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SEPTEMBER 2024

# Rising Stars



CARISSA BROWN



ROBERT DAUGHTERS



RYAN BUTLER



RYAN KOOPMANN



JAY FOUST



LAUREN CZESHINSKI



JESSIE SCHAEFER



BRANDON LYNCH



KYLE KASS



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The Rising Stars class of 2024.

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For the Twitter feed, go to [@biztimes.dbq](https://twitter.com/biztimes.dbq)

# Rising Stars class of 2024

A hearty welcome and congratulations to the Rising Stars class of 2023.

Between work duties, volunteer activities and family time, this year's class stays involved and works toward a healthy community year round.

Join us in celebrating this year's class:

- Carissa Brown, Dubuque County Public Health.
- Ryan Butler, Cottingham & Butler.
- Lauren Czeshinski, Cottingham & Butler.
- Robert Daughters, Dupaco Community Credit Union.
- Jay Foust, Gigantic Design Co.
- Kyle Kass, Honkamp, P.C.
- Ryan Koopmann, Conlon Construction.
- Brandon Lynch, Dubuque Bank & Trust.



Megan Gloss



Anthony Frenzel

- Callie Mescher-FitzGerald, Centrally Rooted.
  - Jessie Schaefer, Osterhaus Pharmacy.
  - Victoria Vail, Dog Days Dubuque.
  - Sam Wooden, RSH Legal Inc.
- Enjoy learning more about them starting on page 4.

## IT'S ALMOST TIME

The breakfast event celebrating the honorees will take place Wednesday, Sept. 18, at the Diamond Jo Casino. Watch it live at [TelegraphHerald.com](http://TelegraphHerald.com).

*Have a story idea? Interested in writing for BizTimes? Email [megan.gloss@thmedia.com](mailto:megan.gloss@thmedia.com) and [tony.frenzel@thmedia.com](mailto:tony.frenzel@thmedia.com).*

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# CARISSA BROWN

DUBUQUE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

BY SARA JORDAN-HEINTZ

**C**arissa Brown, 25, graduated from the University of Dubuque with an undergraduate degree in criminal justice and a masters degree in management-organizational diversity and inclusion leadership with the intent of becoming a change maker.

Last November, she got a job at Dubuque County Public Health as a project coordinator. Her focus: the opioid crisis.

"I think a lot of people have one image of one person that is the stereotype of drug use," Brown said. "With the opioid crisis, the accidental addiction to pain medication happens with people of all ages, and there is an increase of fentanyl in the drug supply."

Fentanyl is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine. Part of her work is ensuring those who need access to Naloxone (also known as Narcan) can get the medication. She also does presentations about how and when to use it. There have been 14 opioid overdoses in Dubuque County so far in 2024. There were 28 last year.

The Opioid Working Group, made up of community members with experience in helping people with substance use and opioid use disorders, aids Brown's efforts.

Public Health Executive Director Allie White said Brown is responsible for planning for the usage of Dubuque County's share of opioid settlement funds, which are expected to exceed \$1 million.

"Carissa consistently demonstrates leadership in the workplace by undertaking projects proactively and approaching her work positively, encouraging others to do the same," White said. "(Her) academic skillsets, combined with an authentic humanitarian mentality, make Carissa the ideal Rising Star."

Brown meets with these stakeholders to determine how the funds should be spent, making decisions based on research.



# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

“It gets presented to the Dubuque County Board of Health for approval, and once the Board of Health approves it, it moves to the Dubuque County Board of Supervisors, and then supervisors vote on the proposed plan we bring forward, and they have the final say of whether we can move forward with it or not,” Brown said.

A website was created to provide information on local treatment and recovery, prevention and harm reduction can be found at [opioid-epidemic-outreach-dbqco.hub.arcgis.com](http://opioid-epidemic-outreach-dbqco.hub.arcgis.com)

“It’s kind of a hub for figuring out what’s available in the county for what you need,” she said.

Staying physically active and spending time with family make up Brown’s downtime. Her parents are Craig and Kim Brown, with siblings Ryker, Morgan, Evan and Grifen. Her boyfriend is Carlos Sanchez.

She also earned honors during her soccer career, including the UD Women’s Soccer Best Teammate of the Year and the UD Sparty Award for Female Athlete of the Year. She gives of her time coaching for UD Mini Kickers and the Dubuque Soccer Club.

Brown volunteers with Mentors in Violence Prevention and the Dubuque Eagles’ Eyes on the Future committee. Volunteer work extends to the Red Basket Project, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Live Like Jack, Manor Care and the Hope House.

“Consistent with her desire to serve her community, a summer with AmeriCorps found Carissa helping to create safe and clean learning environments for students and staff,” White said. “Other ways in which Carissa demonstrates being a role model is by helping to create an on-campus Food Share Co-Op and

by planning, developing and facilitating a campus wide day of volunteering, with over 300 volunteers in the Dubuque community.”

Brown added that she strives to continue to open people’s minds (and change a few) to better understand drug addiction and treatment options.

“We’re working on putting a strategic plan together to put out in the community to help show people all the things we’re working towards in this working group: Our goals and the areas we want the money to go towards,” Brown said. “We want to stay connected with the people directly doing the work. They have so much knowledge and experience that I will never get because of their years of doing this work, and they have a pulse on what’s going on in the community.”

“I think a lot of people have one image of one person that is the stereotype of drug use. With the opioid crisis, the accidental addiction to pain medication happens with people of all ages, and there is an increase of fentanyl in the drug supply.”

**Carissa Brown**



# RYAN BUTLER

COTTINGHAM & BUTLER

BY DAN RUSSO

**F**rom the banks of the Mississippi River in Dubuque to the mouth of China's Yangtze River is a long way. Longer still is the distance from Shanghai to the shores of Lake Michigan in Chicago, then back to Iowa's oldest town.

Ryan Butler knows this geography better than most, as his journey to success took him to all these places.

The 38-year-old, a vice president at Cottingham & Butler, distinguished himself in other endeavors outside of Dubuque before returning to his hometown.

"My reasons for getting into the insurance business were two-fold," Butler said. "I received my MBA at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of management. Many of the alumni work in the insurance industry. I quickly realized it's an incredible industry. There's also opportunity for growth. I think 50% of the workforce will be gone (to retirement) in the next 10 to 15 years."

After achieving success building a career in real estate investment and finance, Butler said another factor in his decision to enter the insurance industry was the opportunity to become a contributor to Cottingham & Butler and work with his family.

The firm was founded in 1887 in Dubuque and has become the third largest privately held insurance brokerage firm in the country. Ryan Butler marks the sixth generation of family working at Cottingham & Butler, and he gets a lot of joy working closely with his father, Andy, and grandfather, John, who is still active and was the third employee at the firm when he joined in 1957.

The company, traditionally known for being a broker and consultant in transportation and trucking, has been expanding its reach lately, due in large part to Butler's contributions. He has focused on developing new "verticals" or business niches in which his company can provide services.

"Ryan has led the development of three significant new verticals: Food/at business, construction and manufacturing," explained Cottingham & Butler Senior Vice President Dean Fair. "For the past few years these verticals, (our non-trucking P&C (property and casualty) insurance has been the fastest growing part of (Cottingham & Butler). This business has more than doubled in the past five years."



# Rising Stars 2024

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# Rising Stars 2024

Butler uses his research and people skills to achieve exceptional results, according to Fair.

“We are winning business not by bidding or being the lowest price, but rather by offering insight and better solutions to drive long-term cost savings,” Fair said. “Ryan has built a division focused on delivering for the client. Ryan has made significant hires and new additions to the team. He has a good eye for talent and loves to coach and develop his players. Ryan started by personally leading a vertical, then has transitioned one of his prodigies into a leadership position.”

Butler’s wide range of experiences before joining his current firm are unique. For example, from 2008 to 2011, he worked for a British company called Savills. He established the first cross-border investment operation for that firm in Shanghai, China.

