

*Lexington's*

2023

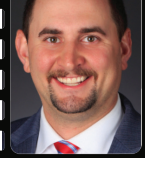
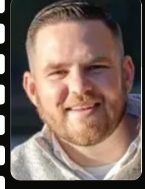
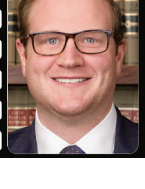
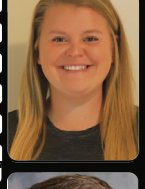
Top

20

professionals  
under 40

*presented by* **Chronicle**

LEXINGTON COUNTY



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# Lexington's 2023 Top 20 professionals under 40

Here they are: the Chronicle's inaugural Top 20 Under 40 in Lexington County.

The intent of this publication is to highlight standout members of the talented workforce who exist in the county, giving them well-deserved recognition and, hopefully, giving our readers a better understanding of the local business landscape along the way.

This first class features a variety of people who do a variety of things, from martial arts instruction to school counseling, government work to marketing, healthcare to retail, practicing law to computer programming.

But they are unified by being leaders in their communities, with most of them adding to the contributions they make through their main gigs with volunteer work.

These winners were determined with help from our readers – who nominated deserving young professionals who were under 40 as of Dec. 31 and then voted on our favorites – as well as the chambers of commerce

representing Cayce/West Columbia, Irmo and Lexington – who gave their perspective on the contributions made by this year's nominees.

All of the winners work and/or live in Lexington County.

Each of the winners responded to a questionnaire from the Chronicle to help you get to know them better.

Cheers to Lexington's Top 20 Under 40!

*Jordan Lawrence*  
Managing Editor



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# Andrea Snelgrove

Gift Shop and Merchandising Manager at Wingard's Market

**Where do you live?**  
Chapin.

**How long have you lived there?**  
30 years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**  
I really liked the idea of becoming a florist, to make people smile with flowers. Guess I grew up to be just that, I get to make people smile and succeed with plants, every day at Wingard's Market.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**  
Love of the outdoors.

**Favorite local restaurant?**  
Mediterranean Café.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**  
Fishing and spending time on the lake.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

I honestly love a grilled shoulder or Boston butt with nothing on it. But if I were to choose, vinegar-based.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I would take them to see the Purple Martins on Lake Murray, Saluda Shoals Park to see the holiday display of lights, and Wingard's Market.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Always listen to those that want to help you. It may be that extra act of kindness that changes someone's day or experience. Take time to be proud of yourself.

# Bret Carter

Producer at The Carter Insurance Group

**Where do you live?**  
Settlers Point Neighborhood (Town of Lexington).

**How long have you lived there?**  
Since 2016. Born and raised in Cayce.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**  
Anesthesiologist.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**  
My mother has been in the insurance industry since 1989. She has always been my inspiration.

**Favorite local restaurant?**  
Private Property or Alodia's.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**  
I love going to the zoo with my family. I know it's not fully in Lexington County, but we still claim half!

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**  
We are in Lexington, S.C. Of course it's Mustard.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I am a big fan of Lake Murray so that would be a good place to start. Also any of the concerts at the amphitheater.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Stay positive, stay honest, and always work hard.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

I am an ambassador for the Real Men Wear Pink campaign supporting the American Cancer Society. I also help raise money for Make-A-Wish through the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of SC.



# Daniel Kim

Owner and operator of Legacy Martial Arts

**Where do you live?**  
Lexington.

**How long have you lived there?**  
A very long time!

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

As is the case with any children, I wanted to be lots of different things at various points: professional sports athlete, FBI agent, attorney, business executive, etc.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

After being involved in accounting for a while, it just wasn't the right fit for me. I spent years trying to figure that out, and eventually fell into teaching and owning my martial arts school. I love making an impact in the lives of our students and making a difference in their lives. So I currently instruct accounting at the University of South Carolina and own and operate Legacy Martial Arts, an award-winning program with multiple locations throughout the Midlands.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

There are so many great places! Private Property, RF's Corner Grill, Hudson's, Red Sake, Arirang, to name just a few.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**

Enjoying the outdoors (hiking, playing disc golf or ultimate frisbee) and attending local events.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

Being a South Carolinian, mustard-based.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

Soda City Market!

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

To truly figure out what you want and to pursue it relentlessly. Achieve that through personal growth, finding a mentor, working hard, and being flexible. Always be ready for opportunities, and take them when it presents itself. And finally, establish a skill that'll distinguish yourself from others.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

Board member for Columbia Ultimate Disc Association, Korean Association of Columbia, SC, and SC Taekwondo Association.



