

# THE METRO REPORT

DECEMBER 2021

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**André McEwing**

*Photo by Rachel DeLira*

# THE LUNCHEON FOR THE BRAVE



**John Wayne Walding**  
Keynote Speaker

A limited number of public tickets are available to welcome Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl participating teams, coaches and fans at the annual Kickoff Luncheon presented by American Airlines and the Omni Fort Worth Hotel. This year's luncheon will be held at the Omni on December 21st. The keynote speaker is American hero and Purple Heart recipient, John Wayne Walding.

Luncheon and game tickets can be purchased online at [armedforcesbowl.com](http://armedforcesbowl.com).



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## THE METRO REPORT

The Metro Report shines a light on women and minorities in the business community of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex!

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS

## Year end wrap-up

by Anjie & Shevoyd Hamilton

As we close out this year, we have had the wonderful opportunity to feature some established entrepreneurs as well as some up-and-comers throughout the year. This month is no different and we are excited to present and feature some great people who are making a difference in their communities and offering products and services that bring joy to others. As you read, keep these business owners in mind as you make holiday arrangements.

We were also pleased to sit down with one of Fort Worth's finest citizens, Mr. Andre McEwing, who is making great strides in helping Fort Worth stay relevant in the diversity, equity and inclusion conversation from the supply chain side of the equation. His tireless work with minority- and women-owned businesses will be something we will all benefit from in the years to come.

Shevoyd and I would like to thank those who work with us to produce the bi-monthly publication. Betsy Lewis, Lisa Logan, Queenie White, Erin Ratigan, Allen White, Steve Rochun, JSoulent Photography and Rachel DeLira work with us every other month on our passion project, bringing you great news and information about those in the minority community in Fort Worth, Dallas and the surrounding areas. We couldn't do it without them.

As you celebrate the holiday, make time for friends and family and tune in next year for more of *The Metro Report*.

Anjie and Shevoyd Hamilton



Publishers Anjie and Shevoyd Hamilton

# Dear Coach RED...

by Collette Portis, M.Ed. with RED Development Group

Dear Coach RED,

I'm a frustrated, overwhelmed business owner attempting to work smarter by using technology, but it feels like more of a burden than an aide. My company is using 10-12 different pieces of software daily attempting to manage and decrease the time it takes to complete a task. We have CRMs, social media posting apps, graphic design apps and software, multiple customer databases, a learning management system, mileage tracking software and so much more. We likely spend 20-25 percent of our time maneuvering between software and apps and I'm sure it's costing my company money, but I'm not sure how to get out of the technology maze or at least make it more efficient. Please help!



Collette Portis, M.Ed. with RED Development Group

Sincerely,  
Stuck in the Tech Maze

Hello Stuck in the Tech Maze,

Technology is an amazing thing, but when we get stuck in the maze, we're in deep and oftentimes over our heads. There are two things we use each day that many don't really understand, that's money and technology, more specifically social media. On average, companies are using anywhere between 22 to 110 different pieces of software and applications daily. That's a lot. There are a couple of things you can do to pull ourselves out of the maze.

**1. Determine your company's desired end goal.**

Technology is often implemented on the fly with no real thought or consideration of the goal the company is working to achieve. Go back to your strategic plan, look at the steps you stated would get you to your end goal and evaluate how each piece of technology can support those efforts. Ask, what can be done using technology and what requires the human touch?

**2. Develop a customized platform that houses all your technology portals.** Sometimes it's cheaper for us to pay a development company to create a single piece of technology that offers what we need. Using this solution will still require outside technologies to aid in completing the work, but it can cut down on the number of technologies you're paying for. Don't develop a technology that is outside of your area of expertise because you will then be faced with the challenge of keeping it up to date.