From 2015 to 2018, Butler lived in Chicago, serving as a vice president for AmWins Group. He worked in special risk underwriting, which is a part of the insurance industry that focuses on unusual hazards that are not normally covered by other insurers. While there, he won employee of the year. Since 2011, Butler has been involved in a real estate enterprise based in Davenport called Treetop Properties. The company provides housing to college and graduate students in the Quad Cities.

Outside of work, Butler is an active volunteer. He serves on the advisory board for the University of Iowa Vaughan institute, helping to grow the newly formed risk management program. In addition, Butler has various speaking and mentoring engagements for the program.

He also is an adviser to Brain Health Now, a grassroots organization dedicat-

ed to ending the stigma surrounding the term mental health. Butler is a student mentor at Northwestern Kellogg School of Management. Each semester, he spends time with a group of students to advise and guide them as they plan their MBA and post MBA careers.

“I get a lot of fulfillment and joy in helping others,” Butler said. “I was blessed to have a good education and have some really good mentors. It’s not just about earning a paycheck. You have to use your skills to benefit others in the community.”

The young insurance broker’s work ethic is well known to his colleagues. According to Dean Fair, “the harder (Butler) works, the more energy he gets, and that is contagious.”

He has no plans to slow down.

“I hope I can keep being a valued contributor hopefully for the next 50 years or more,” Butler said.



## CONGRATULATIONS **RYAN** 2024 RISING STAR

Your visionary leadership and remarkable impact at Cottingham & Butler, throughout our industry, and within our community inspire us all.

We deeply admire your innovative spirit and unwavering commitment to excellence.



Cottingham & Butler

# LAUREN CZESHINSKI

## COTTINGHAM & BUTLER

BY DAN RUSSO

**I**n her professional life and volunteer activities Lauren Czeshinski tries to embody the motto of the company she loves: “Better every day.”

The 27-year-old is a senior market consultant at Cottingham & Butler, a major insurance broker based in Dubuque.

“I start every day with the mindset of ‘Today is a big day’ — every day matters,” Czeshinski said. “Your attitude, your work ethic, how you treat yourself, your team and your clients — matters. I get energy from the people around me and the challenges of the day that are presented. Finding innovative and creative solutions to problems our clients and teammates face motivates me to get better, think differently and work harder. If you can find a way to become a part of something bigger than yourself, you will wake up every day motivated and inspired, willing to work hard.”

Czeshinski studied marketing and public relations as an undergraduate student.

“I was actually part of the mock interview competition at Loras College my freshman year when I first encountered C&B,” she said. “We did it for class credit, but ended up winning the dang thing. The (Cottingham & Butler) representative wanted to hire me that next summer, but after realizing I was only 18 and in my first year of college, told me to call them the following summer for an official spot in their program.”

Czeshinski was hired on as a sales intern in the employee benefits section of Cottingham & Butler. She spent two summers there and worked part time throughout the rest of her years at Loras, learning the business and building relationships. She was hired on full time in June 2019.

“I am surrounded by very passionate, driven and innovative teammates who are constantly pushing the industry and market forward to better serve our clients every day,” she said.

In time Czeshinski has gathered a group of friends and co-workers around her that cultivate adventure and community spirit.

“(Lauren) exudes Cottingham & Butler’s mission of being ‘better every day’ in both the internal work she does there and within the community work she is a part of,” said Danielle Leibfried, president and CEO of United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States, a nonprofit organization with which Czeshinski regularly volunteers.

Czeshinski was a major force behind the Barriers Project, part of an annual holiday drive that also supports Opening doors and Toys for Tots. She also supports United Way’s clothes closet program. The main closet is at Northeast Iowa Community College and there are closets at some of the schools, as well. The main goal is to break down barriers for children that keep them from going to school and being successful in the classroom.

“We’re giving them access to the food, clean clothes that fit and bus passes,” Czeshinski said.

One of the boldest activities Czeshinski has thrown herself into is to strategically build up Cottingham & Butler’s “Over the Edge” team for the United Way’s major fundraiser. Teams from around the area rappel down buildings in Dubuque to raise money for the United Way. This year’s event will take place Friday, Sept. 13, at the Midwest One Bank Building.



# Rising Stars 2024

Contributed



# Rising Stars 2024

Going from year one where Czeshinski fundraised and rappelled, to year five, where their goal is to raise more than \$40,000 with 26 new, cross-departmental staff is the goal, according to Leibfried.

Czeshinski has been on the United Way marketing committee for about eight years and served on the executive committee as marketing committee chair for the past three years.

“Outside of the staff and board being some of the most genuine, passionate and high energy people, I love the work they do,” Czeshinski said about her work with United Way. “I love that the mission connects to all

people in need as well as all donors looking to support a cause they’re passionate about.”

She also served on the Foundation for Dubuque Public Schools board, most recently as the board chair.

“I see Lauren supporting so many of our local charities by attending their galas, their open houses and their fundraising events, and bringing friends with her to support them and their missions,” Leibfried said. “Lauren is an active community leader and all who know her, adore her and admire her energy. We would be lost without her support and the connections she helps us make.”

Czeshinski is committed to giving back to

the community for the long haul.

“My mom (Sue Hafkemeyer) has always been involved in the Dubuque community and taught us at a young age how important it is to be part of the solution to making our community stronger not just for today, but into the future for the next generation,” Czeshinski said. “I try to fulfill this by working hard for Cottingham & Butler and supporting the nonprofit community financially, giving back my time and most importantly bringing others along to teach the philanthropic spirit and provide opportunities for them to be part of something bigger than themselves.”

## Congratulations, Lauren

Rising Star, class of 2024.

Thank you for all that you do to make Dubuque a better place to live!



*Lauren*  
2024 RISING STAR

They say stars shine brightest when they shine for others, and Lauren is a perfect example of this.

Your community spirit and values make us proud. Congratulations!



Cottingham & Butler

# ROBERT DAUGHTERS

## DUPACO COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

BY KATIE LINK

**R**obert Daughters is a self-starter. His story is a testament to the power of mentorship, critical thinking and the drive to make a positive impact on others. Upon reflecting on his college years, Daughters speaks fondly of those who impacted him.

"I had a lot of impactful professors while at college," Daughters said. "People who mentored me and taught me how to think critically about things and how to express my thoughts and work with other people."

With an educational foundation in theology, Daughters developed a deep understanding of how to uncover meaning through texts.

"I studied Greek and Hebrew," Daughters said. "It taught me a lot about how to derive meaning from writing. I use that quite a bit in the work that I do now."

This established the framework for how Daughters approached problems and encouraged him to keep thinking forward.

"I am trying to figure out ways to take pretty complex ideas and express them as simply as possible for a pretty wide audience," Daughters said.

After college, he got married, and he and his wife moved to Dallas, Texas, where he was a barista while she was getting her graduate degree. After those three years, they moved back to Dubuque, and Daughters got hired at Dupaco Community Credit Union in 2014.

"I was hired as a teller in 2014," Daughters said. "I had no experience in banking or financial services, but I had an amazing group of people at the branch where I was working. They recognized right away that I had a lot of potential."

Once Daughters started to find his place at Dupaco, he began getting new opportunities beyond being a teller.



Dave Kettering

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

Once he was well-versed in all of the jobs within the branch, he got promoted to a managerial role for a new help desk department in 2016.

“I was one of two people brought into that department,” Daughters said. “My manager saw a lot in me, and within a year I was leading that department, which was a huge milestone for me because I was leading others in addition to being responsible for my job responsibilities.”

Today, Daughters has led and managed many teams and projects at Dupaco, where he has implemented lots of new ideas. But he finds that helping others is by far the most rewarding at the end of the day.

“It is truly what keeps me motivated

and excited about my work,” Daughters said. “When I was working directly with our credit union members, I had the opportunity to talk with them about their needs and goals.”

Chris Maiers, project management vice president at Dupaco, nominated Daughters for Rising Stars.

