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# THE FAMILY BUSINESS



It has been said many times that Bloomington is a great place to raise a family. It also happens to be a great place to grow a family business. **Herein are the stories of seven such successful family businesses.**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **John Bailey**

## FAMILY BUSINESS

### KM Consultants

**Kristi McCann, owner & CEO; Sharon McCann, consultant**



Sharon and Kristi McCann.

KM Consultants is all about people and improving your business, from the hiring of a new employee to exit management. It also helps businesses large and small focus on all of the "in between" of employee management. Owner and CEO Kristi McCann and her mother, Sharon McCann, both have years of experience in human resource management and master's degrees in business and management.

Kristi has 14 years of human resource management experience. She has worked within human resources for both profit and nonprofit organizations. She has served as a curriculum designer, trainer, and executive director. Sharon has worked in both federal and state government positions and has worked in human resources for nearly 20 years. Her areas of specialization include case management of employee issues, FMLA, and training.

Community involvement is very important to KM Consultants; Kristi has worked

for four nonprofits during her career. The company takes great pride in giving back to the community. Each time a business uses their services, a portion of paid services is set aside to provide future grants for nonprofit organizations, allowing them to have human resource consulting services.

KM Consultants began part time in 2013, and became a full-time business in July of this year when Kristi and her mother lost two special people in their lives. The KM Consultant tree logo honors Kristi's father, Tom McCann, who researched branches of the family tree for many years until cancer took him in 2012. The second loss, just a year ago, was Kristi's beloved grandmother, Waneta McCann. Her legacy enabled the company to begin on a full-time basis. "Those who knew my grandmother knew that she had a heart to serve others," Kristi says. "I want KM Consultants to embrace that focus by continuing her legacy."

— *Sharon McCann*

## FAMILY BUSINESS

**Dragonfly Gallery**

Denise Sudol, owner; Mike Sudol, visionary

Denise Sudol's 20 years as a stand-up comic offered endless opportunities to explore the country while traveling to perform. Driving from her home state of Florida to gigs at Bear's Place in Bloomington, she became acquainted with towns along Indiana State Highway 46. Denise grew fond of Nashville, Indiana's vibrant arts scene before falling in love with Spencer, Indiana's charm.

"I loved Spencer from the first time I saw it. It was just a cool place to unwind," says Denise. "Its topography is similar to Nashville, and, even better, I could afford it."

In 2002, Denise bought land just outside of town where she now lives with her husband Mike. Her daughter Karah, a sophomore at Indiana University, and son Connor both dedicate time working at the Dragonfly Gallery. In Spencer, the family discovered a warm and supportive community.

"The night before we were supposed to open, the shop was still filled with construction guys and scaffolding. I was starting to panic," says Denise. "When we finally started putting together displays that night, people started to show up. I let them know we weren't opening until the next day. They replied, 'We know. We're here to help.' We must have had 25 people who showed up, and some of them stayed until 8 a.m. The store looked great when we opened the next day!"

The Dragonfly Gallery's building once housed an Odd Fellows lodge, and although the lodge was located on the building's second floor, the space was constructed without a staircase connecting the two stories. When Denise and Mike first saw the space, they were greeted by falling plaster, sponge-painted walls, fluorescent lights, and a makeshift ladder.

"My husband's role is that of visionary and my biggest cheerleader," Denise says. "He saw through the mess and was able to envision how we could transform the space from an architectural standpoint to make it the space for my 'Barbie Dream Plan.'"

The Dragonfly Gallery is the culmination of that plan, offering Spencer shoppers an array of art, jewelry, clothing, soaps, and small treasures in its retail space. Upstairs, an art gallery features regional artwork and work by artists discovered by Denise while on tour.

The family isn't finished breathing life into downtown Spencer. The Sudols' next project is to open a sports bar and restaurant a block off of the town square. Future plans include opening a boutique hotel and building 16 downtown townhouses.

Visit The Dragonfly Gallery on Facebook or at [dragonflygalleryspencer.com](http://dragonflygalleryspencer.com).

— Sara Sheikh



Sam Hudson and Jessica Agnelneri.

