



EMERGING AND ENTERPRISING ENTREPRENEURS



Dr. Logan Hampton
Lane College President



Clarissa Williams
Client Comprehensive
Resource Services



Genevieve Rene Dupree
Floral Cakes



Gwen Majors
Majors Enterprises, LLC

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President and board chair,
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Justin Key
Board Member

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Lois Charm

Courtesy Photo

Lois Charm is a freelance journalist with Writing by Design Media, Inc.



Allison Kwilos

Courtesy Photo

Allison Kwilos is a contributing writer. She is the marketing and communications specialist at W & T Contracting Corporation.

Thank you for celebrating our Anniversary magazine edition. It is a pleasure to feature emerging and enterprising entrepreneurs in West Tennessee. Our goal is to educate on entrepreneurship and economic development through digital and print media.

**Sincerely,
Paula Anderson**

Emerging Entrepreneur | Gwen Majors

by Paula Anderson



Gwen Majors | Courtesy Photo

Ford BlueOval City and the growth in rural West Tennessee is going to change the landscape of electric vehicles for residents in Haywood, Fayette, Madison and Shelby counties.

In Nov. 2022, Heartland Forward, Builders + Backers (TM), the CO, Epicenter Memphis, and Ford Motor Company Fund announced a funding opportunity for anyone in Fayette, Hardeman, Haywood, Lauderdale, Madison, Shelby, and Tipton counties to submit an application with a new business idea.

Gwendolyn Majors, owner and operator of Majors Enterprises LLC, received a \$5,000 grant to help build her idea for electric charging stations in West Tennessee.

Majors received electrical training at Tennessee Technology Center in Lexington, Tenn. in 2004.

According to Majors, she relocated to Jackson 30 years ago and worked as an electrician helper in Jackson, Tenn. at Jackson Meadow Retirement residence.

Majors sought full-time employment for almost two years before branching out on her own in 2018.

"No one wanted a female as an electrician," said Majors. "I started my company with the help of the JMCAACC in 2018."

Before starting her business, Majors reached out to the Greater Jackson Chamber and received advice from Katie Bradley, former county commissioner in Jackson, Tenn., who was connected to the Jackson Madison

County African American Chamber of Commerce (JMCAACC).

This led to her starting a business enterprise. Since that time, she has been building her business as a certified electrician with independent contractors on her team.

According to Majors, the grant she received will help with placing EV charging stations in surrounding areas near Ford BlueOval City.

"EV charging stations will be installed into rural Tennessee areas," said Majors.

According to Majors, she has learned skills to help expand her business idea and concept.

"I have received training such as how to use Coda, Sprint, Canva, Coding, Marketing, and how to use social media to leverage marketing strategies. There is also a team spirit that comes with networking with B + B (Builders + Backers) as well. They do all they can to help you succeed," said Majors.

Majors also serves as the secretary for the

Jackson Madison County African American Chamber of Commerce (JMCAACC).

"I also have plenty of professional support from the JMCAACC as they have helped to navigate me to people who gave me opportunities to bid (on) jobs and use our expertise to get the job done," said Majors.

To learn more about Majors Enterprises, LLC, send email to majorsenterprisesllc@gmail.com.

Emerging Entrepreneur | Genevieve Rene Dupree

by Paula Anderson



Creating a 'whimsical experience' for customers to enjoy desserts and cakes was an intentional goal for Genevieve Rene Dupree, founder of Floral Cakes.

"I wanted to create a new conversation about desserts and the bakery in which they could be created," said Dupree. "My daughter's 25th birthday was also part of the reason I created Floral Cakes; I wanted a particular style cake for her party and I was told by several bakeries in the area that they did not offer that style cake, so I created the cake."

As a new business owner, Dupree wants to create a community driven bakery. Floral Cakes is located in the heart of downtown Jackson.

"I was given to a family here in Jackson when I was six months old. I remember as a child through my early teens walking to downtown Jackson with my foster mother. I would be so excited to go into the business downtown or simply pass by the large windows of some of the stores to get a peek inside," said Dupree.

