

## A CONVERSATION WITH TWO-SPORT SANKOFA CLINICIAN **COURTNEY DEENA '13**

Eboni Preston Laurent

Aug 12, 2020

US Lacrosse

Courtney Deena played both field hockey and lacrosse as an NCAA Division I athlete, and currently serves as the assistant field hockey coach at Hofstra University. She also serves as a clinician for the US Lacrosse Sankofa Clinic Series, with a desire to expose the game to more young players of color.

Tell us about your background?

I am from Pickerington, Ohio and I went to a college preparatory school from 1st grade through 12th grade. I graduated in a class of about 86 students and five of us were Black. I grew up in a very proud Black family that was hyper-competitive. My mom was a track runner, my dad played lacrosse at Hobart, and my brother was a soccer player. We had to prove who was the most athletic and we did that by racing...everywhere. I remember one night after dinner, when I was probably six years old, we had a conversation at the table about "who is the fastest?" We decided that we would race. So we got outside, lined up, and took off. My brother won that race; however, I am still waiting for my re-match. I received a scholarship to play field hockey at the University of Maryland. After I graduated in 2017, I played a 5th year (I call it my "victory lap") of lacrosse at the University of Louisville. College was far from easy, but the good and the bad experiences have helped shaped me into the strong woman I am today, and I am thankful.

How did you get started in lacrosse?

My dad played lacrosse in college and he is from Long Island, so I was pretty much destined to have a stick in my hand at some point. I went to my first lacrosse game when I was about one year old.

What made you decide to play in college?

I started off as a college field hockey player and played four years at Maryland. I thought I was done until my friend told me I could take a 5th year and play lacrosse. So, one thing led to another and I was offered an amazing opportunity by Coach Kellie Young to play lacrosse at Louisville. I love lacrosse and I am still very thankful to Kellie and Coach (Scott) Teeter for the opportunity to compete as a Cardinal and for teaching me lessons I still carry with me today.

How did you get involved in coaching?

My dad has coached across all levels, including my horrible rec soccer team when I was three years old. I really got involved in coaching with Sankofa because of my mom and Eboni Preston-Laurent. My mom shared my story in a lacrosse Facebook group and Eboni came across it and here we are today. Outside of Sankofa, I am also the assistant field hockey coach at Hofstra University.

Why did you pick lacrosse over more traditional sports?

Honestly, I consider myself an athlete but I was horrid at basketball and I hate losing. Also, I am barely 5-foot tall so I wasn't shooting over anyone. I played basketball in 7th and 8th grade and in those two years we won one game. When it came time to play in high school, I decided that I would just focus on field hockey and lacrosse and save basketball for those who had a few more inches on me.

What opportunities did lacrosse provide for you that you wouldn't have had otherwise?

Lacrosse has provided me the opportunity to meet many people from various backgrounds. One of the main things it has done for me comes from the Sankofa side. Having the chance to coach youth players

across the country has been the best opportunity so far. I enjoy sharing my love of the sport with others and helping kids develop and foster their own love of the game.

What continues to motivate you to give back to the sport?

We all know lacrosse has grown incredibly fast, however, most importantly lacrosse is growing into all types of communities. As a Black woman, I feel a sense of pride when I see young Black girls playing lacrosse. I am motivated by the growth of young Black and Brown kids within the sport of lacrosse. It is a sport that can open so many doors for so many people, and I want to help youth and others see lacrosse as an opportunity for so much more.

What advice would you give to young athletes of color looking to get involved in lacrosse?

You belong. Many times, playing predominantly White sports can lead to you being the only person of color. It can be lonely being the only one, and it is easy to question yourself. But know that you belong. Also, cherish your difference. I remember times feeling as if I had to forgo a bit of my Blackness to seem more relatable or to appear less of an outsider. The things that make you different are the things that make you, you.

What does it mean to you for the sport of lacrosse to become more diversified?

It means a lot. I love seeing people and kids of color playing lacrosse. I love lacrosse. It is a sport that has given so much to me and continues to do such. I want to see other young kids of color benefit from this sport like I did and then continue to share their love of it for years to come. The more diversity we have in lacrosse and the more kids from diverse backgrounds, the more belonging those players will feel.

What type of social justice issues are you involved in or passionate about?

I am very passionate about racial justice. As a Black woman in America, I have seen first hand the injustices that we as Black people face. I am doing all I can to help educate others on the stories of Black people and encourage people to listen to Black voices. As a college coach of a sport that is predominately white, like lacrosse, I am sharing my stories. My mom taught me the importance of stories from a young age. Stories and experiences are ways that I can share about injustices in our world. I fall into two marginalized groups being both Black and a woman. My stories and experiences as a Black woman have helped me educate people within our sport about the importance of not only diversity, but justice.

If you could provide a book for summer reading for students, what would it be and why?

I would recommend *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. I read it when I was in college and it instantly joined my all-time favorites list. The way Coates writes the book, as a letter to his teenage son, is powerful. The book unveils the injustices that exist for Black people. As someone who values experiences and stories, Coates does a great job weaving in his life experiences and the impact of them. I think that this book would be great for students because it is almost written as a letter right to them.

<https://www.uslacrosse.org/blog/a-conversation-with-two-sport-sankofa-clinician-courtney-deena>

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Speaking with Amgen's Summer Interns

Published on August 19, 2020

**Bob Bradway '81**

LinkedIn

Need something to feel good about? Try spending an hour with almost 200 smart, confident, and resilient young people who are eager to make their mark on the world.

I had the pleasure of doing just that when I met recently (and virtually) with Amgen's summer interns and co-ops. Amid the greatest public health crisis, economic downturn, and social unrest of their lifetimes, these students are understandably concerned about the future, but they remain optimistic – as do I.

My advice to them? There is no dress rehearsal in life. Don't wait to do something meaningful – especially now when the world is facing so many challenges. We all get just one shot, so make it count. Stay curious and never stop learning.

You can read more about our conversation here. What's some of the best career advice you've been given?

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/speaking-amgens-summer-interns-bob-bradway/?trackingId=ukAX0vXhRcClCokdhwPmSQ%3D%3D>

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Amgen CEO to Interns: Stay Curious, Keep Learning, Make a Difference  
5 Tips For Tomorrow's Leaders  
FEATURED NEWS, Amgen  
8/3/2020

Amgen CEO **Bob Bradway '81** spoke by video conference on July 29 with the company's approximately 180 summer interns and co-ops as part of the internship program's Summer Executive Speaker Series. He shared his perspectives on Amgen's business, the company's responses to COVID-19 and societal protest against racial injustice, and his own experience and learnings as Amgen's CEO. He also offered several pieces of career and life advice.

Noting that it is an especially exciting time to work in biotechnology, Bradway urged his listeners to consider pursuing careers in the biotechnology industry. He observed that healthcare will be a huge growth area in coming years as populations continue to age and become more susceptible to diseases associated with the aging process, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and osteoporosis. Advances in human genetics and immuno-oncology, where Amgen has particular expertise, are raising the prospect of meaningful improvements and even cures for people living with cancer and other diseases. Bradway highlighted unmet need in neurodegenerative disease, expressing hope that Amgen's capabilities in human genetics might eventually enable the company to make meaningful progress in that area.

Asked about the most pressing challenges facing Amgen, Bradway cited the need to continue supplying every patient, every time (something at which Amgen excels but where other biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies have struggled); to find new ways of interacting virtually with prescribers when face-to-face engagement isn't possible; and to have the courage to continue investing huge sums in high-risk research and development of new medicines. The interns had many questions about what attracted Bradway from finance to biotechnology, how he approaches his responsibilities as CEO, and what he has learned in that role. "There's something special about devoting your life's work to helping people live longer and healthier lives," said Bradway. As CEO, he added, "my success depends largely on the quality of the people around me. I've focused on recruiting, developing, and retaining the best

people I can find. I've also learned that with a more diverse group of people joining me around the table, we make better decisions."

Asked what challenges he has confronted in leading Amgen during the coronavirus pandemic, Bradway noted that "COVID-19 has taught us that even when you think you've got it all figured out, nature humbles us. For me and CEOs from other companies and industries, COVID-19 is the great equalizer. We're all trying to figure it out together." He added, "my heart goes out to all of you who are trying to complete your education at this very disruptive time."

Here are five career and life tips he shared:

Don't wait to make a difference

"Life is not a dress rehearsal, and all of us get only one shot. If you've got a good idea, don't lose time pursuing it, and if you find something that needs to be changed, help to drive that change." The greatest lie we tell ourselves, Bradway observed, "is that we have infinite quality time remaining. Get off the starting blocks as fast as you can."

Find a position in a company (and industry) doing meaningful work

"At Amgen, we do things every day that really matter, that improve people's lives. It's special being associated with a company that has such an important mission."

Stay curious and never stop learning

"If you're working on something that matters, staying curious is easy – it's inherently interesting to you. I encourage you all to be lifelong learners. However much you think you understand, many things will change during your life."

Have confidence in yourself

"Knowing that other people had confidence in me inspired me to have confidence in myself, and that helped to open new opportunities for me."

Don't be afraid to take on challenges for which you might not be ready

"My predecessor and the Board asked me to take on the job of CEO before I was ready, but one is never fully prepared for such a responsibility. Amgen's best people are those who perform when they are stretched. All of us do better when we take on responsibilities before we are fully ready for them."

<https://wwwext.amgen.com/media/featured-news/2020/08/amgen-ceo-to-interns---stay-curious-keep-learning-make-a-difference/>

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Bexley's **Craig Tann '92** following trails in his Pelotonia fundraising challenge

By CHRIS BOURNEA

THISWEEKNEWS.COM

Posted Aug 3, 2020 at 4:35 PM

Updated Aug 4, 2020 at 11:10 AM

Bexley resident Craig Tann is combining his interest in exploring with raising funds to fight cancer.

Tann said he decided to participate in Pelotonia by challenging himself to walk or run 100 miles through Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, equaling the distance from Columbus to Gambier. His fundraising goal is \$2,500.

“I wanted to explore the state. You can run or walk in every metro park; you can’t ride your bike in every metro park,” he said. “I’m trying my hardest to organize people to come with me, either a family member or a coworker or an acquaintance I haven’t seen in a while. I’m building community along the way, and that is what it is all about it.”

Tann, 46, director of national accounts with Diamond Hill Capital Management, said he has participated in Pelotonia as a cyclist five previous times. He and his wife, Kris, are the parents of a son, Aiden, 11, and a daughter, Natalie, 9.

