

# *Shoals* WOMAN

August 2021

## Shoals Woman *of the* Year

Pam Clepper  
Stumpe

Little Shoals Women  
Doing Big Things

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soft blueberry cookies & more

The Flowering  
Ranch

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# Shoals WOMAN

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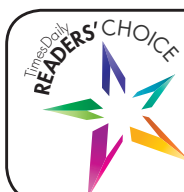
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## ON the COVER



Photograph by Heather Sherrill of Create Portraiture

Everyone has a purpose in life.

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Some provide.

Some entertain.

Some nurture.

Pam Stumpe says that many people could ask what their purpose in life is every day and not know the exact answer.

"Every day I think, 'what is the best thing to fulfill that [purpose]," she said.

Stumpe's purpose, she says, is to help people find joy.

"I just like to see it and be a part of it when it happens," she said.

Stumpe's purpose over the years has been to try to give a little happiness to every person she comes in contact with.

And she has done just that, according to so many who know her.

Her work with the Colbert County Sheriff's FAME Girls Ranch speaks volumes. It took just a simple request in 2009 during the ranch's grand opening and Stumpe was all-in.

Since that day, she has been one of the hardest-working volunteers, leaders and fund raisers for the ranch.

She inspires others to be great.

It's her dedicated work to inspire others, which has garnered our attention and that's why she's the 2021 Shoals Woman of the Year.

Each year, the selection is just as difficult as the year before because when nominations are whittled to the final five, it becomes obvious how many wonderful, strong women we have living right here in the Shoals. They go beyond the responsibilities implied in their career title or business name.

We are proud and humbled to again share with you profiles of five of the finest, not just the finalists, who embody a giving and generous character which makes the Shoals the best place to live.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only been a small speed bump in the lives of these women who have worked so hard for their employers, organizations they support and their families.

We are starting to see the light at the end of the COVID tunnel, so we are so happy to be able to gather and shine a huge spotlight on these incredible women of the Shoals.

They all have worked so hard to lift others up. Now, it's our turn to lift them up.

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**Front row from left:** Russell Bien, MSN, CRNP;  
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## PAM CLEPPER STUMPE

# a love to lift people up

by KEVIN TAYLOR

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

When you look up the word selfless in the dictionary, there very likely may be a photo of Pam Stumpe next to the definition.

The consensus opinion of her is that when she gives of herself, all worries can be thrown out the window.

“Whether it is a work environment, a church environment or friends, she gives a 110%,” a person wrote in their nomination of Stumpe.

When she and her husband relocated to the Shoals, the couple soon became active in the community.

They were introduced to Cindy and Rick Hall, who were in the process of opening the Colbert County Sheriff’s FAME Girls Ranch.

When Stumpe attended the ranch’s grand opening in 2009, Rick Hall pulled her aside and told her that Cindy would need help with the ranch.

Stumpe took that request to heart and has been a faithful volunteer, leader and fund raiser for the ranch.

“That day, the ranch became a part of my life,” she said.

The ranch’s mission is to care for girls who have been abused, abandoned, neglected or have been orphaned. It is a group home for girls who range in

age from 9 to 20.

Some of the girls are at the ranch for a couple of months, while others may be there for years.

Since the ranch opened, more than 170 girls have called it home.

Girls may come and go from the ranch, but Stumpe has been a mainstay.

“She has the unique gift of recognizing when others are struggling before it is obvious to the rest of us mere mortals,” a person who nominated Stumpe wrote. “...Pam is that [person who] goes in after the person who has gone overboard and is drowning. Very often in this situation, no one notices that person is no longer on the ship. Pam notices. ... She also has the willingness to open her heart and give her time to help them get back to the safety of the boat. She has rescued me repeatedly and a long list of other people who have the good fortune to be in her path. I refer to them as “Pam’s Posse.”

Stumpe’s work with the ranch has varied over the years.

The ranch was short-staffed with house parents in 2011, so she and the “posse” went through house parent training so they could spend the night at the ranch and give those house parents already at the ranch



**2021 SHOALS  
WOMAN OF  
THE YEAR**

Pam Clepper Stumpe

some much-needed time off.

Stumpe organized the group to bring meals to the ranch to help the house parents. Some of those within her posse were teachers, so they chipped in and helped to tutor the girls.

By the fall, Pam's Posse was 25 members strong, and they helped to kick off the inaugural FAME Ranch Round-Up.

The event included horse riding, two nights of music and an auction.

The ranch netted a small profit after the first round-up and continued to grow.

By 2013 country music singer, songwriter and Red Bay native Mac McAnally headlined the round-up and a benefit golf tournament was introduced.

Stumpe encouraged a few tweaks to the round-up, which has led to other recording artists like Randy Owen and Allison Krauss to attend.

Krauss' manager was so impressed with how smoothly the event was run, thanks in large part to Pam's Posse. The manager informed the leadership at the round-up he would vouch for the event with other artists who were asked to perform.

Stumpe says her drive to help others comes from her father.

"When I was 8 or 9 years old my dad instilled it in me," she said. "He made an incredible impact on my life the short 16 years I had him."

A family lost everything in a fire, and her father jumped into action.

"We were not by any stretch of the imagination wealthy, but we took all three of those children and bought them clothes. It was an event that impacted me so much that I just give," she said. "I love to help and to give to those who are in need."

A person who nominated Stumpe said that she invited her oldest daughter to live in her Atlanta townhouse for the first year she was teaching in the area. The townhouse was Stumpe's home away from home when she was working in the Atlanta area.

"She dealt with the emotional ups and downs of a first-year teacher and kept me informed of my daughter's well-being," the person wrote. "She even played host by providing her home for my daughter's wedding."

While going the extra mile to try to make everyone else's day, Stumpe has had to deal with her own challenges.

Her father died when she was 16 and was left to care for her mother and her brother.

"She has a heart for the elderly and spends a lot of time sending cards and visiting," one person wrote of Stumpe.

After losing her mother, Stumpe has been a rock for her husband who has battled cancer on and off again.

"Even though she has to spend time caring for him, she still is looking for ways to serve others," a nominee wrote of Stumpe. "She doesn't just contribute money to causes. She gives of herself and always goes the extra mile with no expectation of repayment."

So why does she go that extra mile?