“But here’s the heart of it all: Robert’s genuine care for others. He listens, empathizes and organizes — traits that set him apart,” Maiers said. “He’s a self-starter, eager to learn and share insights. His passion for positive change fuels his advocacy. Robert’s story isn’t about fame — it’s about lifting others. His remarkable dedication, leadership and community spirit make him a beacon. Recognizing Robert isn’t just an award. It’s acknowledging the

profound impact one person can have.”

Beyond his role at Dupaco, Daughters also is committed to his community. He volunteers as a Transit Advisory Board chairman for the City of Dubuque, a school mentor for Dubuque Community Schools and Northeast Iowa chapter president for the Iowa Credit Union League.

Daughters’ story is one of growth, mentorship and dedication to helping others. His story proves that true leadership is not about seeking recognition but about making a lasting, positive impact on those around you.

As he continues to shape his community and inspire those he leads, Daughters embodies the essence of what it means to lift others, leaving a legacy that goes far beyond his professional achievements.

“I am trying to figure out ways to take pretty complex ideas and express them as simply as possible for a pretty wide audience.”

**Robert Daughters**

## Congratulations, **Robert Daughters**

on your rocketing ascent  
to become a Rising Star!



ROBERT JOINS THE UNIVERSE OF DUPACO



Todd Link



Matt Dodds



Tanya Moore



Bob Wethal



Danielle Gratton



Lisa Bowers

RISING STARS ALUMNI



Jill Schweikert



Jennifer Hanniford



Andrew Houy



Meggan Heacock



R.J. Montes



Andy Schroeder



Ellen Goodman-Miller



Katie McClain



Sailu Aryal

# JAY FOUST

GIGANTIC  
DESIGN  
CO.

BY SARA JORDAN-HEINTZ

**S**torytelling doesn't always come in the form of books, song lyrics, films or the spoken word. It also can materialize through digital branding.

Jay Foust, 38, director of digital experience at Gigantic Design Co., said his work begins with gathering information about his clients.

"If I can better understand who they are and who they're trying to reach, then I can ultimately do my job — which is to help them articulate who they are and reach more people, sell their products, sell their services and grow their business," he said. "It's more of a branding thing that we do, but all of that lives through some sort of digital experience; that might be a website, obviously, it could be through a social channel, a digital marketing campaign, email campaigns, that kind of stuff."

Foust was the first employee Gigantic hired, back in 2015.

"Throughout that time, Jay has managed the design, development and maintenance of nearly 100 websites for local, regional and national clients," said Tom Culbertson, is a partner at Gigantic. "Jay's ability to solve and articulate complicated web business problems has turned our upstart agency into a leading provider of web services in the greater Dubuque area."

Foust appreciates being recognized as a Rising Star, but likens his job to participating in a team sport.

"To be individually honored is great, but I think it's a group of people — the people I work with, people that I do community efforts with — that's what the whole thing's about," he said. "I care a lot about what I do and the people I work with, and the clients and partners that we have at Gigantic and being a part of the arts community."

He was instrumental in helping All Together organize its brand so artists can find venues and organizations and people can browse an artist directory. Foust is on the Arts Passion Team for Dubuque Forward and helps to promote First Fridays. In addition, he sets up displays and installs art at the Dubuque Area Arts Collective.

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

Notably, he is the creative mind behind Julien's Flag.

"There's a lot of forward moving progress in Dubuque. You can feel it. There's just a lot of growth in the community through economic development, private sector — people in the community that are starting to lift it up by creating events and all that kind of stuff. I was trying to figure out how, as a designer, I could add my voice to that," he said.

He delved into vexillology (the study of flags) to ensure his blue-

print would be culturally and historically relevant.

"It's not an official city flag," Foust said. "It's not sanctioned, but we're calling it the unofficial, official flag. It's a grassroots campaign. We're trying to get people in the community to buy it and fly it."

Foust continues to give back by mentoring at his alma mater, the University of Dubuque, offering guidance about the design and web development industry.

"A strategic and thoughtful leader, Jay not only leads his

team of developers, but even more impressively, makes the process of scoping, designing and developing websites a pleasurable experience for clients," Culbertson said. "He is always the first to raise his hand and lead others through complicated and challenging web problems with the patience of a seasoned professor."

Foust has a 7-year-old daughter named Hazel and his girlfriend/partner Ivonne Simmonds Fals has a 12-year-old son, Theo.

"To be individually honored is great, but I think it's a group of people — the people I work with, people that I do community efforts with — that's what the whole thing's about. I care a lot about what I do and the people I work with, and the clients and partners that we have at Gigantic and being a part of the arts community."

Jay Foust



**We know a rising star when we see it.**

Cheers to all the things that make **Jay Foust**, Digital Experience Director at Gigantic Design Co., one of Dubuque's best and brightest.

**Gigantic.**<sup>®</sup>  
design.com

# KYLE KASS

HONKAMP,  
P.C.

BY DAN RUSSO

**I**t was in Dick Streit's classroom at Dubuque Wahlert Catholic High School that Kyle Kass first got the notion that he wanted to pursue accounting as a career. "Dick brought the appeal to the profession by allowing us students to jam out to the Beatles, Buddy Holly and other classics as we practiced the basics of debits and credits," Kass said. "This baseline course also provided insight that accounting provides a uniform financial language for individuals and businesses. While this was the initial appeal for a high school student just trying to make decisions about what to do with his life, this appeal was reinforced through my continued education through the accounting program at UNI and internship experiences."

In the roughly two decades since high school, the Dubuque native, now 38, has become a rising star in his field. Kass worked for a decade in the Twin Cities for one of the largest accounting firms in the country. He and his family moved back to Dubuque when he joined Honkamp, P.C., in February 2020. Kass is one of the firm's five shareholders, (formerly known as partners) in the assurance department, which serves hundreds of clients. He also leads his company's manufacturing industry team.

"I personally serve more than 20 clients per year," Kass said. "I thoroughly enjoy the day-in and day-out variety of work experiences, which involve serving clients of different sizes, in different industries and with different personalities."

Honkamp Senior Audit Manager Casey Winkleblack said Kyle's leadership is demonstrated when "he helps bring calmness and stability to engagement teams when they are working on jobs.

"Kyle does a great job of presenting what the ideal auditor should act like, both to clients and with his engagement teams, at all times," Winkleblack said.

Kass believes athletics is one of the reasons for his success.



Dave Kettering

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

“As an individual that grew up with five siblings and played neighborhood or organized sport in most of my free time, I developed a competitive spirit,” he said. “And while when I was younger that competitive spirit drove me to ‘be better’ than others, that mindset has shifted a bit as I’ve progressed in my personal and professional life. This competitive nature keeps me motivated now in that I want to ‘be better’ than any previous version of myself. I challenge myself to be a better version of myself today than I was yesterday, and push myself in areas of personal weakness to achieve the same.”

Kass routinely goes the extra mile for the people in his firm.

For example, he played a key role in getting other staff to record “learning library” explanatory videos that younger staff could view. Honkamp Shareholder Laura Hoss was among those who described Kyle as being viewed as a role model. She said his passion for sharing

knowledge with staff, interns and clients resonates with his colleagues and shows his dedication to the profession.

Outside of work, Kass coaches his daughters in T-ball and joined the board of directors for 100+ Men Who Care in 2021. The charity’s members routinely make donations to a variety of local non-profit organizations. Recent President Kole Wagner said that, as a member of the board, Kass provides feedback that has helped the group attract more men willing to donate \$100 per quarter. Kass is also active with Two By Two Character Development, another local nonprofit that helps youth.

“I feel very fortunate to have a rewarding job and a happy, healthy family,” Kass said. “Many of our local not-for-profit organizations serve those individuals in need who are not as fortunate to have the same. These organizations strengthen the local community in which we work, live and play.”

“Similarly, coaching my young daughters and their teammates allows me to teach them the basics of the games, but also develop life skills such as teamwork, work ethic, ability to respond to loss. I find a lot of joy in seeing them achieve their goals together and growing from week to week at an important developmental age in their life.”

Kass advises students seeking career success to get involved in the community, to use experiences to learn and to embrace change.

