

COLE CUBELIC ON AIR • AN EDGEWOOD COTTAGE RENOVATION • BRIDAL ILLUSTRATION BY JULIE

HOMewood LIFE

THE PINK HOUSE

THE LORE & LEGACY
OF A LANDMARK

MILLIE RAY & SONS

HOW THE ORANGE
ROLLS CAME TO BE

fall
STYLE

THE '90S ARE BACK

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019

HomewoodLife.com

Volume Three | Issue Five

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Cole Cubelic's road to becoming a college football analyst started on the streets he once again calls home.

PHOTO BY DYLAN SPENCER

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Abby runs Peeptoes and Pineapples, a fashion and lifestyle blog. She also works full time at ServisFirst Bank, and when she is not working, you'll find her blogging at local coffee shops (yes, Caveat is one of her favs), shopping at all her favorite local Birmingham boutiques and traveling. You can find her blogging on peeptoesandpineapples.com or on Instagram @peeptoesandpineapples.



Jessica Clement, Stylist

Jessica has been passionate about interior design and decorating since childhood. She graduated with a degree in interior design from the University of Alabama and now has her own locally based design company, JMC Studio. As an interior designer, she believes that well-designed interiors should tell the story about the people who live there and takes pride in creating aesthetically beautiful and functional spaces.



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Katie is a student at Samford University studying journalism and mass communications and photography. With plans to graduate in May 2020, she hopes to someday live in a big city while pursuing her career and continuing to tell people's stories.



Holland Williams, Photographer

Holland is a professional photographer based in Birmingham. She's mom to Chappell, Collier and Margaret Reed, and wife to her best friend (on most days), Reed. She's addicted to coffee and lives in work out clothes. When Holland isn't behind the camera, she loves running with friends, trips to the beach, home improvement projects... and hasn't watched a TV show in probably 10 years.

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FROM THE EDITOR

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S

Some people prefer for fiction and film to take them to other worlds with strange creatures and futuristic scientific advancements. But my fantasy world has always been the past. History has a way of transporting me to a setting, dress and culture unlike my own, but also with a direct connection to my familiar reality. In my free time you'll find me observing Queen Victoria as she wrestles through her marriage and leading a country (Masterpiece Theatre anyone?) or tracing the lineage of two families whose roots go back 300 years to a set of sisters in Ghana (*Homegoing* is one of my top recommended reads).

But it's in my work that delving into the past most connects to the here and now. For this issue that looked like a trip to the world of Eleanor and Georges Bridges. I'd taken a picture of their exterior of their "Pink House" years ago. I knew that she was a painter and he a sculptor. I'd watched the saga unfold starting last year where their home and the aura of its secret garden could be torn down for a new set of homes. But now I wanted to know the long version of the story.

First I turned to its current residents Diana and Eric Hansen to see if they'd even be open to sharing their part of the house's story. To my delight, they were. Then I discovered a documentary had been commissioned on the house, so I gleaned a lot of insight from the filmmakers and historians working on it as well as other Homewoodians who have researched the subject and/or knew the Bridges. I didn't even get to the archives myself to read the Bridges' letters, but I quickly had 5,000 words of notes on the subject I had to boil down into a narrative.

Along the way, I found myself in the Masseys' Italian gardens in Red Mountain and in the sea of pink that bloomed in a then-rural Edgewood at Eleanor's behest. I felt like I was in a Paula McClain novel as I watched the Bridges break convention right and left, absorb ideas on their travels, and leave mark in artistic and cultural spheres. And now it's time to share it with you and hope that soon we'll be sharing some form of good news for the fate of the house.

That's just one story I'm excited to share in the pages that lie ahead. Be sure to also learn the stories of Millie Ray & Sons rolls (a.k.a. the orange rolls at Urban Cookhouse), the best storyteller I have heard in a long time, an artist of apparel, a sportscaster who calls Homewood home, what you'll see in the Patriot Band halftime show this season, a tour of a renovated Edgewood cottage and more. Homewood is full of stories, and I always love to hear your ideas for new ones for our issues.

Thanks for reading, and for venturing into the past with me!

Madoline Markham

madoline.markham@homewoodlife.com

ON THE COVER



Fall Fashion Guidebook

Brooke Gibson sports an animal print headband and other styles from Homewood boutiques.

Photo by Mary Fehr

Styling by Abby Adams

Design by Kate Sullivan Green



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The Moss Rock Festival Beer Garden logo is a yellow circle with the text "MOSS ROCK FESTIVAL" at the top, "EST. 2012" on the sides, and "BEER GARDEN BHAM ALA" at the bottom. Below the logo is a black silhouette of a tree. To the right is a photograph of a group of people, mostly men, standing and talking in a wooded area with autumn foliage. At the bottom, there is a yellow banner with black text.

November 2-3 | The Preserve | Hoover, Alabama
65+ Brews | Cask Garden | Beer Snacks | Fall Football | Wooded Venue | Music
Advance tickets get Featured Glass | \$30 | www.mossrockfestival.com

HOMEWOOD LIFE



#HomewoodLife

Tag us in your Homewood photos on Instagram, and we'll pick our favorites to regram and publish on this page in each issue.

...

@camillamossgdesigns

So thankful for this wonderful place and community where my David has the opportunity to learn and excel! @thebellcenter



@cotton_state

Sunset Above Samford #samford #sweethomealabama



@fitzsigns

Finished. Community mural for West Homewood.

Living in Homewood for over the past 25 years (about 80% of that time in West) this one was a labor of love. Got most, if not all, residential street names in the Hall Kent/West district, plus a few "Easter eggs" thrown in there for true west siders. Thanks to Bob & Bruce at Big Color for donating the wall and helping get this set up.



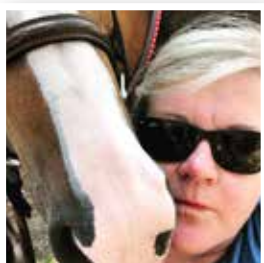
@grovekidsclothing

My vision for Grove Kids initially started around the idea of kids kicking off their school year with the empowerment of filling in their "I am" before anyone or anything fills it in for them.

My hope is that kindness, acceptance, confidence, and individuality would be the strength of the classroom, hallways, and playgrounds...and that kids would begin to see meanness, exclusion, and bullying as the weakness it is.



What teacher in Homewood had the biggest impact on you or your kids?

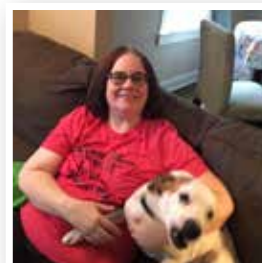


Mrs. Morton has taught ALL THE PEOPLE math at HMS. From her daily Pepsi to not saying the “S” word to her riddles, she made math fun!

-Julie Austin Head

Rosemary Parnell, my home economics teacher. You could go to her and she would listen like a mother, talk to you as a friend and love you no matter what!

-Shari Donsbach Calloway



Mr. Parrott taught history in a way that made me hang on every word.

-Sande Brewton

Mrs. Theresa McKibben! She had such an impact on so many through Edgewood instilling a love for music!

-Elizabeth Gniadek Peters



Jean Reed, now Jean Woodward! Edgewood Elementary 2nd grade! Amazing teacher she had 2 of my boys, and we all adored her! Kids still talk about her!

- Susan Garner

Lynn McGuffey at HHS! Honors and AP English...and Nivada Spurlock! She is a powerhouse world-changer, life-changer, difference maker, still impacting the Homewood community daily.

-Amanda Peterson

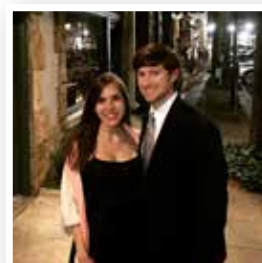


Emily Allison. Because of her I majored in Spanish in college and had many wonderful study abroad and travel adventures!

-Suzanne Pack Gray

Debbie Fly! Not only was she awarded national recognition as a third-grade teacher, but she also took me to shop/get ice cream in downtown Edgewood one day after my dad passed away.

-Holleigh Taylor



THE GUIDE

HOMEWOOD WITCHES RIDE+FALL FESTIVAL

OCT. 27

Registration 4:30 P.M.

Witches Take Flight 5:45 P.M.

Homewood Central Park

Witches will take on the streets of Homewood via bike, but don't worry, they are good witches—candy-tossing witches, in fact. Find their route to catch some treats, or ladies, don your costume and show up for the start to help raise money for the American Cancer Society. Plus, it all kicks off with inflatables, face painting and a performance by the Disco Amigos at the park that afternoon. Register at homewoodwitchesride.com.

Photo by Laine White



OCT. 5

Walk for Williams

9 A.M. Registration
10 A.M. Walk + Fun Run
Patriot Park

Make plans to come out and walk in honor of Shades Cahaba second grader Eva Cordry and others in Birmingham with Williams Syndrome, a rare genetic condition Eva was diagnosed with when she was 2.5 years old. There will be a DJ, bouncy houses, face painting, raffles and refreshments at the event too. Register or donate at walk4williams.org.



OCT. 19

Grace House Pumpkin Festival

10 A.M.-1 P.M.
Homewood Central Park

It's pumpkin season, and it's time to celebrate with a day of family fun benefiting Grace House's work with Alabama girls in foster care. The park will be filled with pumpkin decorating, bounce houses, carnival games, face painting, trick or treating, and food and treats. Adult entry to the festival is free, and every children's tickets, available at grace-house.org or at the event, includes a pumpkin. Be sure to wear your costume!

OCT. 20

Handmade Art Show & Pickin' in the Park

10 A.M.-5 P.M.
Homewood Central Park

All the arts come to the park in one day thanks to the Homewood Arts Council and City of Homewood, and it's sure to be a good time. Check out eclectic local art on display and on sale, hear acoustic performances by local musicians, and/or bring your own instrument to join in on the music-making.



WHAT TO DO IN HOMEWOOD

SEPT. 11

Patriots' Day
Homewood City Hall
9 a.m.

SEPT. 13-14

Lil' Lambs Consignment Sale
Trinity United Methodist Gym
Friday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m.-noon

SEPT. 17

Homewood Chamber
Membership Luncheon &
Legislative Update
The Club | 11:30 a.m.

SEPT. 17

Play Date for Pitt Hopkins
Patriot Park
5-8 p.m.

SEPT. 20

Grateful Dads
Benefitting Homewood City
Schools Foundation
Cahaba Brewing Company
gratefuldads.instagram.com for
tickets
5:30-9 p.m.

SEPT. 20

Birmingham Does Broadway:
Leading Ladies
Samford University Wright Center
7 p.m.

SEPT. 22

Vulcan AfterTunes: Logan Ledger
Vulcan Park and Museum
3 p.m.

SEPT. 29

Vulcan AfterTunes: Griffin House
Vulcan Park and Museum
3 p.m.

SEPT. 30

Astronaut Dr. DeLucas
Homewood Public Library
6-7 p.m.