"I just enjoy seeing someone succeed and find within themselves all the good that they are and what they can be," Stumpe said. "If I can help just a little bit in helping them get there, then that just brings joy. I love to lift people up and make them see what they can do better. Or what's inside them that they don't even know they have."





## REBECCA JOINER SINGLETON

# Her best investment is people

by KEVIN TAYLOR

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

A longtime business owner, Rebecca Singleton learned at an early age the best investment she could ever make would be in people.

Her grandfather was owner of Joiner Bus Line, and she would see dozens of people ride her grandfather's buses into Florence.

Most of those who rode the buses, rode them for free because they were coming to Florence for an education.

"They couldn't afford the bus fare, but granddaddy's philosophy was that he was investing in them," she said.

She took those words to heart.

Singleton owns Southern Accounting System in Muscle Shoals.

A few years ago, Singleton and her daughter opened Shoetopia in Muscle Shoals.

Singleton viewed the shoe store, which sold footwear far below retail price, as a way of giving back to the community.

When she's not working with her accounting business, Singleton is diligently continuing her service work through her church and its worldwide ministry Anchored in Truth.

It is an organization which works with missionaries and pastors all over the world.

"When we had a conference

where missionaries and pastors come in from all over the world, one of our goals was to give them a pair of shoes or a purse from the store," Singleton said. "Our team would literally fight over who would work that week. Everybody wanted to be there when they came to the store."

Many great memories were made in that store, which sadly burned a few months ago.

Singleton's favorite story to tell is that of a priest who came to the area from South Africa.

"He carried back shoes for he and his wife and his kids for a family wedding. It was money they probably would not have spent on themselves, but it gave us that opportunity to have that experience," she said. "It wasn't uncommon at all for them to leave and we all cry."

In addition to her home here in the Shoals, Singleton has a home in Birmingham where she and her husband use it to serve families from the Shoals who are enduring hard times.

Most recently, she opened her Birmingham home to a family, whose young daughter underwent a kidney transplant at UAB. Singleton insisted the parents stay at their home to rest while their daughter recovered from the surgery.

"Rebecca's heart and work are REAL," wrote a person who nominated her. "No matter how small or large the need is, she greets it with a 'no big deal' attitude and gives of herself."

The giving doesn't stop there.

Not long after her father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer, a group of his friends established the Aaron Singleton Endowment Fund at Northwest-Shoals Community College. He passed away within a year of the fund being established.

Rebecca happened to be in town when he passed and she was contacted by the school regarding the endowment fund.

She took it upon herself to ensure the fund stay active.

"We have been able to say, 'wow that kid got an education and may not have been able to had it not been for the generosity of Daddy Singleton's friends,'" she said. "It's an investment in the community and kids."

So what pushes her to continue to help others?

"My faith," she said. "It comes with a relationship with Christ. Out of that have been blessings that have been so bountiful that I can't even count them."





## ELIZABETH "BETTY" MCCUTCHEN

# Paying kindness forward

by KEVIN TAYLOR

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

It was late August 2005 and one of the most destructive hurricanes to date had barreled through the Gulf Coast creating billions of dollars of damage and displacing thousands from their homes.

After Hurricane Katrina left the Southeast, Betty McCutchen opened her home to a family and helped others find homes.

Those who know McCutchen, know that's what she just does.

That's her makeup as a person.

McCutchen grew up in a less than ideal situation.

"So many people kinda rescued me," she said. "The situation I was in as a child and a teenager, I got discouraged and thought no one cared. But I found out that there were people who did care."

One particular person who took a young Betty under her wing was the town librarian.

"Miss Eliza guided me on the books to read, and the teachers and neighbors looked out for me," she said.

When Betty enrolled at the University of Alabama, she didn't have many visitors. But Miss Eliza did.

"One neighbor even sent me \$10 a week while I was in college," McCutchen recalled. "It was a lot of money back then and that showed somebody cared."

It was that token of care which resonated with Betty at a young age.

And she's done her best to pay that kindness forward.

"I want to be there when others need me to repay and mentor," she said.

McCutchen's work for various organizations has paid that kindness forward many times over.

She was one of the first planners and founders of Safeplace in the Shoals.

Until Safeplace opened its doors in 1981 there was only one domestic violence shelter, located in Mobile, in the state.

Safeplace is a domestic violence program in northwest Alabama which continues to provide free services to victims and their children from Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Marion and Winston counties.

"A group decided that services were needed for battered women, so we organized a board," McCutchen said. "It took us about two years to work up the needs assessment. We did our research and eventually wrote the grant, which was mostly done on my dining room table, to create Safeplace."

The group was awarded a \$30,000 grant, and the doors opened.

It has flourished since then - still with McCutchen's help.

"Betty is generous with both her time and resources," wrote someone who nominated

McCutchen. "If someone is unwell or has suffered the loss of a loved one, she always is there with a helping hand."

Before volunteering with Safeplace, McCutchen spent a long career as a social worker to advocate for children.

She also chips in to help at the Brandon Center. She organized an adult day care program to provide relief for caregivers of home-bound spouses or other family.

An avid gardener, McCutchen stays busy.

"She is dedicated to her garden projects at Camp McDowell," one person wrote of McCutchen. "Quite often she spends days at the camp working in the flowers and garden. She never seems to mind answering gardening questions either or advice for those that do not have a green thumb."

First responders in the Shoals know McCutchen all too well.

She drops by at a moment's notice to share some of her cooking with police and firefighters in the area.

"Whether it is a child in need, a sick friend or one of her many community projects, she definitely makes the Shoals a better place to live," one person wrote who nominated McCutchen.





## MARY WADSWORTH WHITE

# Working for the betterment of the Shoals

by KEVIN TAYLOR

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

Mary White, like many other people, looks forward to spring. The flowers bloom.

Brown grass starts to turn green, and leaves begin to return to the trees.

White likes the spring for another reason.

One particular spring Sunday various leaders of nonprofit agencies come to Trinity Episcopal Church in Florence to enjoy breakfast and tell her and others about what impact their agencies have on the people and community they serve.

"That Sunday is probably my most favorite Sunday of the year," White admitted.

Trinity Episcopal had always been generous to help others within the community, but White noticed there was no accountability in how the funds were used.