“Be intentional in observing and mimicking the behaviors of those that you admire,” Kass said. “In my career, when I’ve identified that I have an area for growth (and) improvement, I’ve found tremendous benefit in intentionally identifying and observing another individual that possesses that skill that I’ve lacked. Observing and mimicking these actions and behaviors has helped me to develop my own skill set.”



KYLE KASS • HONKAMP SHAREHOLDER

HONKAMP CONGRATULATES

## KYLE KASS

ON HIS RECOGNITION AS A

### 2024 RISING STAR



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# RYAN KOOPMANN

## CONLON CONSTRUCTION

BY KATIE LINK

**R**yan Koopmann is not only passionate about construction, but also community.

In the past 13 years, Koopmann has built a strong reputation in the construction industry, particularly with his long-standing role as a project manager at Conlon Construction. But his journey began long before he joined the company, with internships that laid the foundation for his success.

"I was able to take advantage of internships each summer," Koopmann said, reflecting on the early days of his career. "It gave me the opportunity to see a lot of different companies."

Those internships provided Koopmann with an insight into the industry and gave him a diverse skillset he could later use when starting his career post-college.

"I started with Conlon when I graduated from school," Koopmann said. "And I have been very fortunate to be with them for the last 13 years."

Thirteen years at one company is no small feat, especially in an industry as dynamic and challenging as construction. It is a clear indication that what Koopmann found in Conlon Construction was not just a job, but a place where he could grow and make a meaningful impact.

In his early years at the company, Koopmann spent most of that time on the road.

"During my time at Conlon, I spent my first five years on the road working on some of our casino projects," Koopmann said.

Not only were these projects large in scale, but they provided Koopmann with a great amount of experience.

After his time on the road, Koopmann returned to Dubuque, where he immersed himself in the community.

When reflecting on his career, it is not only about the projects but the clients he gets to work with.

"I get to work on something new every day," Koopmann said. "I am able to work with some phenomenal clients that make the jobs that I work on quite fun."



Dave Kettering

# Rising Stars 2024



# Rising Stars 2024

Each project brings its unique challenge, and Koopmann’s team helps ease those difficulties by bringing expertise, dedication and a collaborative approach to every job.

“The team that I am surrounded by is very talented and devoted to what we do,” Koopmann said. “It is pretty rewarding all the way around.”

Becky Conlon, executive vice president at Conlon Construction, nominated Koopmann for the Rising Star Award.

“Ryan is a valued and welcome member of the Conlon team,” Conlon said. “He can be counted on to act with the highest of ethical standards at all times. Ryan demonstrates humility by sharing responsibility for a project’s success, but also taking responsibility for any setbacks

that may occur.”

Conlon also shared how Koopmann demonstrates leadership day to day.

“Ryan is flexible and open to change, often taking on the role of spearheading and facilitating new initiatives, troubleshooting software adaptations and offering unique solutions to issues that arise,” Conlon said. “He was instrumental in organizing monthly project management operations meetings and took the lead in the creation and adaptation of an internal, cross-functional process improvement project. Ryan encourages continuous learning and professional development within the team.”

In addition to his construction work, Koopmann is a dedicated community volunteer. He’s an active member of the

Dyersville Volunteer Fire Department and a certified emergency medical responder. He also shares his construction skills on the building and grounds committee at the Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville, Iowa, coaches T-ball and helps out on race day for the Grandview Gallop.

Koopmann is both a driven businessman and a devoted family man. His dedication extends beyond his professional achievements, reflecting a strong balance between his career and family values.

From his early internships to his current role at Conlon Construction, he has continuously embraced new challenges and opportunities for growth. Koopmann shines bright not only as a leader in the construction industry, but as an engaged member of his community.

“I get to work on something new every day. I am able to work with some phenomenal clients that make the jobs that I work on quite fun.”

Ryan Koopmann

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# BRANDON LYNCH

## DUBUQUE BANK & TRUST

BY SARA JORDAN-HEINTZ

**B**randon Lynch, 36, could be classified as a Renaissance man. He's a musician and composer, has a purple belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and a brown belt in Judo, is a dedicated community volunteer — and at his day job — works as a business banker at Dubuque Bank & Trust.

"His dedication to strengthening communities and paving paths to success sets a new standard," said his boss, Scott Steiner. "He spends a lot of time working in the community through various fundraisers, charitable events and always has his customers' best interests at heart. I think he brings a lot to the table with creative ideas for them, whether it's a startup, existing business, how they can expand and better ways to run their businesses. I think he does a very good job of getting to know his customers and working with them."

But banking wasn't Lynch's first career path. He graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in finance, and as he explains it, "cut his teeth" at Prudential Retirement. His wife, Stacy, encouraged him to pursue a job in banking.

"It was her words that guided me into that path and guided me into an organization that ended up being a really good fit," he said. "I've been at Dubuque Bank & Trust about eight years."

His listens to his clients' goals and needs to ensure success.

"Brandon is the epitome of leadership," Steiner said. "He is passionate, dedicated and has a strong moral backbone. Brandon is an exemplary figure; his work ethic and resilience never ceases to amaze us. Always ready to volunteer and face challenges with a bright outlook, he is not just a role model to his coworkers, but to the community as well."

Outside of the office, he keeps an impressive schedule. He participated in the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce's Dubuque Dances with the Stars, raising funds for Centrally Rooted.

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

“Brandon is a stellar example of an involved community member and a recent Leadership Dubuque graduate,” Steiner added. “From participating actively at the Chamber of Young Professionals, volunteering at National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and Dubuque Museum of Art, to soon joining the Dubuque Main Street board of directors, he consistently takes strides toward making a difference in his community.”

Lynch, a native of Dubuque, said

he’s proud of his hometown and wants to see it continue to prosper.

“The drive for me personally is being able to see the organizations we have in town grow and become amenities for everyone in Dubuque,” he noted. “I think it’s important we have nice things in Dubuque for us to do, and anything that I can contribute is an easy one for me to cling to.”

He’s done Jiu-Jitsu for about 15 years, and also excels at Judo and catch wrestling. He teaches child

and adult fundamentals classes at Dubuque Jiu-Jitsu. As a hobby, he also drums and plays electronic/synthesizer instruments. He and wife are parents to 5-year-old son Theodore.

These varied interests, he says, help him stay well rounded, both for physical health and mental well-being.

“Those are my escapes: family, music and Jiu-Jitsu,” he said. “For head space and growth those are important — physical fitness and mental wellness and creativity.”

“The drive for me personally is being able to see the organizations we have in town grow and become amenities for everyone in Dubuque,” he noted. “I think it’s important we have nice things in Dubuque for us to do, and anything that I can contribute is an easy one for me to cling to.”

**Brandon Lynch**



**Brandon Lynch**  
AVP, Business Banker

Dubuque Bank & Trust congratulates

# Brandon Lynch

on being named a 2024 **Rising Star!**



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**Kevin Finke**  
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Banker



**Nick Patrum**  
SVP, Commercial  
Banking Team Lead



**Stacey Hines**  
Senior Wealth Advisor,  
Market Leader

# CALLIE CENTRALLY MESCHER- ROOTED FITZGERALD

BY SARA JORDAN-HEINTZ

**C**allie Mescher-FitzGerald, 38, wants people to feel belonging and acceptance. She believes music therapy can help develop coping skills, emotional regulation, empathy and positive self-talk.

Mescher-FitzGerald is a board-certified music therapist and the founder of Mindful Musicians, a curriculum offered at her business Centrally Rooted, which she established in 2021.

A native of Cascade, Iowa, she earned an undergrad degree in music education and vocal performance from Clarke University. Her master's from Colorado State University is in music therapy, with certification in neurologic music therapy.

"I've always been fascinated by what motivates people and why, and human behavior — that sort of thing," she said "So combining my two loves of music and psychology was an absolute dream come true, especially to be able to do it in a neurologic way, because that brings some credibility more so to the profession."