OCT. 6

Magic City Mac + Cheese Festival
Community Grief Support
Brookwood Village Macy's Upper
Parking Lot

1-4 p.m.

OCT. 6

Vulcan AfterTunes: Christone
"Kingfish" Ingram
Vulcan Park and Museum
3 p.m.

OCT. 15

Homewood Chamber
Membership Luncheon:
Healthcare in Homewood
The Club
11:30 a.m.

OCT. 18 & 19

Mystery Dinner Theatre: The
Murder Room
Purchase Tickets in Advance
Homewood Public Library Large
Auditorium
6:30 p.m.

OCT. 24-27 + OCT. 31-NOV. 3

Girls' Weekend
Homewood Theatre
Inside Brookwood Village

SPORTS

Varsity Patriot Football

Bring on the Friday night lights. Don your red and blue, and we'll see you at **Waldrop Stadium**. All games take place at 7 p.m. Here are all the games from now 'til playoff season:



SEPT. 13: Vs. Helena

SEPT. 27: Vs. Center
Point (Homecoming)

OCT. 4: At Minor

OCT. 11: At Chelsea

OCT. 18: Vs. Carver/
Band Senior Night

OCT. 25: Vs. Jackson-
Olin/Senior Night

NOV. 2: At Bryant

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Edgar Cisneros

Groomer at Liberty Animal Hospital
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NONPROFIT

NYC-Bound

David Nunez didn't get to travel to New York City with the HHS Band last Thanksgiving due to his cancer treatments, but now he's getting his own trip to the Big Apple! **Magic Moments** briefly interrupted band camp on July 23 to unveil David's trip to him and his family, and the whole drum line was there to celebrate.

NOV. 5

Homewood Police Foundation Back Our Blue Luncheon

11:30 A.M.
Rosewood Hall

Join the city of Homewood for this lunch and a program all to fundraise for the Homewood Police Foundation. The foundation provides for our police officers when times of need arise such as the loss of a loved one or a sick spouse or child. Find more information and tickets at policefoundationhomewoodal.com.



AROUND TOWN

SEPT. 12

The Magic of David Garrard
Samford University Wright Center

SEPT. 13-15

PAW Patrol Live! The Great Pirate
Adventure
BJCC Concert Hall

SEPT. 14-15

Fall Plant Sale
Birmingham Botanical Gardens

SEPT. 14

The Brook and the Bluff
Alys Stephens Center

SEPT. 19-OCT. 6

Legally Blonde: The Musical
Virginia Samford Theatre

SEPT. 19

Marlow Shepherd and the
Abraham Becker Orchestra
The Lyric Theatre

SEPT. 19

Rhiannon Giddens with Franceso
Turri
Alys Stephens Center

SEPT. 19-21

St. George Middle Eastern Food
Festival
St. George Greek-Catholic Milkite
Church

SEPT. 28

Irondale Whistle Stop Festival
Historic Downtown Irondale

SEPT. 28

Fiesta | Linn Park

OCT. 2-13

Shop Save Share
Benefitting Junior League of
Birmingham Community Projects

OCT. 3-5

Greek Food Festival
Holy Trinity-Holy Cross Greek
Orthodox Cathedral

OCT. 3-6

Antiques at the Gardens
Birmingham Botanical Gardens

OCT. 4-6

Southern Women's Show
BJCC

OCT. 4-6

Barber Vintage Motorcycle
Festival
Barber Motorsports Festival

OCT. 5

Bluff Park Art Show
Bluff Park Community Center

OCT. 6

Cahaba River Fry-Down
Benefits Cahaba River Society
Railroad Park

OCT. 12

Susan G. Komen North Central
Alabama Race for the Cure
Regions Field

OCT. 20

Breakin' Bread
Pepper Place

SCHOOLS

From Shop to Real Life

He just graduated in May, but TaLek Thomas is already putting what he learned at Homewood High School to work back at a familiar spot. Through the **Academy of Craft Training** he had a full-time job before he even graduated and is using his credentials in building construction. This summer he found himself back in what was the HHS Library working for a subcontractor as a part of the school's renovation. How cool is that?!



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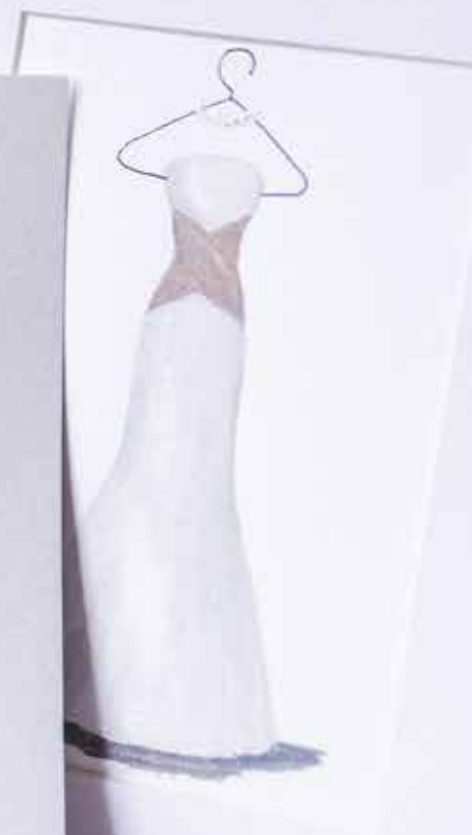
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ARTS & CULTURE



KEEPSAKE IN INK

Julie Tucker captures the magic of memories of extra special garments with the strokes of her paintbrush.

BY ELIZABETH STURGEON

PHOTOS BY JAMISON & LINDSAY KATE SKINNER



Choosing the perfect era of fashion is like picking a favorite child. At least that's Julie Tucker's playful comparison as she reflects on what styles draw her eye. She settles on the classic femininity of the 1940s and '50s, defined by the iconic wardrobes of Elizabeth Taylor and Audrey Hepburn.

Julie also enjoys modern fashion though, from sleek folds to floral embellishments to vivid color. Anything goes right now, especially when it comes to the different shapes and styles of wedding dresses.

Through Julie's illustration business, Bridal Illustration by Julie, she gets to recreate every kind of gown she could dream of. She illustrates wedding dresses with a blend of acrylic paint, pens and markers, creating keepsakes from memorable garments. "I can't just hang up my mother's or grandmother's wedding dress out in public, but I can hang an illustration," Julie says.

This specific focus has developed over the last few years, but the spirit and heart behind the drawings has always been a part of Julie's life. "I'd always wanted to do something with illustration," she says. "I feel like I'm always observing people. Drawing expressions is just how I communicate."

Julie began creating as a child, both through her natural interest in drawing people and lessons from her mom, retired Briarwood art teacher Jo Anne Young. As a student at Samford University, she minored in theater costume design, and drawing



Julie Tucker shows off some of her garment illustrations.



people transitioned into imagining the fabrics, colors and decades people display with clothing.

Her bridal designs seem to be a product of her work with sketching costumes, Julie says. "I've always liked the idea of costumes and history and becoming someone else. Your wedding is your one day to be theatrical, and the dress is the costume you've always wanted to wear."

The bridal focus began with a simple gift to a friend. In 2013, she illustrated an old roommate's wedding dress, and Julie received a teary, joy-stricken phone call back once she received the print.

Even on the small scale that she draws and paints, the illustrations somehow capture all of the magic and memories of the original dress.

From there, Julie began building up her Instagram account and Etsy store to illustrate more gowns for brides who wanted a sweet, handmade keepsake. "It's one of people's happiest days. I love being a part of that joy," she says. Her designs have extended over time to include more of those once-in-a-lifetime pieces, like christening gowns, Easter dresses and prom dresses.

Though she uses the same materials and skills

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PERSONALIZED KEEPSAKES

Julie usually illustrates her designs on a small scale to fit in an 8-by-10-inch mat, and she either shows the dress on a hanger or on a minimalist figure.

But, with every unique dress and story, Julie doesn't have one set standard because she's always following a custom order.

Some orders request adding the groom, the mother of the bride, or smaller details of the day like the veil or shoes. Julie's even added the Very Hungry Caterpillar beside a dress for a bride who got married at the Eric Carle Museum in Massachusetts.



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(all done on her kitchen counter) for each illustration, Julie creates a completely new dress with a new story every time. “It’s like starting over every time I get an order. And then the dress just comes to life,” she says.

Her use of texture transforms for each dress and its unique material. Patterned, tulle or gemmed gowns emerge from the paper, and Julie adjusts her medium to recreate the essence of the fabric. Rosy adornments puff out just right and satin lays delicately with her precision.

Julie can also adjust her style and format to exactly what her order outlines. “The best part is learning each person’s story,” she says. Whether it’s a handed-down dress or a glittery custom gown, every piece has a collection of tales behind it.

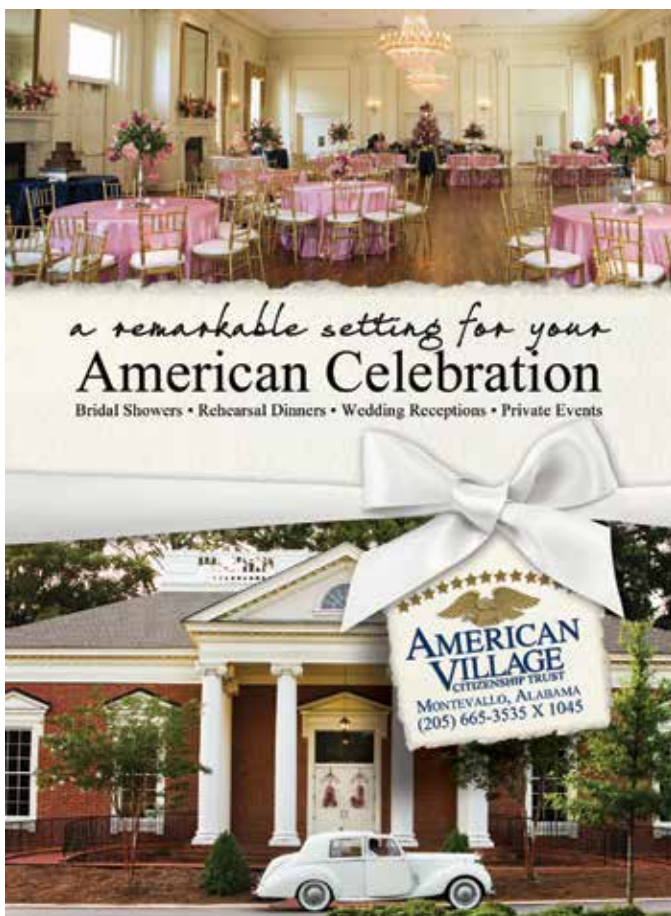
Julie has found that her art generates an

appreciation for the work that goes into handmade pieces. “In the South, so many people have an appreciation for vintage clothing and lace and dressing your children old-fashioned,” she says. She loves seeing the heirloom pieces her friends and customers bring to her, especially during a time when most of her friends are getting married and having kids.