Because of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and a desire to keep participants, volunteers and supporters safe, Pelotonia in May canceled its annual weekend ride and in-person events, which were slated Friday to Sunday, Aug. 7 to 9.

<https://www.thisweeknews.com/news/20200803/bexleys-craig-tann-following-trails-in-his-pelotonia-fundraising-challenge>

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Exclusive: Leadership Columbus announces its Class of 2021

By Doug Buchanan – Editor in chief

Columbus Business First

Aug 17, 2020, 2:02pm EDT

Leadership Columbus is set to embark on what’s certainly the most unusual year in the community leadership program’s long history.

The organization has chosen its latest class of future community champions, bringing in 58 participants for a hybrid of in-person and virtual training and networking to comply with the realities of life during the global coronavirus pandemic.

This year’s class includes participants from the region’s corporate, nonprofit and government sectors, such as AEP, Crane Group, CoverMyMeds, Nationwide, the city’s police and fire departments, and several of the area’s banks and law firms.

Robbie Banks, Leadership Columbus’ interim executive director, said this year will be different for a couple reasons, not just the disruptions from the pandemic.

“We were able to successfully transition from in-person to virtual programming for the last four months of the Class of 2020’s program year, and we will have in-person, hybrid and virtual plans in place for Class of 2021’s program year,” she said in an email. “The events of 2020 have magnified racial inequities; therefore, addressing racism as a leadership issue in our curriculum will be an enhancement for the coming year.”

Banks took over in July for the organization's longtime leader, Laurie Stein Marsh, who retired after three decades at the helm. Banks acknowledged it's been a "challenging time," but said the organization is carrying on.

"This program year is not going to be perfect, but as a community leadership program, we don't have time to pause even if that's the most convenient thing to do," she said. "We're going to press on, and it's incumbent upon us to do that.

"To have employers invest in their employees right now and individuals' desire to become community stewards is a testament that the need for strong leadership does not stop – even during a global pandemic."

The Class of 2021 is the 47th for Leadership Columbus' flagship program, which has graduated nearly 3,000 participants in that time.

Leadership Columbus Class of 2021

**Joe Mayer '04**



Joe Mayer

**Employer:** DesignGroup

**Title:** Associate Principal/Designer

JOSEPH MAYER



[https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2020/08/17/leadership-columbus-class-of-2021.html?ana=e\\_colum\\_bn\\_exclusive\\_exclusive&j=90524204&t=Breaking%20News&mkt\\_tok=eyJljo](https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2020/08/17/leadership-columbus-class-of-2021.html?ana=e_colum_bn_exclusive_exclusive&j=90524204&t=Breaking%20News&mkt_tok=eyJljo)

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Students, Residents Elect 2021 Leadership  
August 05, 2020, 08:42 pm  
News Staff  
The American Academy of Family Physicians

Capping the first virtually conducted National Conference of Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students -- which boasted record-breaking student attendance of 2,293 -- delegates to the National Congress of Family Medicine Residents and the National Congress of Student Members chose new leaders in a remote election. Following an Aug. 1 online forum for candidates, voting was conducted through Aug. 4, with results announced the next day.

The elected residents:

Resident Member, AAFP Board of Directors: **Anna Askari '09**, M.D., Eisenhower Health, Rancho Mirage, Calif.

Resident Chair, 2021 National Conference: Amanda Stisher, M.D., UAB Huntsville Family Medicine Program, Huntsville, Ala.

Resident Alternate Delegates, AAFP Congress of Delegates: Michael Keller, M.D., M.P.H., Memorial Hospital Family Medicine Residency, South Bend, Ind.; and Allen Rodriguez, M.D., Scripps Mercy Chula Vista Family Medicine Residency Program, Chula Vista, Calif.

Resident Member, AAFP Foundation Board of Trustees: Christina Pedro, M.D., M.B.A., Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center, Mishawaka, Ind.

The elected students:

Student Member, AAFP Board of Directors: Cynthia Ciccotelli, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Scranton, Pa.

Student Chair, National Conference: AuBree LaForce, Northeast Ohio Medical University, Rootstown, Ohio

Student Alternate Delegates, AAFP Congress of Delegates: Rebecca Stoll, Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dothan, Ala.; and Morgan Weiler, University of Kansas School of Medicine, Kansas City, Kan.

National FMIG Coordinator: Hannah Smith, East Carolina University Brody School of Medicine, Greenville, N.C.

Student Member, AAFP Foundation Board of Trustees: Ashten Duncan, University of Oklahoma-University of Tulsa School of Community Medicine, Tulsa, Okla.

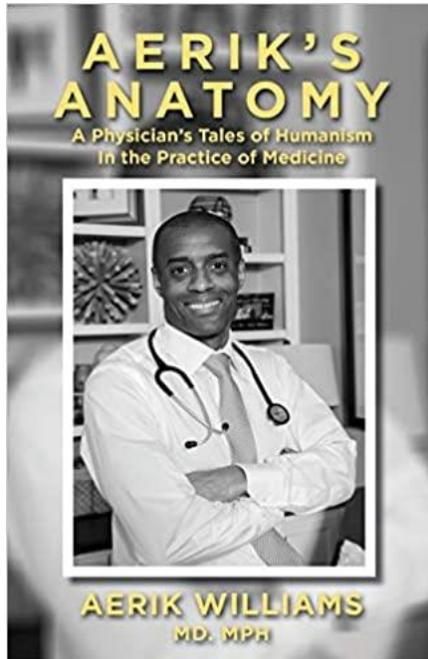
Student Member, Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Board of Directors: Bright Zhou, M.S., Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, Calif.

Several appointed student and resident leadership positions remain available, including:  
resident representatives to the AMA Resident and Fellow Section (applications due Aug. 11),  
student representatives to the AMA Medical Student Section (applications due Aug. 11),  
resident and student to serve on the Annals of Family Medicine editorial advisory board (applications due Aug. 11),  
AAFP Commission members (applications due Sept. 8),  
FMIG Network regional coordinators (students only, applications due Sept. 8),

student liaison to the Student National Medical Association, student liaison to the Latino Medical Student Association, National Research Network Advisory Group resident and student representatives, FamMedPAC resident and student representatives, and American Family Physician resident and student representatives. Information about leadership positions and application materials are available at [aafp.org/getinvolved](http://aafp.org/getinvolved).

<https://www.aafp.org/news/education-professional-development/20200805nc-election.html>

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**Aerik Williams '98**, recently self-published a book: *Aerik's Anatomy*. The transformation of a medical student to an attending physician is wonderfully portrayed by Dr. Aerik Williams in his memoir *Aerik's Anatomy*. His storytelling is captivating and gives vivid detail to the unique experiences of the training physician. Case by case and patient by patient, Dr. Williams describes how his experiences practicing medicine have revealed truths about the US health-care system, pharmaceutical industry, and the obstacles impeding care to the uninsured and those living in poverty. His thoughtful perspective compels the reader into periods of sorrow, disbelief, laughter and self-reflection.

[https://www.amazon.com/Aeriks-Anatomy-Aerik-Williams/dp/057863841X/ref=asc\\_df\\_057863841X/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=416690198812&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=5917760909655071014&hvpon e=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9009954&hvtargid=pla-886457195429&psc=1&tag=&ref=&adgrpid=93867145117&hvpon e=&hvptwo=&hvadid=416690198812&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=5917760909655071014&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvloc phy=9009954&hvtargid=pla-886457195429](https://www.amazon.com/Aeriks-Anatomy-Aerik-Williams/dp/057863841X/ref=asc_df_057863841X/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=416690198812&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=5917760909655071014&hvpon e=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9009954&hvtargid=pla-886457195429&psc=1&tag=&ref=&adgrpid=93867145117&hvpon e=&hvptwo=&hvadid=416690198812&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=5917760909655071014&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvloc phy=9009954&hvtargid=pla-886457195429)

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Album Review: **Gordon Anderson '79** — Moon Man  
Musoscribe: Bill Kopp's Music Magazine  
By Bill Kopp  
On May 23, 2020

It's sometimes said – and unfairly so – that people who are in the business side of the music business are essentially failed, frustrated musicians themselves. My own experience is different: some of my favorite musicians have a foot in both sides of the biz.

It's safe to assume that most if not all of my friends and colleagues in the business – publicists, managers, label people and such – are musicians of some sort or another. I'll admit, though, that I had no idea that Gordon Anderson is a songwriter. The head of Real Gone Music clearly has impeccable musical taste — just look at the material he's chosen to reissue this last decade or so – but it turns out that he's an appealing, insightful composer as well.

His new album, *Moon Man*, is full of what we must assume are story-songs drawn from his own life experiences. And those experiences are ones with which people of a certain age can most certainly relate: "Record Club" tells of the joys of getting eight albums for a penny (or whatever it was). "Funemployment" is a potted tale of how he started a record label.

"Pill Mill," on the other hand, probably isn't a true story. Sung (like most all of *Moon Man*) in the first person, it's the tale of someone who fell prey to pill addiction. The tune's languid tune has the scuzzed-out vibe of Exile-era Rolling Stones, which is more than fitting.

The Crazy Horse-ish, ragged-but-right feel of that tune is of a piece with *Moon Man*'s overall production aesthetic: the songs are well structured but carefully avoiding over-rehearsing and any sense of slickness. There are very little in the way of studio effects; the album sounds like a trio showed up to the studio knowing how it wanted its songs to sound, cut each one in a single take, and got out of there without breaking the bank.

"Palm Reader" is reminiscent of Jonathan Richman, but with a more sophisticated lyrical approach. "The Fall of Song" is as intriguing to read (the lyrics are all printed in the CD's booklet) as it is to hear. "Pinpricks" has a melancholy feel not unlike The La's, and it showcases, Anderson's vocal range: He sure can hit those high notes. "Glazed Antique" is a catchy, rootsy rocker. The soaring "Shotgun Wedding" and "Siren Song" both give the band – Anderson, Richard Briglia and Kathryn Korniloff – a chance to stretch out a la Neil Young and Crazy Horse (again).

The album wraps up with a trio of shorter, more concise songs. The best is saved for last: the wryly humorous and endearing "Already Gone" (not the Eagles song) is about a man whose family is away for the weekend. What does he do? Freed of responsibilities, he drinks, fires up a joint and watches violent movies and sports. But as the song careens toward its end, he admits that he's doing something else: planning a vacation with that wife and kid.

Even if you don't know Gordon personally, listen to *Moon Man* and you'll likely smile and think to yourself, "Hey, I know that guy!"