# Kimberly Braxton

Owner and Operator of Powerhouse Athletics

**Where do you live?**  
I live in Columbia.

**How long have you lived there?**

I was born and raised in Columbia. I moved away for both college and work for approximately 10 years, but then I moved back home to Columbia to open up Powerhouse Athletics.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

I always wanted to be in the coaching field of some sort. Growing up I thought P.E. teachers had the coolest jobs.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

I played softball in college, graduated and then became a collegiate coach. After coaching at the collegiate level I quickly realized that was where my heart was. When coaching came to an end for me, I wanted to provide more opportunity to the younger generation of athletes to excel both on and off of the field.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

San Jose. Nothing beats queso and chips!

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

Mustard-based.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I would start with showing them Main Street - both downtown and Lexington. There is so much history to be seen. Then I would make sure they got to experience a day on Lake Murray.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Don't live life with "what if"s. Life is too short and God has already perfectly designed our lives to fulfill his purpose. If something is on your mind and in your heart, then follow it through! You may just surprise yourself!



# Lester 'Gill' Bell Jr.

Partner at Moore Bradley Myers Law Firm

**Where do you live?**

My family lived in West Columbia until recently relocating to Sumter to be closer to family. I still happily commute to West Columbia for work.

**How long have you lived there?**

I lived in Lexington County for eight years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

I wanted to be in healthcare in some capacity. My mom was a social worker for a nursing home and my dad is a veterinarian. I was really interested in becoming a psychologist or psychiatrist.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

My collegiate path was tailored for going into healthcare. I took a few classes late in undergrad that genuinely inspired me towards a legal career. One night during winter break, my dad suggested I study law as well and that settled it.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

Alodia's.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

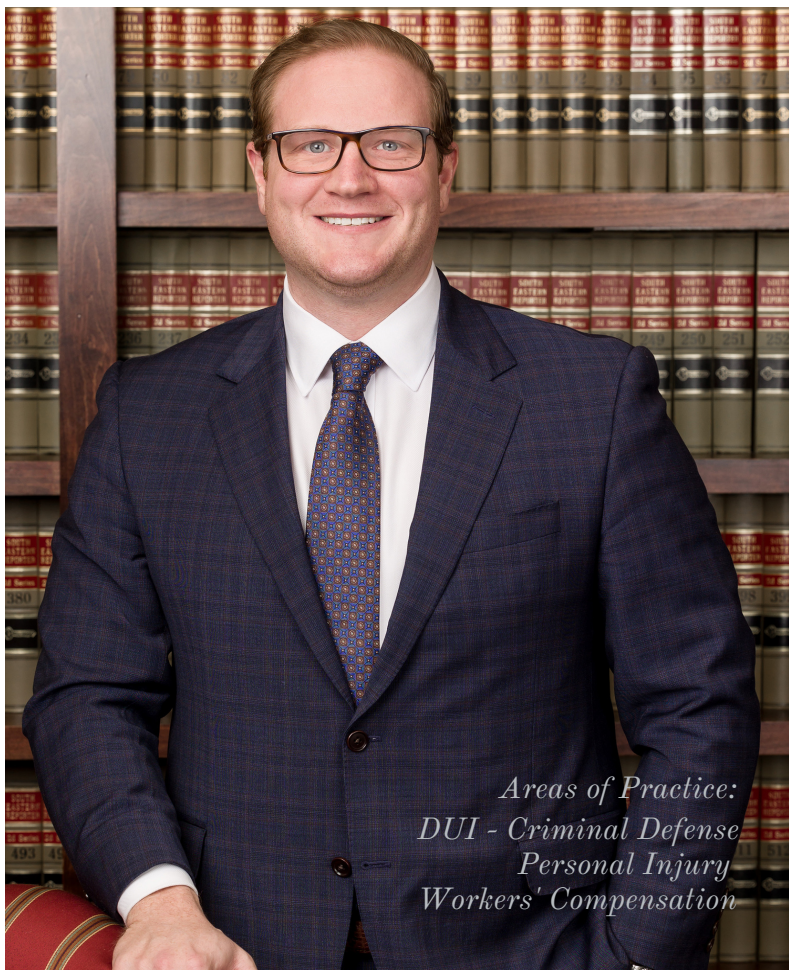
My family would disown me if I say anything other than vinegar.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Value relationships. Every person you meet, no matter how briefly, is a potential friend that can help you grow personally and professionally.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

I'm extremely proud to be a part of Solicitor Hubbard's Drug Court program. I've practiced throughout the state and the Lexington County Solicitor's Office has established the gold standard for drug rehabilitation and diversion.



*Areas of Practice:  
DUI - Criminal Defense  
Personal Injury  
Workers' Compensation*

**MBM MOORE  
BRADLEY  
MYERS**

**Lester M. "Gill" Bell, Jr.**

**Top 20 Professionals Under 40**

Moore Bradley Myers Partner, Gill Bell, was recently honored as one of Columbia's Best & Brightest and as one of the Midlands Legal Elite in the area of Criminal Defense.