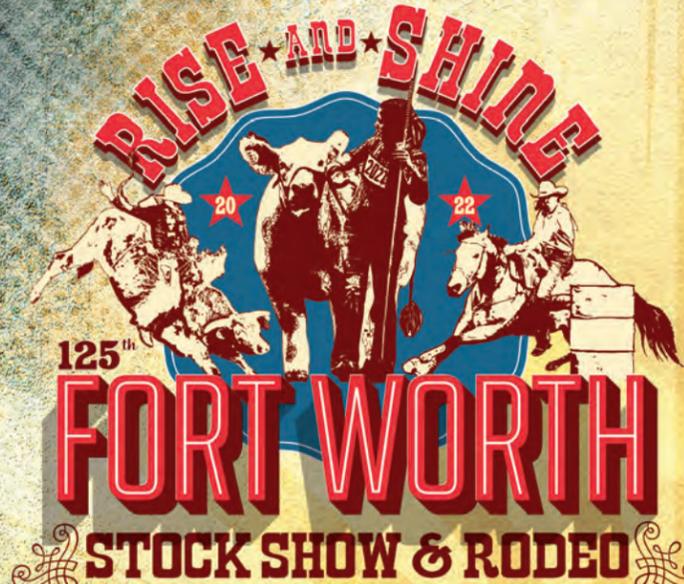
**3. Hire a great Chief Technology Officer.** In growing companies, wrapping your mind around the importance of technology is an absolute necessity. While we often forget about the CTO role, we must remember, if done correctly, this position is a revenue generating role. Using the right technology in the correct way reduces labor costs, shortens processes, and can also be credited with increasing the rate of growth a company experiences.

No matter what stage your company is in, how you manage your relationships with technology can be the factor that makes or breaks you. If you're not yet at the stage where hiring a CTO is an option, try soliciting the services of a fractional CTO or a technology consultant.

Sincerely,  
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# From thought to reality: Que Chula by Allen White

Lydia Guajardo Rickard was already a successful businesswoman when her imagination led her to a completely different business, quite by accident, by the way. In 2017, Rickard was sitting on a beach thinking of ways to repurpose Mexican dresses to highlight the artistry of the hand embroidery. She later purchased a dress from a shop in San Antonio and chopped it up to create accessory items and Que Chula, meaning “how cute”, was born. “I wanted to create a business that would bring me joy and celebrate my culture,” says Rickard. She uses the hashtag #amano, which means “by hand” in her marketing and promotional efforts. Rickard begins with embroideries from Mexican women. “I feel like it is transferred to me — a Mexican American woman, to finish. It is a true work from our hands. I feel like it is a true ‘passing of the baton’”. Culturally, this is how she celebrates the art and traditions of her heritage. Some of the embroidery patterns have been passed down through generations for hundreds of years.



Lydia Guajardo Rickard, Owner, Que Chula Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

“ I wanted to create a business that would bring me joy and celebrate my culture.   
 - Lydia Guajardo Rickard ”

Rickard, who did not think herself the creative or artistic type, finds working with her hands is extremely enjoyable. Working with textiles of all types and creating products without a set pattern means that each design is original and totally unique in addition to being personally rewarding. She began selling her items on her personal Facebook page, never expecting that sales would take off so quickly, so much so, there is now a separate Facebook page for Que Chula. She aligned herself with other “makers” and groups to help with the business. Her background in marketing and ownership of LCOMM Marketing, which she has owned for 15 years, give her inside knowledge on how to use imagery and social media to move product and help messaging. “People are looking for unique gifts”, says Rickard. There is a whole market of people who don’t want “made in China”, they want something original. Her products fulfill that desire in people. She is the sole creator of the handbags she sells, but commissions other products from workshops in Mexico that she sells in her shops.

Rickard started this business with a small investment and because she was selling her merchandise on Facebook, she was able to save money which she then invested in her first storefront. She currently has set up shop at 2 cooperative locations, reinvesting profits

into growing and supporting the business. In addition to retail sales, Rickard also has a wholesale division, which she says was a big gamble, but one that has paid off.



“Owning my own businesses is in my blood”, says Rickard. She uses her business knowledge and savvy in her marketing firm, LComm and allows her artistic, creative side to manifest in Que Chula. Rickard explains the benefits of business ownership like this: “While there are downs, the ups are so much more rewarding”.

Her newest venture makes use of not just her creative talent, but those of others as well. “There are artisans all over who have made a living being creative and working with their hands. It is a gift, so use it”, says Rickard.