With such detail in each piece of clothing, along with the memories they embody, Julie finds value in preserving special garments. She’s even found old photos of relatives to recover and revive. “I love being able to reclaim things in ways that are possible,” she says.

To learn more about Bridal Illustration by Julie or to see

her work, follow her on Instagram @bridal_illustration_by_julie or visit Bridal Illustration, her Etsy Shop. ●



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FIVE
QUESTIONS
FOR

Kyle Bass

Homewood Theatre
Executive Director

PHOTO BY LINDSEY CULVER

...

Did you know that Homewood has its own theater? The aptly named Homewood Theatre has been producing plays for three years, but just found its new home on the top floor of Brookwood Village across from Books-a-Million. Dinner and a show at the new location means affordable \$20 tickets, free covered parking and a selection of restaurants within a short walking distance. We sat down with Kyle Bass, long-time Homewood resident and executive director of the theater, to talk about the relocation.



How did Homewood Theatre get its start? logistical problem.

We had some wonderful mentors in the theater, and I asked them, “What do we need to do if we want to have some community theatre in Homewood?” They said, “You need to be a nonprofit,” so I started pushing nonprofit paperwork. Then in August 2016, we did our first show. We sampled a few things out our first year, and we’ve had two full seasons of structured plays and musicals since then. In general, we do all comedies and musicals.

Where was the Homewood Theatre located before, and why did you decide to move?

We were at The Dance Foundation in downtown Homewood. It was a great space, but they were just too busy. They had classes and recitals all the time, and that’s why we started looking around for another space. We had to build our sets so they could be torn down every night because The Dance Foundation had dance classes in the theater during the day, so it was a little

How did you land on Brookwood Village?

Here at Brookwood Village we’ve got covered parking, so you don’t even have to get wet if it’s raining. We’ve got great restaurants within walking distance, so you can go get dinner then come see a show. You could even go back and get dessert after the show’s over, and you never have to move your car. What more could you want?

What stands out about this location?

Everybody knows where Brookwood Village is, so we’re in a visible spot with easy access. We did a little poll of all of our audience members, and most of them come from Homewood. But the others come from Vestavia, Mountain Brook and Southside, so you can’t get more centrally located than this. It’s also going to give us a chance to leave the set up all the time and build more elaborate sets.

What performances should people be

looking forward to this season?

Oh, I’m looking forward to all of them! We’re kicking off the season with Bill Bugg and Friends. We’ve got some fabulous singers coming with Bill Bugg: Kristi Tingle Higginbotham, Jan Hunter, Dana Porter, Stan Nelson and Clint Pridgen. The second show is one I’m directing, *Girls’ Weekend*. A book club goes off for a girls’ weekend, and the guys show up and hilarity ensues. People asked us to do a Christmas show, so we’re doing one called *Inspecting Carol*. It’s about a group that’s trying to put on the old Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, and again hilarity ensues. Around Valentine’s Day in February we’re doing *Isn’t It Romantic*. In April, we’re doing *Catch Me If You Can*, which is kind of a murder mystery comedy. And then we’re ending the season with another musical called *I Do! I Do!* in May.

Learn more about the relocation and how to purchase individual and season tickets at homewoodtheatre.com or follow @HomewoodTheatre on Facebook.



SCHOOL & SPORTS

TO IMAGINATION AND BEYOND

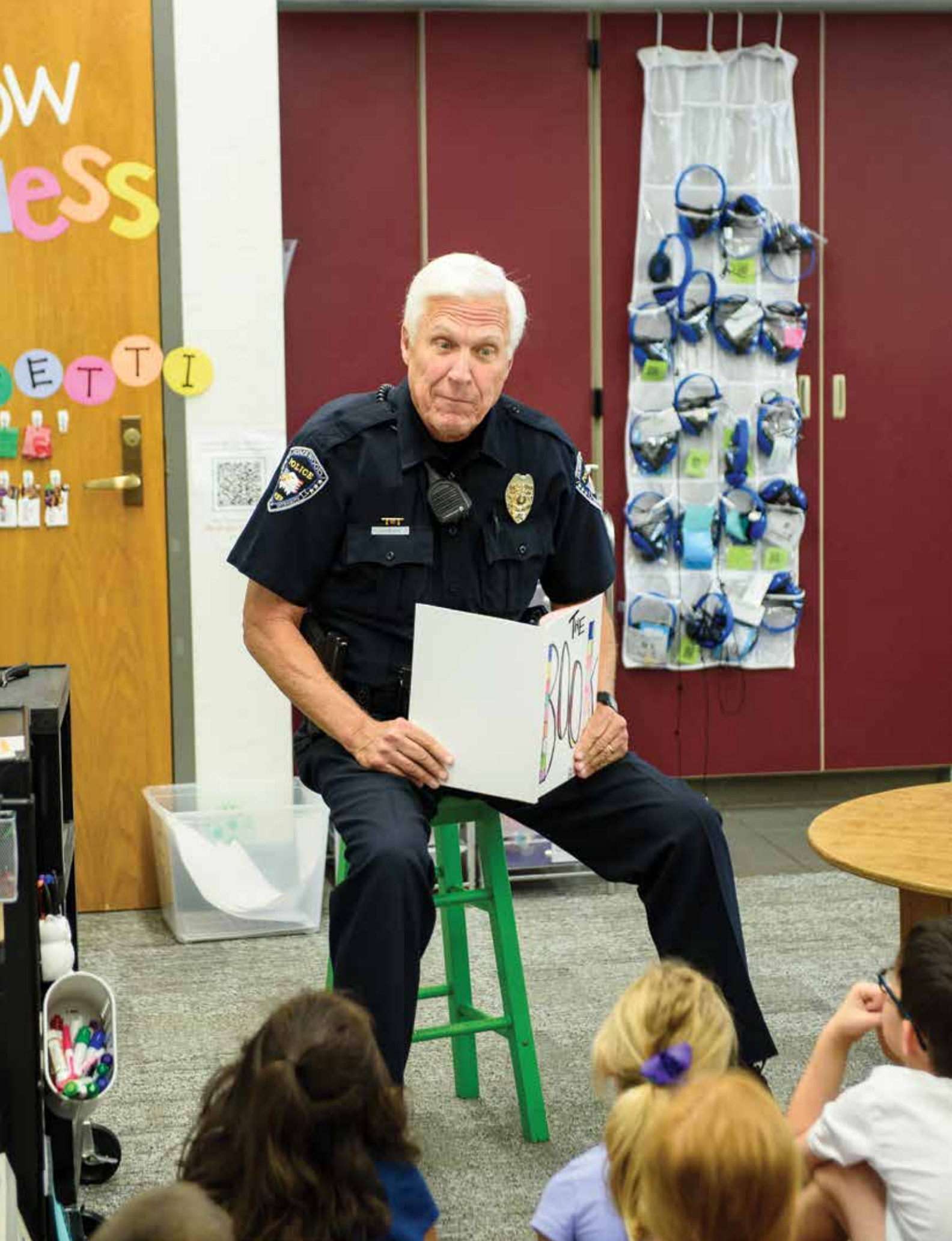
*Meet Officer Kelly Johnson: storyteller extraordinaire
and Shades Cahaba Elementary school resource officer.*

BY KATIE ROTH

PHOTOS BY LINDSEY CULVER

Ever heard the story about a family of owls with a son named Hootie who grows up to weigh 900 pounds and sit atop Shades Cahaba Elementary School? No? That's because it's not a story from your typical storybook. It's from a homemade book with endless stories that come straight from the mind of School Resource Officer (SRO) Kelly Johnson.





Kelly Johnson told the story of a 900-pound owl named Hootie, based off of the very real 900-pound owl statue that sits atop Shades Cahaba, to Rachel Buie's first-grade class in May.



When Johnson is not patrolling Shades Cahaba, manning his station by the front doors or checking out potential threatening situations, he appears in classrooms as a mystery reader. But he is no ordinary mystery reader with no ordinary book. After years of reading stories to his own children, grandchildren and classrooms full of students, he decided to put down the published books and create his own entitled *The Book*.

With a handmade cover and colorful pages created with the help of Hall-Kent Elementary School librarians, Johnson makes sure as he reads to students that no one can see the pages until the very end. He's animated as he tells each word of the story and hopes students are visualizing pictures in their heads along the way, but his favorite moment comes at the end. Little do the children know, *The Book* is full of blank pages. No pictures. No words. Just imagination.

In that moment, Johnson asks one student to come up and show his or her classmates the pages he's been flipping through. Johnson looks out to find wide eyes

and shocked expressions. "Oh, they can't believe it!" he says. "That's kind of fun to watch them... like 'Where are all the pictures?'" And with that, Johnson's goal is accomplished: kids are learning to use their imaginations and be more creative with fun stories.

Inspired by everything from the history of the school's beloved statue to an adaptation of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," Johnson's stories are completely different every time thanks to his own wild imagination and quick, on-the-spot thinking. He has read *The Book* about 20 times so far, and each time he reads it as a completely different story. He says he just sits down and the words start flowing. Many of them have a common theme though: protection. After all, Johnson has been with the Homewood Police Department for

23 years.

About three years ago, he decided to try his hand at a new side of police work and has been an SRO for the three Homewood elementary schools ever since. Johnson is now permanently stationed at Shades



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Johnson with
Rachel Buie's
2018-2019
first-grade class at
Shades Cahaba
Elementary



Cahaba.

"It was just a chance to do something different," Johnson says of his most recent position. "I don't know that everybody's cut out for it. That doesn't mean anything special about me, but you either like kids like this or you don't. I like doing it, and I thought it would be fun."

Day to day, Johnson interacts with 550 kids ranging from 5 to 11 years old all day long. From the fields to the playground to the lunchroom, it's obvious that the students love Johnson, and it's obvious that Johnson's priority is protecting the school and "his" kids. "I'm not gonna let my kids get in trouble," he says.

Thanks to recently installed secure locking technology on the front doors of the school, he can now take time

away from his station, making room for his 15 to 20 minutes of story time more easily and the day more enjoyable and relaxing for him, faculty and parents.

But the joy he brings to kids isn't just reserved for story time. He greets everyone with a smile, knowing that he represents something bigger than himself when he shows up to work in his police uniform.

With stories starring fictional characters like Freddy the Fireman or Polly the Police Officer, Johnson wants to make sure that the kids are not afraid of people in uniform. One of his personal goals is to help educate young students about police officers and what they do—proving that they are not scary, but they are here to help.

"I want these kids to see me in a uniform. I want these



kids to see me as a police officer because I'm not just here representing Kelly Johnson, SRO, Shades Cahaba. In a manner of speaking, I'm sort of representing the Homewood Police Department and police officers everywhere. I want them to get across that police aren't the bad guys," Johnson explains. "I'm here to protect them. I'm here to tell them about what I do."

And Johnson's efforts do not go unnoticed. He is frequently thanked by students, parents and teachers with hugs, kind words and even cards. To him, those are the best tokens of appreciation he could possibly receive.