1700 Sunset Blvd.      110 S. Main Street  
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[mbmsclaw.com](http://mbmsclaw.com)

*Lexington's*  
**2023**  
**Top**  
**20**  
professionals  
under 40

# George Schodowski

Realtor at EXIT  
Palmetto Real Estate  
Services

**Where do you live?**

I live in Irmo.

**How long have you lived there?**

Six years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

Growing up, I wanted to be in the Secret Service and help to plan the presidential motorcade.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

Zillow inspired me to take this career path. I looked at tens of thousands of homes between the ages of 12 and 15 on their site before I got into the business at 16.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

My favorite local restaurant is San Jose Mexican Restaurant.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**

My favorite thing to do in Lexington County is Lake Murray.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

Mustard.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

If they were thinking about moving to Lexington County for work, I would make sure to take them to the Irmo Chamber. The Irmo Chamber can do so much for them business wise.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

First, the size of your goals determines how successful you will be. Set outrageous goals and set out to conquer them. You need to believe in yourself more than what anybody else believes in you. The moment I increased my goals I increased my production because I knew I needed to move faster to meet my deadlines. I would also advise that you network every time you get a chance. You never know who you are going to meet that will change your life or business trajectory.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

I am very committed to community service. I enjoy volunteering with the Special Olympics, Salvation Army bell ringing, at Clemson Football Games, and Screaming Eagles. I am a member of the St. Andrews-Irmo Optimist Club and play in charity golf tournaments supporting the Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce, Optimist Club and Chapin Chamber of Commerce. I support and give time to the community efforts of EXIT Palmetto Real Estate Service assisting with food collection drives.



# Way

Member of the  
S.C. House of  
Representatives  
for District 88



**Where do you live?**

I live in the Lake Frances neighborhood nestled between Red Bank and South Congaree with my wife (Beth), two children (Bobby, 4, and Eden, 5 months), and dog (Veto).

**How long have you lived there?**

We've been in our current home for seven years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

Both my grandfathers served in the Marines. My paternal grandfather served in the Pacific during World War II. My maternal grandfather served in Korea and Vietnam. I thought I would follow in their footsteps. In fact, the Marine Corps sent me to the University of South Carolina on scholarship. Unfortunately, a traumatic back injury that left me with temporary paralysis and multiple back surgeries by the time I was 19 made that dream impossible.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

I run a marketing firm that helps elect strong conservatives to public office and also serve the great people of District 88 in the South Carolina House of Representatives. I do both jobs because I noticed many elected officials willfully ignore our Constitution and the constituents they serve.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

That's a loaded question! Are you trying to tank my re-election? I actually like all kinds of sauces – mustard, vinegar, tomato and even Alabama white. Just nothing too spicy, please.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

A pitch for the Midlands to a prospective resident isn't complete without stops at our history-filled Statehouse, award-winning zoo, and recreation-packed Lake Murray.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Be bold and never compromise your values.

# Stephanie Bergquist



Realtor at Big A Homes/Sales Manager at Epic Homes

**Where do you live?**

Lexington on a five-acre farm.

**How long have you lived there?**

I've lived in Lexington nine years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

Someone who made a difference!

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

During the real estate crash and recession in 2006 I became an expert in short sales and negotiations in deed in lieu or foreclosures, and realized real estate was something that I loved and came naturally to me, so I decided to continue growing my passion in a field I love where I can help people's dreams come true.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

Smoked in Columbia! Libby's in Lexington!

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**

Spend time with my animals on our farm and "Friday night lights" at Gilbert High!

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

Ha ... mustard!

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

Hmmm, well we are a very special town that has grown at astronomical rates in the last decade, so it's important we grow cautiously and not carelessly, however, it depends on what that person is looking for. I love the small town vibe, I like to take folks to Main Street Leesville, have coffee at iCrave coffee, shop at Purple Peacock, and home shop at Sweet Simplicity.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Never underestimate yourself, never undervalue your worth, always trust your intuition and gut instinct, surround yourselves with others who uplift and support you and your ventures, find like-minded and eager individuals, and once you know and understand that not everyone will be happy for your success, you will grow even beyond your imaginable potential.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

We are big 5k runners in our family, we are a retired police family, and we do the Jail Break 5k in Lexington and the Tunnel to Towers 5K in Columbia, both of which benefit police and firefighter foundations. While I am a realtor under my broker husband at Big A Homes, we also offer a 10% broker credit to any of our military or police clients in honor of their service and sacrifice to us, and that's very important to me as an agent and to our thin blue line company.