So, given her past work with other churches, she suggested the church employ the St. Francis Outreach Project.

"This was the third time I had been exposed to the project," she said. "The first was in Charlotte, North Carolina, where a charismatic priest who persuaded their vestry of their church to give away \$500,000 they had just raised to build Sunday school classrooms. It transformed the church so much that they did it twice more after that. Then we lived in Columbus, Ga. I was in charge of outreach. I suggested the St. Francis Project. They had so much success after 10 years that they did another one."

With her enthusiasm, perseverance and dedication, the project at Trinity began in 2009.

The goal of the project was to raise and give away \$1 million over a 10-year span.

Through the support of churches throughout the Shoals, there have been 101 organizations which have received grants through the St. Francis Project.

Through the grants, the project has helped to fund addiction ministries and non-profits, provided professional counseling for rape and abuse victims, developed Florence-based medical services for AID's patients, provided Hospice services for those who cannot pay, given daycare and summer scholarships at the YMCA, developed an emergency fund for homeless children in the Florence City Schools, provided anger management counseling at the Florence City jail, fed and clothed those in need.

It also sent a fourth-grade class on a field trip to the McWane Center in Birmingham, sent troubled youth to their first professional baseball game, bought desks for a sixth-grade teacher in Waterloo and provided training for school resource officers to recognize child abuse.

"I've not only seen the people's generosity, but I've been part of sharing this generosity with our community – both sides of the river – and we've made a huge transformation," White said. "We've changed a lot of things. Some are small and some are large, and it's amazing and transforming. It's hard to give it up. It's like an elixir."

After the project ended in 2019, Trinity invited St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, First Methodist and First Presbyterian to become

a four-church conglomerate and extend the project for three more years.

"It's probably been one of the most amazing things I've ever been a part of. This area where we live is very unusual," White said. "They are some of the most generous people I have ever run across here. I have walked down Court Street and just had someone just hand me a check. We've been put in people's wills, we've been part of people's foundations. The gifts people have given have just been overwhelming."

The latest fruit of the project has been the installation of inspirational plaques around Wilson Park and at the three downtown churches in Florence – Trinity, First Methodist and First Presbyterian.

White's volunteer contributions don't just stop at the church. She has served on the board of the Shoals Symphony at the University of North Alabama, the Cooperating Ministries at the Help Center, the board of the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library, the Florence Public Art Committee, the Florence-Lauderdale Tourism Board, the Tennessee Valley Art Museum, the Shoals Family Success Center, the UNA Foundation and the Alabama State Council for the Arts.

"We hope everyone has the privilege of knowing Mary," wrote the people who nominated White for Shoals Woman of the Year. "She has selflessly contributed her time, energy and manifold talents to the benefit and betterment of our entire community."





## KAREN SHEETS MARTIN

# ‘A true local missionary’

by KEVIN TAYLOR

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

Karen Martin likes seeing her extended family at the Colbert Caring Center on a daily basis.

That wasn't always the case through much of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the height of the pandemic, Martin was separated from her extended family.

No more hugs.

No smiles to see because they were hidden behind a mask.

Now, she is starting to see those smiles peek out here and there.

While COVID precluded many activities, it didn't stop Martin.

The executive director of the center closed the front door of the center because of the low number of available volunteers, but she continued to help people.

Clients of the center would come around to the porch area of the center at the back door so they physically wouldn't be inside the center.

"Karen Martin is a true local missionary," wrote a person who nominated Martin. "She has a loving heart for helping those in need in our community. She has proven to be a fighter to keep on serving those in need in our community during a most difficult COVID-19 pandemic."

The organization, which was founded in 1994, provides

assistance to those less fortunate. The center may help with a utility bill or food from its pantry. The center even has a diaper ministry to distribute diapers and wipes to those in need.

Martin became a volunteer shortly after moving to the Shoals in 1997.

We had just moved here from Birmingham and didn't have any family in the area," Martin explained. "When we lived in Birmingham I had volunteered at places and later found out about the Caring Center after moving here."

Martin began visiting Woodward Avenue Baptist Church and met a gentleman who was one of the founders of the Caring Center. He told her about what they did there, and she started volunteering within six months after moving.

She's been with the center ever since.

"Any agency I've been with in the past, I'm drawn to the need to help others in the community," Martin said. "I was fortunate to grow up in a family that has instilled that in me."

Shortly before the pandemic spread across the U.S., Martin wanted to add food pantry services to the center.

"It took time and a good bit of work changing around to meet requirements of the food bank, but

Karen got the volunteers organized and work to get everything done," wrote a person who nominated Martin. "Karen also spends time picking up canned food at the food bank and grocery stores and organizes volunteers in sorting it, checking dates and shelving it in the center's food pantry."

Why does she do it?

"To serve others. That's what I get fulfillment from. Being there for them," she said.

When she was contacted to notify her that she was a finalist for Shoals Woman of the Year, she said shock was the best word to describe her feeling at the time.

"My husband and I were working in the yard when I got the call and I just remember saying, 'that's so sweet' when I was told I was a finalist. I didn't know what to say," Martin recalled. "But it's certainly an honor."





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Dr. Jennings takes patients' needs very seriously and works diligently to achieve success for his patients, whether it be cosmetic or reconstructive. He is Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and a standing member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. His goal for Shoals Plastic Surgery is to be the "go-to" practice that serves the community in a way that has a positive and lasting impact on the Quad Cities and its people.



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# Simple salads, salsa and such!

Nothing says summer time any better than light and quick fruity recipes. Here are a few that you can quickly make to serve poolside or for a quick snack this summer.

---

by CECILIA BRUMLEY

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

---

## FRUIT Salsa & CINNAMON CRISPS

Fruit Salsa is a dessert meets dip that nobody can ever resist. Loaded with fresh fruit and berries this is the first thing gone at every party! Serve this alongside our favorite oven baked cinnamon crisps for dipping, this is going to be your new go-to!