"I've got a plethora of letters that kids write me every once in a while (that say), 'Thank you for protecting us,'" Johnson says. "I mean, that's better than a Picasso to me." ●

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JAMISON SKINNER PHOTOGRAPHY

A HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM

FIVE
QUESTIONS
FOR

Homewood Patriot Band Drum Majors

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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The Homewood Patriot Band is a force of sound, of movement, of community, and it's nearly 375 members strong, with a 68-member drum line driving the energy behind it. After marching in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade last year, they are coming off that high into this year's field show, plus a parade in Disney World to wrap up the season. At the front of it all you'll see five juniors and seniors on the podiums leading the show. We chatted with Emma Kathryn Compere, Rachel Mau, Hannah Hensarling, Kathryn Sides and Madden Terry during band camp this summer to learn more.

What will we see in this year's halftime show?

Hannah: We have taken a lot of the music from "Malaguena" and other Spanish-style songs and combined it into a show that is super fun. It's really lively, a little bit different from our other years at the high school.

Madden: Typically with Homewood field shows you can guess there will be some funny little songs that we all know thrown in there by Joey Crittendon who composes all our music. He graduated from Florida State, so you can hear the Florida State fight song in there. Last year we had Alabama and Auburn's fight songs in there a little bit.

Hannah: We also have a new bigger and better fly-over, a banner the size of the field connected to sticks that we run out in the finale.

What exactly is the drum major's role?

Kathryne: It's the person who stands up on the podium in front of the band and conducts and keeps time. But it's a lot more than that.

Hannah: We make sure everyone feels included. We help the section leaders with

how to lead their sections, and we help out the band directors.

What makes being in band in Homewood so popular?

Hannah: There's a camaraderie of being all in this together. It's really hot outside, but we are going to have fun. We have dress up days for every night of band camp, and it's a competition and we have a spirit stick.

Rachel: It's a tradition in Homewood and it's woven into the culture, especially at the high school. Everyone has made their friends in band.

Kathryne: I don't think it's just the high school's band. It's the community's band as well because they look forward to seeing us on Friday night and in the parades.

Emma Kathryn: No matter what else you do in school, they want you to be in the band in high school. A lot of people play football or volleyball or cross country, and they are in the band too.

Madden: It's never too late to join. Sometimes people join sophomore or junior or senior year.

What makes the Homewood band the Homewood band?

Hannah: It's our uniforms, our tradition, our big, loud show, our in-your-face music, the Spangles with their sequins up in the front.

Madden: It's great because a lot of people who grew up in Homewood bring their families back to see the band. You will look through family scrapbooks and yearbooks and see your parents wearing the same uniform that you wore, which makes it really special.

Kathryne: We take up the whole field, so there is always something you can be looking at.

What moment stands out the most from the field show each year?

Emma Kathryn: When the whole band on the field turns around at the start of the show, the sound is so loud.

Madden: Every time we turn around and play that big note and Scott Thorne says over the sound system, "The Homewood Patriot Marching Band," my mom weeps. It also represents how much the community loves that moment. There are people walking in the stadium who pause because they know the big note coming.

A person wearing a white shirt is shown from the chest up, holding a small, vintage-style recipe card. The card is yellowed with age and features a small illustration of an orange at the top. The person's hands are visible, holding the card over a dark wooden table. Several other similar cards are scattered on the table. In the background, a clear plastic container filled with more cards is visible. The overall scene suggests a collection of old recipes or a historical food project.

FOOD & DRINK

ORANGE OBSESSION

How Millie Ray's family orange roll recipe has made its way to taste buds throughout the Southeast.

BY MADOLINE MARKHAM

PHOTOS BY JAMISON & LINDSAY KATE SKINNER

It all started at a Hollywood Garden Club party. Millie Ray was planning to make something for the potluck meal and turned to her mom, Essie Mae Stinson or “Mae Mae” to her grandkids, in Evergreen, Alabama, for inspiration. After all her mother had raised her with family life centered around the table, and the same was true of the way Millie was raising her sons and running her side catering business Delectable Edibles. There was no take-out—she cooked every meal for her family. This particular time, Essie Mae gave Millie a recipe for orange rolls, and Millie tweaked it until it was just right for the party.

“And everyone went crazy,” her son Ben retells the story today. That was the start of neighbors and friends requesting Millie Ray’s Orange Rolls for years to come. Ben was born in 1978, the rolls were “born” in 1979 and Millie’s younger son Ryan was born in 1980, so they all grew up together. Every Christmas season, the Ray house transformed into a bakery—and smelled

like one too. Thousands of rolls filled any and every surface proofing with wet towels laid on top of them. “She’d make that (orange) filling, and we’d get spoons and eat it,” Ben recalls. “And she’d get mad.” All along, Millie would give the rolls away to friends and family. It was never a business, and she never told anyone who asked for rolls “no.”

The Rays moved to Montgomery when Ben was in eighth grade, but the Homewood requests never stopped. Any trip to see Ben and Ryan’s paternal grandmother in Birmingham meant filling up the minivan with gallon Ziplocs full of rolls by the dozen.

Fast forward to 2008. Ben and Ryan had both ended up in Atlanta opening a Zoe’s Kitchen back when the restaurant chain was still owned by the Cassimus family

in Birmingham. The now-grown boys went home to visit their parents for Christmas that year and of course encountered the orange rolls. That’s when the idea dawned on them. “We were like, ‘Let’s take these to mom-and-pop shops and butcher shops and delis and give them to people and see what response we get,’” Ben says. So Millie baked up a few pans of rolls, bagged them and put stickers on them, and before long the stores were calling back the Rays asking for more.

From there Millie would bake rolls from her home in Montgomery and meet her sons halfway between there and Atlanta to pass them off. Then one day an order

came in for 300 sets of rolls for Burris Farm Market in Loxley, Alabama. “I knew when they called me that that would take a month, but I was like, ‘Sure, we’ll get that to you,’” Ben recalls. He then called his mom to tell her and she was vehement: “There’s no way we can do it. We’ll be working through the night for weeks.” But she got it done.



Around the same time, Ben and Ryan’s friends from the Zoe’s world, Andrea and David Snyder, were making plans for a new restaurant concept called Urban Cookhouse. “We wanted to offer a sweet bread or roll with our salads and plates, something you’d look forward to with your healthy salad,” Andrea recalls. They thought the Millie Ray’s Orange Roll could be the perfect fit, so one day the Rays brought some rolls over for menu tasting at the Snyders’ house and the deal was sealed.

When Urban Cookhouse opened on 18th Street in June 2010, Millie Ray’s Orange Rolls were on the menu by name. “That was a blast from the past for all the people who still live in Homewood,” Ben says. “When they saw that name, they knew immediately what that



When Millie Ray passed away in November 2018, she left behind stacks of notebooks and notecards lined with hand-written recipes like these.

Baked Potato Casserole

5-6 med. potatoes, peeled and cubed
 4 slices bacon, cubed, crumbled
 1/2 cup evapor. milk
 2 heaping tsp. sour cream
 salt & pepper to taste
 3/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
 1/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Boil potatoes in a saucepan, until tender. Drain.

Return potatoes to saucepan. Do not turn the burner back on.

Add 1/2 of the crumbled bacon, sour cream, evapor. milk and 3/4 cup of shredded cheese. Mix to desired consistency.

Spray casserole dish and scoop in the potato mixture, spreading until even. Bake 350° for 30 min.

Sprinkle remaining bacon and cheese.

Mushroom Sandwiches - Add More (30 sandwiches)
 1 c. cream/mushroom soup
 1/2 cup cheddar
 1/2 cup cheddar
 1/2 cup cheddar

WHERE TO FIND MILLIE RAY & SONS PRODUCTS

To Bring Home & Bake:

Andy's Farm Market

Piggly Wiggly

Urban Cookhouse

Winn-Dixie

To Eat Hot:

Bright Star

Mark's Joint

Miss Dots

Salem's Diner

Ted's Restaurant

Urban Cookhouse



was.” For a while, the Rays would deliver rolls in back of pickup truck loaded in coolers, or sometimes they’d sometimes meet in Clanton to pass them off.

Today Andrea says the orange rolls are one of the three items Urban Cookhouse is best known for, along with their Broccoli Salad and Half-Baked Cookie. “It’s not too sweet, and it goes perfectly with our food,” she says. “It’s the only exception we’ve made to sell something we do not make in-house.” In fact, any sliders on their menu are made with Millie Ray’s yeast rolls too.

Urban Cookhouse customers weren’t the only ones to fall for the orange roll either. Another game-changing moment came when the Rays set up a booth at their food distributor Wood Fruitticher’s Food Show in Destin in 2009. “We sold for two days, and man, at that point, I said, ‘I have to leave Zoe’s to get this business going,’” Ryan recalls. “Cause we did \$70,000 in sales in two days.”

It was time to get down to business. Ben and Ryan would go on to leave their jobs with Zoe’s and move the Millie Ray’s operation back to their roots in Birmingham. Their next challenge was to figure out how to scale their mom’s recipe to taste the same whether the yield was 12 rolls or 1,000 rolls without cutting any corners. Then as today Millie Ray zests oranges for each roll, releasing oils from the peel to flavor the filling and glaze—still the same final product that the Hollywood Garden Club tasted back in 1979.

“One thing (my mom) always stressed to us was no matter how big we grew to keep doing it the right way,” Ben says. “I think that’s why we have grown and why people still like the product. You are getting the real thing.”

The rolls are still rolled out by hand and then smeared with a lightly sweet mixture flavored with orange zest and then rolled up, sliced, baked and topped with a thin orange glaze that hardens as it cools. Lastly, the rolls are placed in pans, bagged and frozen. All in all, it’s a 24-hour process.

Even as they were training employees in their 20s to make the rolls, Millie in her 60s was doing just as much work in the kitchen as they were, all working late into the night seven days a week to get the business going. “It was chaos 24/7, and on top of that Ryan and I had babies at home,” Ben recalls. “Taking that step was a risk where what you produce is your livelihood. You don’t sleep well those first few years.”

But Millie would have it no other way. “For us to work together was the best thing she could ever do,” Ben says. “If she was tired or was hurting, she would never tell you. She would power through. She could work as hard as the 20-year-olds we had working in there. She would stay from 6 in the morning until 12 at night even though we told her to go home.”

“I think that’s what drives Ryan and I is the passion she had for the rolls. She loved the customer and the relationship side.”

Birmingham businesses were quick to sign on to the rolls too. Piggly Wiggly, the first retailer to carry the rolls, accepted Millie Ray’s deliveries in deep sea fishing coolers, and Cajun Cleaver, Mr. P’s Deli and New York Butcher Shoppe were also early customers.



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Urban Cookhouse owners Andrea and David Snyder, on left, first met Millie Ray's sons Ben and Ryan, on right, when they worked for Zoe's Kitchen.