Online or in person, visit Que Chula to make a purchase:  
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# Passion with a purpose: Sharon Gamblin by Allen White

Gone are the days of women wearing crisp white uniforms and white shoes as beauticians across the country. In its place are women and men in street clothes with blow dryers, scissors, flat irons, make-up brushes and colorful nail polishes in hand, making people feel good with flattering hairstyles, smooth skin and manicured nails. There to witness and participate in the transition is Sharon Gamblin, owner and CEO of Fort Worth's oldest beauty school, Fort Worth Beauty School, Inc.

Though diminutive in stature, Sharon Gamblin's larger than life personality makes her stand out in a room. Her passion for her chosen career path is noteworthy. She started as a young girl by doing her doll's hair and later moved on to the hair of her mother, her aunts and their friends. She took cosmetology in high school at Trimble Tech and graduated in 1960. "I always felt this was my mission field," says Gamblin. She believes this field allows her to work with young women and men from all walks of life. "They all have dreams and it is my great pleasure to help them accomplish those," she says,

A licensed cosmetologist, Gamblin worked in and managed salons all over Fort Worth and its surrounding areas before realizing her true mission. "Everywhere I went, I found myself in teaching mode," said Gamblin. She returned to school to earn her instructor's license and worked in public and chain cosmetology schools before making the transition to owner. In 1985, she approached the then owner of Fort Worth Beauty School and offered to buy the school. Gamblin said she had to endure several interviews over a three-month period before Arthur and Dorothy Beedy agreed to sell. She has been the proud owner of Fort Worth Beauty School, Inc., since 1985. The school, established in 1952, is home to eight instructors and up to two hundred students at any given time.

“The biggest misconception about the industry is that it’s a dead-end career, yet nothing could be further from the truth .  
- Sharon Gamblin”

Gamblin knows and has been involved in the evolution of cosmetology for decades. She recalls, "Until 1974, it was illegal for us to do only haircuts; barbers



Sharon Gamblin, owner and CEO, Fort Worth Beauty School, Inc.  
Photo credit: Steve Rochun

were the only ones who could do so." At that time, haircutting instruction was minimal and the only way beauticians could cut hair was to "package" it with wash and style or some other type of service. Hair care, like much else during that time, was segregated. Gamblin worked with a friend to learn how to do "black" hair and she, in turn, taught her friend how to do "white" hair.

She has worked tirelessly to bring the industry into the 21st Century. She fought to bring financial aid to beauty school students before the Senate and Congress and worked to establish the need for continuing education for cosmetologists in Texas. Some of the changes made in the industry involve testing as well as continuing education classes now done via computer, test sites are all over the state, not just in Austin, and the amount of time it takes to test has been reduced from two days to a half day of testing virtually. She is proud to have been a part of all of this.

Gamblin loves working closely with the instructors at the school and welcomes each new student as part of the "family." She keeps in touch with many former students and shares in their successes as they pursue their dreams. Gamblin has former students all over the country — some work in the movie industry, others work in the cruise ship business and still others have their own shops. She works with each of them, getting recommendations and making phone calls when necessary to help them get where they want to go. Several former students have now returned to be educators themselves and many send their own daughters and granddaughters to her school.

Gamblin is passionate about helping people achieve their dreams and goals. She works with people from juvenile centers and those who were formerly incarcerated get into classes if that is their desire. All students must have a high school diploma or GED and meet Texas Department of Licensing and Registration regulations to be admitted to the school. Some students are struggling to make ends meet when they begin and Gamblin is quick to work with local nonprofit agencies, including Catholic Charities, the NAACP and local churches to make sure her students have food to eat and somewhere to live. Gamblin's goal is always to get every student ready to live and thrive.

The biggest misconception about the industry is that it's a dead-end career, yet nothing could be further from the truth according to Gamblin. She and her instructors work with many local salons to place the students and get them ready to work in their chosen

field before they graduate. She has some students who enter this field knowing that it is not their life-time career, but it is a way to earn a good living while attending school. Flexible scheduling makes it ideal for students who are studying at a more traditional college or university or some other form of advanced education.

Where others see obstacles, Gamblin sees opportunities. "If a student wants to go to beauty school, I will do everything I can to make it happen," says Gamblin. She and her instructors care about the education of these students — they are not just a number to her and they become her family. Her students' success is her success. "Seeing the success of graduate students coming back through our doors and telling us their dreams have actually come true, like purchasing a new vehicle or their first home, brings great joy to my life," says Gamblin.