**Oak Fires Glass Studio**

Jessica Agnelneri and Sam Hudson, owners

After losing her mother in 2012 and her father in 2015, Jessica Agnelneri was seeking a way to commemorate their lives and looked to her significant other, Sam Hudson, to help her find a creative, artistic way to do so. Hudson, a glass artist, chose to integrate the cremated ashes from Agnelneri's parents into the designs of two handmade glass memorial marbles.

Soon, Hudson began to field requests for memorial marbles from others, and the couple realized that these original works of art had the potential to help heal others suffering from loss. That realization led them to open Oak Fires Glass Studio, where Hudson designs custom glass art and Agnelneri manages the office and day-to-day operations.

Located in Ellettsville, Oak Fires Glass Studio's cremation memorial marbles are available in several sizes and price ranges. Hudson works with a molten sphere of glass attached to a glass rod, stamping it onto the cremated ashes resting on a clean oak slab, which engulfs the oak and transfers the ashes to the glass. He then hand blows each marble before giving it the final design. Hudson says the round shape of each marble comes somewhat organically, through a natural process of gravity, heat, and rotation. For more information about Oak Fires' products, visit [oakfiresglassstudio.com](http://oakfiresglassstudio.com) or call 812-322-3991. — Sara Sheikh

## FAMILY BUSINESS



Ashley and Michael Korus.

officially took over leadership at Sycamore Farm Bloomington in early September.

Sycamore Farm is more than just a business for the couple — it is also their family home. In addition to running events, the family cares for a small cadre of animals, including two miniature donkeys, Liberty and Alice, who they inherited with the farm. There's also Michael's horse, Mia, and the family's two dogs, Astro and Pippa.

The family's personal relationship with Sycamore Farm Bloomington translates into attention to detail and hands-on assistance throughout the event planning process. "This is truly a family owned and operated business," Ashley says. "Our guests are as much a part of our lives as we are of theirs."

While each Korus family member contributes to the overall guest experience and property management, it's become the sole focus of 30-year-old Ashley. "I am really looking forward to helping people create lasting memories on our family farm," Ashley says.

Michael has found that his day job is extremely helpful when navigating some details at Sycamore Farm. "What I do for a living is similar to what we do here," Michael says. "In some ways, it's an extension to leasing, whether it's space for an event or stall space for a horse."

Norah's job description varies depending on the day and the event. Although the 2-year-old has been known to pick up a mop to help clean up spills, she has become particularly fond of feeding the family's animals and going for rides on the tractor with dad.

"This is what our family will be doing together for the foreseeable future, and we are very happy about that," Ashley says.

Michael agrees that, much as he predicted on their wedding day, Sycamore Farm Bloomington is just the right place for the Koruses.

"This is our family's forever home," Michael says. — Sara Sheikh

**Sycamore Farm Bloomington**  
Ashley and Michael Korus, owners

When Ashley and Michael Korus said "I do" at Sycamore Farm Bloomington, little did they know that the popular venue where they celebrated the most important day of their lives would come to mean even more to them in the future. Less than 15 minutes after leaving the wedding, Michael made a comment that, looking back now, seems prophetic.

"As we were leaving our wedding reception, Michael told me how he'd really like to own something just like Sycamore Farm one day," says Ashley, now 30. "I agreed with him, but I was so tired that I just sort of nodded and left it at that. Less than a year later, I got an email from him telling me that the property was for sale and we had a showing scheduled for that day. Talk about excitement!"

Originally from northwestern Indiana, Michael, 41, grew up around horses and played polo. He graduated from Culver Military Academy, where he was part of one of the nation's most elite horsemanship

groups, the Black Horse Troop. He started his professional career in financial services before moving into real estate. His company, MAXIM Real Estate, INC, celebrated its 10-year anniversary in June.

An Arizona native, Ashley attended The University of Arizona, where she graduated with a degree in molecular and cellular biology. For the last seven years, she worked for Cook in its Aortic Intervention Division and held roles in both sales and strategic marketing. While there, Ashley realized she has a keen sense for detail and planning, and a passion for helping people. Just two days after moving to Bloomington to pursue her career at Cook in 2012, Ashley met Michael. The two were married on July 12, 2014.