### **CINNAMON CRISPS**

- 10 Flour Tortillas 10"
- Cooking Spray or Olive Oil Spray
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon

### **FRUIT SALSA**

- 2 granny smith apples
- 1 lemon
- 1 pound of strawberries
- 1/2 pound raspberries *\*you can also add a cup of your favorite diced melon if you would like, I added a few blackberries*
- 4 tablespoons raspberry preserves

### **Directions**

#### **CINNAMON CRISPS**

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine cinnamon & sugar. Set aside.
- Working with 3 tortillas at a time, spray both sides of the tortilla and sprinkle each side lightly with cinnamon sugar.
- Stack 3 tortillas and using a pizza cutter, cut tortillas into 12 wedges. Place on a baking sheet and bake 8-11 minutes or until crisp.

#### **FRUIT SALSA**

- Zest the lemon and set aside. Peel and finely chop apple, squeeze 2 teaspoons lemon juice over apples and mix well to combine.
- Finely chop strawberries and melon (or kiwi). Gently combine all ingredients, the raspberries will break apart a bit.
- Allow to sit at room temperature at least 15 minutes before serving.







# Soft blueberry cookies

## with *Lemon glaze*

### For the dough...

- ½ cup (1 stick) Unsalted Butter, softened
- ¾ cup Granulated Sugar
- ½ tsp Lemon Zest
- 1 Egg, room temperature
- 1 TBSP Lemon Juice
- 1 tsp Pure Vanilla Extract
- ¼ tsp Salt
- ¼ tsp Baking Powder
- ¼ tsp Baking Soda
- 2 cups All-purpose Flour
- 1 cup Fresh Blueberries

### For the glaze...

- 1 cup Powdered Sugar
- 2 tsp Lemon Zest
- 2-4 Tbsp Lemon Juice

### Directions

- Preheat oven to 325.
- In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, cream the butter, sugar, and lemon zest until light and fluffy-about 3 minutes on medium-high speed.
- Add the egg and mix until just incorporated. Add the lemon juice and vanilla extract and mix until combined.
- Add the salt, baking powder, and baking soda and mix until evenly distributed.
- Add the flour and mix until it is absorbed and then stop the mixer. It is important not to over-mix the dough.
- Fold in the blueberries gently as to not break them.
- Use a small scoop (about 2 tbsp size) and place rounded mounds of dough on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.
- Bake for 11-14 minutes until the bottoms look slightly browned (the edges and tops will not brown).
- Allow to cool on cooling racks before glazing.

### For the Lemon Glaze

- Whisk the ingredients together in a bowl until you have a consistency that can be drizzled. If it becomes too thin, just add more powdered sugar to thicken.
- Drizzle over cooled cookies.
- Store cookies loosely covered at room temperature for 3-4 days. They will get very sticky if you put them in an airtight container.

*\*Notes-You can use frozen blueberries in this recipe but be aware that they will leak a lot of liquid and will cause the cookies to spread more and will stain the batter purple.*

# Watermelon SALAD

Watermelon Salad is the most amazing summer salad! Juicy and sweet watermelon and salty feta cheese on a bed of greens. Yum!

## Ingredients

- 2 cups cubed watermelon
- 5 oz baby arugula
- 5 oz baby spinach
- 3 oz feta cheese
- sea salt
- pepper
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- balsamic reduction/glaze

## Directions

- Cut the watermelon into cubes until you have about 2 cups.
- Add cubed watermelon and crumbled feta on top of arugula and spinach in a large salad bowl.
- Season the salad with sea salt and pepper to taste, then drizzle EVOO and Balsamic reduction over it.
- Give the salad a good toss to combine and enjoy!







# Lemon Melt Away Muffins

## Ingredients

- 4 large eggs
- 1(3.5 oz) package instant lemon pudding mix
- 1(18.5 oz) package yellow cake mix
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (plus 3 Tablespoons for glaze) vegetable oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water
- 4 cups confectioner's sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 zested lemon
- 3 tablespoons water

## Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350
- Spray miniature muffin tins with vegetable oil cooking spray. Combine the cake mix, pudding mix, eggs,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup oil and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water and blend well with an electric mixer until smooth, about 2 minutes. Pour a small amount of batter, filling each muffin tin halfway. Bake for 12 minutes, turn out onto a tea towel.
- To make the glaze, sift the sugar into a mixing bowl. Combine lemon juice, zest, 3 Tablespoons oil and 3 Tablespoons of water. Mix until smooth.
- Set muffins on a baking rack and pour glaze on top. Store in air tight container.



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# Easy Wedge Salad

An easy wedge salad needs just a few fresh ingredients to make the perfect salad at home! Have it with soup for a light lunch or before your favorite meal off the grill for a perfect summer night dinner. Salads are the perfect light recipe during summer.

## What is a Wedge Salad?

This simple salad is a wedge (one quarter of a head) of iceberg lettuce. It's usually topped with blue cheese dressing, crispy bacon, and blue cheese crumbles. You can add other toppings to your likings including red onion, tomato, and avocado.

## How to make a wedge salad?

- Remove the stem from a head of iceberg lettuce, and then cut into four equal wedges.
- Cook bacon until crispy and crumbled once cooled. Chop tomato and red onion.
- Drizzle creamy blue cheese dressing on top of lettuce.
- Top each wedge with tomato, red onion, crumbled bacon and blue cheese crumbles.

*Seriously it's that easy!*



# LIME Lemonade

This Easy Homemade Lime Lemonade is lemonade with a refreshing twist of lime. It's the perfect thirst quencher for hot summer days!

This recipe is the perfect balance between tart and sweet. Adjust the amount of sugar to suit your tastes. You can totally make this with bottled lemon and lime juice if you want; it will still taste so much better than any powdered mix!

## Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup fresh lemon juice (about 4 to 5 lemons)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh lime juice (about 2 to 3 limes)
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 cups water

## Instructions

- In a 2-quart pitcher, stir the lemon juice, lime juice, and sugar together until the sugar is dissolved.
- Add the water and stir to combine.
- Serve over ice and store any leftovers in the refrigerator.



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# Little Shoals women doing big things

by CECILIA BRUMLEY



"I love chalk! It is a science. I know what I need on my hands and what needs to be on the bars for me to work well."  
-Addison Freeman



The Shoals is full of women of all ages with multiple talents and abilities that stand out.

The past few years I have had the opportunity to work with an advanced group of students, and I got a front-row view to sports in the Shoals area.

Two young ladies caught my attention, and I can not wait to see what is next for each of them.

I have had the privilege of seeing Addison Freeman grow up and let me just tell you, there is nothing this beautiful young lady of 11 cant do!

