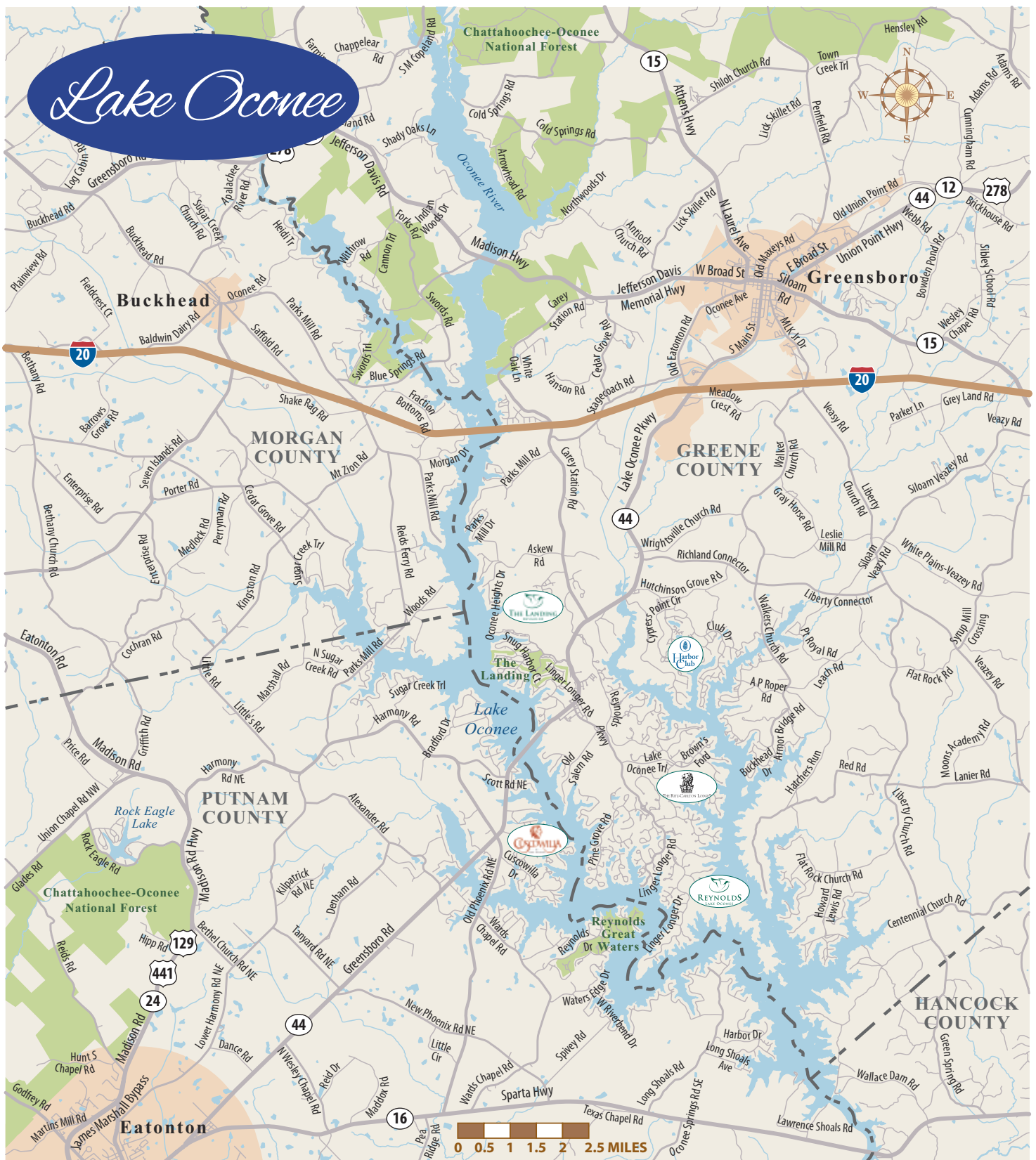


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lake area Attractions

BALDWIN

ANDALUSIA

Home of famed author Flannery O'Connor. The farm estate is open for self-guided tours. For more information, call 478-445-8722 or visit andalusiafarm.org.

BARTRAM FOREST

Originally inhabited by Native Americans in 1794, Bartram Forest today features educational hiking and biking trails that allow visitors to see wildlife and natural wetlands. 478-445-5164.

CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL MUSEUM AT THE DEPOT

Located in the west wing of The Depot, a Seeking Asylum Photo Gallery is displayed alongside other exhibits. Open during office hours by reservation and every Saturday 10a.m.-2p.m. (478)453-1803.

HISTORIC TROLLEY TOURS

Milledgeville's guided trolley tour includes visits to historical venues throughout the downtown area. For tour information, call 478-452-4687 or go to visitmilledgeville.org.

JOHN MARLOR ART CENTER

One of four historic buildings making up the Allied Arts Center, the art gallery features rotating exhibits of local and regional artists. 478-452-8672; milledgevillealliedarts.com

LOCKERLY ARBORETUM AND ROSE HILL

A unique horticultural laboratory surrounding an 1850 Greek Revival home. For more information, call 478-452-2112 or visit lockerly.org.

MEMORY HILL CEMETERY

The final resting place of many people from Milledgeville and Georgia history, including L.Q.C. Lamar, Congressman Carl Vinson, Flanner O'Connor, early Georgia governors, legislators, college presidents, enslaved people, soldiers. Self-guided tour of 47 points of interest begins at the gazebo and follows numbered signs. Download brochure at www.friendsofcems.org/MemoryHill/

OCONEE RIVER GREENWAY

This park and riverwalk offer trails, paths, boardwalks, a dog park, observation decks on the river, individual fishing stations, boat ramp, and canoeing or kayaking opportunities. Open daily, sunrise to sunset. Free parking. visitmilledgeville.org.

OLD GOVERNOR'S MANSION

This National Historic Landmark was home of eight Georgia governors from 1839 to 1868 and occupied by Sherman. For more information, call 478-445-4545 or visit gcsu.edu/mansion.

SALLIE ELLIS DAVIS HOUSE

Born in 1877 to a Black woman and Irish man, Sallie Ellis Davis worked her entire career as a teacher and principal at the Eddy School, where she educated and was an inspiration to hundreds of Black children. Her legacy, preserved in her home, is one of excellence. Open for tours each week. ADA compliant. Call 478-445-5889 or visit gcsu.edu/sallieellisdavis for more details.

THE STETSON-SANFORD HOUSE

Located at 601 W. Hancock St., Milledgeville, this historic house was built in 1825 in the "Milledgeville Federal" style and was a hotel for many visiting legislators who came to the state capital. Open by appointment or on the Milledgeville Trolley Tour. 478-453-1803, visitmilledgeville.org.

GREENE

GREENE COUNTY AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

Dedicated to the empowerment of and truth-telling about African American lives in Greene County, the museum shares the important contributions and stories of Greene's African American community. Visit gcaam.org or call 706-372-4562.

THE OLD GAOL

This 1807 rock jail is one of the oldest penal structures in Georgia. Patterned after Bastilles with castellated battlements. Open by appointment. 706-453-7592.

GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Collection of artifacts, photographs and manuscripts provide a glimpse of the people and events that shaped Greene County's beginnings. For more information, call 706-453-7534.

GREENSBORO CEMETERY

Located on North East Street in downtown Greensboro, unique stones and ironwork mark the burial sites of soldiers, senators, a governor and other notables from Greene County's history. Graves date from the 18th century to the present day and include soldiers from the Revolutionary War and more than 45 unknown confederate dead. Open daily.

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

Historic home built in 1848 in Union Point and one of the oldest houses in the city. Originally a raised cottage, it was enlarged along Greek Revival lines. Drive by tour only. 706-453-7592.

THE IRON HORSE

The 2,000-pound iron sculpture was created by Abbott Pattison and placed at the University of Georgia in 1954; later, it was moved to a Greene County farm near the Greene-Oconee countyline. An awesome photo spot, this iron horse is located in a cornfield on Hwy. 15 North and can only be seen seasonally. Call Greene County Chamber of Commerce, 706-453-7592, for more information.

LAKE COUNTRY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Packed with historical exhibits, interactive multi-media displays, kiosks, nostalgic memorabilia, art, photographs, a 10-foot scale topographic map of Lake Oconee and more. 6340 Lake Oconee Pkwy., Greensboro. 706-999-3513.

L.L. WYATT MUSEUM

This law enforcement museum and hall of fame was named for Loy Lee Wyatt, a Greene County sheriff for 37 years. Century-old arrest warrants, a seized corn liquor still and an authentic former cell block are among items on display. 706-453-7592.

ROBINSON PARK SPLASH PAD

Located directly behind the Greensboro Police Department, features green space, playground equipment, picnic tables, and a splash pad. The splash pad is open as long as temperatures allow. Users can turn it on by pressing a button on a short blue pole.

SCULL SHOALS,

This site on the Oconee River was home to Native Americans 10,000 years ago, a frontier settlement in 1782 and then Scull Shoals Mill Village in the early 1800s. For more information, call the Oconee Ranger District Office at 706-485-7110 or visit scullshoals.org.

MORGAN

GEORGIA SAFARI CONSERVATION PARK

Dedicated to wildlife conservation and stewardship, this 530-acre safari-style park features pastures of free-roaming animals from around the world. Enjoy various tour and/or lodging packages, which include ADA compliant amenities, for an immersive, wildlife-focused experience. 706-608-8203 georgiasafari.com

HERITAGE HALL

Greek Revival House & Museum, furnished in the period. Tours available as well as rental for special events. Tours offered daily. Closed on Mondays. For more information, call 706-342-9627 or visit friendsofheritagehall.org.

MADISON ARTISTS GUILD GALLERY

A co-op of artist members showcasing painting, pottery, jewelry, metal sculptures, textiles and photography. Classes for kids and adults. 706-342-9360; madisonartistsguild.org.

MADISON HISTORY MUSEUM

The museum presents "Madison, Georgia in the 19th Century -- Everyday Life in a Small Southern Town." Carefully curated exhibits and a historic timeline details Madison's first century. Located in the Madison Morgan Cultural Center, closed Sunday-Monday. 706-342-4743, www.mmcc-arts.org/the-museum

MADISON-MORGAN CULTURAL CENTER

Romanesque Revival-style building built in 1895 served as a school and library before becoming a center for visual arts exhibits and performing arts events. For more information, call 706-342-4743 or visit mmcc-arts.org.

MORGAN COUNTY AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUM

Housed in the former home of Horace Moore (c. 1895), this museum serves to preserve, teach and research African-American history, art and culture. For more information, call 706-342-9191 or visit mcaam.org.

THE ROGERS HOUSE AND ROSE COTTAGE

The Rogers House was built circa 1810. The Rose Cottage was built circa 1891. Tours of

both are offered daily. Closed on Mondays. For more information, call 706-342-9627 or visit friendsofheritagehall.org.

STEFFEN THOMAS MUSEUM OF ART

This museum was built by the family of artist Steffen Thomas to display his varied works from drawings to sculptures. It also hosts rotating exhibits of other artists and offers workshops. For more information, call 706-342-7557 or visit steffenthomas.org.

PUTNAM

ALICE WALKER TRAIL

A driving tour highlighting points of interest relating to Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*. 706-485-7701.

THE ARTISANS VILLAGE

The gallery/guild/studio on West Marion Street in downtown Eatonton showcases a full range of one-of-a-kind artisan items by local artists. Guild members provide art lessons. Visit theartisansvillage.org or call 706-623-7757.

THE BRONSON HOUSE

This Greek Revival house is rich with history and now serves as headquarters for the Eatonton-Putnam Historical Society. For group tours and other information, call 706-485-6442 or visit e-pgahistory.org.

BUTTERFLIES & BLOOMS IN THE BRIAR PATCH

This certified butterfly habitat sustains butterflies through all their life stages, tags and monitors migrating monarch butterflies and educates the public on how to incorporate larval host plants into their own gardens. Admission is free. Located at 617 North Jefferson St., Eatonton. Call 706-473-6035 for more information.

GEORGIA WRITERS MUSEUM

This museum has permanent exhibits for local authors Alice Walker, Joel Chandler Harris and Flannery O'Connor, and rotating exhibits of other Georgia authors. For more information, call 706-991-5119 or visit georgiawritersmuseum.org.

VETERANS WALL OF HONOR PARK

Located on West Marion Street in downtown Eatonton, this park includes the names and information of more than 1,800 Putnam County veterans from the

Revolutionary War to present. Open daily. For more information, call 706-473-5406.

OCONEE SPRINGS PARK

This family park nestled on the shores of Lake Sinclair features a swimming area with sandy beach and floating waterpark, cabin rentals, campsites, recreational areas, marina, store, kayak rentals, event space and more. Go to oconeespringspark.com or call 706-485-8423.

OLD SCHOOL HISTORY MUSEUM

Located at The Plaza Arts Center in downtown Eatonton, the museum chronicles Putnam County's history, economy and notable residents from the days of Creek Indian occupation to today. For more information, call 706-923-1655 or visit oldschoolhistorymuseum.org.

THE PLAZA ARTS CENTER

The Center is housed in a renovated school built in 1916 and offers a variety of performing arts shows, art exhibits, community events and creative classes. For more information, call 706-923-1655 or visit theplazaartscenter.com.

ROCK EAGLE 4-H CENTER

Encompassing 1,428 acres, including an 110-acre lake, Rock Eagle is the largest of five centers operated by UGA in support of the state's 4-H Program. For more information, call 706-484-2899 or go to "Georgia 4-H Facilities" at georgia4h.org.

ROCK EAGLE MOUND

This stone effigy and its viewing tower are located at Rock Eagle 4-H Center. It is believed to have been created by Native Americans and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

ROCK HAWK EFFIGY & TRAILS

The site of Putnam County's second stone effigy offers historical and recreational options, including camping, trails, boating, archery and educational displays. For more information, visit rockhawk.org.