**Anything else you want people to know?**

In addition to being married for 19 years and having two children at Gilbert High School, I love being a local realtor in the greater Columbia area, my husband is the Broker and Owner of our company Big A Homes, I am the sales manager for a local custom builder, Epic Homes LLC, and I own and operate a local hobby farm for homeschool tours, photography sessions, and other farm items called The Bergquist Family Freedom Farm, LLC. I love a busy and full life!

# Colin Griffin

CEO and Chief Engineer at Krumware



**Where do you live?**

We live in the Corley Mill area.

**How long have you lived there?**

We moved from the opposite side of Columbia this past summer, but despite leaving downtown, the commute is thankfully shorter by time (for now)!

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

Always wanted to be an astronaut, but there's a fear of heights thing that gets in the way.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

I grew up taking things apart and fixing them, and fell into programming as a less destructive hobby. It just made sense to keep rolling in that direction.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

Definitely Halls Chophouse, but we're really excited that Bodhi Thai has reopened.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**

LJs Par & Grill or the neighborhood pool.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

A natural smoked flavor is best, but a good hickory barbecue or mop sauce is a great fallback. Extra credit for something with some good heat to it.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I'd definitely showcase the opportunity for work/play balance. Start with downtown Columbia and Soda City Market, hop around to a few breweries or head to the lake, and maybe wrap up the day in downtown Lexington. There is something for everyone, so a choose-your-own-adventure approach is a great option.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Know that entrepreneurship is hard. It's a 24x7x365 job that doesn't necessarily pay well. Know what you're getting into before you take the leap, and find a local support system.

# Steven Bullard

## Fire Chief for the City of Cayce

### Where do you live?

I live in the Pine Grove area of Lexington County.

### How long have you lived there?

I have lived in Lexington County for almost 11 years.

### What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I honestly wanted to be an EMT so that I could help people. I ended up becoming a Firefighter first where I had the privilege to obtain my EMT certification.

### What inspired you to take your career path?

My father inspired me to take this career path. When I was younger, he was part of the local rescue squad, and I used to go on emergency calls with him. This was an awesome experience, and I knew then that this is what I wanted to do when I grew up. He was also a police officer, so I have kind of grown up around public safety.

### Favorite local restaurant?

My favorite local restaurant is Duke's Pad Thai. It is located in Cayce on Knox Abbott Drive. Great food and service.

### Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?

I have a couple – visiting the City of Cayce's riverwalk and spending time on Lake Murray when I have the chance.

### Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?

I am unbiased on this one, I enjoy mustard and vinegar sauces. When I make it, I prefer vinegar sauce.

### If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?

I would start off by showing them all the rich history of the City of Cayce. The riverwalk, brick kilns and the small-town vibes of a growing city. Next, would have to be Lake Murray. It has a lot of history as well, and I believe it is the pinnacle of destination spots in Lexington County.

### What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?

Don't give up. Set your goals small and grow them as you complete them. As you start off somewhere, take it all in, learn as much as you can, and do not be afraid to ask for help. Volunteer for everything, and don't be afraid to do the things that no one else wants to do.

### Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?

I serve on the board of the Cayce's Public Safety Foundation, attend neighborhood watch meetings, conduct CPR/First Aid classes and general safety classes for the community.



# Colleen Crosby

### Where do you live?

Lexington.

### How long have you lived there?

My wife and I moved to Lexington in August of 2020 from Columbia.

### What did you want to be when you were growing up?

Growing up, I always wanted to own my own business.

### What inspired you to take your career path?

I was inspired by my dad to become an entrepreneur.

### Favorite local restaurant?

Hard to narrow it down to one favorite ... but I would say Cafe Strudel or Takosushi.

### Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?

I enjoy playing golf, so I would say sneaking in an early morning round at Lexington Country Club or Golden Hills would be top of my list!

### Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?

Mustard.

### If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?

I'd show them a Saturday at the Soda City Market in downtown Columbia. Walking down Main Street during the market is when I remember falling in love with the Midlands.

### What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?

Find something that you enjoy doing, and focus your attention on being the best you can be. Do not worry about what others are doing, and compete against yourself.

### Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?

We have worked with Habitat for humanity to donate multiple roofs to our local community over the years.

Owner of  
Crosby  
Roofing and  
Seamless  
Gutters



# Mia Wilkins

Director of Economic Development and Communications for the Town of Irmo

**Where do you live?**  
Irmo.

**How long have you lived there?**  
I've lived in Irmo for six years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**  
My dream was to be a Navy Seal!

**What inspired you to take your career path?**  
My career allows me to attract retailers. Attracting retailers will turn into jobs. These new jobs will hopefully change someone's life. That is huge!

**Favorite local restaurant?**  
I'm a very simple girl so bring on the pizza! I love Hungry Howie's Pizza (light garlic sauce please).