While retirement is not in her immediate future, Gamblin is pleased to know the business will be left in the hands of her granddaughter who has been in the beauty industry for many years. She has participated in beauty pageants, been involved in the fashion industry and is a licensed cosmetologist and instructor herself. She is excited and ready to lead the next generation of Fort Worth Beauty School students.

From her days as a cosmetologist (counselor/pastor/confidante) until now, Sharon Gamblin has brought her love of people and her desire to make them feel better together in a career filled with greater satisfaction than she could ever have planned for.



Students at Fort Worth Beauty School, Inc.



Photo credit: Steve Rochun

# THE METRO REPORT



*Happy Holidays  
from the staff and  
contributors of The  
Metro Report.  
Wishing you, your  
families and your  
businesses peace and  
prosperity in the new  
year.*



All photos courtesy of Rachel DeLira from Style FW

# From here to there and back again – André McEwing

by Steve Rochun

Born to educators, Fort Worth native André McEwing chose to walk the path of corporate America. After attending Trinity Valley Preparatory School where he was voted the first African American student body president, McEwing left home to attend Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. “I loved both my collegiate experience and the beginning of my corporate career (Lockheed Aeronautical). They provided me with various personal, social and civic experiences based on the demographics of Atlanta,” says McEwing. This is where his passion for diversity and equity began to develop. “Atlanta was a more diverse city for business than Fort Worth. I was able to see minorities thrive and grow in business and in leadership roles,” said McEwing.

“I want people to know that I love Fort Worth and am here to serve and be a valuable asset...to make a better Fort Worth that serves future generations.”  
– André McEwing

After graduating with a BA with a concentration in banking and finance, he accepted employment at Trust Bank Company before moving on to Lockheed Aeronautics as a senior pricing analyst. Though he enjoyed the challenge of this job, home was calling so he made his way back to Fort Worth where he took a position with Pepsi Cola. “When I came back to Fort Worth, I was looking for opportunities where I could make a difference,” says McEwing. He has now worked for a few national companies in management positions continuing to build a professional network and utilizing his knowledge to strengthen those companies. Along the way, he earned a Masters of Sustainability from The University of Texas at Arlington School of Urban and Public Affairs. McEwing, whose father worked at Tarrant County College for many years was drawn to Tarrant County College District not only because of his father, but because of the scope of the job. He was recommended for his current position by former Chancellor Erma Johnson Hadley, a longtime advocate of diversity in Fort Worth who believed he had what they were looking for.



André McEwing, Supplier Diversity Manager, TCCD  
Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

At TCCD, his position as supplier diversity manager has many varied responsibilities including developing, leading and managing the implementation and utilization of minority and women owned business enterprises and historically underutilized businesses. The job entails creating and accessing a MWBE/HUB vendor certified database through business outreach efforts to support contracting opportunities at TCC. McEwing says, “These efforts are important because the certification process provides a fair and equal business vehicle that historically underutilized businesses (HUB) need to compete in the pursuit of contracting opportunities.

McEwing believes in giving back to his community and serves on several boards which include the Real Estate Council of Greater Fort Worth, Uplift Fort Worth, Tarrant Transit Alliance and North Central Texas Regional Certification Agency. He previously served on the boards of American Public Transportation Association and Trinity Metro. In addition to his job and board

memberships, McEwing stays active in the Fort Worth Chapter Beta Tau Lambda of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity where he is a life member and works mentoring youth, volunteers at the food bank and works on the male empowerment living legend program. He is also a NAACP Gold Life member.

In addition to working for TCCD, McEwing also is a partner in Trojan Real Estate a full-service real estate company looking to employ minority agents who will create sustainable economic development in underserved minority communities. Trojan recently brokered a land acquisition deal representing State of Texas General Land Office with Tarrant County on which will be built the Tuskegee Airmen Veterans Home. It is one of the largest land deals brokered by a minority real estate firm in Fort Worth. With diversity in mind, his company recently sponsored two women through the process of getting their licenses and are now part of the sales team at Trojan. The company will sponsor two more who will then apprentice with the company learning the ropes of commercial real estate. When asked why he got into this business, his response is indicative of his passion for what he’s doing in the community. “I looked around and did not see many African Americans in commercial real estate and I want to make sure we are represented in the arenas that affect our community. He plans to continue to grow this business while keeping up with his responsibilities at TCCD.