Centrally Rooted was launched at a time, she says, people were struggling with isolation and mental health due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision to open it at 2230 Central Ave. in Dubuque's north end was intentional.

"We wanted to impact an area of town that was lower income and needed some sort of resources within walking distance," she noted.

It opened with a scholarship fund in place to help cover costs of classes for people who couldn't afford them otherwise.

Jill Klinebriel, chair, communications manager and Mindful Musicians teacher, said Mescher-FitzGerald earned nonprofit status for the business within a year of opening to increase the number of people she could serve.

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

“Callie is an effective, empathetic and strong leader,” Klinebriel said. “She exemplifies the work ethic she expects from others while also seeing each team member as a human being who experiences challenges as well as triumphs. Callie holds weekly team meetings to check in with the team, not only with relation to the business, but to check in with them personally. Callie is a great delegator who easily assigns meaningful work to every team member, giving them a sense of autonomy and achievement.”

Exploration labs are free and open to the public. (Those age 11 and younger must be accompanied by an adult).

“Those are a Montessori approach, play-based learning. One room is art and the other area is music,” she said.

Mindful Musicians is an eight-week program for ages 0 to 6, with a caregiver.

“I’ve taken my music therapy education and written a program so that we are positively impacting brain health of kids from the littlest age,” Mescher-FitzGerald said. “Even my newborn could attend these classes.”

About 120 students per week take private music lessons, which are structured around self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Classes also are offered in the evening, as well as programming and presentations.

“I’m the only board certified music therapist on staff right now. We’re hoping that will change in the next year,” Mescher-FitzGerald said.

She also offers ongoing outreach programs to youth in Dubuque Montessori School, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Dubuque, Young-Uns Preschool & Child Care Center, Key West Early Learning Center, Parents as Teachers and MOPS. Yoga classes also are hosted for Hills & Dales.

Mescher-FitzGerald is an active volunteer in the community, as well. Twice per month, she leads music therapy workshops at the partial hospitalization program at MercyOne. She donates time to free community outdoor yoga in the summer to provide music with B-1 yoga and supports several outdoor community

events.

Last year, she started the Pianos on Parade fundraiser that provided music to the public and benefited Centrally Rooted’s scholarship families.

“People really need to know that they are enough, just as they are and you are exactly where you’re supposed to be on your path,” she said. “I think that once we all start questioning that within ourselves, that’s when we start to get into trouble. And so my goal is to create a community where we’re supporting people through their life in creative ways, but that it’s also very applicable to their non-creative life, just their everyday life.”

Mescher-FitzGerald said her business would never have come together without support from her husband, Kyle.

“None of this would have happened without him. He’s the one who heard my vision when it just lived in my head and made sure it was brought to life,” she noted.

They have a 6-year-old daughter, Ruby, and newborn daughter, Selah.

“I’ve always been fascinated by what motivates people and why, and human behavior — that sort of thing,” she said  
 “So combining my two loves of music and psychology was an absolute dream come true, especially to be able to do it in a neurologic way, because that brings some credibility more so to the profession.”

**Callie Mescher-Fitzgerald**



# JESSIE SCHAEFER

## OSTERHAUS PHARMACY

BY DAN RUSSO

**W**hether it's assisting hospice patients in their final days or caring for families trying to overcome addiction, pharmacist Jessie Schaefer is used to taking on tough challenges.

She played a key role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has been in charge of day-to-day operations at Osterhaus Pharmacy in Maquoketa, Iowa, since 2022. The 32-year-old approaches her leadership roles with a healthy dose of determination.

"I think it's important to share your gifts with others and to try and make the community even better," she said. "Health care is complex, and many people need help with it. It is incredibly rewarding to help someone improve their life by improving their health."

Schaefer joined Osterhaus Pharmacy as a post-graduate resident in 2017. The business serves long-term care, hospice, homebound and community patients, according to Matt Osterhaus, a colleague who works with Schaefer. She has built collaborative relationships with other providers, governmental agencies and community groups to better serve the health care needs of the community.

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

“Jessie brings a can-do attitude to every project or interaction she is involved in,” Osterhaus said. “She has mentored students from high school age to recent pharmacy graduates on the impactful role pharmacists play in our health care system. She has a laser focus on lifting every member of the team to achieve their full potential. She is a patient listener and a lifelong learner. She does a great job of balancing fun with the work that needs to be done.”

Schaefer partners with the Jackson County Prevention Coalition to educate people about substance abuse and get patients and their loved ones the resources they need. Schaefer also volunteers with the Jackson County Regional Health Center Diabetes Education Center.

“The diabetes education team at our Jackson County Regional Health Center offers one-on-one and group education to help patients manage their diabetes,” she said. “I have had the pleasure of serving on the board for this team. I have enjoyed working with the health care team of doctors, nurses and dieticians to optimize medications and help meet patients’ goals.

“Helping patients to use and understand their diabetic meters has been rewarding to see the changes patients can make if they are given the appropriate tools and understanding,” Schaefer said.

Schaefer felt called to her profession early in life.

“I always knew I wanted to work in the health care field so I could help people,” she said. “As a teenager, my local

pharmacist was incredibly helpful and knowledgeable about my medications. It sparked curiosity in me about how medicine worked. I started working in a pharmacy a few years later and earned my doctorate in pharmacy.”

Schaefer is the youngest member of the Maquoketa Rotary Club, where she has served as treasurer and board member. She also volunteers with the local hospice organization. She encourages young people to “find a mentor and get involved in the community.”

“(Schaefer) is an active member of our local, state and national pharmacy organizations and she inspires others to be active also,” Osterhaus said. “Jessie integrates her volunteer time for the benefit of our community and is a part of the fabric of her life.”

“The diabetes education team at our Jackson County Regional Health Center offers one-on-one and group education to help patients manage their diabetes. I have had the pleasure of serving on the board for this team. I have enjoyed working with the health care team of doctors, nurses and dieticians to optimize medications and help meet patients’ goals.”

**Jessie Schaefer**



# VICTORIA DOG DAYS DUBUQUE VAIL

BY KATIE LINK

**V**ictoria Vail finds joy in every wagging tail. Vail's journey started with a deep love for animals, a passion that influenced her childhood and shaped her early dreams.

"I grew up liking animals and was always told, 'You should be a vet,'" Vail said.

Taking that advice to heart, she set out on the path to becoming a veterinarian.

After graduation, Vail moved back to Dubuque to pursue a career in the veterinary field. But she quickly found she was called to do something different.

"I was not sure what I wanted to do with my life," Vail said. "I worked in a vet's clinic for about a year while still figuring things out."

During that time, Vail started to develop a business plan for what would eventually become Dog Days Dubuque, a daycare, training and enrichment center for dogs. As she worked on her plan, everything started to click into place, especially once she secured a location for her budding business.

"I put my all into getting the business up and running," Vail said, reflecting on the intense effort she poured into her new journey.



Dave Kettering

# Rising Stars 2024



# Rising Stars 2024

Dog Days Dubuque quickly gained popularity within its first year. However, the path to success was not without its challenges. When her business partner decided to go a separate way, Vail faced the daunting task of taking on the entire business by herself.

“That was a scary step for me to take it all on my own,” Vail shared.

Despite her initial fear, Vail embraced the challenge, learning to manage the business. Over time, she created a team of employees, which allowed her to take a step back from daily operations and concentrate on expanding the company.

But what Vail finds most rewarding isn't just the business success — it's watching the dogs grow and thrive under her care.

“Building the relationships with the dogs, clients and my employees has probably been the most rewarding,” Vail said.

Many of the dogs at Dog Days Dubuque have been with Vail since they were puppies, growing up alongside her business. Some have been regulars since the very first day the doors opened.

“At least 30% to 40% have been with me since the beginning,” Vail said.

Lauren Minert, human resources manager at Kunkle & Associates, nominated Vail for Rising Stars.

