

2017 LEADERSHIP OWENSBORO CLASS



Jeff Barnette

Brescia University – Associate Academic Dean

Jeffrey Barnette is currently the Associate Academic Dean for Brescia University. He is responsible for the academic coordination and direction of online programs including, but not limited to, faculty recruitment, scheduling, quality control, and assessment. His responsibilities also include identifying and reifying “the Brescia Difference” and the Ursuline Educational Heritage in the online program through continuing education and professional development. He holds a Master of Science degree in Education and is completing his Doctorate in Instructional Systems Technology with a minor in Learning Sciences.



Zara Basham

OCTC – Surgical Technology Program Coordinator/Instructor

Zara Basham is an educator and surgical technologist. She has worked as a Certified Surgical Technologist for 15 years. Zara began working as an instructor for Owensboro Community and Technical College in 2006 and has served as the Program Coordinator for the Surgical Technology program for the past six years. Zara earned a diploma in Surgical Technology from Owensboro Technical College in 2001 and an Associate in Applied Science – Surgical Technology degree from Owensboro Community & Technical College in 2015. Zara is a member of the Association of Surgical Technologists where she advocates for her profession through the Kentucky State Assembly chapter.



Ladona Burns

First Security Bank – Private Banker

Ladona Burns comes to First Security Bank as a Private Banker with over 36 years’ experience in all areas of banking. As a Private Banker she manages consumer and commercial loan portfolio that includes and introduces product lines of deposit services. Before relocating to Owensboro in 2005, Ladona lived in Central City, KY. Prior to joining FSB, she had worked in positions that included Cash Vault Manager, Deposit Operations Supervisor, and Real Estate Lending. Ladona maintains active involvement in several community service organizations. Currently, she serves on the Board at St. Benedict Homeless Shelter and Ambassador to Owensboro Chamber of Commerce. Ladona is married to Mike Burns. They have two children and two grandchildren.

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Chris Castlen

Owensboro Police Department – Professional Standards Unit

Lieutenant Chris Castlen has served with the Owensboro Police Department for 20 years. Lt Castlen was in the Marines, earned a BA in 1996, and MPA in 2012, both from Western Kentucky University. He earned his Graduate Certificate from University of Virginia, and graduated from the FBI National Academy both in 2014. He and his wife Stacy have been married for 20 years and have three daughters. He has served as a patrolman, detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, member of the Emergency Response Team and an instructor for many facets of the department. He is currently the Professional Standards Unit Investigator.



Laurie Castlen

UniFirst Corporation – National Account Support Specialist/Service Analyst

Laurie Castlen is a Service Analyst at UniFirst Corporation. Born and raised in Owensboro, she is a graduate of Owensboro Catholic High School and Western Kentucky University with a degree in Business Management. She has held a position in management since the age of 18. Laurie along with her husband Travis are owners of US Lawns of Owensboro. They have two children Caroline (two) and Tucker (one). She can contribute her passion for the history and continual growth of Owensboro to her parents who have been building Owensboro from the ground up for 68 years as owners of L.A. Buford Masonry.



Dyan Damron

deAm-Ron Building Systems, LLC – Senior Estimator

Dyan Damron is employed as an estimator for deAm-Ron Building Systems, LLC. She does material takeoffs, price jobs, write proposals, and submit bids. Dyan has been employed by deAm-Ron since 1989. She started working as an office assistant and learned to do the estimating 16 years ago. Dyan's current title is Senior Estimator. She is a graduate of University of Evansville with a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. Dyan decided to apply for Leadership Owensboro to learn more about the community as she would like to be more involved in it.

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Stacey Davis

Right to Life of Owensboro – Executive Director

Stacey has been on the board for Right to Light of Owensboro for 3 years and stepped into her new role in May 2016. She has also been a Pure Barre instructor for over a year. Health and fitness are a passion of hers. She loves being involved in the community. Stacey is the executive Vice President of the Junior League of Owensboro. She has been in the league for 4 years and loves seeing the amazing things the group of ladies can accomplish. She is happily married to Thomas Michael Davis, and they have two children. Stacey serves on the PTO at their school and loves being involved in their education and thinks that parents are a vital role in the school not just in parenting.