THE UNCLE REMUS MUSEUM

Museum dedicated to the life and literary works of Putnam County native and author Joel Chandler Harris, who wrote the Uncle Remus stories. For more information, call 706-485-6856 or visit uncleremusmuseum.org.

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WILD BERRY FARMS

138.90 Acres in Wilkinson County, GA
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Wild Berry Farm/ 137 +/- Acres, Wriley Rd., Wilkinson County, GA/ Close Proximity to Milledgeville Shops & Dining/ Oconee River Corridor/ Covered in Wild Berry Bushes/ Deer, Hogs, Turkey, & Ducks / Excellent Area for Wildlife / Trails for ATV Riding/ Remainder in 2021 Planted Pine, Roads, & Food Plots/ Rolling Terrain w/ Internal Road System

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lake area Golf Courses

COURSES	PAR	YARDAGE	HOLES	PRO	DESIGNER	ADMISSION	FEES	PHONE
The Club at Lake Sinclair	71	6,180	18	D. Franklin	Cobb	M-G	\$51	478-452-3220
The Creek Club at Reynolds	72	7,079	18	J. Lopez	Engh	M	N/A	706-467-1680
The Creek Course at Hard Labor Creek State Park	72	6,612	18	K. Gross	McCloud	M-G-P	\$23-44	706-557-3006
Cuscowilla	70	6,730	18	C. Baldwin	Crenshaw/Coore	M-G	N/A	706-484-0050
Great Waters at Reynolds	72	7,073	18	R. MacNeil	Nicklaus	M-G-R	N/A	706-485-0235
Harbor Club	72	7,048	18	K. Kelly	Weiskopf/Morrish	M-G-P	\$75-199	706-453-4414
The Landing at Reynolds	72	6,691	18	P. Shelley	Cupp	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1564
Little Fishing Creek	72	6,718	18	N/A	Player	P	\$12-15	478-445-0796
The National at Reynolds	72	7,034	18	R. Frisch	Fazio	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1142
The Oconee at Reynolds	72	7,029	18	I. Milhouse	Jones	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1200
The Preserve at Reynolds	72	6,674	18	J. Sitler	Cupp	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1135
Richland at Reynolds	72	7,090	18	R. Frisch	Fazio	M	N/A	706-467-1142
Uncle Remus	72	6,780	9	L. Dunn	Ellis	P	\$34-\$47	706-485-6850

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Are you looking to join a dynamic team in the printing industry? Anchorage Printing Inc is a family-owned business offering high-quality commercial web printing serving clients across Alaska. As a Pressman, you will play a crucial role in the operation and maintenance of our 17-unit Goss Community Press, ensuring that our clients receive top-notch printed materials that meet their needs.

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Gerrett Rhodes
General Manager
Anchorage Printing Inc.
907-272-2213

lake area Parks & Campgrounds

Floats Your Boat

A. H. STEPHENS STATE HISTORIC PARK

Known for its equestrian facilities, Confederate museum and lakeside group camp, this pretty park has 14 miles of trails and its own campground. Located at 456 Alexander St, Crawfordville, GA (800) 864-7275, www.gastateparks.org.

COUNTRY BOY RV PARK (PRIVATE)

Located at 2750 Eatonton Rd. (Highway 441), Madison. (706) 342-1799.

CROOKED CREEK MARINA

Boat launches, restaurant, convenience store and RV/tent camping located on Lake Sinclair at 208 Crooked Creek Road in Eatonton. (706) 485-9693.

DURHAMTOWN PLANTATION

Located in Union Point, Durhamtown Plantation offers cabin and RV rentals for the avid dirt bikers, ATV riders, hunters, and more. 2350 Randolph Church Road, Union Point. (706) 486-4603.

HARD LABOR CREEK STATE PARK

More than 60 camping and RV sites, two group camps, two group shelters, two group camps and 20 rental cottages are available in west Morgan County. (706) 557-3001, www.gastateparks.org.

JERE SHAI LAKESIDE, LAKE SINCLAIR

Cabin, jet ski and pontoon rentals, RV lots, boat storage, and more. Located at 1064 Milledgeville Road, Milledgeville, (706) 485-3322.

LAKE SINCLAIR BEACH CAMPGROUND (US FOREST SERVICE)

Camping, picnicking, hiking, boating, fishing and swimming. Hikers can enjoy the 1.8-mile Twin Bridges Trail, which originates at this site. Fees are required. (706) 485-7110, www.fs.fed.us/conf.

LAWRENCE SHOALS, LAKE OCONEE (GEORGIA POWER RECREATION AREA)

Camping and RV sites, picnic pavilion, picnic tables, public beach and boat ramp at 123 Wallace Dam Road, Eatonton. (706) 485-5494.

LITTLE RIVER PARK, LAKE SINCLAIR

Boat launch and marina, RV sites, beach for campers, children's playground. Located at 3069 N. Columbia St., Milledgeville. (478) 452-1605.

NORTH SHORE RESORT

Located on Carey Station Road in Greensboro, this unique private resort on Lake Oconee features full hook-up campsites. Amenities include a clubhouse, two pools, a private beach, boat slips, boat launch, tennis and store and grill. www.northshoreresort.net (706) 453-4505.

OCONEE RIVER CAMPGROUND (US FOREST SERVICE)

Located along the bank of the Oconee River, the recreation area offers camping, picnicking, hiking, boating and fishing. Hikers can enjoy the mile-long Scull Shoals Trail, which originates at the site. A fee is required. (706) 485-7110, www.fs.fed.us/conf.

OCONEE SPRINGS PARK, LAKE SINCLAIR (PUTNAM CO. RECREATION AREA)

Camping, cabins, boat ramp, beach and bath facilities, picnic tables and pavilion. Located on Lake Sinclair at 109 South Spring Rd. SE, Eatonton. (706) 485-8423.

OLD SALEM, LAKE OCONEE (GEORGIA POWER RECREATION AREA)

Camping and RV sites, picnic pavilion, public beach, and boat ramp. 1530 Old Salem Rd., Greensboro. (706) 467-2850.

PARKS FERRY, LAKE OCONEE (GEORGIA POWER RECREATION AREA)

Camping and RV sites, beach and boat ramp, wildlife habitat area. Located at 1491 Parks Mill Rd., Greensboro. (706) 453-4308.

ROBINSON PARK

Located just past downtown Greensboro, Robinson Park features picnic benches and walking path. 1141 Siloam Road, Greensboro.

ROCKY CREEK PARK, LAKE SINCLAIR

Swimming beach, boat ramp, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, fishing pier, playground. Georgia Power park. (706) 485-8770.

SCENIC MOUNTAIN RV PARK AND CAMPGROUND

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Sat, Oct 24, 2026

This festive event brings together music lovers, art enthusiasts, foodies, and families for an unforgettable full day! This event is 3pm - 9pm on the front lawn at MMCC. VIP and General Admission tickets available.



Fri & Sat Dec 4-5, 2026

Madison's premiere holiday event!
Daylight & Candlelight (and combo) Tours
Early bird pricing until Thanksgiving
Discount for groups of 15+



Sun, Dec 13, 2026

Celebrate the season with the Atlanta Shakespeare Company's A Christmas Carol on the historic MMCC mainstage. Enjoy this beloved Christmas classic and stay after the show for a special meet-and-greet and photo with Scrooge.