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

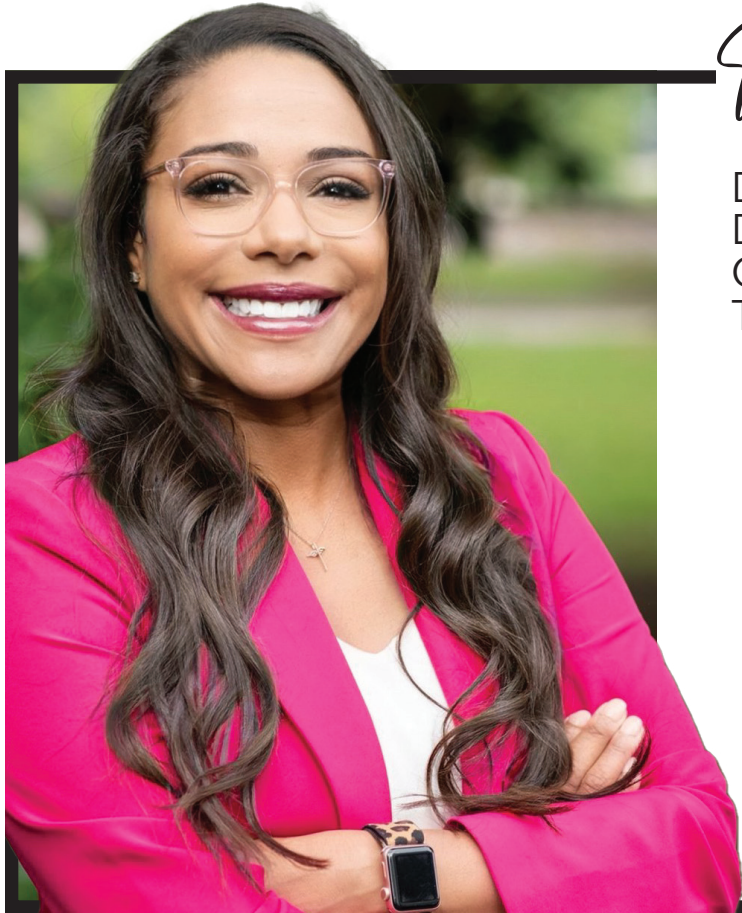
I had no idea there were different types of barbecue sauces until I moved to the Carolinas. With that being said, I'm a mustard-based gal!

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

Soda City Market, Carolina football game, boating and fishing on Lake Murray, a show at the Icehouse Amphitheater. There is just so much to see!

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

When you first start a job you most likely will not have much experience. You will make mistakes, and yes it might be painful. But you will be stronger and learn from them. Like the saying goes, "No pain, no gain." Don't ever stop learning. Teach yourself to learn consciously and question your knowledge from time to time. Always be kind and smile, you never know how much your smile can change someone's day.



# Congratulations

Cayce Fire Department

Fire Chief

Steven Bullard

Top 20 Professionals  
Under 40



Lexington's  
2023  
Top  
20  
professionals  
under 40



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**Where do you live?**  
Lexington County.

**How long have you lived there?**

I have lived in Lexington County my entire life except for when I was in college and law school.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

As a kid, I always said that I wanted to be a doctor by day, ninja by night. Unfortunately, it didn't work out.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

In the sixth grade, my class did a mock trial. I was selected as one of the attorneys, and after "winning," the seed was planted. I had an incredible time preparing for the trial and felt that I had a natural talent for being a trial lawyer. As for being a criminal defense lawyer, I was blessed to have John Delgado as one of my mentors. His compassion for others and zealous advocacy in standing up to the government inspired me.

**Favorite local restaurant?** Libby's.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?** Plain. Don't hate.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

Lake Murray, Williams Brice Stadium for a Saturday night football game, the riverwalk, Lexington Amphitheater, and local breweries.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

First, believe in yourself and don't give up when you inevitably encounter failure. As Albert Einstein said, "Failure is success in progress." Second, there's no substitute for hard work. You must put in the time and effort to achieve your goals. Third, relationships are the key to many opportunities that otherwise would not be available to you.

