

# DOTHAN



## Business Hall *of* Fame

*Banquet & Induction Ceremony*  
*April 12, 2022*  
*Calvary Baptist Church*

# Dothan Business Hall of Fame

If you were to look in the history book for the Dothan and Houston County area, you would be sure to find a vast manuscript filled with the names of individuals who have made a significant impact in the development of this area.

This list of names would incorporate those who have made such an impact by promoting the free enterprise system of entrepreneurship. Those who have spent a lifetime demonstrating civic leadership, philanthropy and humanitarianism toward their fellow citizens.

Recognizing the importance of these individuals, the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and the Dothan Area Young Professionals proudly established the Dothan Business Hall of Fame in 2011. The Hall of Fame's mission is to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of our area's outstanding business leaders, to perpetuate and inspire values of entrepreneurial spirit, personal integrity and community leadership in all generations. This mission is achieved by honoring past and present business leaders and by inspiring the leaders of the future.

Publicly recognizing extraordinary business leaders and establishing a record of their achievement is important on so many levels. These individuals and their contributions remind us of the constant need for renewal and change and the opportunity for economic success. The inductees each year serve as role models for our students, those persons just beginning their careers and for new entrepreneurs.

Once the Hall of Fame was established, governing guidelines were written, a Board of Advisors was created and soon thereafter, nominations for the 2011 inaugural year were accepted. It didn't take long before 17 phenomenal nominations for the Hall of Fame's inaugural year had been received.

Each year, the Hall of Fame's Board of Advisors solicit for laureate nominations through the Dothan Area Chamber's monthly newsletter and website. Once nominations are closed, the Board of Advisors go through a hard and long staking process to select the laureates.

The Dothan Business Hall of Fame is located at the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce in a prominent area so those honored may be seen by Chamber members, prospective members, industrial prospects, visitors and the general public.

The Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce  
and

The Dothan Area Young Professionals

*are proud to present*

The Dothan Business Hall of Fame

2022 Honorees

**Mark S. Culver**

*Houston County Commission*

**David “Mit” Kirkland**

*Scenic Cable Network & Productions*

**Dr. Press Thornton, Jr.**

*Press Thornton Future Masters Golf Tournament*

**Samuel Mason Torrence**

*Couch Construction Company*

**Hugh Ward Wheelless, Jr.**

*Wheelless Development & Realty*



6:00 p.m.

**Welcome**

*Brad Kimbro, Chairman*

*Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce*

**Invocation**

*Chris Suddarth*

*TriState Graphics Inc.*

*Small Business Person of the Year*

6:10 p.m.

**Dinner**

6:30 p.m.

**Past Laureate Recognition**

*Brad Kimbro*

**Opening Comments**

*Brad Kimbro*

*Martin Everett, Chairman*

*Dothan Area Young Professionals*

6:40 p.m.

**Induction Ceremony**

*Brad Kimbro*

*Martin Everett*

7:30 p.m.

**Closing Remarks**

*Brad Kimbro*

## Mark S. Culver

### *Houston County Commission*



Mark Culver was born in Dothan and spent his childhood and adolescent years growing up surrounded by the love of both grandparents, an aunt, an uncle and cousins. Throughout these years Mark's grandfather, Mark Cannon, also instilled in his namesake a strong sense of community pride and involvement. Mark was educated through the Dothan City School system and graduated from Dothan High in 1978. It was no surprise when, after graduating from Auburn University with a major in business administration, Mark returned to Dothan to immerse himself in the business community.

One of the first opportunities presented to Mark upon his return was being asked to serve on the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors by then Chairman Alfred Saliba. Eight years later in 1986, Mark was elected to the Houston County Commission as the representative for District 4. He marked the pages of local history as the first Republican elected to local office in Houston County and the youngest person to serve on the Commission. In May 1997, having served two additional terms as Commissioner, Mark was appointed Chairman by then Gov. Fob James to fill a vacancy. In November 1998, Mark was elected to a full term as Chairman and has been reelected five times since, running many times unopposed.