[http://blog.musoscribe.com/index.php/2020/05/23/album-review-gordon-anderson-moon-man/?fbclid=IwAR2SSk7tVtfH5vjE3qTe7G\\_tCdR3yIIpsnJt-hYxoGOdfEuwbJyhuOD7jLg](http://blog.musoscribe.com/index.php/2020/05/23/album-review-gordon-anderson-moon-man/?fbclid=IwAR2SSk7tVtfH5vjE3qTe7G_tCdR3yIIpsnJt-hYxoGOdfEuwbJyhuOD7jLg)

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Graded on a Curve: **Gordon Anderson '79**, *Moon Man*  
Vinyl District  
BY JOSEPH NEFF  
JULY 7, 2020

Anybody who's partaken in the reissue catalogs of Collectors' Choice Music and Real Gone Music has Gordon Anderson to thank, as he headed-up the former and co-founded the latter. But he's also a guitarist, a singer, and a songwriter of considerable ability, as evidenced by his first album, *Moon Man*,

which is out on CD July 10 through, wouldn't you know it, Real Gone Music. For a guy who returned such a wide range of styles to circulation, his own stuff is quite focused, as post-Byrds jangle and Crazy Horse-informed big guitar moves get combined with rawness and heft that's reminiscent of early indie rock, both instrumentally and emotionally. After a few spins, it grows into a stone killer.

Moon Man, so titled due to a nickname bestowed upon Anderson at summer camp as a kid, is an album defined by remembrance, but it's also record collector rock of the best sort, with its opening track covering both aspects at once as it illuminates the life-altering impact the Columbia House Record Club had on Anderson in his youth.

You might know the story, possibly from first-hand experience: seven albums, all for only a buck (with a few more to buy at regular price later). In "Record Club," Anderson was 12 years old as he came under the spell of rock music on vinyl. His picks included Band of Gypsies, Deep Purple, and Bread, selections that he describes as transforming him into a "rock & roll animal," fittingly swiping the title of a famed record as Anderson speaks of a personal collection that grew to 1,000s of LPs and CDs (he still has and values those records he got in the mail in 1973).

"Record Club" works effectively as a statement of purpose and sets the instrumental tone for what follows, with Anderson welcoming Kathryn Korniloff of Two Nice Girls as both a player and co-producer. Featuring Fender Telecaster, prominent bass and cracking rhythms, the sound launches from a classic foundation with left-of-the-dial edge, as exemplified by the country-rockish jangling of "Funemployment," a cut that also establishes Anderson as a bold and appealingly ragged singer.

While a lot of college rock, u-ground rock, alt-rock, and indie rock spotlights vocalists either with a case of the chronic mumbles (a post-Stipe thing) or having been deliberately lowered in the mix, Anderson is fully upfront and wields considerable range, particularly across "In Turnaround," where he moves from conversational to belting to taking a few gulps in a higher register, all while reminding me in spots of Ian Curtis fleeing Manchester to front some hyperactive jangle band in a university town in early '80s heartland USA.

More to the point, Anderson's singing is mildly reminiscent of Mark Edwards, an undeservedly obscure figure who recorded in the '80s and early '90s under the moniker My Dad Is Dead, his music and vocals also sometimes compared to Joy Division. Anderson is far less of a post-punk disciple however, with "Pill Mill" flaunting the Crazy Horse influence cited above. Lyrically, the track delves into struggles with addiction hinted at in the previous song.

As a singer, Anderson also swaggers a tad like Tom Verlaine (a similarity occasionally extending to the instrumentation) and is simultaneously a rough-toned descendant of Neil, bringing another Young-influenced indie guy, Eleventh Dream Day's Rick Rizzo, to mind (I said he had range). And as heard in "Pillar of Flame," there's zest that's a bit akin to John Darnielle, though Anderson's far less take-it-or-leave-it at the microphone.

Flush with robust guitar moves capped by a stinging solo, "Pillar of Flame" contrasts with the folkish strumming of "Palm Reader," though in a short interval it becomes substantially cosmic and then powerfully crescendos (there's a lyrical earthquake and a bad dream). Next is the catchy "Call of Spring," which inspires thoughts of Hoboken but with an anthemic chorus subtly gesturing toward '90s alt-rock.

“Pinpricks” nods to Young again, but it’s nearer to Neil in solo mode, and with a recurring flourish that suggests Mayo Thompson of all people (it’s a sweet little flash of avant-pop) before the whole thing redirects into the rainy day early ’70s soft-pop zone (like something you might’ve grabbed from Columbia House Record Club).

“Glazed Antique” shifts to the instrumentally sprightly as Anderson turns up the confessionalism a few notches, and then “Shotgun Wedding” begins with a blend of country-rock twang and vocals that conjure visions of an unreleased Barry Gibb session for Asylum Records, all before transforming into a muscular rocker a la Aussie Michael Beach’s Golden Theft and Malkmus circa Pig Lib.

And this is where Moon Man really kicks into high gear, as “Shotgun Wedding” bleeds right into “Siren Song.” That one has vibes suggesting Crazy Horse in their “Down By the River”/ “Cowgirl in the Sand” mode, with a swell tangle of wicked soloing. In short, it rolls like a record by a guy who cherishes records, and who made this one with enthusiasm.

Interestingly, it’s “Siren Song” where the lyrics take a turn toward the contemporary, but without any letdown. Entering the home stretch, “Rose Parade” is an utter jangle fest offset with some of Anderson’s raspiest (but elated) singing, as “Drumroll Please” commences like Neil once more but ends nearer to one of those recently reissued demos by America, which is an against-the-odds swank move.

“Already Gone” takes a deep dip into recollection one last time, sounding like something Mitch Easter might’ve produced in the mid-’80s, except more rocking instrumentally, like a nugget from the late Tommy Keene, perhaps. It’s a solid finale to a record that inspires an abundance of comparisons, though vocally and topically, Anderson finesses the whole with the personal. For anyone who dually loves classic rock and subterranean sounds, Moon Man is a delightful ride. I’m only hoping it eventually gets pressed to vinyl, as it’d sound splendid on the format.

[http://www.thevinyldistrict.com/storefront/2020/07/graded-on-a-curve-gordon-anderson-moon-man/?utm\\_source=feedburner&fbclid=IwAR1lLhMRkzPU4p\\_rq5mCOJpyNwSnSyITS6WE9hjpZXjky4RPyTRtEGSpNEO](http://www.thevinyldistrict.com/storefront/2020/07/graded-on-a-curve-gordon-anderson-moon-man/?utm_source=feedburner&fbclid=IwAR1lLhMRkzPU4p_rq5mCOJpyNwSnSyITS6WE9hjpZXjky4RPyTRtEGSpNEO)



**Davis Friedman '18** worked on a new podcast called CBUS Speaks through his internship at TENFOLD. CBUS Speaks is a podcast series devoted to capturing the told and untold stories from pioneering leaders of Columbus, Ohio and sharing their advice to inspire our city’s next generation of leaders.

<https://anchor.fm/tenfoldtalks>

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**Jay Gokhal '20** was featured in *White Fence Living* where he discussed his podcast *The Jay Way*, the importance of his co-curricular involvement at Academy, his passion for education and his love for politics and public speaking.

## Jay Gokhale

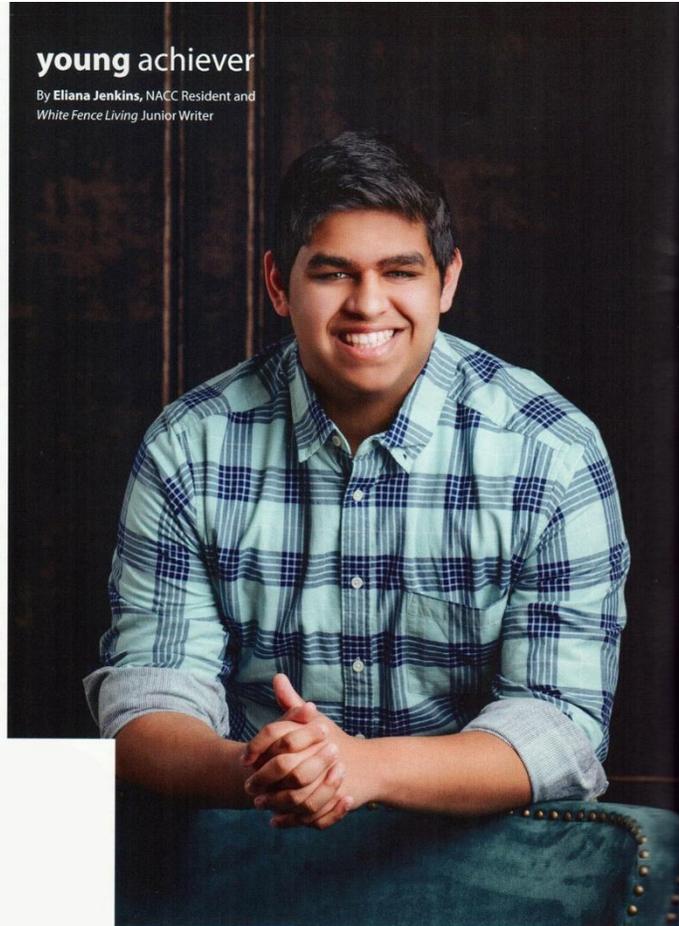
### USES HIS PASSION AS A WAY TO EDUCATE OTHER STUDENTS

Students who discover their true passion in high school are notably rare, yet Columbus Academy senior Jay Gokhale is one of them. As a New Albany Farms resident, Jay, with the help of his supportive parents, Soniya and Anil, twin sister, Lina, two younger brothers, Arjun and Dillon, and dog, Scarlet, discovered his love for politics and public-speaking through his self-managed podcast titled *The Jay Way*.

Although *The Jay Way* is Jay's latest project, it combines elements of other extracurricular pursuits he's been involved in throughout high school. As an active member of the student council, JSA (Junior States of America and Youth in Government), the student alumni representative board, band, and choir, Jay has learned the benefits of versatility and breaking boundaries through leadership. "Education is a privilege," he states, "I've experienced that extracurricular activities enhance my learning and allow me to make real-world

### young achiever

By **Eliana Jenkins**, NACC Resident and  
*White Fence Living* Junior Writer



connections. They allow me to develop leadership skills and necessary qualities for life beyond high school." Podcasts are one of the many interests he plans on continuing following graduation.