In what little spare time he has, McEwing enjoys reading where his focus is Black history, business and economics. He plays golf, watches suspense movies and enjoys traveling. McEwing is also a caregiver to his aging parents. As he continues to build his legacy, McEwing expressed this: “I want people to know that I love Fort Worth and am here to serve and be a valuable asset utilizing my professional and civic experiences to make a better Fort Worth that serves future generations.” Mitchell McEwing, Andre’s father, knew when he was young, he was destined for some role in leadership. How right he was and only he knows what is next.

## Q&A with Andre McEwing

**Q:** What do you see as the main challenge of living in Fort Worth?

**A:** The main challenge of living in Fort Worth is creating an inclusive and equitable quality of life environment that educationally, entrepreneurially and socially benefits everyone.

**Q:** How do you see the minority business atmosphere changing in Fort Worth in the next 5-10 years?

**A:** I see supplier diversity professionals, like me, continuing to advocate for MWBE inclusion within the public and private sector supply chain which will result in a sustainable economic impact within the North Texas region. It will be supported by the increasing number of small minority and women owned businesses. In addition, I believe growth and awareness of the need for diversity, equity and inclusion training is creating a focus on the business disparity and demand for the utilization of MWBE.

**Q:** What role do you see for yourself when it comes to advocating for diversity in North Texas?

**A:** There are few mandates regarding the use of minority and women owned businesses, but there are still opportunities in the private and public sector to partner with companies and other businesses to get them. I will use my experience and the principles I learned from my time in Atlanta and from Pepsico, Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce, Southeast Fort Worth, Inc. and my current position with TCCD to bring awareness and to take advantage of the opportunities available for these businesses.



Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

# Starting Over: Kesha Wright *by Allen White*

Plato wrote “our need will be the real creator.” For Kesha Wright, her need was the impetus behind the creation of her business, The Wright Way Luxury Stay LLC. After a bad car accident and multiple surgeries, Wright found herself forced to leave her job after years of working as a production auditor for Fore Aero Machines, a partner company of Lockheed Martin and Bell Helicopter. Prior to her accident, Wright says “I never dreamed of, or thought about investing in this type of business.” Wright’s desire had always been to own her own cleaning business. She says her OCD and love of cleaning led to her previous desire to enter that business. She and her oldest daughter had even discussed going into business together prior to her accident. But fate led Wright down a different path.

In addition to her OCD tendencies, Wright also lives and loves to serve. After doing some research and praying, Wright spoke with her niece and mentor, Hyrmonie Branch, owner of Branch With Us who helped her make the decision to “branch” out and start her own business.

While recovering from her accident and surgeries, Wright invested her time by taking business classes, participating in Zoom meetings and taking part in one-on-one courses through Branch and another mentor, Justin Richards. The courses and mentoring led her to purchase rental property. The current real estate market and the need for both short- and long-term rentals for business travel professionals make this an ideal time to enter the market.



Kesha Wright, owner, The Wright Way Luxury Stay LLC  
*Photo credit: Taurence Nations Williams*

After working for years at a job she enjoyed, Wright is now happy to be her own “boss.” Her accident left her with several medical and health issues making a regular nine-to-five difficult to work. She controls her own schedule, her own destiny and can reap the rewards of owning her own business. She is also able to follow her passion of networking within the community and building new business relationships with other entrepreneurs while pursuing the mission and vision of her company. As with any other business, there are always a few drawbacks; the risk of the investment and relying on a fickle market for corporate rentals are just a couple of them. Wright says, “You definitely need to be self-motivated and willing to commit the time in order to be successful.” Still learning the business, Wright has made changes in structuring the business she plans to grow and leave for her children and grandchildren. Her intent is to purchase additional properties and work with her children to teach them the ropes of property ownership and management leaving them with the means to be entrepreneurs themselves.

“You definitely need to be self-motivated and willing to commit the time in order to be successful.”