"When our downtown started to have no life - less businesses... a part of my childhood that I remembered was fading. I could not have imagined that as an adult I would be given an opportunity to bring a

business that I created to downtown Jackson... and be a part of the heartbeat of the city by bringing a new bakery to the downtown area - to be apart of the restoring process and bring excitement to someone who might get a glimpse of the bakery here by simply looking inside my business window."

Starting a business can be challenging and overwhelming. And attracting the right customers can also be a daunting task.

"Some challenges that I am presently working on are how to effectively get people to try something new with an open mind," said Dupree. "Another challenge is always making sure that I convey to my customers



Genevieve Rene Dupree | Writing by Design Media, Inc.

and the public exactly what my business is about."

Entrepreneurship is the ability to solve a problem and finding something that you love can be challenging and rewarding at the same time.

"It is imperative that I personally stay focused on the

purpose for creating my business and I continue to remind myself how and why I started out on this journey," said Dupree.

"I had a desire to create something different through the love of baking and finding a creative way to meet this need has kept me focused. Regardless of how many times I hear, that I really can't do this the way that I am moving forward - simply because someone doesn't understand my vision."

Staying focused and motivated is one of the challenges that most entrepreneurs face. Dupree shared these comments.

"I stay motivated as an entrepreneur by focusing on my end goal, and surrounding myself with other entrepreneurs that share the same passion as I do for success," said Dupree. "I created a group called The S.B.C - SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY - one must build their own table and add chairs."

Taking the first step as a business owner can be difficult. Dupree said that the best advice thus far is (to) start where you are and increase from there...the hardest and sometimes most important thing to do is to start.

Learning from others is an everyday process for entrepreneurs. Dupree has words of advice for other aspiring entrepreneurs.

"Do not allow someone else to determine how your business is set-up or tell you that you cannot use your business as a platform to accomplish things in the community. I am living proof that you can."

To learn more about Floral Cakes, visit 210 East LaFayette Street located in downtown Jackson, Tenn.

Legal Spotlight | T. Kevin Bruce, Esq.



Atty. T. Kevin Bruce | Photo Credit: Paula Anderson

With 30 years of experience, Attorney T. Kevin Bruce is continuing to make strides in the legal field with a renewed vision and purpose.

His legal career began in 1993 working with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, DC. Thereafter, he returned to Memphis, Tenn. with the law firm Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs, PLLC in. In 2009, he founded the law firm originally known as Bruce Law Firm, PLLC. Today he practices as a successor of that law firm known as Bruce Law, PLLC.

Atty. Bruce earned his bachelor's degree in finance from University of Memphis in 1989 and his master's degree in business administration (MBA) and his law degree (JD) from University of Virginia in 1993.

"I have always devoted my career to the creation of more sustainable businesses in African American communities" said Atty. Bruce. "Have a purpose bigger than yourself and more meaning than just making money. Choose the right business structure and put in writing rules that will govern your business morally and profitably."

While entrepreneurship can be rewarding, it can also bring challenges that are beyond your control. For new entrepreneurs, Atty. Bruce shares this advice.

"My life's experience has shown me repeatedly that, as long as I prioritize serving God, obstacles can be overcome and all challenges will ultimately work out profitably, either with a good result or with a valuable lesson learned," said Atty. Bruce.

Having business associates to support and encourage is always something that is needed on the entrepreneurial journey.

"I have known Kevin for nearly fifteen years and been impressed with him since we met. He has been a staple of the community and continues to be so today, most visibly demonstrated by his contribution to the local community as a business owner. Kevin has proven to be a top caliber attorney, a hard worker, a good business person and an asset to our society," said Keith Butler, licensed insurance agent and business owner.