What first began as a mechanism for studying Latin junior year has become a passion: a passion that he has a clear talent for, due to his love for advocacy through media platforms. In addition to his interests in business and the stock market, *The Jay Way* is Jay's method of speaking up about greater issues and topics he cares about: "Because I'm passionate about politics, I typically have a political segment, followed by current events, and a discussion topic, and then I end my episodes with a life lesson. I'm glad I finally followed through, and now I definitely want to continue to produce podcasts throughout college and maybe for the rest of my life." With over 500 people tuning in to his podcast each segment, considering he's only produced five episodes so far, he hopes to unite Americans of all ages, cultures, and especially political backgrounds.

Jay feels that it is his responsibility to educate himself and others on current events and ways to resolve some of the conflict that



Jay and some friends from Columbus Academy hanging with the Chick-fil-A cow.

exists within politics: “Far too often, news channels or websites spin stories in their favor or make the other side look bad, and I think that’s a travesty,” Jay claims, as he emphasizes the importance for him to read unbiased and neutral news sources. “We should be encouraging people to discover things for themselves and not be told what to think....I’m very respectful of differing opinions and I encourage them: the only way to learn from each other, make negotiations possible, and continue to move forward in this country is hearing other opinions aside from your own.”

He attributes his drive and good character to his grandparents and their own inspiring story: “They made the bold, courageous decision to immigrate to the United States in the 1960s from India, and they came with nothing. The unfamiliarity of America was brutal and the conditions were not initially desirable, but through hard work and relentless effort, they were able to provide amazing opportunities for not only my parents but for me and my siblings, as well. I’m eternally grateful for the love and support they’ve shown to me, and I will continue to use the ideals they’ve instilled in me for the rest of my life. I want to help and serve others, create meaningful change, and inspire people to live successful lives, and for that, I have my grandparents to thank.”

*The Jay Way* airs every Friday on Spotify and <https://anchor.fm/jay-gokhale1>. Jay is on a trajectory of success that he is determined to continue, as he plans on double majoring in business administration and political science in college. He is proud of the work he’s put in to empower himself and others through the podcast and encourages others to do their version of the same: “I’m just glad I followed through and pursued something I’m passionate about. I encourage you to do the same; if there’s something you’ve been meaning to do for a while now but have brushed it aside, do it! You’ll be so glad that you did.”



**Do you know of a child or teenager you would like to see featured in an upcoming edition?** Please send us a quick note [whitefenceliving@n2pub.com](mailto:whitefenceliving@n2pub.com).



Jay, his brother Dillon (sixth grade), his sister, Lina (12th grade), and his brother, Arjun (ninth grade), enjoy family time at the beach.



Jay participates in Junior States of America and Youth in Government.



Jay with his grandfather at an OSU game.

**Adam Hill '89** was featured in *White Fence Living* where he discussed his career in financial planning.

sponsor  
spotlight

meet  
ADAM HILL, A PARTNER *at*  
**MAXWELL FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT**

Adam Hill, a partner at Maxwell Financial Management, is an independent advisor who lives and works in New Albany. Adam grew up in Dublin and attended The Columbus Academy. After graduating from St. Olaf College in 1993, Adam returned to the Columbus area to start his own financial planning business. Initially, he decided to start the business after seeing first-hand the lifestyle changes his friend's family had to make when his friend's dad passed away. The family had not planned well, and they were forced to move out of their neighborhood and downsize their home. Adam realized his friend's family could have avoided these changes with proper planning. The financial planning business "allows me to help people in good times and bad, and I truly enjoy seeing clients succeed and reach their goals."

Adam had his own practice before teaming up with his friend and mentor Dick Maxwell at Maxwell Financial Management. In 1997, Adam officially became partners with Dick. As a certified financial planner, Adam is focused on "financial planning to help our clients reach their goals and dreams."



A good plan can make the process more predictable." Everyone has their own unique story. Therefore, Maxwell Financial Management works to customize their client's plan to meet their unique situation. Adam advises "a solid plan with consistent updating and monitoring is not only a great idea but necessary."

Adam moved to New Albany in 2000. Over the last 18 years, he has watched the New Albany community grow and change for the better. Adam and his wife, Rebbie Hill, never have a dull moment around their house. Together, they have six kids! Adam has three boys. His oldest, Andrew, is a senior at the College of Wooster. His son, Spencer, is a freshman at Northern Illinois University, and his youngest son, Johnny, is a junior at Columbus Academy. Rebbie has two girls. Nadia is a freshman, and Rory is in the eighth grade. Their oldest, Ansley, passed away from a rare brain bleed in May 2019.

Adam chose to sponsor *White Fence Living* because he loves New Albany and wants to support all aspects of the community. "Whether it is the July 4 5K, the high school teams, or Little Leagues, I love supporting New Albany," Adam said. He feels *White Fence Living* provides another great

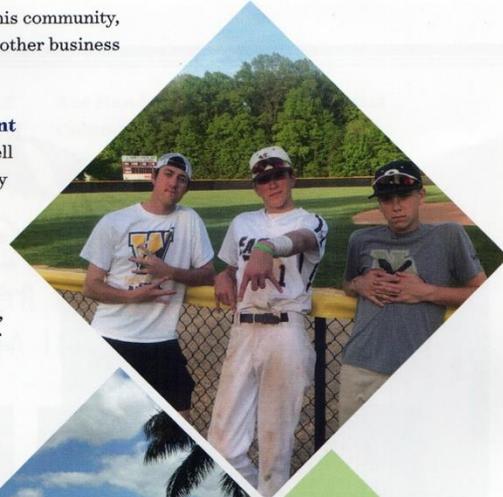
outlet for his company to support his community, and he even uses many services of other business sponsors at his home and office.

#### **Maxwell Financial Management**

Your future is our focus. At Maxwell Financial Management, our priority is helping you take care of yourself and your family. We get to know your personal situation, identify your dreams and goals, understand your tolerance for risk, and help you plan for each stage of your life.

Our experience and disciplined approach can help you optimize your financial resources by avoiding mistakes and taking advantage of opportunities when they come available. Acting as your "financial coach," we seek to take the stress out of making important decisions in your financial life. When decisions need to be made, we will be there to help you.

Securities and financial planning offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC.



Here's how the pandemic is changing three prominent companies for good

By Katy Smith  
Editor, Columbus CEO  
Posted Jul 29, 2020 at 9:54 AM

Some of the changes organizations are making because of Covid will stick.

Companies are facing unprecedented change during the pandemic. What temporary changes have been made in your organization that may become permanent?

**Brian Brooks '87**, president, E.E. Ward Moving & Storage

When stay-at-home orders and safe distancing protocols were mandated in March, E.E. Ward's sales team switched from using the moving industry standard process for sales estimating to 100% virtual and video surveys. The typical method for estimating moves is to visit customers' homes or offices to assess the move scope. Implementing a 100 percent video format improved our consultative sales process as well as decreased miles driven by our team for estimates. Going forward we are offering video surveys as a first option. Additionally, this change has the potential to decrease the metric tons of carbon dioxide emitted from driving to sales appointments.

Tom Krouse, president & CEO, Donatos Pizza

A silver lining of this crisis has been the creation and quick implementation of a number of things we will continue post-pandemic. From a service standpoint, we developed an entire curbside pickup program, which we will complement with exciting new technologies moving forward. We also will continue contactless delivery for those customers who want a simple, no-hassle experience. In terms of the organization, we found that our communications such as nationwide Zoom calls, videos from Jane Grote Abell and I, daily huddles, and more had value way beyond the pandemic. Much of this experience has made us better as a company.

Mike Davis, president, Junior Achievement of Central Ohio

Junior Achievement's traditional programs depend on volunteers in the classroom and at our facility to serve K-12 students through our financial literacy, work-readiness and entrepreneurship educational experiences. Covid-19 has challenged us to rethink what is possible. We have adapted our traditional programs to online formats, as well as developed completely new digital experiences for students. JA is excited to re-engage students and volunteers in the classroom when it's safe, but we also love that we are no longer constrained by space and distance. We will continue meeting students' and educators' needs, whether in school or out of the classroom.

CEO Corner features the voices of CEO of the Year winners from years past.

<https://www.columbusceo.com/business/20200729/heres-how-pandemic-is-changing-three-prominent-companies-for-good>

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**Carolyn Kobus Davis '02** co-authored a Columbus CEO focus article on ways businesses can turn social justice messaging into action.

# FOCUS

Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP

## A CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE: HOW BUSINESSES CAN TURN MESSAGING INTO ACTION

Carolyn Davis, Janica Pierce Tucker and Devin Spencer

In the wake of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, a call for change and end to racism and inequality swept local and global communities. In response, many companies and business leaders issued public statements of solidarity and commitment to the fight against racism. While reaffirming a company's pledge to social justice is important, moving beyond messaging to action is essential for change. The following are best practices and recommendations to assist businesses in their commitment to diversity, inclusion and operating in a non-discriminatory manner.

**1. Set organizational goals—and meet them.** Setting tangible goals related to your hiring practices, leadership, trainings and even your community spend can move the needle forward in diversity and inclusion efforts. Conduct diversity

audits across your leadership suite, departments and vendors to identify areas of improvement in hiring practices and promotions. Review which community organizations your company partners with and determine if funds should be redistributed to organizations that align with your diversity and inclusion goals. Remember to consult with counsel when making decisions related to impact investing and large-scale charitable contributions.



Taft Diversity Chairs Adrian Thompson and Janica Pierce Tucker

**2. Create a culture of open dialogue and continuous learning.** Educate your workforce on diversity and allow for discussion by implementing and supporting internal and external affinity groups. Celebrating holidays such as Juneteenth, National Hispanic Heritage Month and LGBTQ Pride Month will demonstrate to employees and clients your commitment to inclusion. Make development resources and applicable funding readily available to your affinity groups and employees so that your organizational diversity and inclusion goals are continuously at the forefront of your workplace culture.

**3. Invest in training.** Training employees on diversity, inclusion, discrimination and harassment is not only required by many states, it can also protect employers from various harassment allegations. The primary goals of all trainings should be to reduce the number of workplace incidents, empower employees with knowledge on how to recognize and report discrimination and harassment, and demonstrate the employer's commitment to diversity and inclusion and the elimination of discrimination and harassment at work. Be sure that

employees understand that prohibited behavior also extends to their respective social media.

**4. Assess and update human resources protocols.** Your employee handbook is an important tool to define acceptable workplace behavior. Update your handbook to include a section specifically dedicated to the employer's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Make sure your company's Equal Employment Opportunity section and discrimination, harassment and retaliation policies are current and include a process for filing internal complaints.