Addison comes from a long line of advanced athletes and she has definitely been blessed with that gene.

In talking with her mom, Sarah, I asked her "why gymnastics?"

"I felt that it was a good sport that would teach her strength,

discipline, and courage." Sarah said. "Her daddy (Ashley) didn't 'get it' at first. He being an athlete himself, he wasn't impressed with the days when she was younger when we gathered to watch her point her toes, jump up straight and everyone clap but he is one of her biggest fans now. We, as her parents, want to give her every opportunity she needs, we want to support her as she continues

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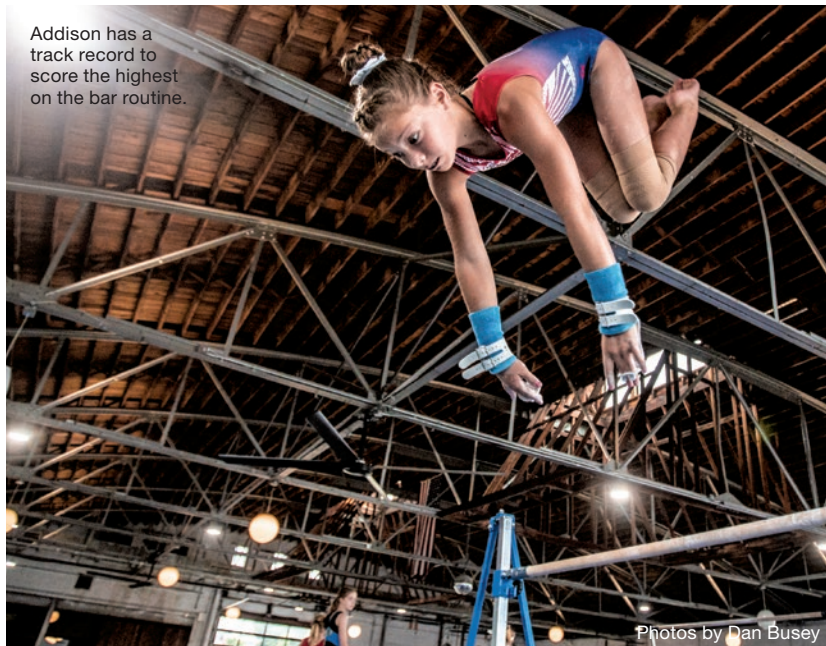
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Addison has a track record to score the highest on the bar routine.

Photos by Dan Busey

to work hard and have fun.”

Addison started gymnastics at 18 months old at Geronimo Gymnastics in a Mommy and Me class and later joined her first gymnastics team at 5.

Addison’s coach had a lot to say about his up-and-coming competitor.

“Addi has the God given abilities that are essential to be a high-level gymnast,” Stuart Ausborn said. “She is committed to hours of

training, and it is not common to be this level at her age or period for that matter. Addison competes on level 8 and after a recent injury if her healing continues, she will compete at level 9 this year.”

The highest level is 10, which is Junior Olympian.

Ausborn started his coaching career while he was in college and carried his own experience in gymnastics to the mat

when he met Addison.

“We were not a great fit initially and our compatibility was off, but she bought in and the puzzle pieces started fitting together,” he said. “As the famous words of Nick Saban come to mind, she ‘trusted the process.’ Addison is light hearted, excitable, she has a positive attitude and outlook and she is a great role model for all these girls and anyone she meets. Addison

has endurance, she has the ability to overcome challenges and those are not things that can be taught.”

School is gearing up and ready to start for most of the students here in the Shoals, but COVID really changed everything.

This past year Addison had the opportunity to go virtual for her fifth-grade classes and she took it.

She spent her fourth-

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"It takes courage and mind-set that people don't see."  
Sarah Freeman, Addison's mother.



Photos by Dan Busey

grade school year attending school and training afterward.

"It was too much," Addison said. "I didn't get anytime with my friends, training like I want to train those hours just were not beneficial for me."

"This upcoming year I will be homeschooling. You might not believe it, but it really allows me more time with my family, friends, school work and training like I want to train."

Addison trains in the mornings, gets her school work done and is ready to greet her brothers when they get home from school.

"Getting to train in the morning allows me to come in here and have fun, try new things and see what I can do," she said.

Just getting to see Addison compete on Facebook videos gets me all excited about what her future holds, so I was eager to ask

her what her goals were.

Addison has her eyes on college gymnastics, specifically Florida, LSU and Alabama. (cough cough, Roll Tide!).

I personally have plans for her to be on my kids' cereal box one day, but I would even wear Florida orange to support Addi.

This adjusted schedule is "necessary to get to my long-term goal," Addison said.

Sarah agreed that

homeschooling was never a plan, but it was a door opened that will give her more life and school training and allow her to work at her own pace.

She has more time to be a kid and enjoy growing up, she loves watching her brothers, Asher and Archer play ball.

Addison does as much, if not more, strength training as she does skill work to perfect her talent.

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Her brother Archer said, "endurance is hard" recently as he was trying to keep up with her while she was doing some at-home training.

"If Addison came in one day and decided that this was no longer for her that is fine, I would never feel like this was time wasted," Sarah said. "It takes courage and a mindset people don't see. Nobody can make her work the way she does in here except herself."

Addison's list of awards is long and competitions have taken her all over the Southeast.

She has been listed as a state champion in her level which qualified her as the top 8 competitors in her level and placed her

on the state team to compete at Regionals in Montgomery this past April.

She was the uneven bars champion and finished fourth on beam.

There is no doubt that she would have finished in top rankings in Level 8 Regional Championship had she not experienced an injury that sidelined her for the rest of the competition.

Addison has long days ahead, but her attitude will shine through whatever dark moments she faces.

The true grit and grace that Addison displays has made her shine bright and make the Shoals proud.

Addi we can't wait to cheer you on!





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congratulations to the shoals woman of the year!

From left:  
Ann Elyse Cox,  
Kadence Rolston,  
Abby Sain, Lilly Hamm

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Madison Howton began her senior year at Mars Hill Bible School in early August, but her cake orders keep her busy in when she isn't studying or practicing sports.



Photos by Heather Sherrill  
of Create Portraiture

Madison Howton has a lot on her plate.