Today Millie Ray's mostly sells their products to food distribution companies that in turn sell them to local stores and restaurants throughout Alabama and now all over the Southeast. This summer Food City, a family-owned grocery chain with 130 stores, started carrying rolls in Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee and beyond. As production increased, the company had to move most of their production from Irondale to Atlanta where they partner to use Tennessee Baking Company's Masada Bakery, but the business operations and their most loyal customers are still in the Birmingham area.

The 2019 product line also features cinnamon rolls with cream cheese icing made similarly to the orange rolls, yeast rolls, dinner twin rolls and new buttermilk biscuits. "(Mom) wanted to use real buttermilk instead of buttermilk powder," Ben says of the biscuits. "When you are baking them you can smell them, and they are awesome." You can now buy the biscuits frozen at Piggly Wiggly, or eat them hot at Salem's Diner in Homewood, Miss Dots in Crestline or Ted's Restaurant downtown. And you never know when the yeast roll you are eating at a restaurant might be one of Millie Ray's. Bright Star in Bessemer is just one of many that serves them.

A couple of years ago the company worked with a marketing and branding company, who recommended they change the name to "Millie Ray & Sons Baked Goods" since Ben and Ryan were such a cornerstone of the business too, and Millie herself loved it. By the time Millie passed away in November 2018, the branding change was complete. "What she instilled in us is the passion she had for the business," Ben says. "She had always wanted to have a food business. She loved food that much."

These days Ben and Ryan sometimes travel with sales reps who are introducing new businesses to their products. As they tell their family's story, they pop some rolls in the oven and let the products themselves do the selling. It doesn't matter if they say that they are "not an orange fan" or don't know what an orange roll is, the brothers have never met someone who doesn't like the roll their mom perfected. "Our orange roll is not overly sweet like our cream cheese icing on our cinnamon roll," Ben says. "That's why Urban Cookhouse can get away with putting them on their salads and plates. A lot of steakhouses love it instead of doing Texas toast or a yeast roll."

And it all started on Hampton Drive, just a short drive from where Ben and Ryan's kids are growing up on Millie Ray's rolls too.

Editor's Note: Some quotes in this article were taken from "Ben and Ryan Ray, Millie Ray and Sons," an oral history by the Southern Foodways Alliance conducted by Annemarie Anderson. ●



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FIVE QUESTIONS FOR

Dave Horn & Taylor Hughes

Soho Standard + Soho
Social Owners

PHOTO BY MADOLINE MARKHAM

• • •



If you know Mudtown in Cahaba Heights, The Ridge in Rocky Ridge or Soho Social in Downtown Homewood, you know the concept. All three are neighborhood restaurants where families are more than welcome and there's a full bar too. And if a regular or any customer makes a request for a menu item, owners Dave Horn and Taylor Hughes listen—and make changes so each becomes what the neighborhood wants. That's the reason you can order corn dogs and a pretzel with queso at Soho Social, and it's the reason the two men behind it are now opening a sister establishment next door to it in Homewood, Soho Standard. They are aiming to start serving dinner in October and will possibly add brunch and lunch in the months to come—if that's what the neighborhood wants.

Where did the idea for a new restaurant come from?

Dave: Soho Social grew more than we expected in the last six months, and the size of the kitchen didn't correlate. We mentioned it to our landlord, and we ended up leasing the whole space next door where Market Table was. In the process we got the kitchen space we needed for Soho Social and another dining room, so we figured we'd open another restaurant.

What's the vision for the new restaurant space?

Taylor: I saw regulars at Soho Social and business owners and asked if we were to open up something else right here in Soho what they would want. With the departure of Michael's, there was mention of wanting a good steak and a place to get a good piece of fish. A lot of people say they love what we do up here at Soho Social, but sometimes they don't want to bring the

kids and they just want to go out for a nicer, quieter meal. Homewood doesn't have a lot of options like that. You have Gianmarco's and Jinsei that are flavor specific, but nowhere you can get upscale American food—steak, fish, pasta, crab cakes. Soho Social is more laid back, and at Soho Standard there is going to be a higher standard from a service standpoint and a culinary standpoint. We want it to still be approachable and relaxed but more refined.

What will be the look and feel inside?

Taylor: We are in the process of building a bar right now because there wasn't one. It's a gorgeous space with white subway tile and reclaimed wood already that we are keeping. The reclaimed wood is nice but it's not formal or stuffy.

Dave: I hate telling people it's "casual fine dining" but it is. We want it to be the kind of place you can come two to three times a week. It shouldn't feel like a special

occasion, it will just feel like special food.

Can you give us any menu previews?

Taylor: It's all stuff we have never made before, and right now we are playing with recipes and taste testing to get them to the level we want them.

Dave: The goal is to have five appetizers, five entrees, a couple of salads and a couple of desserts, and it always grows. I like to keep it simple and grow after it opens, and Taylor will come up with like 12 things and we both learn to compromise. He wants to push the envelope creatively, and we're asking people what they want on the menu.

What will we find at the bar?

Dave: We'll have a full bar but it will mostly be premium liquors with a higher focus on wine and a select five to eight beers, some local and some imports. We'll have a big selection of scotch and bourbon and refined cocktails with house-made simple syrups and fresh juices.

A photograph of a kitchen interior. In the foreground, a thick wooden countertop holds a white ceramic vase with a textured, rounded design, filled with a bouquet of white and green flowers. Next to the vase is a shallow wooden bowl containing several oranges and apples. Three more oranges are scattered on the countertop in front of the bowl. The background shows white kitchen cabinets with gold-colored handles and a stainless steel refrigerator on the left.

HOME & STYLE

A WELL COLLECTED HOME

You'll find layers of meaning in the details of the Snells' historic Edgewood home.

BY MADOLINE MARKHAM

PHOTOS BY HOLLAND WILLIAMS & LAUREN USTAD



Kristen Snell never envisioned herself living in a big house. Instead, she always wanted a small cottage filled with the things she loves. Today her family's newly renovated home is full of as much charm as it is meaning. Look a layer beneath its pleasing palette, and you'll find artwork created by adults with dementia she works with, memory markers she and her husband Jonathan have collected on trips, and countless tasteful odes to their love for their two basset hounds. Kristen calls the vision Chickadee Interiors helped her bring to life "well collected and eclectic," and it's spot-on.

Kristen and her husband Jonathan rented a house in Homewood after they first married, and when they moved to Atlanta for work, they knew they'd one day come back to Homewood. When they acted on that promise in 2014, they put an offer on a 1946 Edgewood cottage house within an hour of when it went on the market, and it immediately felt like home. Plus, it's on Homewood's "Halloween street," and their house soon became known for its dance party music and fog machine for trick-or-treaters.

For all they loved about the 1,300-square-foot house, though, Kristen and Jonathan wanted to improve its flow for

their family and fix all the "Band-aids" that various sets of homeowners and renters had put on it. Architect Brian Jernigan immediately caught their vision, and Stephen Boehme and Brian Hart with Phoenix Builders Group brought it through to completion.

They opened up the home's galley kitchen to one large open space with the living room and added a new master bedroom and bath as well as a screened porch off the back, making for 500 new square feet in all. The renovation also updated bathrooms, added storage, raised the ceilings in the main living spaces, and reworked wall placements.

In keeping with the charm-maintenance goal, the Snells still have the original narrow-width hardwoods and replaced the door knobs with glass handles that looked like the original ones in the house. Jernigan also drew Chippendale railings for the front porch before he even saw the original photo of the house, so of course those had to come to life too—the perfect entrance to the charming, well collected home Kristen had long envisioned.



Entry Artwork

Beth Bradley, a local artist who has worked with Picasso Pets, created this painting with the Snells' basset hounds Norah Belle and Chandler Bing before Chandler passed away. The dogs dipped their paws and tails into paint to create the base of the scene, and then Beth turned it into a scene of Highland Park. Both dogs and Beth left their signatures too.

Sitting Room Art

The black and white art on this wall as well as colorful canvases on the Snells' bookshelves were all created by participants in a community respite ministry at Canterbury United Methodist for people with mild to moderate dementia diagnoses. Kristen is on staff with the ministry, which uses art, music and pet therapy with its participants.



Front Sitting Room

Kristen displays her fish float collection in a shallow wooden dough bowl that has been in Jonathan's family for several generations.



Kitchen

For their newly open kitchen the Snells commissioned a hearty butcher block island countertop from Magic City Woodworks, a local woodworking shop that helps young men bridge the gap between unemployment and meaningful employment. Kristen wanted the space to be simple and white, and the white Visual Comfort orb lights and cabinets are in keeping with that theme.



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Living Room

The color scheme for this light and airy space off the kitchen was built around the antique lamp behind the couch that serves as its decorative focal point.





Master Bathroom

The Oriental rugs throughout the home are sourced from Etsy, Chickadee Interiors and other stores. In her living room she layered a solid cream colored rug under a patterned Oriental to soften it, but here the Oriental stands on its own.



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Art Nook

Kristen knew she always wanted to find a space in her home for the antique trunk at the base of this vignette. She found it while antiques in Maine in the middle of a trip where she and a friend drove 34 dogs in a Sprinter van from Shelby County, Alabama, up to New Hampshire to be adopted through Shelby County Humane Society's Shelby Partners.





Dining Room

Kristen sanded her grandmother's table down and left the wood raw to update the look and added an indigo grasscloth buffet by Society Social to correspond with the darker walls. Behind the buffet hangs a painting created by adults with more advanced dementia who participate in local adult daycare programs around the city.

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Nursery

The Snells didn't find out the gender of their baby until she was born, so they wanted to keep the nursery gender-neutral as well as fun and funky. Above the floating bookshelves hangs a piece of art of a basset hound in a hot air balloon they bought on a trip to wine country as well as a sketch of their own basset hounds.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Architect: Wm. Brian Jernigan

Interior Design: Kate Hartman & Kelly Petro Neely,
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Contractor: Stephen Boehme & Brian Hart, Phoenix
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...AT HOME...

OFFICE STYLING

Photo & Text By Jessica Clement of JMC Studio



The key to getting a lot of work done at home is a well-designed office, right? For a look that is bold and sophisticated, style your desk with interesting accessories, like a variation of antique jars, a fun table lamp and art. For comfortable seating, add a beautiful printed pillow to a traditional chair and intriguing Tibetan fur pull-up stools for guests. Small details, like recycled African beads and florals, will make the room feel finished and relaxed.

1. Blue, White and Gold Striped Lamp, Defining Home- \$1,049. 2. Blue Batik Pillow, Defining Home- \$170. 3. Landscape Canvas, Defining Home- \$128. 4. Black/White Ginger Jar, Defining Home- \$259. 5. Blue/White Melon Jar, Defining Home- \$149. 6. Round Bottle Vase, At Home- \$14. 7. African Glass Beads, At Home- \$21. 8. Mongolian Wool Stool, Defining Home- \$750.



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PHOTOS BY MARY FEHR || STYLING BY ABBY ADAMS & JESSICA CLEMENT

Sleeveless Isla Red Dress, Shea Davis
Boutique- \$128. Red Cheetah Headband,
Shea Davis- \$50. Thread Wrapped
Hoops, Dear Prudence- \$19. Cheetah
Cuff, Cottage Basket- \$28.