Train hiring managers and human resources professionals on recognizing implicit bias and what hiring, interviewing, evaluation and promotion practices can lead to discrimination, such as asking questions related to race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability or religion. Establish a protocol for asking the same interview questions for each candidate to help prevent implicit bias. Additionally, confirm that your human resources employees have access to an attorney who is well-versed in employment discrimination law for complex questions and legal needs that arise.

Implementing protocols such as the above can help reduce the risk of discrimination, harassment and implicit bias while also fostering purposeful change in the workplace. While messaging is an important component in demonstrating your company's commitment to social justice, assessing and implementing diversity and inclusion best practices will channel these statements into meaningful action.

Taft/

think forward

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[https://taftlawpr.blob.core.windows.net/taft/files/fileuploads/5f283c41dd6e8002aa2a6bf/Focus\\_Taft.pdf](https://taftlawpr.blob.core.windows.net/taft/files/fileuploads/5f283c41dd6e8002aa2a6bf/Focus_Taft.pdf)

How Much Does it Cost to Start Online Business? 51+ Online Entrepreneurs Share How Much They Spent to Launch an Internet-based Business.

BY SAM STEVE  
smartentrepreneurblog

If you have ever wondered how much it costs to start online business, you may want to read this post. 51+ entrepreneurs cutting across different niches share how much it cost them to launch their businesses.

Recently we've been receiving a lot of inquiries from our readers about how much it costs, on average, to start an internet-based business.

While we could have answered the question based only on our experiences launching multiple online businesses, we wanted to provide a much more robust and in-depth answer. And, hopefully, it would cut across several niches and online business models.

To achieve our objective, we turned to other online business owners and entrepreneurs to learn about how much it cost them to launch their online ventures.

We went a step further to ask for the tools and resources they used and what motivated them to choose the niche they launched in.

The result is this extremely detailed, long-form content that cut-across several niches including infomarketing, ecommerce, house flipping, tech startup, affiliate marketing and several other business models.

To ensure easy navigation through the content, we added a table of content that will take you to the exact business model you want to explore.

You will also notice at the top of each niche that we summarized the main idea, listed the average cost to launch a business in that particular niche based on the responses we got, and all the tools and resources used by other founders.

Our goal is to ensure you can retrieve useful information from the content as quickly as possible.

However, when you are time-rich, you can sink your teeth into the post to read about what motivated these online entrepreneurs to launch their businesses.

If you are ready let's get started.

More than \$2000 launches

Costa Arvanitopoulos of Barkerst weighed in with their motivation for launching what they believed is Australia's only coffee e-commerce website.

"We saw that customer behavior was changing to a more online focus and we thought to just [jump] onto this and bring coffee onto the internet.

As I spoke with customers I kept on hearing that they wanted easy access to coffee from all over Australia and the easiest and best way to do this was via the internet."

Costa shares the basic tools they use on their site, "Our website is based on WordPress and we use the woocommerce plugin for our e-commerce. We use MailChimp, Google Ads, Facebook/Instagram retargeting and Moonclerk for our subscriptions."

"Once we price everything together, from the time we started to put our idea on paper to when we launched our website the cost was only \$2790."

Daniel Brady of Heavenly Hammocks ventured into selling hammocks online when he saw that other shops selling the same products are doing well.

"This one is 5 years old and successful now. It originally started with a \$5000 import to test the market and a month of effort to build the website. I originally used BigCommerce, but later swapped to self-coded to add flexibility and save on costs."

Jacob Rosenberg of Tajima Direct runs an online Direct-to-Consumer polarized lens replacement company.

“It cost us roughly \$5000 to launch including legal costs production up-front costs, design costs, and niche set up costs for contracting out work. Because we were able to contract out most of our production costs and pau on consignment/job, we were able to keep startup costs relatively low.”

**Tolu Obikunle '12** of Sapiens Beverage Company spent \$15,000 to get started including inventory and packaging.

“I was inspired to start Sapiens because I’m not a drinker but during my internships, I found myself pretending to drink just to fit in with my colleagues. A non-alcoholic option would have eliminated the social friction I experienced.”

Tolu shared a breakdown of the tools they used and what it cost:

Shopify basic – \$29/month

Shopify Inventory management – \$14/month

Shopify theme – \$360 one-time fee

Label design – \$150 from Fiverr

Sampling and product development and first inventory runt – \$7000

Marketing plus agency fee one month – \$7000

Key Takeaways

Launching an ecommerce store is a popular model to consider when starting a web-based business.

One can start an ecom business with less than \$200 as some of our responders has demonstrated or spend upwards of five-figures to get started.

However, as Tracey Pedersen experienced, it’s not all straightforward. You will have to make allowance for unexpected changes in prices especially if you intend to stock up.

<https://smartentrepreneurblog.com/how-much-does-it-cost-to-start-online-business/>

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Franklin County home values on the rise, says county auditor

by: Ted Hart

Posted: Aug 24, 2020 / 06:34 PM EDT / Updated: Aug 24, 2020 / 06:56 PM EDT

NBC4 WCMH-TV

COLUMBUS (WCMH) — Donna Bowman was not surprised that the new tentative property value of her Weyant Avenue home is up 20 percent from three years ago. She explained there’s a lot of interest in homes in the Columbus east side neighborhood.

“I get a lot of calls,” Bowman said. “They’re buying houses on the street. I’m glad somebody’s interested in my house.”

Franklin County Auditor **Michael Stinziano '98** kicked off a campaign Monday to educate property owners about the new property values they are receiving in the mail.

“Based on the real estate sales in Franklin County, their tentative value has gone up and that’s is a good thing,” Stinziano said. “You want this investment to be an increase, but then we are aware of that concern and the interplay it has with property taxes.”

The new property values are part of the county’s triennial update to bring the value of every parcel in the county in line with the current real estate market.

The last update was conducted in 2017.

According to the auditor’s review, the total value of property in Franklin County has increased by more than \$26 billion. Residential property increased 20 percent and commercial property increased 15 percent.

Stinziano explained that an increase in property value does not necessarily mean an increase in property taxes. He said that depends on the tax rate in each community determined by the various levies and bond issues approved by voters.

“A lot of those issues go to the ballot seeking a set fixed amount, so even if that [property] value goes up, that set fixed amount doesn’t change,” Stinziano said.

The Auditor’s Know Your Home Value campaign is intended to educate residents and businesses about the triennial update. A video has been produced to explain the update process, and multi-lingual informational brochures will be available.

Homeowners can request an informal value review meeting with auditor’s appraisers to discuss their home value. The office is encouraging virtual informal reviews, but there will also be three physical locations for in-person meetings:

Reynoldsburg American Postal Workers Union building, 610 Lancaster Ave. in Reynoldsburg  
Urban League, 788 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Columbus  
Hilliard City Hall, 3800 Municipal Way in Hilliard.

For more information, visit the Know Your Home Value campaign website at <https://www.your2020homevalue.org>

<https://www.nbc4i.com/video/home-values-on-the-rise-how-to-set-up-a-time-to-get-appraisal-from-county-auditor/>

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Franklin County auditor to update dog tag system

By Marc Kovac

The Columbus Dispatch

Posted Aug 6, 2020 at 8:35 AM

The auditor’s office is moving forward with an upgrade that is planned to be fully functional by December, when 2021 dog tags go on sale for area pet owners.

Franklin County Auditor **Michael Stinziano '98**, compares his office’s online dog licensing system to a mid-1980s Chevy Impala he had back in the day.

Sure, it ran, and it got him where he was going, “but there were clearly features and functions on it ... that were woefully behind,” he said.

Same thing with the dog tag system, which, while only a few years old, is well past its prime, he said.

“Across the board, I think dog owners and residents of Franklin County will appreciate a much better one-stop shop,” Stinziano said.

The auditor’s office is moving forward with an upgrade that is planned to be fully functional by December, when 2021 dog tags go on sale for area pet owners.

The county commissioners have signed off on a \$300,000-plus contract with New York-based Hoover Blanket Inc., doing business as Main Street Computing, which submitted what was deemed as the best of eight bids for the project.

The existing licensing system, in place since the 2017 licensing season, needed about \$200,000 in upgrades, according to the auditor’s office.

The new system will provide a more user-friendly experience, allowing residents to check their license status, inform the auditor’s office when pets die and complete other tasks online that currently require phone calls or emails to staff.

Absent a better system, residents whose pets die sometimes receive license renewal reminders.

“It’s one of the unintended consequences of the auditor’s office that I didn’t think about until I was there,” said Stinziano, who owns two rescue pugs. “We recognize it’s frustrating. We know we can do better in that regard.”

The ultimate goal, Stinziano said, is to increase compliance with required tags for dogs. Though the auditor expects upward of 86,000 licenses to be issued this year, that’s only about one-third of the total estimated pet dogs in the county.

<https://www.dispatch.com/news/20200806/franklin-county-auditor-to-update-dog-tag-system>

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Trump administration bars FDA from regulating some laboratory tests, including for coronavirus  
Some public health experts worry defective tests could end up on the market, but others cheer the change, saying it is long overdue

The Washington Post

By Laurie McGinley and Yasmeen Abutaleb

August 20, 2020 at 8:05 p.m. EDT

The Trump administration this week blocked the Food and Drug Administration from regulating a broad swath of laboratory tests, including for the coronavirus, in a move strongly opposed by the agency.

The new policy stunned many health experts and laboratories because of its timing, several months into a pandemic. Some public health experts warned the shift could result in unreliable coronavirus tests on

the market, potentially worsening the testing crisis that has dogged the United States if more people get erroneous results. They argued the change is unlikely to solve current testing problems, which at this point are largely due to shortages of supplies such as swabs and chemical reagents.

But supporters cheered the change as long overdue, saying it could help get new and more innovative tests to market more quickly. They said that the FDA review process sharply slowed testing at the beginning of the pandemic and that the new policy could ensure such bottlenecks don't recur.

Administration officials said the decision, announced Wednesday on the website of the Department of Health and Human Services, was made for legal reasons. They said the FDA lacks the authority to regulate laboratory-developed tests — a significant part of the market. The agency, they said, can only obtain that through a formal rulemaking process or legislation; those options are unlikely to occur any time soon. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to freely discuss the decision.

The change in policy came as a surprise to many at the FDA and was a point of intense disagreement between HHS Secretary Alex Azar and FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn. Tensions have been rising between the two men for weeks, according to several people familiar with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they did not have clearance to talk about it. Hahn vociferously opposed the change, arguing the agency has the authority to regulate laboratory-developed tests during a public health emergency like the current pandemic, the individuals said.