John DeLacey

Owensboro High School – Principal

John DeLacey was born and raised in Owensboro and is currently in his second year as Principal of Owensboro High School. It is here that he serves with 140 staff members to ensure that the 1,275 students are prepared for life after high school. Prior to becoming Principal at OHS he has worked in the OPS district at various levels. He taught 3rd grade for eight years at Cravens Elementary before becoming an assistant principal and athletic director at Owensboro Middle School. John served in this role for two years before becoming the associate principal of the Owensboro Middle 5/6 center in which he held that position for two years and then moved to OHS. These experiences in education allow John a unique perspective of working in all grade levels in the district and in many cases he has worked with kids and families from kindergarten through graduation. Mr. DeLacey is a 1988 graduate of OHS. He has a Bachelor's of Science in Elementary Education, Master's in Education, and Rank I in Educational Leadership and Instruction, all from WKU. He is married to Amanda DeLacey and they have two children



Taylor Edge

Riney Hancock CPAs PSC – Senior Accountant

Taylor was born and raised in Owensboro. She graduated from OCHS in 2010 and Kentucky Wesleyan in 2014. She is currently a senior accountant in the audit department at Riney Hancock CPAs and received her CPA license in January 2016. Currently, Taylor serves as the Philanthropy Chair for Chamber Young Professionals and the Treasurer and Kettle Campaign Chair for the Salvation Army. In her free time, she enjoys watching sports (GO CATS), working out and spending as much time as possible with her friends and family.

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Susan High

Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce – Business Manager

Susan High is the longest serving member of the Chamber Staff starting in 1991. She is a native of Indianapolis and attended Indiana University. Susan and her husband, Joel, have owned and operated businesses throughout their careers. They are proud to have made Owensboro their home.



Alex Jagoe

Jagoe Homes, Inc. – Builder

Alex Jagoe is a native of Owensboro, KY. He moved to Nashville, TN, to earn his Chemical Engineering degree from Vanderbilt University and quickly moved home to continue working in the family business. Alex is a builder at Jagoe Homes—with a personal focus on construction and land development—and a Realtor at L. Steve Castlen, Realtors. In his community, Alex serves on the Board of Directors for Junior Achievement and as the 2017 Vice President for Home Builders Association of Owensboro. Alex is a student of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Judo, and Muay Thai at Hidden Samurai Martial Arts and lives with his two best mates and their two dogs (in a Jagoe Home).



Thomas Johnson

Domtar – E/I Reliability Engineer

Thomas is an E/I (electrical and instrumentation) reliability engineer at Domtar, the paper mill in Hawesville, KY. He was born and raised in Owensboro and graduated from University of Louisville in December 2015 receiving his bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. Thomas is technical and logic minded and enjoys fixing problems and improving on designs. During his free time he enjoys spending time with family, exercising, and working on home projects. He always enjoys learning something new, especially if he is able to apply the information to work or other activities.

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Jennifer Keller

Aflac-Keller & Associates – Regional Sales Coordinator

Jennifer Keller is regional sales coordinator of Aflac in Owensboro. Keller first joined Aflac in 2007 as a sales associate while in college. She served as an associate, coordinator in training and district sales coordinator in Indiana for 3 years. Since the fall of 2012 she has served as district sales coordinator in Owensboro, and January 1, 2016 was promoted to Regional Sales Coordinator. Bringing a fortune 500 regional operations to our community. Under her leadership, her team was No. 1 for new accounts in the state of KY in 2013, 2014 and in 2015 is still carrying the title, as well as finishing 2014 and 2015 in the top 10 in the entire company. Keller is a graduate of Apollo High School, and attended OCTCS and WKU Owensboro and studied Marketing. Keller and her husband, Garrett, are proud parents of their two daughters.