434 S. Main Street, Madison, GA 30650

706-342-4743

Tickets & Information: WWW.MMCC-ARTS.ORG

A man and a young boy are sitting together, reading a book. The man is holding the book, and the boy is looking at it intently. They are in a dimly lit room, possibly a bedroom, with a metal bed frame visible in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on the book, creating a cozy atmosphere.

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Thanks to Georgia's continued growth, we announced increased savings expected to reach \$180 per year for the typical residential customer beginning in 2029. Learn more at georgiapower.com/goodnews.



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Georgia Lake Country

Calendar of Events



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

PUTNAM: Book Launch Paul Casola

Paul Casola will present and discuss his book, *The Space Between: A Reluctant Memoir*. Chat with Casola, get your book signed, learn the inspiration behind the story. 6-8 p.m. at Lake Country Books & Gifts, 104 Harmony Crossing. 762-220-1201 lakecountrybooksandgifts.com

PUTNAM: Downtown GetDown: Ray Howard Band

Free concert featuring the Ray Howard Band's live tribute to Earth, Wind & Fire. BYO lawn chairs, coolers, and dancing shoes. Food trucks and vendors open at 6 p.m., concert 7-10 p.m. at Eatonton City Center Stage, 124 A. North Jefferson Ave., Eatonton (Behind Barrel 188)

PUTNAM: Lake Country Photography Club

Monthly club meeting for member education and skills development. Frequent guest presenters. All level photographers welcomed. Email LCPC01234@gmail.com for information. 6:30-8:00 p.m. at The Peoples Bank community room, 991 Lake Oconee Pkwy., Eatonton.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

MORGAN: Mother's Finest in concert

Madison-Morgan Cultural Center's 50th Anniversary celebration features a concert by legendary Atlanta-based funk rock band Mother's Finest. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Cultural Center, 434 S. Main St., Madison. 706-342-4743, www.mmcc-arts.org



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

PUTNAM: 'Bunkers in Baghdad' golfing collection

The Knights of Columbus Assembly 3799, in cooperation with charity "Bunkers in Baghdad," will collect golf balls and clubs to send to U.S. troops at home and around the world. 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. at 6341 Lake Oconee Pkwy., Greensboro. If unable to drop off on Sept. 26, contact John Peterson, jmpmep@aol.com or 904-403-6491 to make arrangements.

PUTNAM: Upscale Resale

Help turn gently used handbags and jewelry into food for needy local families. Drop off items at Bend the Trend, 2101 Reynolds Walk Trail, Greensboro. Or email upscalefundraiser@gmail.com to arrange pickup. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Oconee Lutheran Church, 1089 Lake Oconee Pkwy., Eatonton.

GREENE: Cars and Coffee

All cars, trucks, their enthusiasts, and coffee drinkers are welcome to PJ's monthly car show. See and discuss awesome vehicles and enjoy coffee. 8-10 a.m. the last Saturday of each month at PJs Coffee, 1010 Market St., Greensboro. 762-445-1187

BALDWIN: Rosehill Tours

Tour Rosehill, an 1850s Greek Revival style house on the National Register of Historic Places, on the gorgeous grounds of Lockerly Arboretum. Guided tours begin every hour on Saturdays. 1534 Irwinton Rd., Milledgeville. 478-452-2112, www.lockerly.org

BALDWIN: Haunting History Tour

A guided walking tour of Central State Hospital, also known as the Georgia Lunatic Asylum with chilling stories and unsettling subject matter rooted in education and advocacy. This tour is of the campus grounds only, and does not go inside any buildings. 5:30 p.m. at Georgia's Old Capital Heritage Center, 95 Depot Circle, Milledgeville. \$25 ticket includes admission to the museum. 478-453-1803, thedepotga.org



PUTNAM: Crime & Wine Experience

Law Enforcement Hall of Fame honoree and author Sheryl "Mac" McCollum presents another exciting, real, cold case for the audience to help solve. Tickets \$45. 7 p.m. at Georgia Writers Museum, 109 S. Jefferson Ave., Eatonton. Register at georgiawritersmuseum.org.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

MORGAN: Toddler Fun Sunday

Ages up to 5 years old can enjoy nature oriented, hands-on activities. This is an outdoor event, space is limited, registration required. 10-11 a.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, GA 30663 706-557-3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek

Have an event you'd like listed in Lakelife's community calendar? Email it to lynn@lakelife.today by Sept. 6



Lake Adventures

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 30

PUTNAM: Hiram Little Monument Reveal

Join in celebrating the legacy of Eatonton's own Tuskegee Airman, Hiram Little with the unveiling of his statue in Veterans Memorial Garden. 11 a.m. at 304 W. Marion St., Eatonton. The 8-ft. tall bronze statue was made by Atlanta sculptor Basil Watson.

OCTOBER 1-31

GREENE: Costume Swap

Join the Greene County Library's annual costume swap. Gently used and new costumes are accepted all month long. Those in need of a costume may stop by any day to check out the selection. 610 S. Main St., Greensboro. 706-453-7276.



PUTNAM: Eatonton Scarecrow Contest

Participate and make your own, and/or explore the many festive creations. Contest features scarecrows crafted by local businesses, civic organizations, churches, families and more, which are displayed throughout downtown Eatonton for the entire month of October, with the public voting for their favorites. See rules and details at downtowneatonton.com

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

BALDWIN: Gospel Fest

This free event delivers an uplifting evening of gospel music, joyful fellowship and community celebration via live performances by Hancock-Baldwin Community Choir and Lora Brown. BYO chairs. The celebration will move indoors in the event of inclement weather. 6-8 p.m. at the Black Heritage Plaza, 101 Floyd L. Griffin Jr. St., Milledgeville. 478-452-3950 www.milledgevillealliedarts.com

GREENE: Mahjong

Learn and play Mahjong, whether it's your first time or 30th time, in this non-competitive Mahjong group. Meets 1-4 p.m. every Friday at Greene County Library, 610 S. Main St., Greensboro. 706-453-7276



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

BALDWIN: Ghosts of Milledgeville morning walk

This guided walk offers a respectful yet spine-tingling look at Milledgeville's haunted heritage. Moderate walking required. 6 p.m. at Milledgeville Visitor Center, 200 W. Hancock St., Milledgeville. \$12 per person. 478-452-4687

PUTNAM: Lake Oconee Elks Chili Cook-Off

Great food, friendly competition, live music, raffle prizes and free hot dogs for kids. \$10 entry fee for adults to taste and vote for the best chili! 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Elks Lodge, 871 Harmony Rd., Eatonton. Visit online at Bit.ly/cookorr2849 for more information.

PUTNAM: Downtown GetDown - Vintage Vixens

This free concert features the Vintage Vixens performing live the classic hits and sounds of the 1960s and 1970s. BYO lawn chairs, coolers and dancing shoes. Vendors and food trucks open 6 p.m., concert is 7-10 p.m. on East Marion Street in downtown Eatonton.



MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

PUTNAM: Chess Club

Join fellow chess enthusiasts for some friendly competition. All ages and all skill levels welcome. 4-5 p.m. at Eatonton Putnam County Library, 309 N. Madison Ave., Eatonton. 706-485-6768

MORGAN: Open Mic Night

Share your song, poem, story or joke for an audience in The Hall on Foster. 7-9 p.m. at Madison Morgan Cultural Center, 434 S. Main St., Madison. 706-342-4743 www.mmcc-arts.org

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

MORGAN: Chair Yoga

Adults are welcome to participate in Chair Yoga with Shari Allen every Tuesday, 10-11 a.m. at the Morgan County Library, 1131 East Ave., Madison. 706-342-1206. Participation is free.

GREENE: Greensboro Writers Guild Meeting

Share and read each other's writings. Meetings are the first and third Tuesday of each month, 1 p.m. at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer Activity Center, 303 n. Main St., Greensboro. Call 706-817-0345, 706-485-2622, or



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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

PUTNAM: Meet the Author – Michael Luckner

Author Michael Luckner will present his new murder mystery novel, *Rule One*. Themed dinner included with each \$45 ticket (or \$40 for two or more). 7 p.m. at Georgia Writers Museum, 109 S. Jefferson Ave., Eatonton. Register at georgiawritersmuseum.org



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

PUTNAM: Lake Oconee Shag Club

The best of beach music dancing with basic shag lessons 6-7 p.m. and dancing till 9 p.m. Club members are free, non-members \$5. Single dancers welcome. The first Wednesday of each month at Bruzze Brewing, 170 Scott Rd., Eatonton. Shagdance1998@gmail.com

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

PUTNAM: Men's Bible Study

Join a weekly informal get-together for men wanting to learn more about the Bible and its teachings. Every Thursday, 8:15 a.m. at Compassion Café, 646 Old Phoenix Rd., Eatonton.

FRIDAY, OCT. 8-18

PUTNAM: Blithe Spirit

The Plaza Alliance for the Performing Arts presents Noel Coward's ghostly comedy "Blithe Spirit", 7 p.m. Thursday through Friday Oct. 8-9 and Oct. 15-16; and 2:30 p.m. Sunday Oct. 11 & 18 at The Plaza Arts

Center, 305 N. Madison Ave., Eatonton. \$25 tickets, 706-923-1655, plazacenter.org.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

GREENE: Lake Oconee Duplicate Bridge Club

Join players from Milledgeville to Watkinsville each Tuesday and Thursday for American Contract Bridge League-sanctioned \$7 games. ACBL Masterpoints awarded. Please arrive by 12:45 p.m. so directors can set up the game for a prompt 1 p.m. start. At Lake Oconee Lutheran Church community center, 1081 Greensboro Rd., Eatonton. Email lodclub1@gmail.com for information.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

GREENE: Monte Carlo Night at The Ritz

An evening of elegance, excitement, classic casino games, heavy hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, auctions. Cocktail attire, black tie optional. All proceeds benefit Neighbors Helping Neighbors' projects. \$200 tickets at secure.qgiv.com/event/montecarlonight/. 5:30-9:30 p.m. at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, 1 Lake Oconee Trail, Greensboro.

GREENE: The Jazz Legacy Project: Weather Report

Enjoy the music of legendary jazz band, Weather Report, which includes some of jazz's brightest stars such as Wayne Shorter, Jaco Pastorius, and Joe Zawinul, as performed by The Jazz Legacy Project.



7:30-9:00 p.m. at Festival Hall, 201 N. Main St., Greensboro. Tickets at festivalhallga.com

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

MORGAN: Pastels Workshop

Bring your apron and create a stunning seascape in this 3-hour workshop. All supplies included in the

\$100 fee. 1-4 p.m. at Steffen Thomas Museum of Art, 4200 Bethany Rd., Buckhead. Visit steffenthomas.org/events for details.

TUESDAY, OCT. 20 & NOV. 17

BALDWIN: Evenings with History

Bring the past to life through engaging talks on local history. October's speaker is Dr. Trea Welborn on "Red, White & Cue: Georgia History through Barbecue." November's speaker is Diane Mathis on "The History



of the Georgia Plate." 6:30 p.m. at Allen's Market, 101 E. Floyd L Griffin Jr. St., Milledgeville. 478-452-3950, milledgevillealliedarts.com

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

MORGAN: Haunted Village at Hard Labor Creek

Visit the Spooky Haunted Village for a family-friendly, slight-fright event. Walk through Camp Daniel Morgan on a trail filled with scenes of your Halloween scary favorites. Ages 6 and older. Wagon rides available 1:30-4:30 p.m. for those who don't want to be spooked on the haunted village. Contact Park for times. Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge. 706-557-3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek

MORGAN: Harvest Festival

Enjoy live music, artists market and food trucks on the MMCC front lawn. Music lineup includes TopHouse, The Lee Boys, Darin & Brooke Aldridge, and EG Knight, beginning at 4 p.m. until 9 p.m., but guests are welcome to claim lawn space at 2 p.m. Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, 434 S. Main St., Madison. mmcc-arts.org for more information.

See more events using this QR code. Send your events to lynn@lakelife.today for inclusion in the print and online calendars.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

PUTNAM: Candy Mania

Children in their Halloween costumes can Trick-or-Treat in downtown Eatonton, 5-8 p.m., from house-to-house, businesses and organizations on site.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

PUTNAM: Beginning Acrylic Painting Class

Learn and practice various techniques and do a painting together. Class by instructor Linda Foster. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at The Artisans Village Art Gallery, 110 W. Marion St., Eatonton. Cost is \$55, includes some supplies. Visit theartisansvillage.org for more information.



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

PUTNAM: Eatonton Mistletoe Market

A festive day of shopping on the Putnam County Courthouse Lawn with over 100 arts and crafts vendors, and live art demonstrations. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. along the 100 block of South Jefferson and West Marion streets in Eatonton.

THURSDAY, NOV. 19

MORGAN: Poetic Exploration of Survival, Community, Testimony

Join Emory University's Dr. Tameka Cage Conley for "Won't You Celebrate with Me? A poetic Exploration of Survival, Community, and Testimony." The poetry workshop includes wine and appetizers. Tickets \$150 each, advanced registration required. 4:00-6:30 p.m. at Steffen Thomas Museum of Art, 4200 Bethany Rd., Buckhead. Visit steffenthomas.org/events for details.