– Kesha Wright

Wright withdrew money from her cash management savings account to invest in herself. Her investment paid for the property and furnishings and she has since applied for business credit to make sure her business is able to run properly. Wright listed her property the first week in October and had immediate bookings beginning early November. She uses VRBO, Furnished Finders, her business website and word-of-mouth to market the property. She still manages to satisfy her OCD and love of cleaning by thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing her property after each rental stay.

Wright stands firm on her brand, “Customer Service and Customer Satisfaction.” Her business has been founded on hard work, dedication, discipline and will power. She encourages others to enter the world of business ownership. “Recognize your strengths and weaknesses and find something you have a passion for,” says Wright. She believes a successful entrepreneur is always focused on the business and its goals,

understands its target customer and provides great customer service. The owners who have successfully focused on the customer experience will ensure customer satisfaction and repeat business.

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*Photo credit: Taurence Nations Williams*



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# Culture Shock Record Store: Red Zeppelin

by Erin Ratigan

Stepping into Red Zeppelin Records is something of a culture shock. Located in McKinney town square surrounded by small boutiques and numerous coffee shops, the shop is quickly recognizable by its bright red door, through which customers are immediately faced with a giant, retro-styled mural on the back wall. The space is colorful yet low lit and a mass of band t-shirts on the wall makes the room feel like a merch booth at a rock concert.

In other words, while the rest of the town square feels very white, middle-class and conservative, the Red Zeppelin is a low-key hideaway for anyone with a turntable.

This atmosphere might appear casual to passersby, it was an intentional style choice, according to shop owner Katie Scott, who opened the shop in July last year. Scott said she wanted the store to feel like a “hole in the wall” designed to inspire people’s imagination.

“It makes you feel like it might be in a more urban area in the 80’s,” she said of the store’s aesthetic. “There’s graffiti everywhere, there’s a room where people can go in and write on the walls – kind of dive-y.”

As owner of the Groovy Coop – a vintage fashion and gifts shop on Tennessee St – Scott already had a retail presence in the square. She’d always wanted to open a record shop, she said, and having regulars at the Coop helped her when it came to starting her second business because it gave her a customer base to work with.

Knowing a landlord with a vacant storefront around the corner didn’t hurt, either.



Red Zeppelin Records

Photo credit: Erin Ratigan

Starting a business can be tough during a normal year but doing so during a global pandemic seemed particularly daunting, Scott said. By July the lockdown had just been lifted, but retail storefronts were still struggling amid concerns around spreading COVID-19.

But Scott’s concerns quickly vanished, as the shop brought out a veritable flood of customers on opening day thanks to the shop’s social media post on Instagram.

“We were so busy,” she said. “We were so blown away by how many people showed up over that weekend.”

Though the shop also sells products online, the majority of sales still come from in-person shoppers.

Declan Williamson has worked as a desk clerk at Red Zeppelin since the shop opened, and said the store is particularly popular among young music lovers and musicians.

“There’s almost a community and a movement starting to emerge around this small group that we have,” Williamson said. “We have a lot of younger artists who are now playing shows around here, so it’s like a ‘scene.’”

He said he’s noticed vinyl records becoming increasingly popular since lockdown, and believes this trend stems from music fans looking to stay busy.

He’s correct that vinyl sales took off in 2020. LP and EP album sales in the US were the highest they’ve been in decades according to a recent report by Statista, a consumer and market research group. The report showed retail value of vinyl has gradually increased since 2006, with those numbers spiking drastically in 2020. A Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) database found that LP and EP sales in 2020

alone reached \$619.6 million – the highest vinyl revenue since 1988.

While record stores may be seeing more shoppers in recent years, the businesses themselves are still predominantly male-owned and operated. There’s not much comprehensive data for how many record shops in the US are women-owned, but within the industry female-ownership is still unusual, and Scott estimated that there are approximately 20 women-owned record stores in the country.

She said she wants to encourage diversity within the local music industry and retail in McKinney.

“I’ve seen more and more shops opening up that are a little bit more diverse, and I hope I was a part of that,” she said.

Scott would not go into specifics about Red Zeppelin’s financial value, but said the shop was swiftly successful in meeting fiscal goals. Given that this success occurred during a difficult time for retail storefronts, she said she could “only imagine” what business will be like going forward.