Madison is an athlete that will take the court this year wearing a Mars Hill jersey during her senior seasons playing volleyball and basketball.

Her competitive academic ranking in her class made her a standout for Mars Hill

Bible School Student of the Year representative for Shoals Scholar Dollars this past spring.

Along with brains comes many abilities and one she adds to her resume is baking.

But this isn't just bake sale baking Madison is doing in her mom's kitchen.

Madison started baking at a young age. By the time she was in eighth grade, her business was making a name for itself.

Her aunt took part in a cancer fundraiser and used a bake sale to raise money.

Madison said she found herself in charge

and she wanted to do something big.

She made cupcakes and cake pops, and her quick sell-out got her wheels turning.

The first year Madison spent most of her time making cake pops.

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Gingerbread Bakery came from an idea in class with friends one day, but Madison has big plans for the future.



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they appear.

Again, COVID changed everything and Madison was asked to make a cake although it presented its own difficulties, but it was the birth of a new skill and business started.

"I just became obsessed with making cakes and they are a lot easier than the cake pops," she said.

Landing on a business name was quite a task so she enlisted some friends during an English class one day.

"Maddie's Cake Pops" was the obvious first choice listed.

"I mentioned gingerbread and then thinking of my roots, my red roots Gingerhead came to mind and Gingerhead Bakery was born!," she said.

Maddie doesn't recall what was the topic of class that day was, but the name of her bakery

was accomplished.

Madison practices under the Alabama Cottage Law and she is Servsafe certified so you can trust that you are getting a quality product.

Madison will have to cut her orders in half to accommodate her school work and athletics, but she is looking forward to being full swing in the spring.

Culinary school is not too far off.

Madison has a few schools in Utah, one in Colorado and one in South Alabama on her list to look at this year and move toward enrollment once she makes a decision.

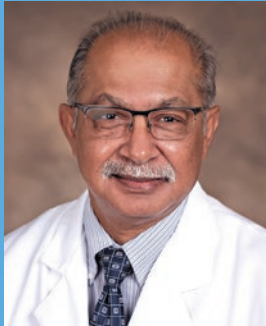
Her plans are to one day return to the Shoals to start her own business storefront to sell her baked goods.

Madison, the Shoals will be waiting on you and your sweets!

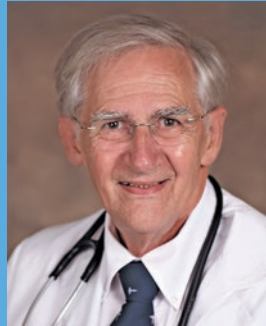


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# HAVE YOU SCENE IT?

Cities across the US are becoming well known because of mural painting on buildings. Large city welcome signs, wings and more are a tourist photo op and social media hashtag making its presence known everywhere.

by CECILIA BRUMLEY & BERNIE DELINSKI

Photos by DAN BUSEY

Florence has a few mural paintings in the downtown area, but the one getting the latest attention is bright, bold, and looks delicious. What will the downtown College Street mural hashtag be?...

The downtown College Street mural in Florence.

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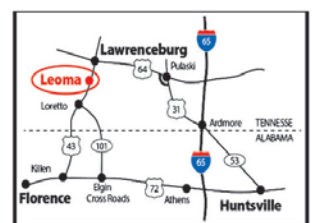
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Angela Faustina has been working diligently on a downtown mural, and the community is beginning to see the fruits of her labor.

Faustina is painting a fruit mural on the 346-foot long wall along East College Street and is enjoying the reactions from the community.

"It's been absolutely fantastic," she said. "People are stopping in their cars, or coming down here because they'd heard about it."

The Atlanta artist started the mural on May 23 after being commissioned by the City of Florence for the \$20,000 project as part of the city's streetscape program.

Using an oil-based paint designed to last for years, she jokes that most of the money is going toward that.

Faustina said it probably will take another week or two to complete the wall,





Atlanta artist sees fruits of her labor with downtown Florence mural.

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depending on weather.

She said she has been moved by the community's reaction since she started on the wall, which initially was painted white to provide a canvas for her.

"People who had seen the white wall and didn't know it was going to become a mural have told me they see what I'm doing, and it's provided a big smile for them," she said.

"Photographers are out here taking professional photos, and moms are out here with their kids taking selfies."

During these hot summer days, Faustina usually starts her day early in the morning, stops before the afternoon, and returns in the evening.

She has experience in painting murals on long walls and specializes in fruit, so the city contacted her about this project.






Angela used a mock-up drawing, she created to guide her on her wall art.

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She said she started exhibiting her work in 2007 and began doing murals in 2018.

"I fell in love with painting outdoors, and meeting with the community is huge," she said. "I feel very blessed and really fortunate to be able to do what I love. Fruit is my specialty. It's just so happy and bright and vibrant."

Faustina said she paints the fruit large so it is recognizable from a distance.

"I want it to grab your attention from far away, but also want people to come up close and see it," she said.

She wants the community to decide on a name for the mural.

Names like Florencia Fruitopia, Florencia Bounty, Florencia Flourish, Strip of Sweetness and Garden of Eating are among suggestions she has received.



She is considering creating a contest for the favorite name.

Faustina drew more than 50 pages of her vision for the mural and is following that along the way.

That has worked out well every step of the way.

"This is the longest mural I've done," she said. "It's as long as a football field."

She said she hopes the mural helps Florence reap rewards both aesthetically and economically.

"Statistically, public murals and art have been a boom to cities," Faustina said. "I hope this is. I hope it makes Florence more bountiful."



"Strip of Sweetness" has a nice ring to it.

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# The Flowering Ranch

by CECILIA BRUMLEY

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

One of my favorite things about living in the Shoals is its central location to so many great cities, countryside and hidden gems. A day trip is all it takes to find something interesting in north Alabama. Just East on U.S. Highway 72 with a few roads north you will find The Flowering Ranch...

The Flowering Ranch is owned and operated by Deana Sublett.

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The Flowering Ranch is owned and operated by Deana Sublett. Deana claims she is just a country girl from Hazel Green, Alabama, but her daily work is spreading beauty all over north Alabama and southern Tennessee.

She is a summa cum laude graduate of Auburn University with a bachelor's of science degree in agronomy and soils. After working two years with the USDA-NRCS she decided to come back home and join her father on the farm row cropping like she did growing up and now is a sixth-generation farmer.