"I am quite *stricken* by Kevin's intelligence and abstract thinking. His work has always been thorough and comprehensive, as an employee and now as a proprietor. His decision-making is clear, concise, and definitive. Kevin's personal beliefs impact everything he does. For him, exceptional work is founded on what was once known as the Protestant work ethic. It is his belief and obligation to complete every task that he endeavors with earnest enthusiasm and the diligence to do his very best. His values and morals as a man compel him to maintain the discipline and work ethic essential in attaining quality and high performance. He has demonstrated a drive to achieve in everything he does. He is truly one of the best professionals I've ever met!" said Butler.

To learn more about Bruce Law, PLLC, send email to tkbruce@brucelawmemphis.net.

Enterprising Entrepreneur | Clarissa Williams

Like most entrepreneurs the reason for starting a business can vary and the 'why.'

Clarissa Williams, owner and operator of Client Comprehensive Resource Services LLC, offers health insurance and annuity plans to small business owners and companies. She is based in Jackson, Tenn.

"I wanted to be part of an organization that could make a difference in a person's financial future and what better way to do that than to start my own insurance agency. I went into the insurance business after being in social work for 15 years," said Williams.

"I took those skills developed in my social work, providing resources and solutions, applying them to my career. I decided not only would offering solutions for a clients financial protection be ideal but to offer more. I offer services like tax preparation, EIN creation, business state registrations and pretty much anything that an individual, family or business owner would require."

The next step in the business planning process is to make sure monthly revenue and other infrastructure systems are in place and these are a few challenges that most business owners encounter.

"I faced the typical challenges that most small businesses have like making sure there is enough revenue coming in to sustain our company and our employees, also ensuring that I am marketing to the right audience but first deciding who that audience or target client would be and lastly remembering to take time for myself. It is very easy to work one's self all of the time as the owner of the business but in order to prosper you must have your health and sanity," said Williams.

Making a profit and an impact seems to be the way most businesses operate from a social enterprise mindset.

"My business contributes to the economic empowerment and advancement of the Black community by providing accessibility to resources, products and education to create, protect and prepare



Clarissa Williams | Courtesy Photo

for the future. The partnerships I have formed, the clients I have made and the futures I have made possible keep me going."

The Covid pandemic shifted businesses to a virtual or hybrid model. Williams states that her company is a brick and mortar structure and it uses online advertising to obtain leads and referrals and a marketplace platform to enroll clients in policies.

The journey of entrepreneurship is not easy and Williams shares this advice to aspiring entrepreneurs:

"I would say don't give up and find a great mentor. Having a person that you can bounce ideas on, make you accountable and even be a cheerleader, is a very vital part of running a business. Never stop learning about your chosen profession. Read everything about your business. Most important of all, keep positive people in your life to provide motivation. You become what you surround yourself with."



Candid Conversations™ with Entrepreneurs | Jackson, Tenn.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners in Jackson, Tenn. gathered for an in-person panel discussion on business planning at Floral Cakes on April 20, 2023.

In 2019, Candid Conversations w/Entrepreneurs was launched to highlight entrepreneurs in a one-on-one interview. Due to the pandemic, the in-person conversations shifted to virtual for safety reasons.

Candid Conversations was re-ignited in Dec. 2022 with an in-panel discussion at Muggin Coffee House in Memphis, Tenn.

Since West Tennessee will be home to Ford BlueOval City, Jackson, Tenn. was selected as the venue for West Tennessee in April.

Genevieve Rene Dupree, owner and operator of Floral Cakes, served as the host.

Panelists from the Jackson, Tenn. community opened up about experiences as small business owners.

Danielle Barbee, owner and operator of The Math Success Coach, shared her experiences as a woman in a male-dominated industry.

Lakesha Smith, owner and operator of Comfortably Clean, shared the challenges that she has faced as a sole proprietor.

Dr. Michael Chua, owner and operator of GeriHab Physical Therapy and Wellness, shared his challenges

during the Covid pandemic due to a transition from working a full-time job.

Jonathan Pounds, branch manager for Regions Bank, shared insights about lending options and how to plan to receive capital. Pounds sponsored the cupcakes.