“Victoria's leadership extends beyond operational improvements,” Minert said. “She has fostered a culture of excellence and compassion among her staff, who are trained to provide the highest level of care and attention to each dog. Her commitment to continuous improvement and customer satisfaction has resulted in a thriving business with a waiting list of dogs eager to join. Victoria's ability to adapt and grow her business while maintaining a personal touch is a testament to her leadership and dedication.”

In addition to her business, Vail also is the founder of “Dog Mom Club,” where she organizes events that educate and engage dog owners, with proceeds often benefiting local organizations like the Dubuque Regional Humane Society. She also is heavily involved with Secondhand Soulmates, a nonprofit animal rescue in

Iowa, where she not only fosters dogs, but also collaborates on events to promote adoption and support the organization's mission.

“One notable initiative Victoria created is a community bingo card designed to showcase dog-friendly locations and support local businesses,” Minert said. “This summer event saw participation from over 100 people. Activities included taking dogs for a walk at Mines of Spain and enjoying \$1 off a drink at the Yardarm (Riverfront Bar & Grill) when accompanied by a dog. This event not only promoted local businesses but also fostered community engagement.”

As Vail reflects on her journey, she is filled with gratitude for the support system that has surrounded her.

“I am grateful for my friends and family, staff members and all the clients and dogs that come to me,” Vail said. “I do not think I would be where I am today without them.”

“Building the relationships with the dogs, clients and my employees has probably been the most rewarding.”

**Victoria Vail**



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# SAM WOODEN

RSH LEGAL INC.

BY KATIE LINK

**S**am Wooden, 38, has a passion for people.

Coming from the small town of Scales Mound, Ill., where the act of service was manifest throughout the town, Wooden's passion for helping others was deeply rooted not only in his hometown, but also in his undergraduate days at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa.

"Buena Vista's motto is 'Education For Service,' and I really took that to heart," Wooden said. "The reason we go to get education is to help and serve other people."

Wooden's career has taken many turns. Starting in Nashville, Tenn., where he balanced criminal defense and environmental law with a part-time role in music management. Then, he returned to Dubuque in 2016 to work at a local law firm, which lasted until 2021. He then focused on his campaign for county attorney. Though he came up short in the general election, that ultimately paved the path to his current position at RSH Legal Inc.

A fellow attorney at RSH Legal, Ben Long, nominated Wooden for Rising Stars.

"From the time he graduated from law school, Sam has shown a willingness to take risks and gamble on himself," Long said. "He exemplifies in his actions what it takes to develop a plan and chase it to its bitter end. I know firsthand that many lawyers around Iowa see Sam as an example of how to take on the practice of law without fear or hesitation."



Dave Kettering

# Rising Stars 2024

# Rising Stars 2024

Wooden also gives his time to various volunteer groups. He served on the Dubuque Housing Commission for more than five years and has volunteered since 2020 delivering food for the Dubuque Area Labor Harvest. He also has been on the boards at Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa, assisting with the Housing Helpline; Northeast Iowa School of Music; and the Galena Art and Recreation Center. He was recently elected vice president of the Dubuque County Bar Association.

Wooden also was nominated by Dubuque County Magistrate Natalia Blaskovich.

“Sam has an outstanding history of representing clients who have been in-

jured, discriminated against and are requiring strong, zealous advocacy,” Blaskovich said. “He has taken many cases that may not result in a profit for him, but have a strong impact on those he represents and the community. He balances his very successful trial practice with representing accused defendants through the court-appointed system. He’s also taken a number of pro bono cases that have had a significant impact, such as challenging noncompete clauses for minimum wage employees.”

Wooden says his family — wife, Sarah Cassella, and sons, Jasper and Graham — is greatly influential. His wife he says, “is the smartest, caring, compassionate, passionate and forgiving person ... Which

inspires me to try and live up to the example that she sets for our kids and myself.”

Throughout his career, Wooden reflects on what is rewarding about his profession.

“When I know I have made a difference in a person’s life or given them some sort of closer,” Wooden said. “The hugs I have received in a courtroom can only be compared to the ones given by my Grandma.”

From advocating for clients to supporting his community, Sam Wooden’s commitment to making a difference is undeniable. His journey, driven by resilience and purpose, demonstrates that true success lies in helping others with integrity and compassion.

“When I know I have made a difference in a person’s life or given them some sort of closer. The hugs I have received in a courtroom can only be compared to the ones given by my Grandma.”

**Sam Wooden**



The logo for bizTIMES features the word 'biz' in a lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by 'TIMES' in a larger, uppercase, serif font. A small play button icon is positioned between the 'i' and 'z' of 'biz'. The entire logo is set against a dark blue rectangular background.

Story suggestion?

Want to write for biztimes.biz?

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### Business After Hours



Stephen Gassman

The Business After Hours was hosted by Dubuque Area Landlords Association at Dubuque Shooting Society.



Attendees mingle during Business After Hours.

Business After Hours took place on Aug. 20.



An attendee enters the building for Business After Hours.



The Business After Hours was hosted by Dubuque Area Landlords Association.

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## BIZ LOCAL

### UNIFIED THERAPY SERVICES CLINIC DIRECTOR COMPLETES TRAINING



Ryan

Unified Therapy Services, in Lancaster, Wis., announced that speech-language pathologist and Lancaster clinic director **Madison Ryan** has completed training for oral feeding in fragile infants.

### EAGLE POINT SOLAR RANKS AMONG TOP CONTRACTORS

Eagle Point Solar of Dubuque was ranked 162 on “Solar Power World” magazine’s 2024 Top Solar Contractors List.

### UNITYPOINT RECEIVES 5-STAR RATING

UnityPoint Health – Finley Hospital, of Dubuque, received a 5-star rating from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for the fourth-consecutive year in recognition of providing a high quality of care according to CMMS standards that include mortality, safety of care, readmission, patient experience and timely and effective care.

## EXECUTIVE MOVES



Kamps

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Asay

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# Midlife career changes can be risky, also rewarding



## GERALD J. KOPPES, SPHR

He is a retired instructor from Northeast Iowa Community College and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville

It's not uncommon for a professional employee to hit a mid-career slump (often in their 40s) and wonder what the future might hold. Maybe it's a desire to get off the old treadmill and change directions to pursue a long held, but much deferred, dream job. If the employee has already achieved financial success and can take a likely pay hit, that change can become a reality.

**Disclaimer.** I am not talking about the iconic balding baby boomer in a midlife crisis who seeks to relive the past by taking his '69 Camaro out of storage for leisurely cruises to classic car shows and an occasional run to the local Sonic Drive-In for a hamburger, fries and a chocolate shake.

For me, the idea of a career change started with the sudden and unexpected loss of a younger sibling, and the realization that life is short and might be much shorter than I anticipated. Convinced that I had already reach most of my goals in a 35-year career in human resources, I decided that a job change into another profession was what I wanted and needed.

Here's the process I used to get to where I wanted to be. Perhaps my experience will be instructive to others contemplating a change in employment that can take them into retirement.

With the availability of veteran's educational benefits and supplemented by an employer's training funds, I had previously earned a graduate degree in applied (business) psychology with the primary purpose of advancing my professional career and with no thought of teaching.

A few months later, an out-of-town university was offering a master's in management in this area and needed a local instructor for a human resource management class. On a whim I applied and was hired.

I was surprised how much I enjoyed teaching, especially the contact with students. I continued to teach part time for many years and thoroughly enjoyed my new gig. I found that local colleges and universities had plenty of openings for part-time teaching in my areas of expertise and that I could most likely stitch together enough classes to approximate full-time work and pay.

Shortly after my sibling's tragic death, my current employer generously approved a phased, three-year early retirement package. Now I needed to discuss a transition plan with my wife.

After her initial shock wore off, we conducted a thorough evaluation of family finances. We were about to become empty nesters as our two children were close to college age. My wife was already working in the medical field and the expected reduction in my income would not jeopardize our daily financial needs. Our retirement plans were amply funded and her employer provided generous health insurance benefits. Projecting our financial resources out to retirement age confirmed that we would enter our golden years in a comfortable financial position.

I took the leap and my second career as a full-time instructor turned out to be even more satisfying, and the perfect 10-year path to full retirement.