Chris Luttrell

Owensboro Fire Department – Battalion Chief

Chris is a Battalion Chief at the Owensboro Fire Department. He has been employed at the fire department for 19 ½ years and CAN retire in March 2017 if he wants to. Chris has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Brescia University and Master's Degree in Public Administration from WKU. He has been married for 11 years to Jennifer, who is the Director of Elementary Instruction & Early Childhood for Hopkins Co. School. He has two kids, Ben 21 and Kelsey 25 and one grandson Daniel who is 3 ½ years old.



Justin Meers

MPD, Inc. – Accountant

An Owensboro product and an Owensboro High School graduate, Justin attended the University of Kentucky where he earned a BS in Accounting and a BS in Business Management. Justin is currently pursuing his Master of Business Administration from Western Kentucky University. He was an active member in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity holding several positions including Vice President. In his career, Justin has served Owensboro Health, MasterBrand Cabinets (Jasper, IN), and MPD, Inc. in various audit, accounting, and finance roles. Justin is an active member in the Chamber of Young Professionals and has coached youth sports teams in the community.

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Scott Muench

OMU – Substation, Metering & Communications Supervisor

Scott Muench is a supervisor for Owensboro Municipal Utilities with 20 years of experience. He started with the utility as a Substation Electrician, advance to Substation Crew Leader after only four years and then was promoted to Supervisor over several departments in 2010. Scott is currently leading OMU's Advanced Metering Infrastructure and Meter Data Management Team. Scott's workplace focus is on continual improvement of the electrical system with the goal of leaving a better system to future employees to better serve customer demands. He measures his true success on how well he is able to help prepare and mentor others to find their life purpose.



Louise Murdock

Jagoe Homes, Inc. – Social Media/PR Coordinator

Louise has lived in Owensboro for two and a half years now working full-time for the company. She runs over 30 Social Media pages for the company, reforms and improves aspects of the company website, works with public and private relations, and assists with various other projects. She is also an Ambassador for the Owensboro Chamber of Commerce. Louise was born and raised in Atlanta where she graduated from Woodward Academy in 2009, and went on to graduate from the University of Alabama in 2013 with a Major in Anthropology and a Minor in Psychology. She was organically planning on attending the Maryland Institute College of Art to attend higher education for her now hobby, sculpture. She currently resides in Downtown Owensboro with her 3-year old yellow Labrador and loves every second of it.



Trey Pippin

Daviess County High School – Social Studies Teacher

Trey Pippin is an Owensboro native and a 2008 graduate of Daviess County High School. During his senior year, Trey was selected as a McConnell Scholar and was awarded a full-ride scholarship to attend U of L. The program, founded by United States Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, was designed to provide an "Ivy-League" experience for Kentucky's "best and brightest students." Trey graduated from the program and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science in 2012. Following working stints in the United States House of Representatives in 2007, the United States Senate in 2011, and even the Walt Disney World Resort in 2013, Trey completed a Masters of Arts in Teaching in 2013. Trey has returned to Daviess County High School, this time as a Social Studies teacher and coach. He has found his passion in working with young people and developing them as young leaders.

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Chip Pride

Independence Bank – Commercial Loan Officer

Chip Pride is a 21 year resident of Owensboro, KY moving here in January of 1996 following graduation from Western Kentucky University. Originally from Tell City Indiana, Chip has spent most of his working career in Banking. For the last 4 years, Chip has held the position of Commercial Loan Officer with Independence Bank. While not at work Chip spends time with family. He and his wife Amy have 4 children, Max, 13, Mollie, 12, Major 10, and Morgan 3 as well as working with many civic and community activities. Chip is a member of the Owensboro Kiwanis Club, the Junior Achievement Board, past president of the Owensboro Catholic Youth Sports League, and has served as an assistant varsity football coach at Owensboro Catholic High School for 20 seasons.