“To be doing as well as we’re doing is just amazing, and I’m just beyond thrilled,” she said.

She also said the shop might be expanding soon, and that people should “keep an eye out” for updates.

On top of selling records, CDs, and band parapher-

nal, the Red Zeppelin now includes a record label. As of August, Scott said distribution deals were in place and four local artists signed with the label.

Shop online or in person:  
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Phone: (469) 500-7277

<http://www.redzeppelinrecords.com>

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Photo credit: Erin Ratigan

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“There’s almost a community and a movement starting to emerge around this small group that we have... it’s like a ‘scene.’”  
– Declan Williamson

Before Red Zeppelin moved into their current location at 206 E Louisiana St, that space was home to a salsa shop. When the salsa shop closed, Scott said the store’s owner suggested she take over the space.

The long, narrow layout made the space unique, she said, and she instantly knew it had potential.

“I knew that it would be a great record store,” she said.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

# Brandon T. L. Nelson

**Name, title, company:** Brandon T. L. Nelson, MBA, Director of Development and Marketing, The Parenting Center

**City of residence:** Mansfield

**City of birth:** St. Louis, Missouri

**Spouse:** Anjee

**Children:** Aiden

**Company description:** At The Parenting Center, we exist to ensure that the families, parents, couples, children, and individuals we serve are able to enjoy the positive and healthy life experiences we believe they deserve. We are able to achieve this through the provision of family, group and individual counseling, parent coaching and education, couple workshops, and programs for teens that focus on healthy relationships, financial literacy and emotional intelligence.

**Years with company:** 2

**Personal business strategy:** Never forget why you started; remain committed to your why.

**Challenges your company (or industry) will face the next 12 months:**

As difficult and challenging as fundraising has been the past two years, I do believe we will begin to see things turn around in 2022. If nothing else, the pandemic exposed critical gaps in the operational efficiency, financial health and flexibility of many non-profit organizations. Now fundraising professionals have a unique opportunity to engage with our supporters and identify areas of opportunity for the organizations we lead to thrive, even during a global crisis.

**Business advice to share:** If it costs you your peace and sanity, it's too expensive. Money isn't everything. You matter too.

**Worst business decision:** Every decision I've ever made in my life has ultimately been a lesson learned. So as for a "worst business decision," I truly do not have one because even the most challenging decisions have all produced immensely valuable lessons.

**Your greatest achievement:** Being a husband to my wife Anjee and a father to our son Aiden. It honestly gets no better than that.

**First job:** The first real job I can remember where I actually received a check was working at Saints, a popular skating rink in St. Louis. Fun Fact, there was a recording studio in the rink and it is actually where Nelly, The St. Lunatics and other local artists would frequent and record their music.

**Dream job:** When I figure it out, I'll report back.

**Hobbies:** At heart, I'm a creator and enjoy opportunities that allow me to engage my creative senses, like motivational speaking, graphic design and photography. I also enjoy using my creativeness to assist my wife with her event and in-



terior design business, Curated Weddings, Events and Interiors.

**Role models:** Parents and entrepreneurs, they are the real MVPs.

**How I know I'm successful:** When I can look myself in the mirror, knowing that I've never compromised my personal morals and values, remained ethical in my decision making, put my best foot forward at all times, all while possessing the confidence and awareness to fully show up as myself in every room where my feet may touch.

**Best places to find talented employees:** While there may be some diamonds in the rough that develop from job posting sites, my experience has been that word of mouth and engaging personal networks tend to bring forth the most qualified and talented employees.

**Favorite book(s):** What Makes the Great, Great by Dr. Dennis P. Kimbro,

**Favorite movie(s):** I'm honestly a big fan of animated movies, specifically those by Disney Pixar. Top five, in no particular order, Finding Nemo, Soul, Up, Cars, and Coco. Bonus picks - Luca and Onward.

**Favorite restaurant:** IMOS Pizza... "The Square Beyond Compare" is a favorite anytime I am back in my hometown of St. Louis.

**People I'd most want to share a meal with:** While I would enjoy the opportunity to share a meal with some of the most influential people throughout my lifetime, none of them could offer the feelings of love from my great-grandmother, Geraldine "Granny" Nelson.