It has been said that some people lead lives of quiet desperation. Captured by the golden handcuffs of a prestigious job or generous compensation, they are bound to jobs they dislike but from which they seem unable to leave. Those with the courage to take that dive into a final career change might be surprised to find

that the final lap to retirement can be some of the most rewarding years of their lives.

### GERALD SAYS

For me, the idea of a career change started with the sudden and unexpected loss of a younger sibling, and the realization that life is short and might be much shorter than I anticipated. Convinced that I had already reach most of my goals in a 35-year career in human resources, I decided that a job change into another profession was what I wanted and needed.



# Meet the Rising Star Class of 2024



Carissa Brown



Ryan Butler



Lauren Czeshinski



Robert Daughters



Jay Foust



Kyle Kass



Ryan Koopmann



Brandon Lynch



Callie Mescher FitzGerald



Jessie Schaefer



Victoria Vail



Sam Wooden

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# Investment flows: Trends and dangers

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executive wealth advisor



Monitoring the flow of the wet weather creek at our old house was important if we didn't want to replace our road. The creek was usually dry, but

heavy rain could make it rise 10 to 12 feet in minutes, overwhelming our 3-foot culvert. I continually watched it, ready to act if the pipe got clogged and threatened our road.

Similarly, I continually watch investment flows to look for trends or dangers.

Investment fund flows, which measure the movement of cash in and out of investments, can reveal patterns in investor sentiment and general investing trends. Reviewing the July fund flow activity, I noticed a trend: Investors like the top and bottom of the market but are shying away from the middle.

The Morningstar category data for July showed that the financial sector had the most inflow, gaining \$3 billion in July alone. This continued a trend we've seen all year, highlighting investors who might be chasing performance in anticipation of a Fed rate cut.

The technology sector received the most inflow after financials. Technology gained more than \$2 billion in July as investors continue to see earnings opportunities in artificial intelligence and cloud computing. Technology has outpaced all other sectors by a significant margin year to date. Utilities, industrials and energy are the only other sectors with positive inflows in July.

Investors seem to be hedging their bets on a Fed rate cut and a continued market surge. They will watch Chairman Powell's speech on Aug. 23 for clues about the Fed's next moves.

Where was the money moved from? Mostly from communications and health care, which had the most outflows. The communications sector lost \$687 million, and the health care sector continued its draining trend by losing \$259 million in July and more than \$10 billion this year to date as the Medicare reimbursements drama continues to weigh it down. Next on the list of losing

sectors were consumer staples, real estate and consumer cyclical, which had negative outflows for July, and all have negative outflows year to date.

Despite July's overall strong market performance, investors continued to move toward the top and bottom ends of the market capitalization (total value). Stocks categorized as large blend and small blend had the largest inflow of new investment. While stocks in the middle, categorized as mid-cap growth and mid-cap value, had some of the biggest investment outflows. Mid-cap growth stocks have lost more than \$20 billion this year, more than any other category.

So what should investors do? I am resisting the urge to overweight financials despite July's strong performance and the potential for possible deregulation under a Trump victory scenario. I am staying neutral with financials because of my concerns with regional bank exposure to commercial real estate.

I continue to be overweight to communications even though it was the top sector for outflows. There have been some earnings misses here, but I believe the contentious elections will give the communications sec-

tor an earnings bump with their huge political advertisement spending.

Often, debris from flash floods would clog our pipe with limbs and leaves. I kept a 20-foot pole with a big hook nearby for this type of emergency.

Similarly, a good investment professional should be watching the market with a big hook on the ready to maneuver their accounts away from danger before it happens.

Have a blessed week.

*Fervent Wealth Management is a financial management and services entity in Springfield, Mo. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC.*

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*The economic forecast outlined in this material may not develop as predicted and there can be no guarantee that strategies promoted will be successful.*

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# Guided and energized by a purpose



**ELIZABETH  
KUNDE**

**Stonehill  
Communities**

**She is the Director  
of Strategy and  
Compliance for  
the Dubuque-  
based nonprofit**

In the fast-paced business world, the pressure to modernize and adopt new technologies is relentless. Organizations constantly seek fresh perspectives on procedures, policies and missions. However, understanding and adhering to your core purpose is crucial for long-term success and stability amidst external pressures and evolving market conditions.

Finding and staying true to your purpose is more than a feel-good benefit. Research by Jump Associates over 20 years found that purpose-driven companies achieved an average compound annual growth rate of 13.6% in their stock prices, compared to 3.7% for their closest competitors and 5.5% for the S&P 500.

Are you purpose-driven? We must ask ourselves: How do our values and purpose shape our services and products? Are we committed to quality, affordability, reliability or sustainability? Do we pride ourselves on customer service, friendliness and fairness? How does our business create the future we envision for our community? Are we providing living wages and benefits, promoting volunteer service or philanthropic giving, participating in civic events, advocating for policy change and practicing environmental responsibility? These answers guide decision making and operations, fostering a positive employee culture and appealing to consumers.

Stonehill Communities, a Catholic faith based nonprofit organization, is rooted in the legacy of the Sisters of St. Francis. In today's world of declining religious practice and new technological and sociocultural trends, we carefully discern how best to serve our diverse community while maintaining

our purpose of providing compassionate, modern health and wellness services based on Catholic values.

For Stonehill Communities, this means:

- Messaging that welcomes all, regardless of faith or orientation.
- Continuing the tradition of starting meetings with a prayer or reflection.
- Providing holistic services that address physical, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, spiritual and social needs.
- Caring for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized in our community.

As a nonprofit, our larger purpose and community impact are integral to our identity. But all organizations can find unity in their sense of purpose.

Considerations for all organizations, nonprofit or otherwise, include:

- How do you maintain relationships with customers and employees during rapid growth and change?
- How does your business adopt technology while still providing a people-oriented approach?
- How do you achieve financial success while supporting causes important to you and your stakeholders?

Allow time for reflection on your mission and purpose and ensure that purpose is communicated. In a rapidly changing business market, your purpose and values will energize your business and team, keeping them aligned, on course and propelling them and in the right direction.



## More Than a Gym

The Stonehill Wellness Center includes treadmills, elliptical and NuStep® machines, recumbent bikes, strength and circuit equipment, an indoor walking track, group fitness classes for all abilities, educational sessions, a HydroWorx® 2000 underwater treadmill therapy pool, and a sauna.



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Kalmes



Patel



Barton



Rodriguez



Small



Gaulke



Kahl



Flogel



Broderick



Brehmer

## WOODWARD PRINTING SERVICES

**HIRED:** Alex Irish as a web press assistant.

## MEDICAL ASSOCIATES CLINIC

**HIRED:** Kyle Leubka has joined the family medicine department.

**HIRED:** Anna Henningsen has joined its anesthesia department as a nurse anesthetist.

**HIRED:** Lauren Trumm as a nurse practitioner in the pulmonology department.

**HIRED:** Angela Roling, DNP, in the allergy, asthma and immunology department.

## COTTINGHAM & BUTLER

**HIRED:** Megan Lang as a marketer.

**HIRED:** Brian Vega as a benefits ser-

vices associate.

**HIRED:** Luke Pattarozzi as an account administrator.

**HIRED:** Austin Kalmes as an accountant.

**HIRED:** Johan Patel and Katelyn Barton as inside sales executives.

**HIRED:** Armand Rodriguez as a sales executive.

**HIRED:** Ryan Small as a senior claims representative.

**HIRED:** Rebecca Gaulke as a claims administrator

**HIRED:** Nyla Kahl as a talent acquisition specialist.

## MULGREW OIL & PROPANE

**HIRED:** Davis Flogel as a management trainee.

**PROMOTED:** Martin Broderick to chief financial officer.



Fritz



Meyer



Vance



Simmonds Fals

**PROMOTED:** Mark Brehmer to chief operations officer.

**PROMOTED:** Lenny Fritz to director of operations.

**PROMOTED:** Katherine Meyer to customer experience and operations specialist team leader.

## GIGANTIC DESIGN CO.

**PROMOTED:** Latrell Vance to designer.

**PROMOTED:** Ivonne Simmonds Fals to senior designer.

Continued on page 41



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**Congratulations to our 2024 Rising Star, Brandon Lynch!** Well done, and welcome to the DB&T, a division of HTLF Bank, Rising Star Alumni!