After 15 years of corn, cotton, wheat and soybean farming, she began thinking how to expand.

She started with the idea of peonies, just two or three 300-foot rows of them. She always wanted to grow something out of the box, her peonies were fun so she set in motion plans to have a spring and summer full of flowers. After visiting several wholesale farmers in North Carolina she





Deana with daughter Kennedy who has big dreams of being a flower farmer herself one day.



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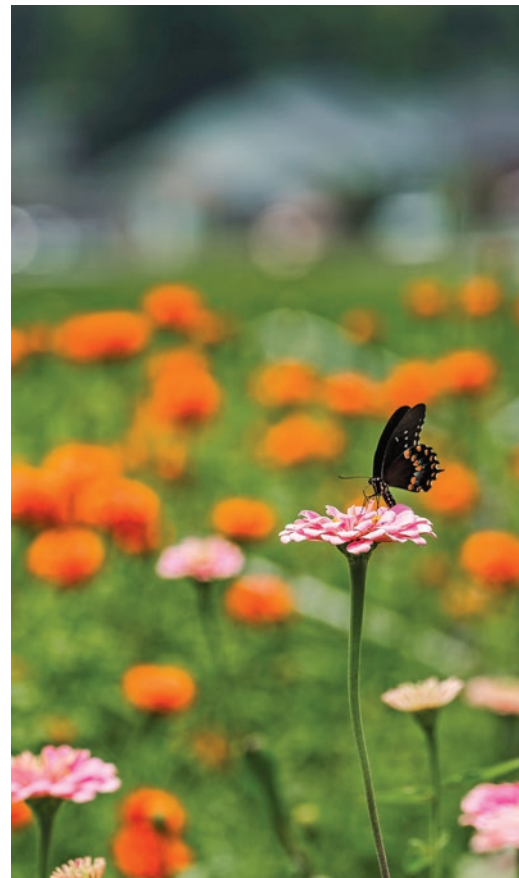
Deana is a part of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers and has learned a few things.

"About 82% of flowers in the U.S. are imported; that is a lot," Deana said. "There are things that just can't be grown here and especially in Alabama. Long-stem roses will never be something you will see here, but what I can offer is fresh cut flowers that do not come in a box and flown from a different country."

Deana started small with just a subscription service which offered pickup or delivery every other week.

"I have been blessed that North Alabama has been so supportive," she said.

Although her 3,300 peony plants (and hundreds more she



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plans on adding in the spring) will be two years before they are in full production, she is keeping herself busy supplying florist wholesale all over north Alabama and southern Tennessee.

Her fields are full of lisianthus, sunflowers, zinnias, dahlia's and more, and they are a rare find in such excellent condition but again that is because they are fresh, not from a box, and in space that is changing climates a few times before placed in a table arrangement or vase here in our homes or a special event.

"I wish it was sexier than it is but it's not," she said.

She has dug her heels in the dirt, learned from trial and error and read a ton to educate herself

on what she can offer from her 190-acre farm in Alabama.

She is excited about the future.

On Fridays the public is invited to the farm to purchase freshly picked flower bouquets, fresh eggs and local honey from her shop on the farm that is nestled in the middle of her luscious fields and greenhouses.

Her display gardens are something from a southern gardener's dreams.

"This makes me happy because when people leave here they are happy," Deana said.

A busy fall is in the works as she plans to offer workshops to practice floral design and arranging skills using on-site flowers taught by some north Alabama designers.

Deana sells fresh eggs and honey in her small shop on the flower farm each week.



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# past WINNERS



## 2005 | SHERRY FOWLER

Fowler was chosen for her work with the North Alabama Head Injury Foundation. Her daughter, Mary Darlene, sustained a debilitating head injury in 1986 when she was struck by an intoxicated driver. Fowler was advised to place her daughter in a nursing facility. She refused. She received the training necessary to care for her 19-year-old daughter at home. Fowler continued working with the foundation after her daughter's death in 2005.

## 2006 | NATALIE GORDON

Gordon was 24 years old when she battled cancer and underwent a life-saving surgery: the removal of her left arm and shoulder. She was mother to a 7-month-old and a 3-year-old and Gordon said she was not prepared to lose parts of her body. More importantly, however, she said she was not prepared for her children to lose their mother. She said the surgery was traumatic and depressing, but Gordon adjusted and became an inspiration to others. She vowed not to let her loss stop her.



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## 2007 | KAY PARKER

Parker and a friend, Sharon Scogin, developed the idea for The Healing Place after Parker saw a television report about a grief support center in Portland. She believed a similar center was greatly needed in the Shoals. The Healing Place became a haven where adults and children learn to work through their grief after a loved one's death. Parker's goal was to give people a place to be heard and to learn healing thoughts, including learning how to cherish memories and keep them from being debilitating.



## 2008 | BETTY BURDINE

Burdine has spent her life helping people, first as a nurse, then as coordinator of the Lifewise Seniors program for Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital in Florence. She didn't stop there, but volunteered in several community endeavors. She helped raise money for the American Heart Association and was instrumental in procuring the monument for Lillian Diebert in Diebert Park in Florence. Burdine's caring nature extended to Lillian Diebert, who she would look in on before Diebert's death in 2011.



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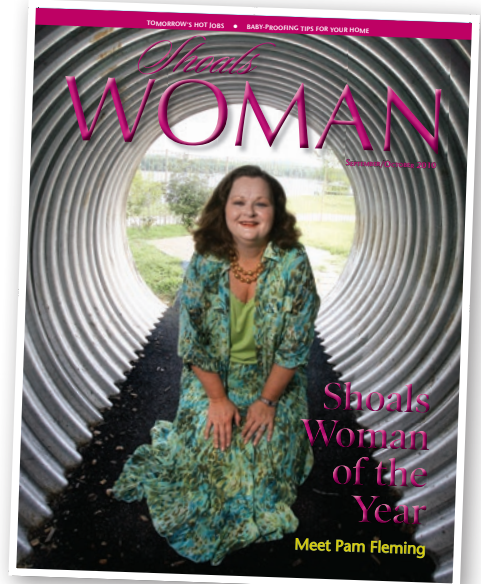


## 2009 | FELICE GREEN

Green retired from the University of North Alabama in 2003 but didn't sit still. She has a special love for children and will don costumes to read to children at various outlets across the Shoals. Green also expressed her love of art and dance and became a member of the Poza Dance Troupe while remaining active in Delta Sigma Theta sorority, which she helped charter at UNA. She is a known organizer of events during the W.C. Handy Music Festival including the ABCs of Blues & Jazz. She is a volunteer with the Salvation Army and St. Vincent De Paul Society at Our Lady of the Shoals Catholic Church in Tuscombria.