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A WHITE TOP.

*White Bohemian ¾ Sleeve Top, Hemline-
\$175. Maroon Embroidered Mini Skirt,
Ambiance- \$57. Black Bootie, Soca- \$50.
Round Black Leather Purse, Abbey Luxe-
\$395.*



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SIDE WITH THIS
FALL'S ANIMAL
PRINT TREND.

Almond Leather Jacket, Theodora- \$550. Somewhere in LA
Tee, Ambiance- \$30. Agolde Black Ankle Jean, Soca- \$158.
Snake Skin Print Belt, Dear Prudence- \$12. Black Micro
Suede Heel, Hemline- \$80. Thin Gold Hoop Earrings, A.
Edge Designs- \$36



Woodstock Graphic Tee, Hemline- \$35. Agolde Hi Rise Mini Skirt, Hemline- \$128. BF Leopard Blazer, Shea Davis Boutique- \$275. Melody Cut Out Wedge Sneaker, Fab'rik- \$48. Snakeskin Belt Bag, SOCA- \$55. Black Feather Earrings, Cottage Basket- \$28.

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Shelly High Neck Navy Blouse, Fab'rik- \$38.
Claudia Stripe Shorts, Fab'rik- \$54. Clear
Wedges, Hemline- \$48. Gold Necklace,
Fab'rik- \$18. Giraffe Print Earrings,
Fab'rik- \$28. Straw Bag, Fab'rik- \$88.




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TRANSITION INTO
COOLER WEATHER.

*Bohemian Stripe Embroidered Blouse, Theodora-
\$216. Wide Flare Jeans, Ambiance- \$76. Cognac
Cork Heel, Abbey Luxe \$173. Faux Cognac
Leather Clutch, Dear Prudence- \$49. Leather
Braided Earrings, Holland & Burch- \$38.*



Black Swing Tank, Shea Davis Boutique - \$35. Ayana
Leopard Print Joggers, Fab'rik- \$48. Gold Feather
Statement Earrings, Cottage Basket- \$30. Wyeth
Allesandra Black Hat, Shea Davis Boutique- \$64.
Black Jelly Bracelets, Cottage Basket- \$30.



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\$150. Gold Geometric Statement Earrings,
Theodora- \$89.*

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ROOMS FOR THIS PHOTO SHOOT.





THE PINK HOUSE

BY MADOLINE MARKHAM
PHOTOS BY DYLAN SPENCER + CONTRIBUTED

Eleanor Bridges was known for her bustling presence and elegant style replete with statement-making hats and chunky heels that elevated her short stature.

The first time Diana Hansen met her was in the early 1980s. Diana, who was president of the Civiettes women's civic club at the time, was picking up Eleanor, then in her 80s, from her Edgewood Boulevard house to speak at the club's event that day. Diana never imagined that morning that she'd live in that very house one day.

"I had a little bitty car and she had on this huge hat, and I was so worried all the way down the pathway she wasn't going to fit in the car," Diana recalls. "She said, 'Never you mind' and took that hat off." And so off they went to The Club for the event, where seemingly everyone knew Eleanor. From there they drove back to Eleanor's home, now commonly known as The Pink House, where she showed Diana around the pink stucco Italianate structure she and her husband, Georges, had built in 1921 and its "secret garden" enshrouded behind tall trees. "It was so beautiful," Diana recalls. "Every time I would pass by that house (before

that day) I would try to peek in there and see.”

A few years later, in 1987, a for-sale sign went up in front of the house. Diana had heard that Eleanor had moved to a nursing home, but she still couldn't believe her house was being sold. Diana's husband, Eric, took her to see it. “We walked through that front gate, and he said to the realtor, ‘We came to buy this house.’ And that night we bought it,” Diana recounts. “Eric is a photographer, so he appreciated everything about it.”

With that, two artists of a new generation became the caretakers of the home that two artists who came of age in the 1920s had dreamed up and cared for for decades—nearly a century before it would be named to Alabama's Places in Peril in 2019.

MEET THE BRIDGES

Eleanor was born in 1899, the daughter of Massey Business College founder Richard Massey. The college taught typing and other clerical skills to provide new opportunities for women in the workforce, and like the school, Eleanor was always a step ahead of her times. “She grew up in that environment and was quite a feminist in her own way,” says Will Womack, a UAB history professor and member of the Homewood Historic Preservation Commission. “She was a bit of a rebel and free thinker.”

Interestingly enough Eleanor's parents' palatial house and its Italian-style gardens—which likely inspired Eleanor's own garden—were demolished in the 1960s to make way for the new Elton B. Stephens Expressway, one of many losses for historic preservation in the same era that landmarks such as the Birmingham Terminal Station met their end.

But years before that, at age 19 Eleanor found her match in a man from Tennessee, Georges Bridges, and they eloped at her parents' house. The six lots that would become the Bridges' decades-long home were likely a wedding gift from Eleanor's father.

At the time most people of the social class Eleanor came from would have lived in more established areas, but not Eleanor. She and Georges were a far cry from conventional in all respects and chose to make their home out off a dirt road in the rural area that was then Edgewood.

“They had a bohemian sensibility as artists,” Womack says, retelling a story from an oral history with Eleanor. One night when the couple was expected to go to a big society event at the Tutwiler Hotel but instead decided to skip it and use the money they would have spent that night to buy dinner for homeless people they met.

Over the years Georges worked on his sculptures first in the former stables on the house's grounds and later at the Old Green Springs Baptist Church building off



Eleanor Bridges was known for her pet portraits, including those of presidents' dogs.





Green Springs Highway (today it's the King Cotton building). Today you can see Georges' work in the family home's "secret garden" as well as around Birmingham. He cast the Thomas Jefferson monument now on display in Lynn Park and the Brother Bryan statue in Five Points, as well as one of a boy and a cat in front of UAB Callahan Eye Hospital.

Local history author Martha Wurtele Jones recalls the first time she saw the house behind its walls of trees. As a child growing up in Edgewood, she found the Bridges' Pekingese Mr. Chou when he had escaped his yard. "I took him home, and (Eleanor) showed me the dogs she was working on painting," Martha recalls. "She had a Russian hound in her dining room she was painting."

And indeed Eleanor was a prolific painter, particularly of pet portraits. A collection of 100 of them was at one point exhibited at the Birmingham Museum of Art, and perhaps most famous were her depictions of President Franklin Roosevelt's Scottie Fala and Gerald Ford's Golden Retriever Liberty.

Outside of the home, Eleanor oversaw numerous fundraisers and civic projects and was named Birmingham Woman of the Year in 1953. She helped plan the then-annual Birmingham Festival of the Arts and hosted a Sculpture in the Gardens event featuring Georges' sculptures that was open to the public.

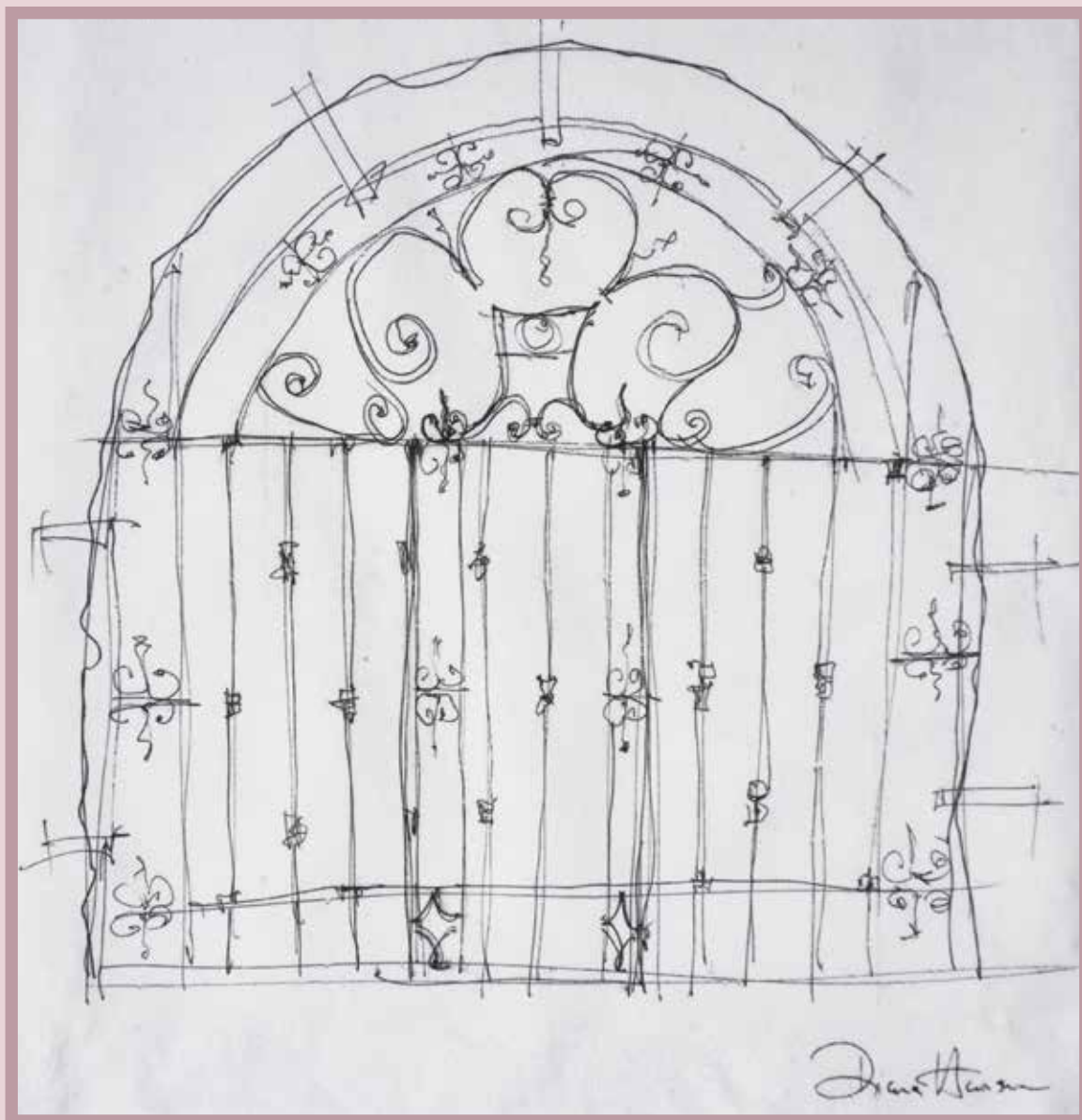
Fittingly, from the start The Pink House was also known as a salon for new ideas. There the Bridges hosted meetings of the Birmingham Theosophical Society, which came out of a 19th century esoteric spirituality that espoused a series of moral teachers.

Historically, the house also fits into a movement of artists' gardens created in that era that the Bridges had likely seen on their travels and brought home inspiration from. "That's one of the things that's the most historically significant about it," Womack says. "(The house) was an emanation of their ideas and designs."