Ken Olds, co-owner of Muggin Coffee House and a financial representative, with Leaders Credit Union served as sponsors.

Candid Conversations™ with Entrepreneurs | Juneteenth



by Allison Howell

In celebration of Juneteenth, movers and shakers from the Mid-South minority business community met for the latest "Candid Conversations with Entrepreneurs", with an enlightening discussion that focused on construction and real estate.

Writing by Design Media, Inc. hosted the event at Union Centre in Memphis' Midtown Neighborhood. Many community supporters were present, including the MMBC Continuum, Tennessee Small Business Development Center (Memphis) and Tennessee Apex Accelerator, Memphis Grindhouse Coffee was an event sponsor and collaborator. The event was held on June 15 2023.

The panelists included Wiley Richards and Terrell Richards, co-owners of W&T Contracting Corporation; Veronica Clark, APEX Counselor for TN APEX Accelerator; and T. Kevin Bruce, Attorney at Bruce Law, PLLC. Eric Brinson, managing partner with A&R Development & Acquisitions moderated the discussion.

Many important topics were discussed, including the panelists' experience in Memphis' construction industry, available training resources, barriers African American business owners face, factors that prevent minority contractors from

transitioning to working on major developments in the state of Tennessee, and disparities minority business enterprises face in this industry.

The panelists shared other helpful insights to find success despite disparities. Veronica Clark said:

"Candid Conversations was an exceptional event, uniting brilliant minds and sharing invaluable knowledge. Wiley and Terrell, co-owners of W&T Contracting Corporation, empowered minority-owned firms to overcome marketplace barriers. To seize procurement opportunities, small businesses must explore diverse options and avoid fixating on a single project due to fierce competition. From the new Titans stadium to Ford Blue Oval, the marketplace offers a wealth of possibilities. Ensure your business is procurement ready with these keys to success:

1) Understand your capacity:



Group Photo | Photo Credit: Allison Howell

- a) Assess your team's ability to fulfill project requirements.
 - b) Have sufficient financial capacity to endure payment delays for 60 to 90 days.
- 2) Conduct market research:
- a) Determine whether being the prime or sub on a job is more suitable.
- 3) Create a strategic marketing approach:
- a) Craft an engaging elevator pitch and tailored capability statement.
- 4) Master your numbers.
- 5) Leverage the available ecosystem of resources eager to assist you.

With these direct and helpful insights, your business can confidently navigate the procurement landscape and unlock new opportunities for success."

Audience members included successful entrepreneurs and young, hungry future leaders. Derek Rivers Jr.,

Agent with New York Life said: "No matter what industry or walk of life, Candid Conversations is an insightful networking opportunity for all entrepreneurial mindsets."

Knowledge is power, and these conversations are important. It is crucial for minority businesses to engage with one another to share opportunities, successes, and overall learnings from their experience as an entrepreneur.

Candid Conversations with Entrepreneurs, hosted by Writing by



Eric Ryan Brinson | Moderator

Design Media, Inc. is the premier quarterly event that connects local entrepreneurs and empowers them to succeed despite the adversity they may face.

For more information on upcoming events, contact Paula Anderson at writingbydesignmediapr@gmail.com or editor@wbdmedia.com.

Allison Kwilos is a contributing writer. She can be reached at AllisonKwilos@wtcontractingcorp.com.

Lane College continues to serve as an HBCU of excellence in Jackson, Tenn.

by Lois Charm



Founded in 1882 by Bishop Isaac Lane as a high school along with members of the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church - Lane College has been a path to educational success for African Americans, as one of the few HBCUs in Tennessee.

Dr. Logan Hampton has served as the school's president for almost a decade and shared how the school has been dedicated to educating students, some who have since gone on to do outstanding things with their lives.

"For 141 years, school staff and faculty have gathered on this holy hill to fulfill the purpose described by Bishop Lane," Hampton said.