**Brandon Lynch**  
AVP, Business Banker

**RISING STAR ALUMNI**



**Kevin Finke**  
VP Commercial Banker



**Nick Patrum**  
SVP, Commercial Banking Team Lead



**Stacey Hines**  
Senior Wealth Advisor, Market Leader

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Mueller Adams Kass Buse Pudlo Serdar Foust Errthum Xavier

Continued from page 39

## SERTOMA CLUB OF THE TRI STATES

**ELECTED:** Kevin Mueller to president.  
**ELECTED:** Greg Adams to first vice president.  
**ELECTED:** Chuck Davis to treasurer.  
**ELECTED:** Nancy Adams to secretary.  
**ELECTED:** John Hingtgen to sergeant of arms.  
**ELECTED:** Dee Leicht to sponsorships officer.



Greibe Kunkel Cooke Dressler Husemann Williams

## TWO BY TWO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

**ELECTED:** Kyle Kass of Honkamp, P.C.; **Scott Buse** of Theisen Supply Inc.; and **Mike Pudlo** of Cottingham & Butler to the board.

**RE-ELECTED:** Shane Burtzloff, of Anderson-Weber Toyota, as president; **Ryan Kilburg**, of A.Y. McDonald Manufacturing, as vice president; **Wendy Knight**, of Focus Forward Thinking, as past president; **Katie Schueller**, of Dupaco Community Credit Union, as treasurer; and **Rick Fullmer**, of Dubuque Police Department, as secretary to the board.

**RE-ELECTED:** Amy Errthum, of Clarke University; **JJ Rupprecht**, of Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling Company; **Susan Hess**, of Hammer Law Firm, PLC; **Stephanie Vondal**, of Dubuque Community Schools; **Justina Reisch**, of Premier Bank; **Jane Kuhle**, of Roussetot, Inc.; and founder **Kristin Woodward Vaassen** to the board.

## THEISEN'S HOME FARM AUTO

**HIRED:** Tim Serdar as risk manager.  
**HIRED:** Curtis Foust as a junior buyer for the automotive department.

## DYERSVILLE COMMERCIAL

**HIRED:** Deirdre Errthum as a reporter and photographer.

## MCCULLOUGH CREATIVE

**HIRED:** Joezer "Joe" Pinheiro Xavier as an exhibit designer.

## STATERA INTEGRATED HEALTH & WELLNESS SOLUTIONS

**HIRED:** Taylor Greibe as an eating disorder recovery coach.

## MI-T-M CORP.

**PROMOTED:** Tony Anderson to associate fabrication manager.

## EIDE BAILLY

**HIRED:** Ava Kunkel and Sarah Cooke as audit associates.

## MULGREW OIL & PROPANE CO.

**PROMOTED:** Paula Dressler to operations specialist.  
**PROMOTED:** Tim Husemann to fleet coordinator.  
**PROMOTED:** Jim Williams to customer experience specialist.

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adno-392584

# New book helps readers plan, take breaks then return to workforce

BY BUSINESS WIRE

DES MOINES, Iowa — Laura Nguyen has announced the release of her new book, “Career Break Compass: Navigating Your Path to a Balanced Life Through Intentional Time Off.” It’s available for pre-order and will be released on Tuesday, Nov. 12.

Published by The Collective Book Studio, “Career Break Compass” is aimed at mid- to senior-level leaders who are high achieving, goal oriented decision makers and find themselves losing momentum and drive from overwork, lack of work-life balance and emotional exhaustion.

Sixty-two percent of employees have taken a career break, and 84% of millennials expect to take a career break. However, many do not have the tools or an intentional plan.

Nguyen left her corporate executive job and embarked on a career break to reset and redefine her life. After recognizing that she was burned out, she researched science-based methods to recover from burnout and interviewed more than 170 professionals.

“In all of my interviews, there are two common challenges,” Nguyen said. “First, people feel they are the only ones experiencing burnout;

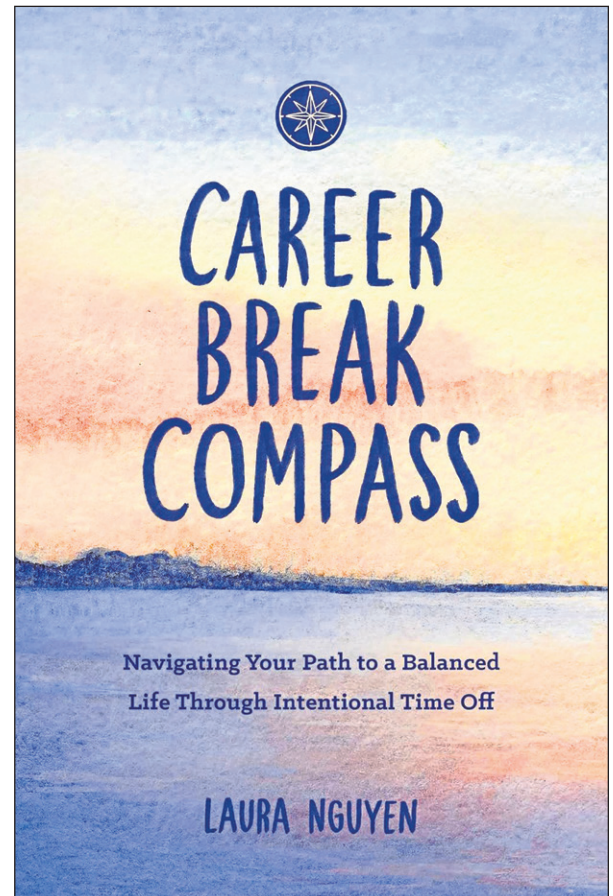
they feel alone. Second, people go into a break without a plan of how to spend the time, which interferes with their ability to recharge and find the next role that’s right for them.”

Rather than simply taking time off, she created an intentional plan, breaking it into four sections: Play, pause, plan and pursue.

The book provides guidance on each stage and shares stories from Nguyen and her interviewees. Play is focused on disengaging from work and re-igniting joy. Pause is intended for reflection and meditation. Plan investigates the reader’s core values and how they can incorporate them into their life and career. Pursue helps prepare readers to successfully re-enter the workforce with more alignment.

“Laura’s carefully thought out strategies for taking an intentional break as a way to stop the burnout and reset your work-life balance offers actionable and sustainable practices that will recharge you — at home and in the office,” said Fran Hauser, best-selling author and former Fortune 500 media executive.

The book will be available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble, as well as local bookstores. It will also be available on Kindle and Audible.



Contributed

## Success introduces Amy Somerville podcast



Contributed

BY BUSINESS WIRE

DALLAS — Success magazine has announced the launch of its new podcast, “Unscripted with Amy Somerville.” This bi-weekly show delivers no-nonsense, actionable advice through unlikely stories to help listeners navigate the messy, unpredictable nature of work and life.

Focusing on practical solutions to real-world challenges, it blends intimate fire-side chat-style interviews with advice from leading experts to bridge the gap between knowledge and practical application.

It’s set apart by its focus on the universality of problems that otherwise seem siloed. Rather than rehashing entrepreneurial

journeys or relying on platitudes, Somerville engages listeners through unscripted conversations that dig deep into the human experience.

“Our goal was to create a podcast that surpasses inspiration and instead provides the crucial actions needed to reach listener goals,” Somerville said.

Industry guests include fitness expert Lori Harder and Squeeze co-founder and CEO Brittany Driscoll.

Somerville brings more than 20 years of experience building thriving businesses and mentoring tomorrow’s leaders to the bi-weekly show.

Listen to it on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or [success.com/podcasts](https://success.com/podcasts).

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