An FDA spokeswoman declined to comment on the new policy and referred questions to HHS.

The episode is the latest in which health agencies have been undercut by political overseers. On Wednesday, for example, President Trump blamed the FDA for not yet authorizing the emergency use of convalescent plasma, a promising but unproven treatment. "You have lot of people over there that don't want to rush things. They want to do it after November 3rd," he said in a White House press briefing.

But administration officials who defended the change said it was based on the law, not politics, and that it emanated from HHS as part of a review of the department's covid-19 response. They said it was consistent with administration efforts to reduce unnecessary regulation.

"It's safe to say this fits squarely into the 'lessons learned' category of the department's response to covid," said Brian Harrison, Azar's chief of staff.

HHS officials also said they were unaware that the FDA began requiring emergency use authorizations, a kind of temporary approval, for laboratory-developed tests in February, after Azar declared a public health emergency.

FDA supporters said the agency has followed the same practice during previous public health emergencies, including the H1N1 pandemic in 2009 and the Zika outbreak in 2015 and 2016. They stressed that it is critical during health emergencies to make sure tests are accurate and not fraudulent.

The tests affected are those developed by and used at laboratories regulated under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments program, which is overseen by HHS's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Such labs are in big academic medical centers, smaller commercial laboratories and big outfits such as Quest and LabCorp.

By contrast, tests manufactured by one company — such as Roche and Abbott, for example — and sold to labs and other firms are still regulated by the FDA and aren't affected by the change.

The FDA regulation of laboratory-developed tests has long been a gray area. Technically, such tests include all those designed, manufactured and used within a single lab. But lab experts said there is no hard-and-fast definition. For years, the FDA has asserted authority over the tests but acted on it primarily during health crises. During the Obama administration, the FDA proposed tighter regulation in nonemergencies, a move that drew intense opposition from labs. But it didn't implement the plan. However, during public health emergencies, the FDA requires developers of the tests to seek an emergency use authorization that allows regulators to review the tests for accuracy.

Some FDA backers inside and outside government worry the policy change may be a way to blame the agency for the February testing debacle that set the United States behind and allowed the virus to spread undetected for weeks.

In February, the administration was relying almost entirely on a test developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — which is standard practice during public health crises — but the test was faulty. It took three weeks for the FDA to loosen restrictions that allowed other tests — at that time, mostly laboratory-developed tests — to come to market. Azar was head of the coronavirus task force at the time. The move, FDA backers say, may be an effort to allow Azar to argue he took action, albeit belatedly, to improve testing.

There's also concern within the administration, some current and former officials say, about possible congressional investigations similar to the 9/11 commission that would probe what went wrong with testing and why the administration was not better prepared. No one wants to be blamed, the officials said.

Throughout February, academic medical centers and others became increasingly vocal that the FDA was too slow and bureaucratic in reviewing laboratory-developed coronavirus tests. On Feb. 29, the agency responded by making changes that allowed the labs to start using their tests after validating them — but still required them to apply for emergency use authorizations. The FDA has since approved scores of such tests for the coronavirus and even more tests that are not laboratory-developed.

"I think it's pretty concerning," **Patricia Zettler '98**, a law professor at Ohio State University and a former associate chief counsel at the FDA, said of the change. She said she was especially worried that it came over FDA opposition. "It makes me worry that this is going to have negative public health implications. Why is this coming right now?"

Alberto Gutierrez, a former FDA official who served as director of the Office of In Vitro Diagnostics and Radiological Health, agreed

"Letting the Wild West be the Wild West ... that doesn't actually help," he said. "In the end, it harms more than it helps."

But some lab experts say the change was long overdue.

“This is what we needed and asked for five months ago,” said Melissa Miller, director of the University of North Carolina Medical Center’s Clinical Molecular Microbiology Laboratory. If laboratories like hers had not had to submit applications to the FDA, “we would have been able to roll out and expand testing earlier in the pandemic,” she said.

The emergency use authorization “requirement meant well. But in my opinion was a disaster,” Michael Mina, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, wrote on Twitter.

Administration officials who defended the change said that the tests still will be subject to CMS regulation and that the FDA will have the authority to take a bad test off the market.

Peter Lurie, a former top FDA official during the Obama administration, said CMS oversight is not sufficient to protect patients.

“I always worry about the FDA’s washing its hands of any particular class of medical product,” he said.

Laboratory groups expressed surprise about the change and said they were scrutinizing the new policy.

“I’m not certain why this reversal by HHS was done now, given the oversight process seemed to be working,” said Scott Becker, chief executive of the Association of Public Health Laboratories. “This move was needed early in the emergency, for sure. When this crisis passes, we need a thoughtful rethinking of test oversight because quality matters in a public health emergency, but so does timeliness.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/08/20/trump-fda-tests-coronavirus/>

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Trump suggests US FDA slow-walking COVID-19 plasma therapy for political reasons

20 Aug, 2020

Author Donna Young

S&P Global

President Donald Trump said U.S. regulators had delayed granting emergency use of convalescent plasma as a treatment for COVID-19 to harm him politically ahead of the U.S. elections and suggested he may put pressure on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to act.

Convalescent plasma is considered an experimental therapy and is not approved by the FDA.

But regulators were ready to grant emergency use authorization, or EUA, for the plasma therapy to treat COVID-19 patients before top officials at the U.S. National Institutes of Health expressed concern and intervened, according to an Aug. 19 report in The New York Times, which quoted a high-level scientist at the agency.

The NIH did not respond to questions from S&P Global Market Intelligence about the Times' report and declined to make any of the agency's officials available for an interview.

Anand Shah, FDA's deputy commissioner for medical and scientific affairs, told S&P Global Market Intelligence in an emailed statement that "In general, NIH is not involved in the decision-making process at the FDA and does not have the entirety of confidential data the FDA uses to make these regulatory decisions."

Shah said per the FDA's policy, the agency was not able to comment on whether it would take any action on granting an EUA for convalescent plasma. He said regulators would "render a decision at the appropriate time."

Plasma is the liquid part of blood. People who recover from infectious diseases, like COVID-19, may have antibodies in their blood capable of fighting the virus.

There are no data from randomized clinical trials available that show convalescent plasma is successful in treating COVID-19.

But the Mayo Clinic is running a large taxpayer-supported expanded-access program using the experimental therapy. On its website, it said it has infused about 67,000 people with convalescent plasma.

On Aug. 14, Mayo reported that the seven-day mortality rate was reduced in patients transfused within three days of COVID-19 diagnosis compared with those who received the therapy four or more days after diagnosis — 8.7% versus 11.9%. It said similar findings were observed in 30-day mortality — 21.6% versus 26.7%, respectively.

In a statement posted Aug. 19 on the FDA's website, the agency said that "although promising, convalescent plasma has not yet been shown to be safe and effective as a treatment for COVID-19. Therefore, it is important to study the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 convalescent plasma in clinical trials."

But Trump said the reason the FDA had not yet granted an EUA for convalescent plasma "could be a political decision because you have a lot of people over there that don't want to rush things because they want to do it after Nov. 3" — the date of the U.S. elections.

Trump and a number of his officials, including FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn, have repeatedly promoted convalescent plasma as a treatment for COVID-19, despite it lacking U.S. approval.

Hahn's image has appeared on advertising billboards around the U.S. urging Americans who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate their plasma.

"I've heard fantastic things about convalescent plasma," Trump told reporters from the White House Aug. 19.

He said he had "heard" about data showing "over 50% success" with the plasma therapy in patients with COVID-19, though he provided no evidence of that information or what research institution had reported it.

"We should have it approved if it's good and I'm hearing it's good," Trump said.

He said he planned to find out why regulators had not granted an EUA for convalescent plasma in COVID-19.

"We'll see. I'm going to check that right after this conference," Trump said.

## Political pressure

Lawmakers and legal and public health experts have expressed concern that Trump was pressuring the FDA to grant EUAs or approve experimental COVID-19 products before there are sufficient data showing they are safe and effective.

A group of legal experts called on Congress in an Aug. 18 report to ban the FDA from using an EUA for COVID-19 vaccines.

"The potential for this kind of political interference in FDA decision-making is deeply troubling, particularly right now, when we really need FDA to follow the science and when the public needs to be able to trust public health regulators' communications and decisions," **Patti Zettler '98**, associate professor of law at The Ohio State University, told S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"It's exhausting and disheartening having President Trump play such a central role in pushing unproven medical products for COVID-19, routinely spreading health-related misinformation and undermining the regulatory independence of the FDA," added Leigh Turner, associate professor at the University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics.

In an Aug. 5 op-ed in The Washington Post, Hahn acknowledged he has been repeatedly asked if there has been any inappropriate pressure on the FDA to make decisions not based on good data and science.

But Hahn "does not explicitly deny that there has been pressure," tweeted Rachel Sachs, associate professor of law at Washington University in St. Louis.

If lawmakers want to hear directly from Hahn about whether he or the FDA has been pressured by Trump to rush products to the market, that testimony must also include the agency's politically appointed staff, tweeted whistleblower Rick Bright, who was ousted in April as the head of the U.S. Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority and assigned to a lower-level position at the NIH.

Bright has accused Trump of putting political connections and cronyism over science in contract awards to biopharmaceutical companies.

<https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/trump-suggests-us-fda-slow-walking-covid-19-plasma-therapy-for-political-reasons-60008979>

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Legal experts call for Congress to ban COVID-19 vaccine emergency authorizations

19 Aug, 2020

Author Donna Young

S&P Global Market Intelligence

Congress should consider banning the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from granting emergency use authorization to experimental COVID-19 vaccines, a group of legal experts said, citing concerns over political pressure to rush those products to Americans before they are ready.

The recommendation came in a lengthy report from over 50 U.S. legal and policy experts from multiple academic institutions, who outlined a number of concerns with how the nation has handled the COVID-19 pandemic, calling the response a "massive failure of executive leadership."

"Decades of pandemic preparation focused too much on plans and laws on paper and ignored the devastating effects of budget cuts and political interference on the operational readiness of our local, state and national health agencies," the legal experts wrote in the report from the George Consortium's Public Health Law Watch, which was sponsored by the American Public Health Association, the de Beaumont Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Congress should look closely at the substantial risk that social or political pressure — or just the overwhelming desire to do good — will influence the FDA to approve a vaccine too soon, they said. "While expediting the process is obviously vital, it is equally important to ensure that the final decision is made by scientists, not politicians facing an election," the experts said.

Congress created the emergency use authorization, or EUA, process in 2004 to grant preapproval use of medical products when the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declares a public health emergency.