In Bishop Lane's own words, "I took special notice of the conditions of my people and found that our preachers needed a common school education that would enable them to read and write and speak the English language correctly. We needed a training school."

Dr. Hampton and school staff have been dedicated to keeping up the vision of Bishop Lane through a liberal arts education.

"Since 1882, we have provided students access to Christian liberal arts education," he said.

"This mission is our legacy and our responsibility to advance."

The college has award - winning and accredited academic programs offered in dozens of majors and minors. Hampton further shared about the various opportunities the school offers students.

"We continue to stay connected to our ancient roots with focus on the trivium, the lower division of the seven liberal arts, comprising grammar, logic, and rhetoric," he said. "We continue to teach the critical liberal arts skills: reading, writing and reasoning. In addition, we provide career pathway initiatives, where we equip students with career ready credentials and opportunities through a diversity of partnerships with the corporate community, including FedEx, CVS Health, 6K, U. S. Marshall's Office, Tennessee Education Lottery Corporation, Strada, IBM, Coca - Cola, Cricket Wireless, and others."

Before Hampton became the school's president, he still played an integral part as a leader in the CME Church.

"Prior to Lane College, I was a bi-vocational serving as a chief of student affairs officer in higher education and pastor in the CME Church," he said. Afterwards, his leadership transitioned him into his current position at Lane College.

"In 2014, I had the opportunity to apply for the position of president," he said. "I thought a Christian college, as Lane College is, would allow me to pursue my two passions, education and salvation, in one location. I'm pleased to begin my 10th year of service to our students, faculty, staff, and the public."

He also shared how his time as president has meant more to him than being an academic leader.

"I love Lane College, our mission, our faculty, and staff, and most especially our students," he said.



Dr. Logan Hampton | Courtesy Photo

"With close ties to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME), Lane College affords me the opportunity to fulfill my life purpose in the ministry of education and ministry of salvation."

He further shared how important a Christian-based campus culture is to him and those involved with the college.

"Lane College is a transformative Christian college," He said. "For me, these seven words describe who we are, what we do and the college that I want us to be."

Hampton further explained how the success of students has been one of his main commitments as president.

"My student success commitment is to show each student the love of Christ and to help them achieve the career of their dreams," he said. "So, when I see a graduate become a real estate developer or software developer, sign a professional football or basketball contract, or become a teacher or pastor, I am reminded that is the reason God called me here."

In regards to student success, Hampton shared a few stories about the impact the college has had on its alumni and current students. One student, named Kinna, helped a world-renowned U.S. singer gain major success with her business.

"I think of Kinna's story who graduated a few years back and went to work for Walmart, the world's largest retailer," he said. "You may remember November 2015 when Walmart sold out of Patti Labelle's sweet potato pies. Kinna was the brain behind Patti's pies that caused a sweet potato shortage in North America."

Hampton also shared about a few other students that have left a mark on the college's history in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field.

"I think of Joanna who some doubted that she could make it in the STEM field," he said. "After four short years of STEM rigor, she was accepted in a STEM PHD program at one of our leading graduate institutions and is making her mark. I also think of Candace, Michael and Aaron, our Luminosity Lab scholars, who worked with the Starbucks Foundation to build websites for small and minority owned businesses."

Furthermore, another Lane College student left her mark on the school's history by becoming the first African American woman to win one of Tennessee's major pageants.

"This past weekend, the captain of the Lane College Dragons volleyball team, a high achieving academic scholar, and Miss Lane College, Jada Brown, won the Miss Tennessee Volunteer pageant," he said. "She became the first African American in the seventy-year history to win the statewide pageant and represents all Tennesseans and serves as the Governor's character spokesperson focusing on respect."

With all the great things happening at Lane College and its alumni, the college has definitely done its part to preserve the vision of its founders, ensuring a path to success for future generations.

Lois Charm is a freelance journalist for Writing by Design Media Inc,

Entrepreneurship Spotlight

by Lydia Haworth



Lydia Haworth | Courtesy Photo

I've always been interested in business, but studying business I felt like the classes were focused on preparing me to work in the corporate world. While there is nothing wrong with that, I have learned that those courses did not align with my goals to start a business.