The story goes that the Bridges met expats like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemmingway while they were studying art in Europe in the 1920s, and some of these figures could have visited the house. What is fact is that Eleanor's boarding school roommate was aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart. "I have a feeling she visited," Diana says.

A LIVING LEGACY

Stepping back to Diana and Eric's chapter of The Pink House story, although it had been vacant for three years before the Hansens purchased it, Eleanor's marks were still all over the home and garden. A life-size portrait of a horse she was working on on canvas hung



from the second story, and in front of it lay the scaffolding in the living room she'd used to access the canvas. An in-process Cyclorama of Birmingham History that she had been commissioned to complete—on display today at the Birmingham History Center—hung in the house as well.

Upon the sale of the home, it was still filled with antiques and collections from the Bridges' travels worldwide, and a large metal coat of armor and red velvet curtains remained in the living room. Most of these items were sold in an estate sale, but the Hansens were left with some of her books, empty hat boxes, a recipe box with index cards with the first lines of speeches she would give and some of her platform shoes.

One of the hat boxes was emblazoned with the words "White Flowers," which inspired the name of the gift store Diana would go on to open. Eric would take

pictures of Eleanor's shoes as well as images from the property and then Diana would make them into T-shirts to sell at the store, which made its home on 18th Street for years and recently moved to Brookwood Village across from Cocina Superior.

In keeping with her theme, Diana had the house's interior painted white to show off its architecture. The hue replaced the turquoise and mustard yellow that had covered the walls in the Bridges' era beneath large Oriental rugs that hung down from the balcony.

The Hansens had the power and water connections upgraded when they moved in, but beyond that haven't updated anything inside the house, even now 32 years later. They chose not to touch the light pink paint on the exterior either since they didn't want to take down the jasmine vines that crawl up its walls. The tiny kitchen where Eleanor prepared for her garden parties has no dishwasher today just as was true in Eleanor's

era too,

The Hansens made one of the two upstairs bedrooms their own, but left alone Eleanor's meditation room, a space where she'd go to read and think, which is only accessible through a staircase accessible from the back of the house.

In the garden the Hansens simply sought to continue what Eleanor had sown for decades, watching as surprise lilies popped up in the summer and the cedars and hollies continued to shroud the property in secrecy. "We just felt like caretakers there, we always have," Diana says.

In its heyday during Eleanor's time spring ushered in a "pink forest" in the garden with pink dogwoods, red buds and pink wisteria—plus double Russians, yellow violets, a wildflower garden, "varieties hitherto unused here," and an herb garden that was "Mrs. Bridges' particular pride," according to an *Anniston Star* article from June 25, 1950. Many of the garden blooms came from the Bridges' travels, and Eleanor introduced some azaleas to Alabama for the first time. "She said she hid (the seeds) in her bustle since you weren't supposed to bring them back," Diana says.

The house's natural amphitheater also hosted garden

THE PINK HOUSE ON FILM

This magazine article is far from the only party interested in preserving the history of The Pink House. The Homewood Historic Preservation Commission (HHPC) commissioned a documentary on the house that will be released this fall. HHPC members as well as UAB Media Studies Director Michele Forman, UAB students and UAB graduate Kenzie Greer have all worked on the film.

"It's raised this question to me on how a city finds a happy



medium between evolving and progressing but also preserving its history and keeping the legacy of how it began intact," Greer told us. "I would like the film to ask that question."

The commission will be announcing dates for film viewings soon.

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performances of theatrical groups including Birmingham Little Theatre, an organization that provided foundations that led to present-day Virginia Samford Theatre—just one sign of how the Bridges’ legacy lives on decades later. “Her spirit and his spirit are still in the garden,” Diana says. “We can feel them. We are always thinking about them down in the living room dancing together.”

Although the Hansens’ passion for caring for the property has never wavered, its ownership was transferred in 2004 when Diana’s family was in need of money for her father’s medical care for his Alzheimer’s disease. She and Eric sold the home to developer Pat O’Sullivan with an agreement that they could continue to rent it back from them and live there month-to-month with 60 days’ notice if they ever needed to vacate.

Last year O’Sullivan received approval from the Homewood Planning Commission to tear down the house and build five new homes in its place, and following that news the Homewood Historic Preservation Commission, which is associated with the city of Homewood, and the independent Homewood

Historical Preservation Society have sought to preserve the building and most recently help find a buyer who could save and restore it.

As of the printing of this article, the future of The Pink House is still yet to be determined, but regardless of its next chapter, the house’s legacy as an artists’ residence will live on in a new documentary on the subject and in the memory of the Hansens and countless others. “Every day I wake up and walk down the stairs and look out the window to see the garden, and I’m grateful to be there,” Diana says. “The garden becomes part of the house. You walk out of the front door and you walk back in, and the garden goes with you.”

Editor’s Note: Special thanks goes to Diana and Eric Hansen; the Homewood Historic Preservation Commission and particularly members Will Womack, Jake Collins and Suzan Zuber; the Homewood Historical Preservation Society and particularly Martha Wurtele Jones and Dylan Spencer; filmmaker Kenzie Greer; and artist Taren Black for their help with research and artwork for this article. ●



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ON FIELD + ON AIR

COLE CUBELIC'S ROAD TO BECOMING A COLLEGE FOOTBALL ANALYST STARTED ON THE STREETS HE ONCE AGAIN CALLS HOME.

BY SOLOMON CRENSHAW JR.
PHOTOS BY LINDSEY CULVER & CONTRIBUTED







Cole Cubelic interviews University of Alabama Football Coach Nick Saban on the sidelines for ESPN. PREVIOUS: Cole played football for Auburn University from 1996 to 2001.

Growing up in Homewood schools Cole Cubelic wasn't passionate about world history, algebra or biology. But the world of sports was a different story. He would announce the games he and friends played on videogames as a kid—RBI Baseball, Tecmo Bowl, NBA Jam, Madden and the like.

Today, that passion is on display weekdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. as Cole cohosts the 3 Man Front radio show on WJOX-94.5 FM. It is also evident during podcasts on Sirius XM radio and on college football broadcasts on the SEC Network and ESPN.

Since 2011, Cole, now 41, has been a college football analyst for ESPN and currently appears on SEC Saturday Night, providing on-field analysis on the SEC Network's marquee Saturday Night college football game. He is a frequent contributor to The Paul Finebaum Show and other SEC Network programming too.

And to anyone who lends an ear, it is evident that Cole has done his homework when it comes to the topic of the day with cohosts Aaron Suttles and Landrum Roberts, or as he provides in-depth analysis of game that has him on the sideline or the podcast he's delivering.

"As far as work, he's very serious about it," Aaron says of Cole. "He works really hard at it. As someone who also works hard and takes my career very seriously, I appreciate working with someone who I know is putting in as much effort and as much thought making what we do as successful as possible."

The daily radio show is a dream job for Cole but it's one he couldn't have imagined, much less dreamed, in the very area of Birmingham that set him on his life's path. That path has come full circle as Cole again lives in Homewood, now with his wife Katherine and their children—4-year-old Katherine Elizabeth "Kit," and 2-year-old John Judge who goes by "Judge."

Speaking at the Homewood Grown fundraiser for Homewood City Schools Foundation earlier this year, Cole recounted his earliest days in Homewood. His parents Tom and Christy Cubelic had divorced, and when he was 2, he and his mother moved from Center Point to Homewood.

"I knew I wanted him in Homewood schools," Christy recalls. "Being newly divorced, I couldn't afford a house, so I had to make a choice, a decision where I wanted



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Cole and his wife, Katherine, now live in the community where Cole grew up with their two kids. OPPOSITE: Cole interviews Uga at the University of Georgia.



him to grow up.”

From his home base in the apartment where he lived until he left Homewood to continue his education at Auburn University, Cole remembers playing wiffleball and tackle football and days in the pool.

He also calls to mind the nurturing teachers at Hall-Kent Elementary who “made me feel loved, and made me feel important every single day. Those teachers cared and they showed me what it was like to care, to love, to guide.”

Over at Homewood baseball parks, coaches helped him deal with some occasional anger issues. “He had a bad temper and he had a hard time controlling it,” Christy recalls of her son. “It’s something that he really had to work on. I think that’s where sports came in that really helped him.”

In the end, it was football that set Cole “in the right direction, on the right path,” his mother recalls, with coaches like Bob Newton and Dickey Wright giving

her son needed guidance.

One of the most instructional periods of Cole’s athletic career came when he couldn’t take the field. The Homewood High Patriots won a state football championship while he was out with an injury.

“It taught me an appreciation for what other people do (and) an appreciation for being a part of a team,” he says today. “I wanted to be the leader of the team, I wanted to be the best player on the team, I wanted to be the best player in the state. And I didn’t think they should be able to do that without me.”

After the onset of that injury, though, recruiting calls from some schools went silent.

“It was pretty much Auburn who continued to call and continued to talk to him,” Christy says. “I think he was not only humbled, but very grateful that Auburn was still (recruiting him).”

Cole would learn another lesson in patience during his career on the Plains. A disagreement with an

assistant coach going into his senior year got him relegated to sixth-string center – and “we didn’t have six centers,” Cole states.

The Tigers opened that season against Wyoming. Cole was to have alternated Ben Nowland at center, but after getting in for one series, he never returned to the field.

“That’s the only time I’ve ever cried after a football game,” he recalls. “I was just devastated. I went in the locker room and didn’t even take a shower. I put my clothes on, put a towel over my head and walked out. I was literally crying all the way back to Sewell Hall.”

Christy remembers seeing her son come out with that towel over his head, knowing he was humiliated, hurt and devastated. “We got in his truck and he drove and I think it was those 10 minutes, five minutes to get to his apartment, that I thought, ‘Gee, he needs some advice,’” she recalls.

Cole picks up the conversation. “You need to make a decision,” he recalls his mother saying. “She’s like, ‘You can shut it down. You can walk away. You’ve got to decide right now you’re going to finish this. Can you keep your mouth shut and you work and you do whatever you need to do?’”

Ultimately a knee injury would limit Cole’s play, but he started the Iron Bowl, the SEC Championship Game and the bowl game against Michigan to end his Auburn career.

“The night before the bowl game against Michigan, my teammates voted me a permanent captain on that football team, which is one of the one of the things I’m most proud of,” he recalls.