HHS Secretary Alex Azar declared such an emergency on Jan. 31 for COVID-19, though it was not made official until Feb. 4. Public health emergencies must be renewed every 90 days — an action most recently taken July 23.

'Difficult task'

The report's authors acknowledged the FDA is facing an "undeniably difficult task" in a situation where there is an urgent need to move as quickly as possible while also ensuring rigorous evidence has shown the products are safe and effective.

Congress' giving the FDA the EUA mechanism arguably reflects a societal decision that the regulator should have the flexibility to lower standards of safety and effectiveness during public health emergencies to speed access to promising but unproven products, **Patti Zettler '98**, associate professor of law at The Ohio State University, and her colleagues wrote in the report.

But the FDA is likely to face tremendous political pressure — whether from the White House, HHS, Congress, industry, patients or other stakeholders — to use that flexibility "and may lose public trust if the agency is viewed as unresponsive to patients' concerns," they wrote.

During the current crisis, the FDA used its EUA authority first on March 28 for the use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine in certain hospitalized patients with COVID-19 and on May 1 for Gilead Sciences Inc.'s remdesivir.

But regulators revoked the EUAs for hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine on June 15 after evidence showed the drugs were ineffective in COVID-19.

Risking public trust

President Donald Trump had started touting hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine as treatments or preventive medicines in mid-March. The FDA's decision to grant the drugs an EUA came only nine days later, "raising significant concerns about political interference in public health decision making," Zettler and her colleagues noted.

Trump and members of his administration, including his trade adviser Peter Navarro, repeatedly criticized the FDA's decision to revoke the EUAs.

On Aug. 19, The New York Times reported that the FDA had considered granting an EUA for convalescent plasma to treat COVID-19 before top officials at the National Institutes of Health expressed concern and intervened.

The NIH did not respond to questions from S&P Global Market Intelligence about the Times' report and declined to make any of the agency's officials available for an interview.

"Per policy, we are not able to comment on whether or not we will take any action regarding emergency use authorization for convalescent plasma," said a spokeswoman for the FDA.

Misunderstandings about what an EUA signifies could drive inappropriate policy decisions or undermine public trust in FDA decisions when products granted EUAs prove ineffective or unsafe, Zettler and her colleagues wrote in their report.

Another major concern is that the FDA, "perhaps driven by political pressure, may too freely issue EUAs for COVID-19 countermeasures, even judged against the relatively low statutory standard" for granting them, they said, pointing to hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine as examples.

They called for the FDA to decline to grant any EUAs for COVID-19 vaccines, but if regulators do, the legal experts said that mechanism should be limited for use in individuals with a documented higher than baseline risk of death or serious injury from COVID-19.

FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn and other top officials at the agency pledged in an Aug. 7 article in the Journal of the American Medical Association to hold a public meeting with an outside expert panel to vet any COVID-19 vaccine before it was authorized for emergency use or licensed in the U.S.

But in an Aug. 18 article in the public policy journal Health Affairs, Hahn and the other FDA officials tweaked their language and said regulators would convene the advisory panel for a COVID-19 vaccine "when data from trials becomes available."

NIH Director Francis Collins told reporters Aug. 13 he did not anticipate any data to be available for the FDA's review until at least November or December.

<https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/legal-experts-call-for-congress-to-ban-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-authorizations-59987067>

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Trump Administration Blocks FDA From Regulating Many New Medical Tests

August 21, 2020 3:47 PM ET

Heard on All Things Considered

Rob Stein, photographed for NPR, 22 January 2020, in Washington DC.

ROB STEIN: The Trump administration has blocked the Food and Drug Administration from regulating many new tests, raising concerns about the reliability of new coronavirus tests and the FDA's independence.

AUDIE CORNISH, HOST: The Trump administration is making it harder for the Food and Drug Administration to regulate an entire class of medical tests. The move raises concerns about the quality of new coronavirus tests as well as the independence of the FDA. Joining us now is NPR health correspondent Rob Stein, who's been reporting on this. And, Rob, exactly which tests are we speaking about here?

ROB STEIN, BYLINE: So they're called laboratory developed tests because they're developed by individual labs like those in big hospitals and universities, you know, big commercial labs for their own use as opposed to tests that are developed and sold and used by other labs. They're regulated to some degree by the government - as part of the government known as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. But these tests fall into a kind of a gray area when it comes to whether they're also regulated by the FDA. When the pandemic started, the FDA required these tests go through the same emergency authorization process as any other tests. And critics say that was a big mistake because it slowed down the development of two new tests when the country desperately needed as many tests as possible as fast as possible.

CORNISH: Now that the Trump administration has stepped in the middle of this, how exactly have they changed the policy?

STEIN: The Health and Human Services Department says labs no longer have to seek authorization from the FDA before they start using their tests. And this is a big deal, obviously, because it comes just as lots of new tests are in the pipeline to test people for the coronavirus, for COVID. So the move is being welcomed by some, like David Grenache of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry.

DAVID GRENACHE: It could help laboratories respond to the pandemic by allowing them to develop their own test, a lab-developed test. I'm quite pleased.

CORNISH: There's concern about this, and I want to better understand why because it's not as though tests won't be regulated at all.

STEIN: That's right. That's right. But one big concern is that, you know, lots of bad tests could start flooding the country. You know, critics point to what happened with antibody tests. I don't know if you remember. At first, the FDA didn't really regulate them. And what happened was lots of inaccurate and unreliable antibody tests were suddenly all over the place. The FDA finally had to step in and crack down on them.

You know, I talked to Peter Lurie about this. He's a former FDA official who now runs the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

PETER LURIE: The last thing we need at this moment in the pandemic is a bunch of tests that inaccurately label people as having the infection when they don't or tell people that they don't have it when they do. What we need is accurate testing, and the only way to get that is with proper involvement of the FDA. And without that level of scrutiny, I worry about having a Wild West out there with respect to these tests.

STEIN: Lurie also worries that the Trump administration may just be using the pandemic as kind of an excuse to weaken the FDA's power over tests. And this could lead to bad tests for all kinds of other things down the road.

CORNISH: So pointing to politics, essentially. I mean are there any other red flags here?

STEIN: Yeah, there are. Another big worry is about the integrity of the FDA and whether this might just be another example of the Trump administration sidelining government scientists. Here's Patricia Zettler from Ohio State University.

**PATRICIA ZETTLER '98**: I think we might worry about interference with FDA decision making on all kinds of things - on potential COVID drugs, on potential COVID vaccines, on basically any kind of COVID product that FDA is going to be reviewing.

STEIN: You know, I talked to two Trump administration officials late in the day today, and they defended the decision and say that there will still be oversight of these tests. And they're not going to let any bad test stay on the market. The FDA could go after them and block them if they see that's happening.

CORNISH: That's NPR's Rob Stein. Thanks.

STEIN: You bet.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/08/21/904798116/trump-administration-blocks-fda-from-regulating-many-new-medical-tests>

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**Joel Pizzuti '90** on opening \$170M luxury hotel during a pandemic: 'Do I wish it was different?'

By Martin B. Cherry and Adam Sichko

Columbus Business First

Aug 26, 2020, 12:13pm EDT

Let's dispense with the obvious: Real estate developer Joel Pizzuti is not thrilled that after well more than five years of planning and construction, he's unveiling a nearly \$170 million luxury hotel in Nashville as Covid-19 has flattened the tourism and convention business.

Pizzuti is not wallowing in some kind of pandemic pity. He is resolved to showcase The Joseph, the debut Nashville development for his family's Columbus-based real estate business.

The Joseph hotel officially opened this week, at 401 Korean Veterans Blvd. in downtown Nashville. The hotel reaches 21 stories high and contains 297 rooms that are part of Marriott's Luxury Collection — the newest in a crop of high-end hotels aiming to cater to the higher caliber of traveler that had been flocking to Music City before the virus struck.

"We have a great project, in an amazing city, at an A-plus location. When this is all finally over, we'll still have a great project, in an amazing city, at an A-plus location," said Pizzuti, president of his family's 44-year-old company. "I think long term, we're going to be fine."

The pandemic pared back a planned 300-person celebration to a private ribbon-cutting of no more than 25 people, adhering to Nashville's Covid-19 restrictions. On an Aug. 20 tour, employees wore masks as they prepped food in the kitchen and installed the final pieces of the penthouse-level spa.

Otherwise, there were not many visible signs of what appear to be more months of rough business ahead for Nashville hotels. In fact, there were more employees than you might think: About 140, which is 40% of what the hotel will have when fully staffed in a stronger economy.

Pizzuti bounced around during an hour-long tour, highlighting some of the 1,000 pieces of art found throughout the hotel, created by some 80 artists, most of whom have some kind of Tennessee connection. Pieces commissioned for the hotel include the handles on the front doors and the Lucchese Boot Co. leather front desk — something the boot company had never done before.

Pizzuti proudly introduced internationally acclaimed husband-and-wife duo Tony and Cathy Mantuano, who crafted the hotel's food and beverage offerings. The Mantuanos have moved to Nashville from Chicago, where Tony Mantuano earned Michelin stars and James Beard Awards. (His Spiaggia Restaurant happened to be former President Barack Obama's favorite joint in the Windy City.)

The feature restaurant is Yolán, which was well-booked for its first night, at the half-capacity limit set by the city. The rooftop level includes another restaurant, a spa, a fitness center with skyline views and a saltwater swimming pool with cabanas and live greenery.

On the pool deck, Pizzuti reflected on the path his company took to get here, standing atop a hotel on land that used to be a parking lot for the Nashville Symphony. His grandfather, for whom the hotel is named, may have immigrated from Italy — but the grandson is flashing a British "keep calm and carry on" attitude.

"Do I wish it was different? Of course, for lots of reasons. But what are the choices?" Pizzuti said. "We figured we would have a long ramp-up period anyway, so we said let's just go ahead and open and establish ourselves."

In a final twist, the hotel is actually opening earlier than planned.

"We're seven weeks ahead of schedule. Normally, I'd be ecstatic about that. But now ... " Pizzuti said. He smiled and applauded the work of contractor Brasfield & Gorrie. "Let me be clear: I'm still happy we are on-budget. We're incredibly proud of what we've done."