The couple had been seeking a farmstead property ever since Michael made his fortuitous comment on their wedding day. Then the Sycamore Farm listing came across his desk. The Korus family, including the couple's 2-year-old daughter, Norah,

## FAMILY BUSINESS

### Closets, Too!

J.P. Jeffries, president;  
Tina Cooper, vice president

J.P. Jeffries and Tina Cooper spend a lot of time together making sure customers of their family-owned business, Closets, Too!, get the perfect cabinet-style shelving systems for their homes.

The couple believes in providing great customer service and takes pride in offering lifetime guarantees for their customized products. Those same principles guided company founder Jim Jeffries, J.P.'s father. Now Jim acts as a part-time consultant to J.P. and Tina, who, in January, will officially become owners of the 30-year-old business. It was started by Jim and his wife, Patricia Jeffries, and is located at 3912 S. Walnut.

J.P., 40, who's been involved with Closets, Too! since he was 12, now designs the shelving he and Tina assemble and install in area homes. Tina, 34, is the vice president and has been with the company since 2006. They work both with builders and directly with homeowners who want to upgrade shelving, closets, and showers. They even create custom pet enclosures!

"We make sure we use space to the fullest potential, so homeowners can make maximum use out of the space they have," says J.P. Another advantage is that Closets, Too! shelving systems can be adjusted or disassembled and moved as people's needs change. For more information, visit closetstoo.com or call 812-332-2233.

—Barb Berggoetz



J.P. Jeffries and Tina Cooper.



Sally Walker and Hayley Foltzer.

### Argentum Jewelry

Sally Walker, owner;  
Hayley Foltzer, manager/buyer

Working side-by-side, Sally Walker and her daughter, Hayley Foltzer, offer customers at Argentum Jewelry elegant gold and silver jewelry known for its high quality and unique designs. "It's fun to share this as a mother-and-daughter team," says Walker, owner of the shop founded in 1971 as a wholesale business by her late husband, Gene Foltzer. "Hayley and I enjoy attending gem and jewelry shows all over the country together, seeking out designer jewelry in a full range of prices."

Argentum, a downtown Bloomington staple, has operated as a retail business since 1973 and has been at North College and West 6th Street for 35 years. The couple managed Argentum with the help of a talented sales staff until Gene's passing in 2002.

Hayley started cleaning cases and jewelry at age 10. Her experience growing up working at Argentum led to an interest in jewelry and gemstones. She worked at Los Angeles-area jewelry firms, including Tiffany & Co., before returning home several years ago. Now 26, she is the store's manager and buyer, helps design custom pieces, and has completed jewelry repair and stone-setting courses.

Walker, who has a graduate diploma from California-based Gemological Institute of America, says, "I hand select only the finest quality jewelry for customers seeking an exceptional colored gem or diamond." Visit argentum-jewelry.com.—Barb Berggoetz

### The Olive Leaf and Peacetree Mountain Truffles

Linda Armes & Lisa Hornibrook, co-owners, The Olive Leaf and Peacetree Mountain Truffles;  
Gretchen Handlos, co-owner, Peacetree Mountain Truffles

The Olive Leaf and its companion business, Peacetree Mountain Truffles, are thriving in Bloomington under the guidance of three longtime friends and with help from some of their children, who are learning firsthand about being entrepreneurs.

Luscious truffles and solid chocolates are made and sold alongside more than 20 flavors of balsamic vinegars and fresh, high-quality olive oils from around the world at The Olive Leaf, located at 879 S. College Mall Road. This fall, the owners started selling a solid-chocolate leaf collection for fall and have doubled production of the popular 12 Truffles of Christmas.

It all came about when Linda Armes, Lisa Hornibrook, and Gretchen Handlos (who met while home schooling their children) started Peacetree in 2011 using Armes' truffle recipes. They now have 60 flavors. In 2014, they wanted a storefront, so Armes and Hornibrook bought The Olive Leaf, which had been selling their balsamic truffles.

Early on, six children helped out, beginning when they were in junior high school. They tested the truffle market at a local farmers' market and earned money for a field trip by selling truffles. "The kids have always helped us decorate, box, and deliver truffles," Armes says. Now in high school and college, they take shifts running the front counter or work behind-the-scenes — creating a true multi-family business.

—Barb Berggoetz



Lisa Hornibrook and Linda Armes.

# Bloom

MAGAZINE

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