## 2010 | PAM FLEMING

Fleming's outgoing personality helped her carry on a tradition she first learned from her parents: help people in need. She was honored for her work in helping to create the boundless playground at Riverfront Park in Sheffield. The playground is play-friendly to any child, regardless of his or her abilities, with a sandbox that wheelchair-bound children can roll up to and play in. Fleming also was instrumental in getting a new home for the Ealy family when their daughter, Shanteki, was diagnosed with leukemia and was told she could not return to her home because of its condition.



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## 2011 | DEBBIE RAPPUHN

Rappuhn took her daughter to the Florence-Lauderdale Animal Shelter for a school project but soon returned to offer her services as a volunteer. She painted and scrubbed and initiated improvements that included a cat habitat room, a puppy room and a laundry room with a sink for bathing animals. She was appalled at the number of animals euthanized and dedicated countless days to finding homes for those unwanted pets – even if it meant sending them to other shelters and homes across the country.

## 2012 | ELBA BARNES

Barnes needed to care for her ailing parents and moved from Birmingham to Florence to be near them. She soon realized there was an important gap in available services in the area: there was no place where adults like her parents could go for social interaction, exercise and art activities. Such a place would also offer respite for caregivers. Barnes brought an idea for an adult day care to Westminster Presbyterian Church. In July 2009, Westminster Interfaith Caring Place opened, initially as a Sunday-only program. By November, it was offering a mid-week break so caregivers could go Christmas shopping. Eventually the nonprofit center would operate Monday through Friday.



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## 2013 | SARAH JENNIFER THOMPSON

After Thompson's sister, Sidney, died in January 2006, Thompson honored her sister's memory and founded Sidney's Safe! Foundation. It was a place where other women could learn how to stand strong against domestic abuse and how to seek recovery from addiction. The foundation has branched out to help children, too. It is an outreach that provides hundreds of bags of food a week to local schoolchildren who otherwise would go hungry.



## 2014 | SUSIE MARTIN

Susie Martin was only required to spend four hours a month with the girl who became her "little" at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Shoals, but she and 13-year-old Sabrina Carles are together every weekend, all weekend. The program allows Sabrina to be Martin's Little until she is 15, but Martin jokes she will keep her until Sabrina gets married.



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## 2015 | ANGIE HAMILTON

Angie Hamilton presented the idea for a one-stop center that could streamline help for victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and physical abuse, and elder abuse – cases she saw regularly as an assistant district attorney in Lauderdale County. The idea was immediately well received, and One Place of the Shoals was born.



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## 2016 | NINON PARKER

Ninon Parker grew up on the front lines of celebrating the history of the Shoals, including as a member of Ivy Green's first cast of "The Miracle Worker" – the stage play that celebrates the awakening of Helen Keller to the world around her. Parker's community involvement is one of historical preservation and business promotion that keeps the Shoals a vital place that recognizes its important past, as well as its exciting future.



## 2017 | MERCY WINTERS

A member of the Salvation Army Women's auxiliary, Mercy Winters was instrumental in bringing the successful Empty Bowl Luncheon to the Shoals as a fundraiser for the Salvation Army each year. She is hands-on in her volunteer work, not only in helping to plan the luncheon each year, but leading her "clay mates" group to meet at her and her husband's ceramic business to make the bowls that are featured at the luncheon. She has even gotten her neighborhood involved in community charity work by organizing an Iron Bowl event that benefits a different charity each year.

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## 2018 | JESSICA DAVENPORT

Jessica Davenport's children, Kruz and Paizlee, were born with Schimke Immuno-Osseous Dysplasia, or SIOD. In simple, dire terms, the children have a rare form of dwarfism that brings with it renal failure and a weakened immune system. It's also fatal, with a life expectancy of 9 to 11 years. Instead of falling apart, Davenport founded Kruzn for a Kure Foundation and has raised the \$1 million needed to get the attention of wealthy philanthropists who can raise the \$6 million needed to kick researchers into finding a cure for the rare disease. In the 12 months since Davenport received the Shoals Woman of the Year award, she and her husband Kyle have moved to California where Kruz has not only received his mother's stem cells, but one of her kidneys as well. Paizlee is being prepped to receive the same from her father. Keep abreast on these remarkable children and their parents through Jessica Davenport's Facebook page or the Kruzn for a Kure Foundation Facebook page.



## 2019 | GINGER WILLINGHAM

Ginger Willingham has always had a heart for service, and in 2014 learned there were children in the community whose only opportunities to eat were at school. After much prayer and discussion, she was inspired to establish Isaiah's Call, named for Isaiah 58 in the Bible. She and a bevy of volunteers pack food bags with enough food for the children and their families to have during the weekend. They started with seven families at one school and now serve more than 200 families at schools in Colbert and Lauderdale counties, as well as Safeplace, a local shelter for women and men and their children who are fleeing domestic violence.

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## 2020 | MARY DAY SMITH

Mary Day Smith was on active duty for the Alabama National Guard on Helton Drive when fellow Korean War veteran Ralph Dula visited her there and became her mentor. He recruited her to join the American Legion. When Smith joined the Legion there were a lot of guys, but slowly she worked her way up and became the first female commander for this area. Smith became heavily involved with programs all over north Alabama. "When there's a crisis in your life, its easy to dream about a rescue that immediately rushes to your side, determined to clear the crisis and put you and your family back into a good place" and that is what Smith has a hand in doing. She doesn't seek thanks for anything but she claims that she sees the thanks come to her in unexpected places. Smith believes in the Legion slogan "Veterans Still Serving."



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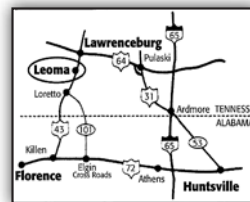
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