During his time as Chairman, Mark has been involved in some of the largest, most impactful business developments for the Dothan area, including Commercial Jet Services, CAE and McLane Co. Inc. Other projects Mark was involved with during his years of service include the creation of the Houston County Substance Abuse Board, a regional landfill authority, implementation of Houston County's E-911 emergency addressing system and purchase of the property for the development of the Houston County Distribution Park. Recognizing the many positive strides Houston County has made under Mark's leadership, he remains proudest of the partnerships formed and completed to create economic opportunities for his constituents.

Mark's talent and business acumen are also prevalent in the Dothan small business community. With his entrepreneurial spirit, he has founded and had ownership in many successful small businesses in the community, including current owner and CEO of Playmaker, former CEO and owner of both NUW Graphics and Southern Nut Collection. Additionally, he has been a realtor with Coldwell Banker Commercial - Alfred Saliba Realty since 2000.

Mark has served on many local and state boards during his career. In 2001, he served as President of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama and was recognized in 2013 with their Outstanding Contribution to County Government Award, the organization's highest honor. Mark has also served as President of the Dothan Rotary Club and Dothan Landmarks Foundation in addition to past Board Chairman of SARCOA and the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission.

Even though he will be retiring after his current term, Mark has and will continue to remain ever committed to the growth and development of Dothan and Houston County.

Mark is a member of First United Methodist Church and has three children, Dr. Stephanie Simmons, Robert Culver and Cannon Culver.



## David "Mit" Kirkland

### *Scenic Cable Network & Productions*

Born in Dothan and a lifelong resident, David "Mit" Kirkland, the youngest of three brothers, grew up in a neighborhood surrounded by the love and leadership of family, professionals and entrepreneurs. His family owned and operated the only Kindergarten in the North Highland part of town. His childhood home was the gathering place where everyone was welcome.

Growing up Mit had a love of sports and technology that still exists today. As a child he was fascinated with radio and TV and how they worked so he tried to make a TV camera at age six or seven. As a teenager, he operated his own radio station "The Voice of the Block" WVOB which he made with a hobby kit from Radio Shack.

Mit's love of sports inspired him to play junior high and high school basketball. During his career, he was part of winning basketball teams, which taught him what could be accomplished through hard work, discipline and working together for a common goal.

His professional career began in 1973 at the Dothan radio station WDIG as a radio announcer known as "Mitt De Witt" which led to an opportunity to work in television in 1975. He was employed by several local radio and television stations over the next dozen or so years.

In the back of his mind, Mit always felt that in order to control the quality and creativity of the end product he needed to have ownership. In 1988, that led to becoming part-owner of Scenic Productions, a cable TV advertising and video production company. In 1992 he took on new business partners Terry Duffie and Dr. Wallace Miller. Today, Mit and Terry are celebrating nearly 30 years of partnership in Scenic, which is now a multi-million dollar company serving the advertising needs of businesses in seven counties in Alabama and Georgia.

Mit's partnership with Scenic Productions has provided production services for several major television networks, as well as large multi-national corporations including Michelin, GE, Sony and Georgia-Pacific. Scenic has also provided production services for The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, The Montel Williams Show, Fox News Channel and The Food Network.

Giving back has always been important to Mit and Scenic. They have donated millions of dollars of free advertising for local nonprofits. Furthermore, in the first quarter of 2021, over \$300,000 of airtime was donated promoting the mission and fundraising efforts of these agencies. Scenic's assistance helped to disseminate information to the public regarding essential services provided by these organizations and helped market their programs for public support.

Mit was awarded the 2014 Small Business Person of the Year by the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and has also been featured in the Alabama News Center as one of Alabama's Bright Lights in 2015. Mit's commitment to improving the Dothan community is solidified through his work on the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, the Wiregrass Area Food Bank Board, the Dothan Botanical Gardens Board, the George Washington Carver Museum Board, the Dubois Institute (Aunt Katie's Community Garden) Board, Southeast Alabama Community Foundation Board and Vice-Chairman of the Dothan Downtown Redevelopment Authority.

Mit credits his success to growing up in a family where God, believing in yourself and community service was part of his daily life.