Criminal Defense Attorney/  
Manages the S.C. practice of  
Price Benowitz LLP

# Cameron Beeler

School Counselor  
at Saluda River  
Academy for the Arts



**Where do you live?**  
West Columbia.

**How long have you lived there?**

I have lived here since May. I previously lived in Lexington.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

In first grade, I wanted to be a mailman and dress up as Chuck E. Cheese. In high school, I wanted to be an anesthesiologist because they made the most money. My high school counselor said, "You do not like blood or needles! You have to do what you love." I did not listen at first, but now, I am a school counselor.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

Mrs. Porter, my high school counselor, inspired me to take my career path. She was there for me through everything in high school, after high school, and up until this day. She was there for me when my mom had breast cancer and was also there for my mom. She is the reason I am who I am today.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

My favorite local restaurants are Publico in Columbia and San Jose in West Columbia.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

My favorite barbecue sauce is mustard.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I would find out their career field and some of their likes. I would take them to a restaurant with good vibes and a great atmosphere, walking in downtown Lexington and downtown Columbia, and wherever else that I had a feel for that they would enjoy.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Like Nike says, "Just do it." Take care of yourself – well-being, mental health, set boundaries, find your passion, do what you love, do what makes you happy. Make connections and network. Build your resources. Build your empire. Be the best person you can be each day. Do not hold onto anger or it will rob your happiness. Do what makes you happy in the moment.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

I love being actively engaged and involved. My career is my passion and goes hand in hand with community involvement. My Jr. Beta Club students host schoolwide drives, such as raising money for a local homeless shelter, filling a van full of clothes for the homeless, raising money for charities, making holiday cards for the elderly and sick kids, collecting food, going on a field trip to the local homeless shelter, and more! In my volunteer work outside of school, I enjoy volunteering at Oliver Gospel Mission, encouraging others in any way that I can, and I am in the process of trying to begin a support group at a local jail.

# Walker Brewer

## Where do you live?

I grew up in the Midlands. Currently my wife, daughter and I live in Lexington.

## How long have you lived there?

We moved to Lexington 3.5 years ago.

## What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I wanted to go into construction management.

## What inspired you to take your career path?

I became interested in the details of what makes an event happen and once I looked behind the curtain there was no turning back.

## Favorite local restaurant?

So many to choose from and depending on your mood, I would give my top three as Old Mill Brew Pub, Keg Cowboy and O'Hara's.

## Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?

Tomato-based.

## Downtown Venue Promoter for the Town of Lexington/Icehouse Amphitheater

### If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?

Look at the whole picture of Lexington, it has truly become a place to live, work and play.

### What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?

Never be afraid to admit you are wrong and always be ready to learn and adapt. No one person has all the answers and the only thing constant is change.

### Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?

Over the past two years, I have reconnected with Scouting and helped them change and adjust how they recruit new members.



# Coming Soon! LAKE SIDE

## THE GOOD LIFE ON LAKE MURRAY

It covers about 50,000 acres of land and 650 miles of shoreline with its 763 billion gallons of water. But even those big numbers can't fully communicate the outsize impact Lake Murray has on Lexington County and the Midlands. It is a hub for outdoor recreation and tourism, is home to businesses and restaurants that generate a great deal of revenue, and is generally a tremendous part of the county's identity.

Which is why the Lexington County Chronicle will launch LakeSide this spring, a quarterly magazine exploring the various activities and developments happening around the lake and the people that are making them happen.

GET READY TO DIVE IN.

# Hunter Sox

Cayce City Council  
Member/Legislative  
Initiatives Coordinator  
for the South Carolina  
Institute of Medicine and  
Public Health

**Where do you live?**  
Cayce.

**How long have you lived there?**  
Eight years.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**  
I gained a great understanding of the legislative process while working at the state house during college for former state Rep. Mac Toole. I gained a lot of great knowledge and experience that led me to my current role as Legislative Initiatives Coordinator for the South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health where I inform legislators on policies to improve health and health care in South Carolina.

**Favorite local restaurant?**  
D's Wings or Zesto of West Columbia.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**  
Lake days on the boat and floating the river.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer?**  
Any answer that is not mustard based is incorrect.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work. Where would you take them and what would you show them?**  
When the weather is warm, the lake or river. During the colder seasons, any of our great breweries, restaurants and venues. We have a lot of entertainment districts and events throughout Lexington County that promote community, making us such a marketable area to move to or do business in.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**  
Don't be hesitant to take risks and step out of your comfort zone. Get involved in something you are passionate about. Burnout does not deserve glorification – it is okay to slow down sometimes, you'll enjoy life more.



## Congratulations

Councilman  
Hunter Sox  
City of Cayce

Top 20 Professionals Under 40

Lexington's  
2023  
Top  
20  
professionals  
under 40



## Congratulations!

STEPHEN  
WILLIAMS



WEST  
COLUMBIA  
• HEAD WEST •



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#HeadWest #WeCoSC #ShowUsYourGrit



# Dr. April Barnes

General Pediatrician at  
Brookland Community Pediatrics

**Where do you live?**  
West Columbia.

**How long have you lived there?**  
Four years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**  
I do not recall what I initially wanted for my future career. However, I remember being an avid reader, so I assume something like doctor, lawyer or teacher was on my radar. I also knew I wanted to be an advocate and champion social justice issues in some arena. After being in the care of Dr. Clarence Dollison, an African-American pediatrician in Columbia, I definitely thought I wanted to be a doctor. My desires for a future career changed many times between elementary school to college, but I think I finally settled in the perfect career.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**  
Tomato.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Make time for your interests outside of your career. They help develop you into a whole individual. Prioritize your mental health. If given an opportunity to advance, even if you are afraid you will not be able to deliver, try it anyway. It is only failure if you fail to learn from your experience.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

I am on the board of the Columbia Museum of Art Friends of African American Art and Culture affinity group. Our activities are centered on African-American art and teaching the public about its importance and diversity. I also participate in career days at local schools and share information at churches concerning pediatric mental health and mission work.