Waylon Ramming

Vectren – Senior Supervisor of Forecasting

Waylon Ramming is the Supervisor of Gas Demand Forecasting for Vectren Utility Holdings, Inc. (VUHI). VUHI is a combined natural gas and electric utility with nearly one million customers in Indiana and Ohio. VUHI is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Fortune 1000 company Vectren which includes pipeline infrastructure companies, energy consulting business and a financial holding group. Formerly, Waylon was a comptroller at a vegetable marketing cooperative, and a consulting agribusiness analyst for the University of Kentucky. Waylon holds a MS Degree from Oklahoma State. Waylon is married to David Hunter. Together they have three daughters and two granddaughters.



Gay Rogers

Hospice of Western Kentucky – President & CEO

With a deep passion for hospice, Gay has dedicated 30 years to ensuring other's rights to live and die as they desire. Another passion of hers is developing leadership in others. This has been done within the context of Hospice, nonprofits and in organizational consulting. Besides operations, her expertise is in change management, organizational strategy, and culture. Her educational background is an RN, the BSN and MS is in leadership, organizational development, and doctoral studies in Human and Organizational Learning. Gay has two fabulous children; four, counting spouses. The stars in her eyes are from her two grandchildren with the third on their way.

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Hannah Thurman

WKU Owensboro – Marketing Assistant

Hannah Thurman, Marketing Assistant at WKU Owensboro, is a dedicated promoter of education in the Owensboro community. She has spent the past six years on staff at WKU Owensboro and has served as a volunteer graphic designer for the Foundation for Daviess County Public Schools for nearly four years. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Advertising from Western Kentucky University in 2011 and is currently working toward a Master of Science in Recreation & Sport Administration from WKU. In her free time, she enjoys cheering on the Hilltoppers and the Dallas Cowboys with her husband and two dogs.



Shawn Tomes

Kentucky Wesleyan College – Director of Campus Ministries

Shawn E. Tomes is the new Director of Campus Ministries at Kentucky Wesleyan College. He has previously served as Area Director for Northwest Kentucky Fellowship of Christian Athletes and as a counselor, coach, and teacher within the Daviess County Public School and McLean County Public School systems. He has earned bachelor's degrees in art and art education from Kentucky Wesleyan and a master's degree in counseling from Western Kentucky University. He lives in Island, KY with his wife of 22 years, Marcia Everly-Tomes (Teacher/Southern Oaks Elementary/DCPS) and his two children, Kenzie and Isaiah.



Erica Yartz

Thacker, Hodskins, Searcy & Knight, LLP. – Associate Attorney

Erica Yartz is an associate attorney at Thacker, Hodskins, and Knight, LLP and also currently serves as the Assistant County Attorney for McLean County. She grew up in Nashville, TN and went on to attend her parents' alma mater, the University of Kentucky, where she graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's in economics and a minor in mathematics and Spanish. Erica earned her J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 2013 and moved to Owensboro after taking the Kentucky Bar. She currently serves on the Board of Directions for The Boulware Mission and is chair of the Mission's board development committee. She also serves on the Executive Committee of Chamber Young Professionals as the chair-elect.

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Jared Ziliak

U.S. Bank – Assistant Vice President

Jared Ziliak, an Evansville native, is a 2005 graduate of the University of Evansville earning a bachelor's degree in communications with minors in business administration and marketing. Jared joined US Bank in 2013 as a Business Banker and Assistant VP. He has been in banking for 9 years, previously with BB&T as part of the Leadership Development Program, a loan officer, and branch manager. After working in KY for 9 years, he considers himself a Kentuckian at heart. He is active in the Chamber of Commerce including CYP. Jared is also involved with United Way of the Ohio Valley where he is a member of the financial review team, Community Reinvestment Committee and Campaign Cabinet. He and his wife Jessica have one child.