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Jazz Legacy Project: Cole Porter

Festival Hall – Greensboro – August 6

Photos by **Leigh Lofgren**



Jeff Keim and Victoria Darby



Blayne May



**Jonah Pierre (piano),
Kevin Smith (bass)**



Greg and Mary Tantum

Lake Adventures



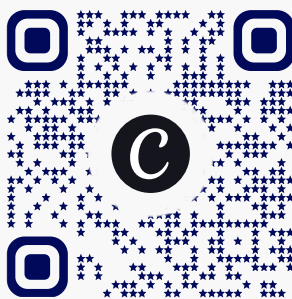
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Steffen Thomas Museum of Art – Morgan County – July 19

Photos by **Leigh Lofgren**



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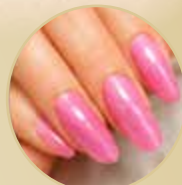
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LONGSHOTS & UNDERDOGS

Shocking Southern football upsets in the modern era

■ Story by **Hank Segars**

■ Photos contributed

The South's rich college football heritage rests on legendary teams built around players like Bama's fierce linemen, Georgia's lightning-fast running backs, and Ole Miss's uncanny quarterbacks, as well as on support from boisterous crowds, such as those at Clemson and LSU, who pack their respective Death Valley stadiums.

Yet there's a special feeling in pulling for the longshots and underdogs: those unheralded teams that rely on each other and on their own heart, grit, and willpower. They refuse to listen to fans, oddsmakers, and sportscasters, and choose to write their own endings.

Let's revisit 10 of our region's most stunning modern-era upsets—games where longshots become legends and underdogs deliver heartbreak to their oversized, ranked opponents:



10. Troy 24, LSU 21 (2017)

LSU held a 49-game non-conference home winning streak at Tiger Stadium, also known as Death Valley and arguably one of the loudest stadiums in the nation. The Trojans from small Troy, Alabama, were a three-touchdown underdog and forced four LSU turnovers, including late interceptions. As co-champions of the Sun Belt Conference, Troy ranked 11th nationally in defense, allowing only 18.5 points per game. A stunning upset.



9. UGA 26, Tennessee 24 (2001)

From the 1990s through 2020, Tennessee owned the Dawgs, holding a nine-game winning streak. The No. 6 Vols were expected to easily defeat UGA's unranked team again at Neyland Stadium in Knoxville. Trailing late in the fourth quarter, with time running out, freshman quarterback David Greene hit Verron Haynes on a 6-yard pass with only seconds left. The upset thrilled the Dawg faithful, became a landmark victory for Mark Richt's program, and brought fame to Larry Munsen for his famous "hobnail boot" radio call.



8. **Louisiana-Monroe 21, Alabama 14 (2007)**

In Nick Saban's first year at Alabama, the Crimson Tide was a 25-point favorite over Louisiana-Monroe. The Warhawks left Bryant-Denny Stadium with a 21-14 victory and \$300,000 in payment. In 1997 and 1999, Louisiana Tech beat the Tide 26-20 and 29-28. There seems to be something dangerous about playing Louisiana's small colleges.



7. **Jacksonville State 20, Florida State 17 (2021)**

In Tallahassee, the Gamecocks trailed late to FSU but rallied with a 59-yard Hail Mary touchdown pass from quarterback Zevin Cooper as time expired. In 2010, Jax State beat Ole Miss 49-48. Teams are not generally excited to see this school on their schedule.



6. **Georgia Southern 26, Florida 20 (2013)**

Statesboro's Eagles amassed an astonishing 429 rushing yards without completing a pass. The win on the Gators' home field, "The Swamp," proved to be a defining moment for Southern's football program. Southern proved it could play with the big boys, home and away.



5. **Marshall 26, Notre Dame 21 (2022)**

The Thundering Herd pulled off a stunning upset in South Bend, ending No. 8 Irish's 42-game winning streak over unranked opponents. To make matters worse, Notre Dame reportedly paid Marshall \$1.25 million while taking a loss. Sometimes underdogs and longshots don't cooperate with the plans of national powerhouses.



4. **Vanderbilt 40, Alabama 35 (2024)**

Vanderbilt's football program began in 1890, and early championships and competitive success followed. However, since becoming a charter member of the SEC in 1932, the program has struggled to beat conference opponents regularly, with a 1-60 record against No. 1-ranked teams. This time, things would be different in Nashville. Disruptive play-calling, defensive stops, and opponent turnovers gave the Commodores their first-ever win over an AP No. 1-ranked team—a win for the ages.



3. **The Citadel 23, South Carolina 22 (2015)**

The Citadel has also beaten Georgia Tech 27-24 (2019) and Arkansas 42-31 (1992). Think about this: The institute's overall football record since 1905 is 532-617-32 (.464). With a student enrollment under 4,000, how do you explain the Corps of Cadets beating a major football program? (I don't know, but perhaps we should not underestimate those whose primary goal is to serve in the military.)



2. **Auburn 34, Alabama 28 (2013)**

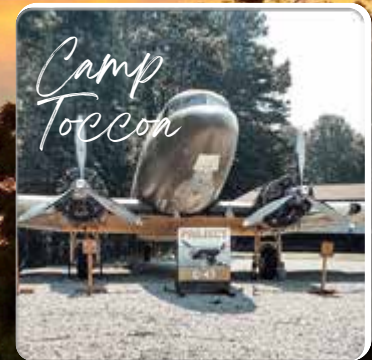
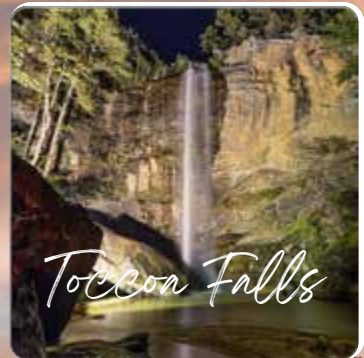
Best known as the “Kick Six,” this Iron Bowl game remains one of college football’s most surprising upsets. With one second left, Auburn’s Chris Davis returned a missed 57-yard extra-point attempt and raced 109 yards from the end zone for the game-winning touchdown. Still hard to process to this day!



1. **Appalachian State 34, Michigan 32 (2007)**

Michigan, ranked No. 5 nationally, was heavily favored to win the Big Ten Championship. Smaller Appalachian State had a good team, but Las Vegas bookmakers set no betting line. Michigan’s “Big House” in Ann Arbor was filled with a roaring crowd of 107,000 Wolverines. Nevertheless, the Mountaineers stayed calm and determined throughout the game, blocking a last-second, game-winning field goal. This David vs. Goliath gridiron contest is widely considered the greatest college football upset of all time—a win for small schools, longshots, and underdogs everywhere. ♦

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Greyhound excels as Marine

Robinson transitions high school
athleticism into military service

■ Story by **Debbie Lurie-Smith**

With multiple scholarships laid out before her, a Jones County High School graduate decided to enlist in the United States Marines and came out of boot camp an honor graduate, platoon leader and number one in physical fitness for her entire company.

PFC Addison Robinson graduated in December of 2025, left for boot camp the following March 17, while she was still 17. She turned 18 on Paris Island, S.C., graduating June 12. Her proud family, including her twin brother Gavin and grandmother, Dee Gattie-Sellers, traveled to the graduation to celebrate Addison's accomplishments.

After a brief 10 days at home, the PFC was off to Fort Geiger for 28 days for Marine Combat Training, with the next stop MOS (Military Occupation

Specialty) school.

During her short time at home, Addison was able to work in time for an interview to talk about her decision to enlist, her family and future plans.

The Marine was accompanied at the June 16 interview by her father, Tommy Robinson, who provided a lot of information about his daughter's cross-country career at JCHS.