In the years that followed Cole’s dream of playing

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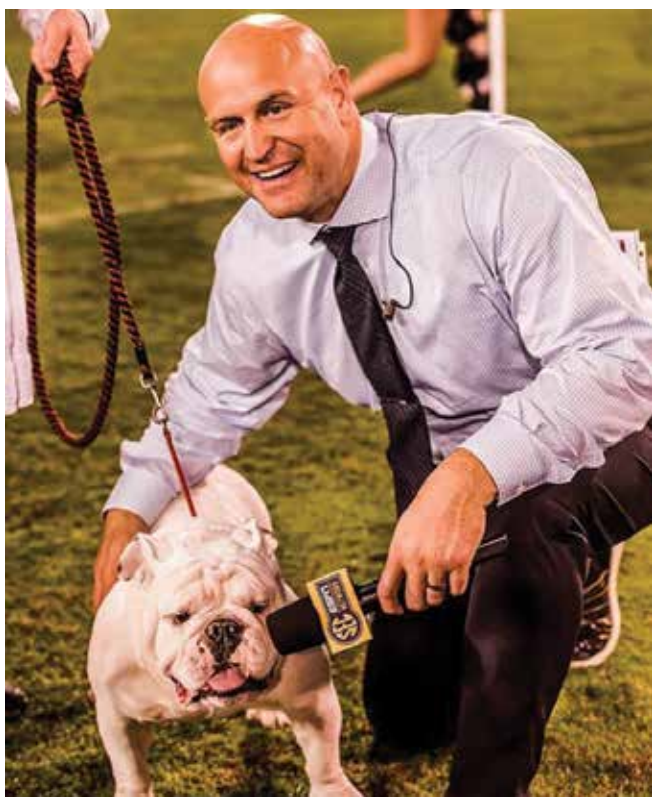


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Cole interviews Auburn Coach Guz Malzahn on the Plains, where Cole played for the Tigers starting in 1996.

in the NFL would not come to fruition. He knew he wanted to get into broadcasting though but didn't know if it was attainable. His career path took him to pharmaceutical sales and medical sales before he got a taste back in the sports world, first on local radio shows in Huntsville and eventually college football telecasts.

But broadcasting wasn't the only dream he followed around that time. Cole met Katherine in 2002, and she remembers that sparks were instantaneous. "I think it was pretty immediate probably for both of us," she recalls. "We hung out in a group setting a few times. I'm pretty sure I called friends after (our first date) and said I definitely see there's a future with this guy."

The couple got married five years later. "We were together through some difficult times in my career, especially the TV part when the SEC Network was launched, and I wasn't a part of it," he says of a stretch when he worked as few as two games in a season.

"That's when Katherine sat me down," Cole recalls. "She's like, 'Listen, we've got to figure something out because I can't have you home on Saturday in the fall. You're miserable. Find something where you're working or let's find something else for you to do all

together.'"

The next season, he worked 10 games, the next he worked 13 and then he ended up on the Saturday Night Game on the SEC Network. "This will be year three for the Saturday Night Game, so we've taken a small step every year, which has been amazing," he says.

Today Cole says he has two dream jobs: for the SEC Network and WJOX. But Christy says she's most pleased by her son's other job – being father to her grandchildren.

"One of the proudest things I am of him is what a good father he's become," she says. "He's really there for those two little kids and realizes the importance of that."

And, like his mother before him, Cole wanted to raise his children in Homewood. That meant taking his wife away from her hometown in Decatur. He made a soft sales pitch, bringing the family down for a day trip to visit friends and for Katherine to get a feel for the place he had called home.

And all it took was one night in Homewood to convince Katherine to come back to the streets where he first learned to announce games and countless lessons about sports and life. ●

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September 11

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September 17

September Membership Luncheon
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The Club
11:30 a.m. doors open
Noon meeting convenes

September 26

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Hours
Soiree
5:30 p.m.

October 3

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Beeson University Center
Samford University
11 a.m.

October 15

October Membership Luncheon:
Healthcare in Homewood
The Club
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convenes at noon

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The 18th annual Holiday Open House will be held Thursday, November 7, 2019 beginning at 5 p.m. in Downtown Homewood. The merchants of 18th Street and surrounding areas invite you to kick off the holiday season with extended store hours, holiday specials, refreshments and other treats. Enjoy the sounds of the season from local musicians while you stroll through the streets, hop on the Homewood for the Holidays Trolley to be transported throughout the downtown area, and bring your little ones for a picture with Santa!

Holiday Open House draws thousands of people to the Homewood Community

each year and is one of the Chamber's most anticipated events. In addition to kicking off the holiday shopping season, Homewood for the Holidays encourages the community to shop locally in smaller boutiques closer to home — stressing the importance for holiday shoppers to support our local businesses.



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EVENT RECAP: SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE @ 5

The Homewood Chamber of Commerce and Homewood Rotary Club hosted a joint school supply drive on July 25th. The event, "Business After Hours: School Supply Drive at 5," was held at Caveat Coffee in Homewood and sponsored by Regions Bank, with the goal of collecting school supplies to be donated back to the students in the Homewood City Schools system.

Attendees of the event were encouraged to bring school supplies as a donation to the cause. An impressive display of school supply donations were received and will be directly donated to each of the schools within Homewood City School's district including: Edgewood Elementary, Hall-Kent Elementary, Shades Cahaba Elementary,



Homewood Middle and Homewood High School. Supplies donated tallied over 100 boxes of crayons, 200 glue sticks, 500 notebooks, 60 reams of paper, 100 boxes of colored pencils, 15 backpacks each filled with an assortment of supplies, 100 pairs of scissors, 100 pencil pouches, 300 pencils, 300 pens, and an assortment index cards, erasers, pencil sharpeners, and more.

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AT&T Homewood



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JH Berry Risk Services



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SUMMER READING KICKOFF

PHOTOS BY JAMES CULVER

Gutsy the Flying Fox got kids pumped up for reading with acrobatic tricks at the Homewood Public Library on May 30.

1. Lillie and Will Stogner
2. Joseph and Clementine Drwiega
3. Kate, Webb and Chase Thompson
4. Eden Livesay and Julia Fleisher
5. Anna, Lucy, Elizabeth and Charlotte Peterson
6. Derry, Ronen and Zelig B. Crawford
7. Heidi Moos, Cristina Castor, Mary Eller and Laura Tucker
8. Jaron, Erika, Callum and Everly Raper
9. Sarah Grace, Louisa and Vivianne Rogers

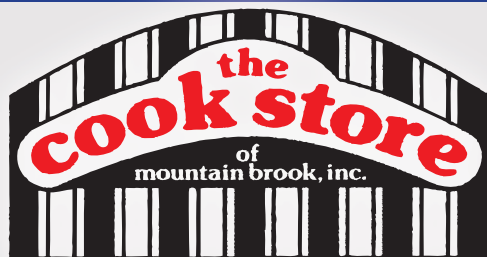
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WEST HOMEWOOD FARMER'S MARKET

PHOTOS BY KATIE ROTH

Local farmers and vendors, along with food trucks, took over the Shades Valley Community Church parking lot for the West Homewood Farmer's Market on Tuesday evenings this summer.

1. Mary Hunter Geer, Hannah Bryant and Lily Fry
2. Daniela Portillo
3. Sarah Bishop and Liz Cuenin
4. Aimee Bals, Hallie Feldman and Rebecca Feldman
5. Everett Calvert
6. Micah and Norah Phillips
7. Charlie Stokes with Harry
8. Sharon Ponder, Michelle Blackwood, Henry Hughes, Jim Johnson, Serene Johnson and Ken Blackwood
9. Meghan and Samantha Briley
10. Henry the Golden Retriever
11. Mary Evelyn Jakubik and Blair Seegers

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REBECCAWISEPHOTOGRAPHY

www.rebeccawisephoto.com
rebecca@rebeccawisephoto.com

Children's & Family Photographer

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OLS FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVAL

PHOTOS BY JAMES CULVER

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church held its annual patriotic festival on Independence Day along with its Trash 'n Treasures Sale.

1. Elizabeth Corso, Grace Annert and Maria Castellanos
2. Claire Teklitz and Katie Williams
3. Marie Swift
4. Kris, Danielle, Macks and Lydia Jaje
5. Zach and David Simmons
6. Paul and Evie Digiorgio
7. Maddie Bauman, John Grimes, and Matt and Megan Bauman
8. Adam, Miranda, Avery and Jacob Lovell
9. Jill, David, Tyler and Heidi Brayden, and Jo Pigford
10. Angel, Nixon and Olivia Macke
11. Tony Crimi, Ruby Thornton, Caroline Crimi, Frances Crimi and Georgia Thornton

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SPOTLIGHT PARTNERS: AARP Ala • CartoTracks • Golden Flake Snack Foods
 Hoover's Magazine • Jefferson Credit Union • LeafFilter North of AL
 Mountain High Outfitters • Royal Cup • Saiia • Sprouts Farmers Market

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JULY 4TH FESTIVAL

PHOTOS BY JAMES CULVER

Downtown Homewood was filled with rides, games and fun before the Fourth of July fireworks were set off from Vulcan.

1. Allison, Benjamin, Elisa and Leo Diop
2. Roy Brook
3. Brandie Price Sutton, Charlott Brim, Rhys Kraft-Cooper, Evie Kraft-Cooper, Emilie Kraft-Merchant, Meredith Brim and Andrew Brim
4. Addison, Harper, Ashton and Maghan Craig
5. Zoe Diaz
6. Julianne Naro, Laura Calero, Sophia King and Sophie Hubbert
7. Derek, Jessica, Ally and Averie Riddle
8. Diana, Peggy, Jana, and Lily Paulk with Sadie
9. Scott and Amy Creutzman, with Abby, Jacob and Allie
10. Markus, Kalli, Keyani, Ja'Lynn and Rhian Boykin

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Homewood City Schools Superintendent

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The Exceptional Foundation

This place is special to my heart. I always enjoy going over there to visit with former students and seeing all of the amazing things their participants are doing. It's always full of fun and happiness, and we are fortunate to have an organization like this in our community.

On the Trail

Shades Creek Greenway

I have two active dogs, so my family takes advantage of the greenway a lot. I'm thankful for all that our City Council has done to extend the greenway and enjoy seeing so many of our families and students out walking and running on the trail.



Always a Patriot

Homewood City Schools

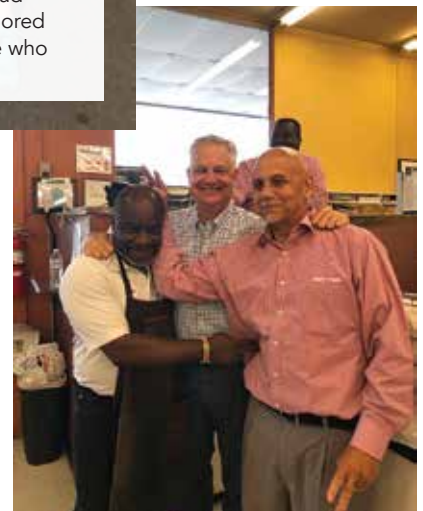
This is going to be on my list for obvious reasons—I am a proud alum, my children are graduates of Homewood, and I am honored every day to work in a system filled with such amazing people who are dedicated to helping youth reach their potential.



For a Mr. Frank Chat

The Pig

Homewood has many amazing businesses so I can't pick just one, but there is a business that I am found in a lot and that's The Pig. Every time I step foot in there, I feel like I'm surrounded by friends. Everyone needs to stop and chat with Mr. Frank every now and then.





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