# Dr. Press Thornton, Jr.

## *Press Thornton Future Masters Golf Tournament*



A veteran, dentist, realtor, talented golfer and local legacy, Pressly "Press" L Thornton, Jr. was born in Dothan on Feb. 20, 1928, to Pressly L. Thornton, Sr. and Elsa Thornton. Press spent his youth playing with friends who became lifelong friends. The seeds of Press' faith took root as he became involved in his local church, St. Columba Catholic Church, serving as an altar boy and a passion for golf was emerging.

At age 11, Press won his first golf tournament, the Dothan County Club Junior Championship. He would go on to win two more Dothan County Club men's championships, one at age 14 and one at 15. He played in many local and area tournaments throughout high school and upon graduating from Dothan High School in 1946, was awarded a golf scholarship to Louisiana State University. He had a successful golf career at LSU and in 1948, transferred to the University of Alabama to complete undergraduate studies for dental school.

While Press was attending the University of Alabama, his father, also an avid golfer, became concerned about available opportunities for young golfers to compete against each other. This concern was the catalyst for the establishment of a junior golf tournament sponsored by the Dothan Country Club, named after its creator the Press Thornton Future Masters. The first tournament was played in 1950, the year Press graduated from the University of Alabama and entered the UAB School of Dentistry.

After graduating from dental school and following a two-year commitment to the U.S. Air Force, Press returned to Dothan in 1956 to open his dental practice. While he was practicing dentistry, he was an active member and held office for the Third District of the Alabama Dental Association. He was also the first dentist in District Three to use nitrous oxide, also known as laughing gas, to treat patient anxiety. Press practiced dentistry for 50 years, earning himself the affectionate and appropriate nickname "Doc", before retiring in 2005. This allowed him to enjoy more time golfing and sell real estate at Coldwell Banker - Alfred Saliba Realty alongside his wife, Evelyn.

Press served as General Chairman of the Future Masters for 64 years, spanning the entirety of his dental career and his retirement. He not only shared his love of golf with thousands of junior players, but he also extended kindness, hospitality and fellowship to these players and their families. The local economic contribution of the tournament is notable and impressive, generating more than \$500,000 annually to the Dothan economy and equating to more than \$30 million overall throughout its history.

Press' heart for the community was also evident through his involvement with other charitable organizations. An active member of St. Columba Catholic Church, he helped establish an office for Catholic Social Services, where food, clothing and counseling is made available to Houston County residents. He also served on the Dothan Boys Club Board and was a member of the Rotary Club, honored as a Paul Harris Fellow and with the President's Award for his many years overseeing the collection of Christmas gifts for children.

Press was married to his wife Evelyn for 61 years and together they raised five children, Camille, Press, King, Lyn and Elsa. His family is proud to honor and carry on their father's and the family's legacy in the community for many more decades to come.



## Samuel Mason Torrence *Couch Construction Company*

A native of North Carolina, Sam was born in Raleigh and grew up in New Bern. In 1952, he graduated from Wake Forest University and entered the Armed Forces, assigned to Fort Rucker. During this time he met his future wife, Juleann Flowers.

Sam intended to return to North Carolina when his military service ended. However, when Quinn Flowers, Sr. offered Sam the position of Office Manager for Couch Construction Company, he decided to make Dothan his home. Two years later he married his boss's daughter, Juleann.

When Mr. Flowers was tragically killed in an automobile accident in November 1959, Sam became General Manager of Couch, a paving company founded by S. E. Couch with a long history in Alabama and operating in Dothan since 1908. During World War II and by the 1950s Couch had paving projects in at least five states. The Eisenhower Interstate Highway System gave Couch an opportunity to build many of these projects as well as airports and other related projects. Although the management of all this work was difficult, it was worth the rewards. Sam depended upon many excellent Couch employees, sharing, "I attribute my success to my employees. I was just one of the many that made it successful."

In the early 1960s the Estate of Quinn Flowers, Sr. bought out the stock of Stirton Oman of Oman Construction Company in Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Oman gave Sam much valued advice until his death in 1977.