# Stephen Williams

Superintendent of  
Parks and Beautification  
for the City of West  
Columbia

**Where do you live?**  
Gaston.

**How long have you lived there?**  
Almost 12 years.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**  
I wanted to attend Johnson & Wales and be a chef.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**  
I've always enjoyed helping people, and with my job now with the city in Public Works, I get to help people daily.

**Favorite local restaurant?**  
Compton's Kitchen.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**  
Fish and ride motorcycles.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**  
Vinegar.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I would take them to our West Columbia Parks, the West Columbia Riverwalk, and show them all of the outdoor recreational options in the county.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

If you work hard and put your mind to it, you can always accomplish anything.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

I am enrolled in the Local Government Leadership Institute, a member of the American Public Works Association, and a Mason.



# Noteable and Quotable

“ I really liked the idea of becoming a florist, to make people smile with flowers. Guess I grew up to be just that, I get to make people smile and succeed with plants, every day at Wingard’s Market. – Andrea Snelgrove

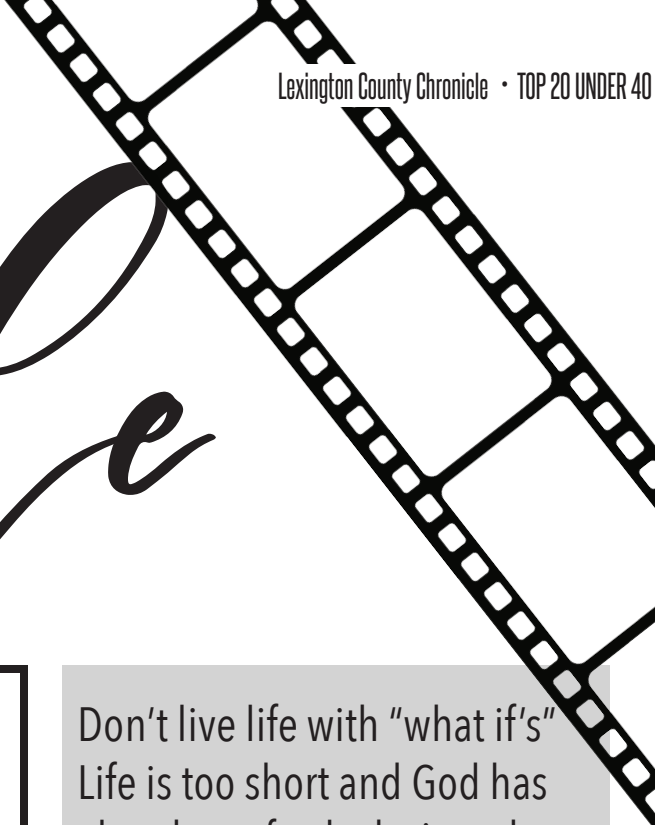
Don’t live life with “what if’s” Life is too short and God has already perfectly designed our lives to fulfill his purpose. If something is on your mind and in your heart, then follow it through! – Kimberly Braxton

To truly figure out what you want and to pursue it relentlessly. Achieve that through personal growth, finding a mentor, working hard, and being flexible. – Daniel Kim

“ Like the saying goes, “No pain, no gain.” Don’t ever stop learning. Teach yourself to learn consciously and question your knowledge from time to time. – Mia Wilkins

“ Know that entrepreneurship is hard. It’s a 24x7x365 job that doesn’t necessarily pay well. Know what you’re getting into before you take the leap, and find a local support system. – Colin Griffin

You need to believe in yourself more than what anybody else believes in you. The moment I increased my goals I increased my production because I knew I needed to move faster to meet my deadlines. – George Schodowski



Be bold and never compromise your values. – RJ May

First, believe in yourself and don't give up when you inevitably encounter failure. As Albert Einstein said, "Failure is success in progress."  
– Dayne Phillips

If you work hard and put your mind to it, you can always accomplish anything.  
– Stephen Williams

Stay positive, stay honest, and always work hard.  
– Bret Carter

Never be afraid to admit you are wrong and always be ready to learn and adapt. No one person has all the answers and the only thing constant is change.  
– Walker Brewer