**Pet peeve:** That is classified information and I'm working on them no longer being pet peeves.

**Colleges attended:** Hampton University (Hampton, VA), Eastern Illinois University (Charleston, IL)

**Favorite place to get away:** I'm a true St. Louisan, through and through; I love my hometown. I can always find peace and refuge back home whenever a quick break is necessary.

**I collect:** Without question, I'm a sneaker guy. Between all three of us in the family, we easily have 150 pairs of sneakers.

**Motto or theme song:** Motto: Every day is a new opportunity to be the very best version of yourself. Press on! Theme Song: Sky's the Limit by Biggie Smalls/The Notorious B.I.G.

**The talent you'd most like to have:** I'm content with the talents God has given me and those that he has provided me the opportunity to identify and further develop.

Photo credit: The Metro Report staff

SPOTLIGHT ON:

# Carolann Morris

**Name, title, company:** Carolann Morris, Vice President, Pinnacle Bank

**City of residence:** Arlington

**City of birth:** Miami, Florida

**Children:** Samantha & Scotty

**Company description:** We first opened our doors about 30 miles south of Fort Worth in Keene. Today, Pinnacle Bank, Texas serves Arlington, Azle, Benbrook, Burleson, Cleburne, Colleyville, Fort Worth, Joshua, Keene, Mansfield, Rhome and Springtown. Although we've grown, we still greet you by name and answer our calls in person. Banking has changed a lot over the years, but you'll find our people are good people in good towns who bring you banking The Way Banking Should Be.

**Years with company:** 3 years and 8 months

**Personal business strategy:** I've been a banker over 40 years. Over the years, my customers have become my friends and family. It gives me great joy to know I have gained their trust and they know I will always take care of them and look out for their best interest. I will work tirelessly for each one of them and love at the end of the day when a deal comes together.

**Challenges your company (or industry) will face the next 12 months:** Shrinking net interest margin. With deposits continuing to come into the bank, we need to continue to grow loans and with the low interest rate environment we are in, the challenge is to maintain our net interest margin. Another big challenge all banks are facing is cyber security threats. We need to help our customers understand the need for cyber security for their computers.

**Business advice to share:** Be honest and true to who you are in everything you do. It makes a difference.

**Worst business decision:** Staying someplace where I was completely stressed and unhappy but afraid of change.

**Your greatest achievement:** Being a single mom, raising 2 kids while building my career.

**First job:** Steak Place Restaurant in Hollywood, Florida during high school. I worked behind the counter, then became a waitress, cashier and finally their bookkeeper.

**Dream job:** Event planner for non-profit organizations

**Hobbies:** Shooting, clay shooting, trying to learn to play golf, boot camp, mud/obstacle course runs. Watching my grandson's baseball game or music recitals. Anything outdoors.

**Role models:** Betsy Price has been a role model to me for many years. I admire her drive, her passion for our city and the people of Fort Worth. But most importantly, I admire that she is always true to herself. She is a strong, loving, and genuine woman and highly respected by so many. I strive to have the same attributes and give my whole heart in everything I do, just as she does.

**How I know I'm successful:** When I know that my work with charities and boards made a difference in the lives of others and for our city.

**Favorite movie(s):** Twelve Mighty Orphans

**Favorite restaurant:** Capital Grille (of course)

**People I'd most want to share a meal with:** I would have loved to have met George and Barbara Bush. I love how dedicated they both were to our Country but also how much they loved one another.

**Pet peeve:** Having to double do work. I like to find ways to work smarter, not harder

**Colleges attended:** Florida Bible College, Tarrant County College

**Favorite place to get away:** The beach. Anywhere I can listen to the waves.

**I collect:** Shoes...bad habit!

**Motto or theme song:** I recently heard this quote and it spoke to my heart. I kept reading it over and over..."To be tough is to be fragile, to be tender is to be truly fierce."

**The talent you'd most like to have:** Oh how I wish I could SING! I'm sure Jason wishes I could too when I'm singing out loud in the car!



Photo credit: Rachel DeLira



“ Lisa Logan makes the complicated process of buying and selling such a painless experience, it’s easy to overlook the high degree of real estate savvy and professionalism that she brings to the process.

~ ERIC P.

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