In 1985 Couch sold to Superfos, a large Danish company. Sam said the timing for the sale was right. Nothing really changed. The Couch name remained intact, and the company retained its State Licensing Board for General Contractors License Number Four. At the time, Couch was the third oldest operating paving company in Alabama. Sam served as President until retiring in 1995.

During his time with Couch, Sam was involved in many industry-wide endeavors as well as local and community organizations. He served as President of the Alabama Roadbuilders Association, the Alabama Asphalt Pavement Association and the National Asphalt Pavement Association. Sam was a member of the Capstone Engineering Society and founding member of the National Council of Asphalt Technology. He was instrumental in bringing NCAT to Auburn University, now the research center for the worldwide asphalt industry. He was elected to the first class of the Alabama Roadbuilders Association Hall of Fame along with his late father-in-law. Sam served as Chairman of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, was elected a Paul Harris Rotary Fellow and was a member of the Dothan Kiwanis Club for 61 years. He was also a member of the national Young Presidents Organization.

Sam was a long-time member of First United Methodist Church, serving as Chairman of the Administrative Board and held many other church offices, including a special affiliation with the United Methodist Children's Home.

Sam and Juleann were married for 62 years and had three daughters – Julie Shaw (Steve), Lane Flemming (Ned) and Lee Billings (Paul). They have eight grandchildren and now 16 great-grandchildren.

Sam was an active leader in the growth of Dothan. He led Couch into commercial and residential real estate development, including the development of Spann Farm. His family, although scattered, still has business interests in Dothan. Sam leaves a legacy of integrity and innovative business interests that his family continues to serve in the community.



## Hugh Ward Wheelless, Jr. *Wheelless Development & Realty*



Hugh Ward Wheelless Jr. was born to parents Willie Austin and Ward Wheelless, Sr. April 19, 1947. He spent his childhood years in Dothan, completely unaware of the profound, enduring legacy he would create in his community.

Hugh attended Auburn University after graduating from Dothan High School in 1965. While at Auburn, Hugh served as a flight instructor during the Vietnam War. Dothan called Hugh home after he graduated in 1970. He took over operation of Dothan Aviation at Wheelless Airport upon the death of his father and remained in this capacity throughout his career. He also served as the president of Wheel-Air Aviation Insurance and president of United Distributing Company.

It was during the 1980s and 1990s that Hugh made pivotal decisions that changed the trajectory of the west side of Dothan and made Dothan a destination in Alabama. In the 1980s, then CEO of Retirement Systems of Alabama, David Bonner enlisted the help of famed golf course architect Robert Trent Jones to design golf courses throughout the state. Then Mayor Alfred Saliba wanted Dothan to be a part of this project after hearing Bonner speak at a Kiwanis Club meeting and felt Hugh's family land on the west side of town was the perfect location. When Hugh was initially approached by the Mayor and Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce staff about donating 400 acres of his family's farmland, he was not convinced. However, after being invited to see the progress of the Oxmoor Valley Course in Birmingham, Hugh wondered what opportunities he may be missing. He then approached Mayor Saliba, not as a constituent, but as a friend seeking advice. Following their conversation, Hugh decided to donate the land and was fully committed to the project. The Highland Oaks Golf Course opened in 1993.

During that time, Hugh also formed Wheelless Development & Realty, developing much of the land surrounding the golf course. He sold 29 lots his first morning. The impact of Hugh's land donation for the golf course coupled with his development of the surrounding land was an economic home run for Dothan, attracting not only visitors to the world class golf course, but additional housing opportunities attracted outside industries. Wheelless Development & Realty established many sought-after communities including the Highlands, Highlands South, Highland Lakes and Highland Cove.

Hugh possessed a steadfast servant heart. He was a member of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, founding member and Past President of the Dothan-Houston County Rotary Club, a Rotary Club Paul Harris Fellow and Chairman of the Houston County Port Authority. He served on the Wallace Community College Foundation Board for 16 years, spending many years as the Board Treasurer and Chair of the Nominating Committee. As the Co-Chair of a Major Gift Campaign in the late 2000s, Hugh assisted in raising \$4.3 million for Wallace student scholarships. A man of great faith, Hugh served in various capacities at his local church, the Church of the Nativity.