Spring (2022) of my junior year I ended up in my first entrepreneurship class and finally felt like I was on the right path. The following summer (2022) I participated in the entrepreneurship accelerator called ImagineU, a 12-week program for students at the University of Memphis, Southwest Tennessee Community College, Christian Brothers University and Rhodes College. This program was nothing short of life-changing for me.

I was relatively quiet before participating in ImagineU. I hesitated to voice my opinions in group settings, not to mention I hated public speaking as well. Through ImagineU and the environment created during the program, I learned the value of working with diverse groups of people and making efforts to express my perspective and encourage others to express theirs. ImagineU caused me to shift my mindset and start looking for opportunities and problems to solve. During this program, I worked with a team in validating problems, brainstorming solutions, and getting feedback on those solutions. Once we identified and

validated our solution, we moved forward with building financial projections and creating a pitch deck.

As part of the program, we received extensive feedback on our pitch and practiced repeatedly. By the end of the summer, my public speaking skills had improved, and I ended up delivering a winning pitch on demo day.

This program taught me the method of how I can create my own business or company but more importantly it gave me the confidence that I can start my own business. Starting the next (year) semester, I approached school completely differently; I was less afraid of failure and more willing to voice my perspective in my classes. I also tend to procrastinate less now that I've seen the benefit of acting and revising after the fact as opposed to getting caught up in the planning.

Overall, I highly value my experience in ImagineU and look forward to seeing how it will impact my life in the workforce.

Lydia Haworth is a graduate of the University of Memphis and works as a program assistant for the Crews Center for Entrepreneurship.

Writing by Design Media, Inc. is launching its Inaugural Virtual Conference on August 19 from 10AM -12PM to celebrate the accomplishments of Black Excellence. This year's theme is Celebrating Black Excellence Every Day.



The inaugural conference event is for our readers and stakeholders to be encouraged and inspired by their peers and fellow entrepreneurs during National Black Business Month.

The speakers for the conference are:



Dr. Latanya White
founder Creative Group Concepts
Keynote Speaker



Lenora Ebule
founder of Bailan Spices



Jill Coleman
founder of Jamerson Strategic
Consulting, LLC

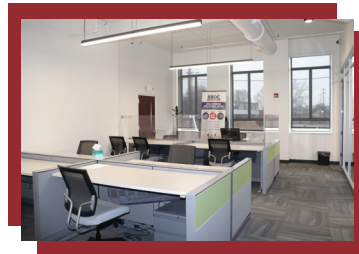
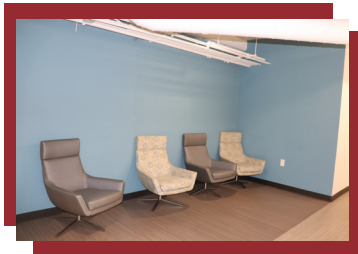


Justin Key
founder of Black Theorem

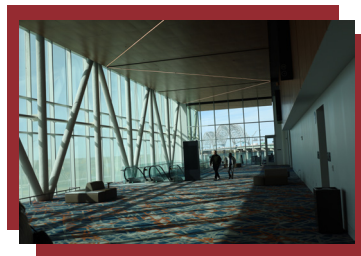


Eric Ryan Brinson
A&R Development and Acquisitions
- Virtual Program Emcee

To register, visit wbdmedia.com.



#1-4 ENC | Photo Credit: Paula Anderson



#5-7 RCC | Photo Credit: Jonathan Ennis



Jonathan Ennis | Creative Mass Media Graphic Designer
Renasant Convention Center

Ennis graduated from the University of Memphis with a bachelor's degree in Creative Mass Media. He worked as an intern for Writing by Design Media, Inc since 2021 and is a current freelancer.

Entrepreneur's Network Center (ENC)



National Black Business Month