[https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2020/08/26/pizzuti-cos-opens-joseph-hotel-sobro-kvb-downtown.html?ana=e\\_colum\\_bn\\_editorschoice\\_editorschoice&j=90525556&t=Breaking%20News&mk\\_t\\_tok=eyJljojWIRobE5URmhZVEV3WVdVeilsInQiOiJpdFpRtZl6bG1XC8wMzM1M1ZZbzFiZGw1RzN5MDI\\_SdWcxMGs5YklZc05MTEZvQTRoVnNYbnhrNXh0cUMyWU3M1wvNEZqWStNb1k3TUpFTGxCVnpvVk5IVVkr29PZTFpb2MxNHFc3crR0hKYmJKMFIPZGNSMDQ5K3RHYktcL3BTSIJ9](https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2020/08/26/pizzuti-cos-opens-joseph-hotel-sobro-kvb-downtown.html?ana=e_colum_bn_editorschoice_editorschoice&j=90525556&t=Breaking%20News&mk_t_tok=eyJljojWIRobE5URmhZVEV3WVdVeilsInQiOiJpdFpRtZl6bG1XC8wMzM1M1ZZbzFiZGw1RzN5MDI_SdWcxMGs5YklZc05MTEZvQTRoVnNYbnhrNXh0cUMyWU3M1wvNEZqWStNb1k3TUpFTGxCVnpvVk5IVVkr29PZTFpb2MxNHFc3crR0hKYmJKMFIPZGNSMDQ5K3RHYktcL3BTSIJ9)

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In Memoriam

**Steve Orndorf '64** passed away in his home with his family by his side on Tuesday, July 14, @ 12:33pm. Steve was born on March 28, 1947 and lived a life full of love and adventure. He was a husband, father,

grandfather, brother, and friend. He was an avid fisherman, mushroom hunter, bird watcher, music lover, weather fanatic, rock and beer can collector, lover of Mother Nature, A's fan, 49ers fan, author, mentor and partier extraordinaire. Steve's greatest passions were fishing the jungles of South America and helping others.

During his 39 years in Napa County, Steve was very active in the community. He served terms as president of the School Board, Rotary, Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Boys & Girls Club. He also volunteered for the Napa River Steelhead Monitoring Program and served on the Board of Napa Valley Bank. His most passionate public service was mentoring veterans with PTSD from the Pathway Home in Yountville and the Post Deployment Assessment Treatment Program at the Martinez VA. He formed long lasting relationships with many of the veterans and continued to support them long after graduating from the program.

Steve will always be remembered for his wit, humor, integrity, work ethic, generosity, and zest for life. Steve left an unforgettable mark on his friends and family. We will miss him forever.

A party in Steve's honor will be held in Napa on the one-year anniversary of his passing.

Tentative Date: Saturday, July 17 th , 2021. Save the date.

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/17396886/Steve-Orndorf>

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**James Michael Whalen '60**, 78, passed away on Monday, August 3rd in Bradenton, Florida. James was Born on July 1, 1942, in Springfield, IL and moved to Cape Coral Florida in January of 1991 from Westerville, OH to pursue his passion for costal fishing and diving. He had served as a Certified Public Accountant, Co-Owner, and President of the accounting firm, Whalen & Company in Worthington, OH.

Jim served 6 years in the Ohio National Guard through the buddy system with his brother, Jedd Whalen during the Vietnam Era.

He was an active member of the community through the Columbus Academy Alumni – Class of 1960, Little Turtle Country Club, Cypress Creek Country Club, Bradenton Country Club, and a passionate Ohio State Football Fan. OH-IO!

Throughout his life, Jim was an outdoorsman, craftsmen, corvette enthusiast, artist, and family man. He enjoyed golfing, fishing with his family in the Florida Keys, and hunting wild game with his closest friends.

He was known for his clever sense of humor, incredible stories of adventure and mischief, his thoughtful mind and tender heart, his passion for knowledge, but most of all; his unwavering love of family and friends.

Jim is survived by his wife of 43 years, Michelle T. Whalen; daughters, Kim Tramuta, Peggy Hemmer, and Taylor Stringer; brother, Jedd Whalen; sister, Maggie Dahl; and five grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, Cam Whalen; mother, Geraldine L. Whalen; and father, Elmer J. Whalen.

A Celebration of Life will be scheduled at a later date for his family and friends. He will be laid to rest at Blendon Central Cemetery in Westerville, OH.

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/17790945/James-Michael-Whalen>

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Monica Block remembers Oct. 3, 2013, with painful clarity.

She and her husband **Greg Block '84** were home in Atlanta. He began his day handling business calls but started feeling strange and thinking he might be suffering a heart attack.

"He got off the phone and tried to walk downstairs and started to become paralyzed on one side of his body," she recalled. "I ran inside to drive him to the hospital. But once we hit the sidewalk he had a seizure so we called 911 instead."

An examination at Piedmont Hospital revealed a sobering diagnosis: stage 4 cancer in his lungs that had spread to his brain.

"He was woken up early the next morning and told he had six months to live," she said. It seemed surreal, especially because he had finished an 18-mile training run for an upcoming triathlon just days before.

Released from the hospital that afternoon, Block's first stop was an athletic field to coach his son Jackson's youth-league football game.

Family, friends and colleagues say that was typical. Nothing, but nothing was going to stand in the way of Block's commitments or slow him down.

He beat his original diagnosis of six months to live by more than six years.

An entrepreneur who sold a successful home textile company in his early 40s to focus on a way to give back to the community — a desire instilled by his mother, who was a community volunteer and started a nonprofit to end corporal punishment for children — Block was also a community activist, dedicated athlete and a musician.

He held a series of conversations with colleagues and civic leaders about what he should do next, and what emerged was the creation in 2007 of First Step Staffing. It is an Atlanta-based non-profit that places the homeless, those with criminal records, struggling veterans and others with employment barriers in jobs.

"He told me, 'Am I supposed to drive by these people every day and know that they have lives and stories and not give them a chance to lift themselves up?'" said Joe Guerra, a former Atlanta businessman and friend.

Block's admirers said that once settled on a course of action, his passion and entrepreneurial skill came to the fore.

“He was a cannonball,” said Guerra. “He was all muscle. When he crashed through something, he left a great gaping hole, but it was always to take things to the next level.”

Another friend and colleague, A.J. Robinson, the president of Central Atlanta Progress, described him as a warrior.

“He was incredibly courageous and determined and impatient,” he recalled. “He had a vision and said, we’re going to get there.”

One example: Block’s years-long campaign to get Robinson to join the agency’s board of directors.

Robinson declined, pleading other involvements but said after ten years “I got tired of making excuses. He wasn’t going to give up until I said yes. That’s how he approached every hurdle in life.”

Block, 54, died Aug. 14. He’s survived by wife Monica, children Will, Carole Anne and Jack, his mother, Nadine Block, and two brothers.

Friends and family said with his cancer diagnosis and the clock ticking, Block redoubled his efforts to grow First Step, whose footprint hadn’t increased since its inception.

He settled on an unusual strategy — putting together deals to buy for-profit staffing agencies in Atlanta and elsewhere, turn them into non-profits and meld them into the mothership operation.

Amelia Nickerson, who took the CEO job earlier this year, said that had never before been done in the staffing industry.

“He told me it was like crawling over broken glass to get people to listen to him initially,” she said. Eventually, Block put together a financing package of money from community development financial institutions and social impact lenders to buy a larger staffing firm in Atlanta.

Using the same model, operations eventually expanded across six states. First Step grew from \$2 million in payroll in 2013 to \$40 million in 2019, and the number of clients served swelled from 100 a week to some 1,500.

Block pushed his vision through rounds of exhausting radiation, chemo, medication and clinical trials. Friends and family said he hit the pause button when needed but mostly kept silent about his battle.

“It was a week or so before he died and he wasn’t feeling well, just no energy,” recalled Monica Block. She talked to friends that day and expressed her worries.

“I came back into the room and found him on a conference call because he was working on another non-profit project. He spent an hour and 45 minutes on the phone.”

Block said that a private family memorial was being planned, with a more public celebration of his life coming next year.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/obituaries/greg-block-54-an-entrepreneur-who-gave-back-dies/WKQAZSRMIRA47BCTSTOUKXROCE/>

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Joe Blundo: **Greg Block '84** was force of persistence, goodwill to the very end  
The Columbus Dispatch  
Posted Aug 30, 2020 at 7:00 AM  
Updated Aug 30, 2020 at 12:38 PM

Gregory Block was the undersized player whose middle-school football coach would send up against the biggest kid on the other team, knowing that Greg had the grit to prevail.

He was the 16-year-old punk rocker who wouldn't hesitate to jettison any bandmate who missed more than two practices.

He was the successful businessman who decided he would rather run an unconventional nonprofit dedicated to finding jobs for the homeless.

He was a cancer patient who, told he had six months to live, stretched it into nearly seven years.

"I've never met a more mentally strong person," said his widow, Monica.

Block, a Columbus native who became a force for good in Atlanta, died earlier this month of lung cancer. He was 54.

Determination was his defining characteristic, said his mother, Nadine Block, 83, of Upper Arlington. (If her name sound familiar, it's because she helped lead a long and ultimately successful battle to ban corporal punishment in Ohio schools.)

Greg Block's intensity as a middle-school football player or a high school rocker came in part from competing with two older brothers at home, his mother said.

He grew up in Worthington, graduated from Columbus Academy, attended Emory University in Atlanta, and ran American Pacific, a textile import company started by his father, Jared Block. He eventually sold the company because he wanted to do something good for the world.

That desire led him to found First Step Staffing in Atlanta in 2007. It's a nonprofit organization that places the homeless, veterans and those with criminal records in jobs.

After his cancer diagnosis in 2013, Block intensified his efforts, expanding the company by acquiring for-profit staffing agencies and flipping them to nonprofits. Convincing others to buy into this "social entrepreneurship" approach took all the persistence Block could muster.

"Like crawling over broken glass," he told a colleague.

First Step now operates in six states and employs about 1,600 people a week.

"He took his skills as an entrepreneur and ... applied them not just to giving advice but actually to finding a long-term solution, really a marvelous solution," former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Jackson said when Block was given a community award in 2015.

The endeavor also gave Block a purpose during his long illness, Monica Block said. He often conducted business from a hospital bed.

A triathlete, Block tried to stay fit even as his cancer advanced. The night before his last hospitalization, she found him working out on an elliptical machine while hooked up to oxygen.

“To his last breath,” she said, “that man fought to live.”

Block’s family — he is survived by three children and two brothers, in addition to his mother and his wife — plan a celebration of his life sometime in the future. There will be a lot to celebrate.

Joe Blundo is a Dispatch columnist.

<https://www.dispatch.com/lifestyle/20200830/joe-blundo-greg-block-was-force-of-persistence-goodwill-to-very-end>