Addison was First Team All-Region all four years of high school. She was the Region 2-AAAA Runner of the year in 2025 and seventh at state.

She said she started running while at Gray Station Middle School because several of her friends and Gavin were running.

"I didn't take it really seriously in middle school, but then my brother and I both won a race. I said, 'Well maybe I do like this,'" she said. "Then there was the joy of the team and the environment we were in. I've run ever since."





Why the Marines?

Addison said she wanted to join the military because she had always looked up to her cousin who was in the Air Force. She said the Marines gave the most discipline and honor, and cross-country racing was all about discipline.

She said her cross-country coach at JCHS, Geoff Moore, taught them the importance of hard work and discipline.

"Running, you have to be disciplined, and if I was going to join, I wanted to join the best of the best," Addison said.

She was in Delta Company in boot camp that included 47 women. The total number of recruits in the company was 268. Addison was the highest scorer for physical fitness out of all of them.

The Marine said the physical activities were not a problem for her.

"I've always been physically fit. Running was a big part of training at boot camp, and I had spent seven to eight years running."

And as for the weapons training, she had some previous experience in that, too, with her father and brothers being hunters.

Addison said she will learn more about weapons and combat training in her next session, and she plans to go into Intelligence and security for her specialty.

Anyone who has attended Boot Camp remembers the friends they went through the training with. Addison said her company was made up of people from all over the United States and the world, including Africa and Jamaica.

"Six people in our class became citizens at graduation. One of them had been in America for four months, and three of those months were in boot camp," she said.

The Marine said everyone makes mistakes, but recruits quickly learn there are consequences.

"They teach you if you make mistakes, you won't make that mistake again. You go to the pit and have to work out," she said.

Addison had a scholarship to the U.S. Naval Academy. She said with that scholarship, she could go to the Navy or Marines. She said she was able to talk to people who had taken both routes, which helped her make her decision.

The Marine also had other options because of her cross-country career. She had scholarship offers from West Point, Georgia Southern, Georgia State, Young Harris, Kennesaw State, Jacksonville and Alabama.

"It took a lot of prayer and deciding what to do," she explained.

Addison was able to graduate early because of taking college and online classes. But she said graduating early was not a goal.

"It didn't make a big difference to me because I was hardly ever on campus," she recalled. "Sometimes I would go to school maybe for an hour," she said.

Her father said he tried to talk her out of graduating early.

"She was bent and determined that was what she was going to do," Tommy said.

Addison said she hopes to see the world while in the Marines, especially Japan.

"It would be cool to see the world and the type of militaries that are out there."

Whether or not she is a career Marine depends on how she likes her first tour, which will be a total of five years. She said if she gets out after her first tour, she would have no problem finding a job in security.

Family pride

Tommy said Addison has two older brothers, Noah and Gage, who are also proud of her.

He said their relationships have gotten stronger since she became a Marine, and Gavin is even

thinking about the military.

"It's powerful to see the graduation, that transformation. They go in as a kid and come out matured; they've grown. It's pretty neat to see that," the father said.

Addison agreed her experience in the Marines has strengthened her relations with her family.

She said she has grown physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, everything.

The father said Addison's enlistment and her success have put pride at a whole new level.

"You are always proud of your kids. They've run races and done other things, but this is indescribable. You have to let them have their life. We are just here to support and love," he said.

Tommy said he is confident in her future.

"If she can live through the Crucible, she can make it through anything," he said. "I heard her friends in boot camp talk about how she dominated and could not be caught, and these were the guys talking."

The Marine explained the Crucible begins with a six-mile hike carrying 60-70 lbs., then a three-mile hike with 25-gallon ammo cans. The hike back is nine miles. It is a 54-hour event and a total of 48 miles.

Addison said a lot of her confidence to compete was because of the way she was raised.

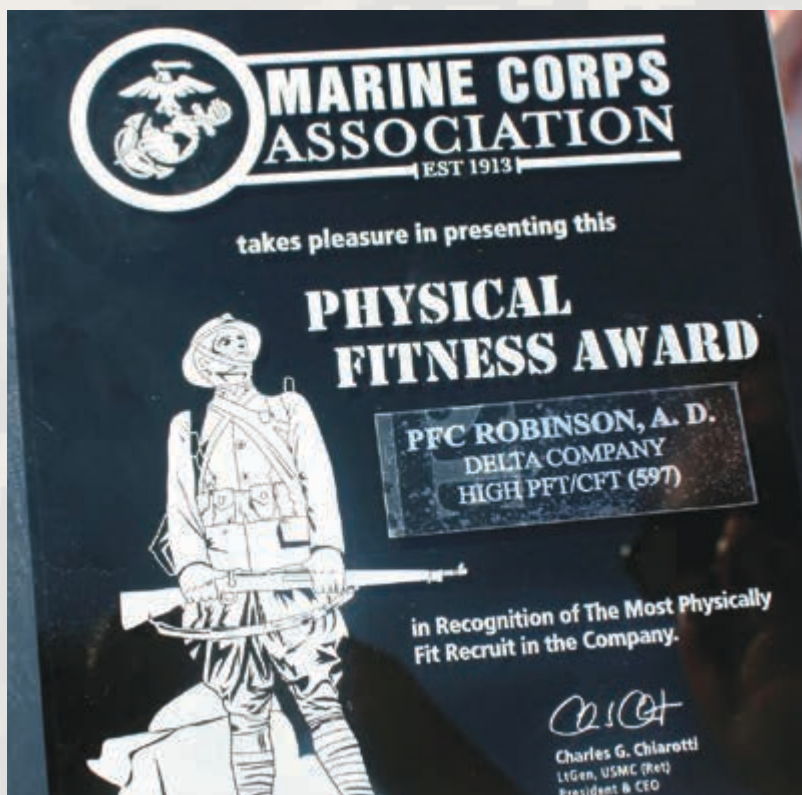
"I was always around boys; I tried to be as good as them," she stated simply.

She said Coach Moore always made sure she did everything with the boys.

"I had to be as good as them. He prepared me physically by running and mentally being the best I can be. He and my dad taught me to be comfortable being uncomfortable, and that's what boot camp is all about," she explained.



Addison Robinson smiles on the podium after placing seventh in the 3,200-meter event at the May 10, 2025, state meet.



Addison received the Physical Fitness Award for Delta Company at the conclusion of boot camp out of 268 Marine recruits.



Calls from friends and family are a welcome break during boot camp.

What's next?

Addison plans to complete her college degree while in the military in either political science or psychology.

"When finished, I'll come out with college degrees and no school loans," she said. "It sets you up for life."

Tommy said the military is not for everybody, but he thinks it was a wise decision for Addison.

"I wasn't talking like that six months ago," the father said.

Addison said women make up 1% of Marines.

"It's good to know I'm a member of that small portion," she said. "Once a Marine, always a Marine."