Hugh was the husband of Barbara Parker Wheelless. He has three sons, Trip Wheelless, William Wheelless and Christopher de la Croix, as well as six grandchildren. He left a legacy that has and will continue to benefit the Wiregrass community for years to come.

# Dothan Business Hall of Fame

## 2019 Honorees

A. B. Clark  
*DSI Security Services*

Dr. Marnix E. Heersink  
*Eye Center South*

Tom A. West  
*Tom West Company*

## 2018 Honorees

Velma J. Tribue  
*Velma Tribue State Farm  
Insurance*

C. Charles Nailen, Jr.  
*BBG Specialty Foods Inc. -  
Taco Bell Corp.*

Reafield Vester  
*Alabama Cooperative  
Extension System*

Sam Wainwright  
*Wainwright Engineering*

## 2017 Honorees

S. Earl Dove  
*AAA Cooper Transportation*

W. Earl Durden  
*Durden Outdoor Displays  
Inc.*

R. Hayne Hollis, III  
*Hollis & Spann Contractors*

Alan C. Livingston  
*Lee, Livingston, Lee, Nichols  
& Barron, PC*

## 2016 Honorees

Dr. Linda Young  
*Wallace Community College*

Thomas Allen "Tom" Shirley  
*Home Oil Co. Inc. / Hobo  
Pantry Food Stores*

## 2015 Honorees

James F. Coleman  
*Coleman Worldwide Moving*

John E. Downs  
*Qualico Steel Co. Inc.*

John H. Edge  
*Flowers Hospital*

Michael D. Schmitz  
*Mike Schmitz Automotive  
Group*

## 2014 Honorees

Norma Saliba Hanson  
*Norma Hanson & Associates*

Larry G. Blumberg  
*Larry Blumberg & Associates  
(LBA Hospitality)*

John A. Conti  
*Hedstrom Co.*

Larry C. Register  
*Register Realty Co. Inc.*

Dr. Jack L. Sasser  
*Wiregrass Rehabilitation  
Center Inc.*

# Dothan Business Hall of Fame

## 2013 Honorees

John H. "Red" Dove  
*AAA Cooper Transportation*

Morris M. Slingluff  
*Slingluff United Insurance*

Ralph Smith  
*Lewis-Smith Supply Corp.*

## 2012 Honorees

Eustace E. Bishop, Sr.  
*Bishop Laundry and Cleaners*

William Jesse Forrester  
*Sanitary Dairy*

John H. Glanton, Jr.  
*Glanton and Son  
Homebuilding and Real  
Estate*

Harry P. Hall  
*Dothan Federal Savings  
and Loan*

John Holman Watson  
*Smith's Inc. of Dothan*

## 2011 Honorees

Agnes D. Simpson  
*WOOF Radio*

G. Mack Dove  
*AAA Cooper Transportation*

Dr. Paul R. Flowers  
*Flowers Hospital*

James W. Grant, III  
*James Grant Realty*

Wallace D. Malone, Sr.  
*First National Bank*

Richmond C. McClintock, Sr.  
*McClintock & Associates*

Alfred J. Saliba  
*Alfred Saliba Corp.*

DIAMOND

# MIKE SCHMITZ AUTOMOTIVE GROUP



## PLATINUM

Coldwell Banker - Alfred  
Saliba Realty

Couch Aggregates

Empire Pipe

Reeves & Shaw Construction

## GOLD

Dothan Country Club

Press Thornton Future Masters  
Golf Tournament

Playmaker

Scenic Cable Network &  
Productions

Wheelless Development &  
Realty

## TABLE SPONSORS

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices  
Showcase Properties

City of Dothan

Coleman Worldwide Moving

Dr. Press Thornton, Jr.  
Family & Friends

DSI Security Services

Flowers Insurance Agency, LLC

Hayne Hollis Family

Heersink Family Foundation

Houston County - Peter Covert

Houston County - Pres Register

Larry Blumberg & Associates  
(LBA Hospitality)

MidSouth Bank

David "Mit" Kirkland  
Family & Friends

Qualico Steel Company Inc.

ServisFirst Bank

SunSouth Bank

Synovus

Troy University

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