Don't give up. Set your goals small and grow them as you complete them. As you start off somewhere, take it all in, learn as much as you can, and do not be afraid to ask for help.  
– Steven Bullard

Find something that you enjoy doing, and focus your attention on being the best you can be. Do not worry about what others are doing, and compete against yourself. – Collen Crosby

Burnout does not deserve glorification – it is okay to slow down sometimes, you'll enjoy life more.  
– Hunter Sox

Never underestimate yourself, never undervalue your worth, always trust your intuition and gut instinct, surround yourselves with others who uplift and support you and your ventures, find like-minded and eager individuals, and once you know and understand that not everyone will be happy for your success, you will grow even beyond your imaginable potential.  
– Stephanie Berquist

Make time for your interests outside of your career. They help develop you into a whole individual.  
– Aprel Barnes

Make connections and network. Build your resources. Build your empire. Be the best person you can be each day.  
– Cameron Beeler

Don't back down. We are a unique generation full of innovation, perseverance and willingness to change and adapt.  
– William Lynch

Success isn't given away and life isn't easy or fair, so do not give up.  
– Cynthia Giles

Value relationships. Every person you meet, no matter how briefly, is a potential friend that can help you grow personally and professionally. – Lester "Gill" Bell Jr.



# William Lynch

Location Leader,  
Funeral Director and  
Cremation Specialist  
for Thompson  
Funeral Home in  
Lexington



**Where do you live?**

The Springhill Community of Chapin.

**How long have you lived there?**

Since 2016.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

Funny enough I wanted to always work in NASCAR. Pit crew, crew chief, official, you name it, I would have done it.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

It was something that really fell in my lap, but after just a few weeks in the business I realized I had found my calling. Being able to serve families during one of the most difficult moments of life and make an impact has been very rewarding. There are long days, very difficult situations, and things a funeral director will never forget, but making a lasting impact on a family, or making that process just a bit easier, is why we do it.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

Chapin Chophouse for dinner. Zesto's of West Columbia for lunch.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

I'm a Pee Dee BBQ man. Vinegar all day (I make my own).

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

There are so many things that make this area the best in South Carolina. Lake Murray, our restaurants, local businesses are all what make this place unique. Being able to show off not just the physical structures, but the true sense of community we have in Lexington County and the Midlands. Plus, we are in a prime location in our state. It's a perfect spot to be convenient to other places in our state like the mountains or the beach.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Don't back down. We are a unique generation full of innovation, perseverance and willingness to change and adapt. Never be afraid to speak up and prove that.

# Cynthia Giles

CEO at Cut Throat  
Marketing

**Where do you live?**

In Columbia near Irmo.

**How long have you lived there?**

Seven years now.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

I wanted to be an epidemiologist, was absolutely obsessed with viruses after watching "Outbreak" at 5 years old.

**What inspired you to take your career path?**

Computers are my friend. Technology is fascinating to me and how we as humans interact with it is even more so. Everyday I get to help someone understand how they can get more out of technology, and they just light up, getting chills with excitement. You just cannot beat that, and it is very important to love what you do for a happy life, so that is my inspiration.

**Favorite local restaurant?**

A Fuego 100x35, this amazing Puerto Rican restaurant in Irmo.

**Favorite thing to do in Lexington County?**

Anything on or around Lake Murray. Love being outdoors, walking, hiking, boating and the views are great.

**Which barbecue sauce do you prefer (mustard/vinegar/tomato/other)?**

MUSTARD. It is the superior condiment.

**If you were trying to convince somebody to move to Lexington County/the Midlands for work, where would you take them/what would you show them?**

I would take them to the Irmo Chamber Red White and Blue Wine Walk or their Oyster Roast. Each event is hosted in Irmo at the chamber house, which is super cute, but then you have the beautiful Irmo Town Park across the street complete with the pond and wooden gazebo. Spend an afternoon enjoying the view and talking with kind people while having fun. Mingle with local town leadership and peace officers who cross the street to participate with their community. It would make anyone envious to have to go back to work anywhere else.

**What advice do you have for other young professionals from your own experience?**

Success isn't given away and life isn't easy or fair, so do not give up. Yes, you must work hard, but you can still obtain your goals and a nice life if you work towards it. Even when it seems that you have hit rock bottom, you can still get back up and try again.

**Tell us about your volunteer/community/civic engagement?**

Currently, I am the board chair for the Irmo Chamber of Commerce and will be a board member with the BIA of Central South Carolina coming in 2023. My volunteer engagement includes joining my husband for one of his many St Andrew's Optimist Club projects. We have worked tree lots at Christmas, rang the bell for the Salvation Army and fixed up homes for different benefactors around the area.

**Anything else you want people to know?**

When the TV tells you to hate, remember to love your neighbor.