Update

Since the initial interview in June, Addison successfully completed Marine Combat Training July 20 and was on her way to report to the Naval Air Station Oceana Dam Neck Annex in Virginia Beach to attend the Marine Corps' MAGTF Planning Specialist course. MAGTF stands for Marine Air-Ground Task Force, the Marine Corps' combined fighting force of ground, air, logistics, any command elements. ♦

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Functional Fall Herbs & Spices

The leaves are turning colors, evenings and early mornings are cooler, and ragweed is floating through the crisp air around us. This can only mean one thing: Fall is upon us here at the Lake!

With all the sweater weather mornings and cozy evenings come so many fall flavors that seem to act as a sort of security blanket for our souls. The Cinnamon, Nutmeg, and Allspice scents have such a calming effect on us because they connect to neurotransmitters that trigger our brain's nostalgia center. These aromas instantly remind us of our childhood holiday memories when times were simpler. Back then, we weren't the adults creating the magic with our endless to-do lists and fuller-than-typical days. Instead, we were simply living those memories out, one at a time, and storing them in our brain's pleasure centers. We knew nothing of the science behind the dopamine they would release in the future and for decades to come.

Well, now the baton has been passed, we've been actively creating that magic throughout our adulthood, and somehow we're not as cozy and relaxed as our limbic system has been communicating to us that we should be. Every year, the olfactory nerves compete with our busy schedules to try and steer us toward simplicity, slow-down, and, believe it or not, healthy eating.

The herbs and aromas of Fall happen to be some of the most potent jars in an Herbalist's cabinet when it comes to overall support for the body's immune system. The trio mentioned above is packed with polyphenols and antioxidant-rich compounds, like Eugenol, Myristicin, and Cinnamaldehyde. These compounds get to work within minutes of entering the body by healing cellular oxidation and attacking pathogenic invaders all throughout.

These Fall-associated herbs can be so beneficial to our bodies, but only if we prepare them correctly. Here are some simple suggestions to remember if you want your kitchen to produce Autumn Aromas while also supporting your immune and nervous systems simultaneously:

1. Ditch the dairy, conventional flour, and sugar
2. Cook Low and Slow
3. Use whole herbs and spices, rather than pre-ground



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With a small shift in our typical Fall mindset, we can achieve immune system support, nervous system regulation, and that cozy, comforting relaxation that we remember from days past. If you want a little glimpse of these herbs, spices, and suggestions in action, I've included my personal recipe for Sweet Potato Breakfast Squares. This combo is easy to throw together and can be enjoyed as a nutrient dense meal to start your day with or post-dinner as a rewarding treat for a day's hard work. I hope you enjoy it the same way I enjoyed sharing some of my food knowledge with you. Until next time,

Get Food-Nerdy,
 Cathi Chandler



Sweet Potato Breakfast Squares

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked and mashed sweet potato
- 1 cup coconut flour
- 1 tsp Ceylon cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ginger
- ¼ tsp allspice
- ¼ tsp clove
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ⅓ cup pure maple syrup
- ¼ cup coconut or olive oil
- ¾ cup coconut milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup chopped dates
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seed

Directions:

1. Mix together Dry Ingredients
2. Add in Sweet Potato, Coconut Milk, Maple Syrup, Eggs, and Oil. Stir to Combine
3. Fold in chopped dates and pumpkin seeds
4. Spread onto 9x11 inch parchment-lined baking dish
5. Bake in preheated oven at 350° for 30 minutes

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A photograph of a deer standing in a river, surrounded by autumn foliage. The deer is facing left, and its reflection is visible in the water. The background is a dense forest with trees in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The title "Sightseeing in Blue Ridge" is overlaid on the image in a white, stylized font.

Sightseeing

in Blue Ridge

Capturing fall colors is an annual tradition

■ Story by **Casey Brady**

If it's autumn, it's time for our annual leaf color photo shoot.

My bride and I have made capturing fall colors an annual tradition for decades. A great deal of planning goes into each trip — where are the best locations, when are peak colors and the “golden hours” to shoot. Sunrises and sunsets are the best photo opportunities and we fill in the rest of the day doing touristy things.

We've photographed many stunning autumns around the U.S.—the San Juan and Rocky Mountains in Colorado, throughout New England and several South Eastern/mid-Atlantic states. There is no doubt some of the most brilliant colors are just a few hours









away and it's my pleasure to share some of the places we've recently visited.

For this trip, we ventured north to the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival in Hiawassee, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Cherokee, and Bryson City, North Carolina where we rode the historic Steam Engine 1702 on Great Smoky Mountain Railroad.

Originally built in September 1942 to assist with America's entry to World War II, the U.S. Army Transportation Corps S160 Class steam locomotive No.1702 is one of only 26 of its class that were preserved and still in operation today. No.1702 was purchased by the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad in Bryson City, North Carolina in late 1991 for tourist train excursions along the 53 miles of track between Dillsboro and Nantahala, North Carolina. ♦







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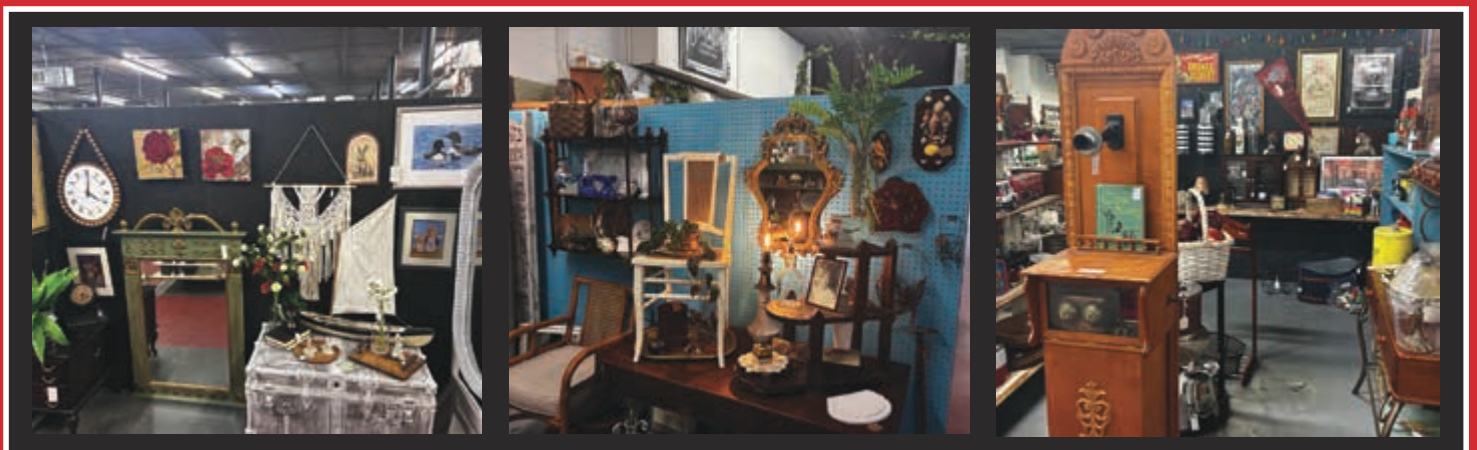
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Photo by
Casey Brady

Autumn

■ By **Kathy Wright**

Wind blows
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Crows call

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Geese fly
Summer's done



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