



According to the National Association of Women Business Owners, more than 9.1 million firms and businesses are owned by women in the United States, employing nearly 7.9 million people and generating \$1.5 trillion in sales. The 28 women here, representing 21 area businesses, are part of that trend. While not all of these businesses are owned by women, all of them do recognize the valuable contributions women make to the economic vitality of our community.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS





(l-r) Leslie Noggle and Susan Yeley.
Photo by Martin Boling

Susan Yeley & Leslie Noggle

Susan Yeley Interiors, Owner, and
L Noggle Architectural Designs, Owner

A woman-owned business in a male-dominated industry, Susan Yeley Interiors offers architectural and interior design/decorating services under one umbrella—a one-stop-shop model in which two south-central Indiana natives help you determine everything from roof rafters to rugs.

The Susan Yeley Interiors team came together organically one fateful day when Yeley called on Leslie Noggle for architectural assistance with an addition to her own home. After successfully collaborating on Susan's studio space and two new bathrooms, the pair knew they had something special. "When you have an interior designer and an architect working together as a team, you have the opportunity to influence the whole project," Yeley says. "It is very satisfying for us, and results in wonderfully cohesive homes for our clients."

Noggle, the team's architect, began accruing related experience as a child from her father, a designer-builder, and her grandfather, an architect. The Brown County native obtained a degree in architecture that served as a passport for exploring vastly different buildings through work experiences in the Hamptons and travels throughout Europe. Noggle, who acts as an independent operator for Susan Yeley Interiors, is also the owner of L Noggle Architectural Designs.

Yeley holds degrees in the liberal arts (English and Spanish, and Religion and

Philosophy), but an unpaid internship at a furniture showroom in Chicago's Merchandise Mart redirected her career, inspiring her to enroll in the Harrington College of Design. From there, she went to work for a high-end residential design firm in Chicago's River North Gallery District. Yeley established her creative design business in Bloomington in 2005 after she and her husband returned to town to raise their family.

In addition to standard blueprints, Yeley and Noggle create detailed elevations for the interiors of their projects, showing tile layouts, art and lighting scale and placement, and custom casework design, for example. They also provide digital mock-ups of what the actual space will look like once finished with walls, trim, paint, fixtures, and furniture. This gives clients a realistic look at what might otherwise be hard to see from a 2-D blueprint, and is just one aspect of Susan Yeley Interiors' "full-service, high-touch" approach.

"We are *people* people," Yeley says. "We love your children and your pets. We love getting to know you. You shouldn't have to re-explain what you want a million times to your architect, designer, contractor, and furniture salesperson. Just tell us, and we will work with you start to finish, to smooth out a stressful process and create with you a home you love." Learn more at susanyeleyinteriors.com and noggleslie.houzz.com.

Susan Woods

The Wellness Circle, Owner

After facilitating a group wellness session last summer, Susan Woods expressed to her dearest friend what a wonderful experience it was. Her friend's suggestion that she start her own coaching business motivated Woods to start The Wellness Circle, a supportive group environment where Woods works with clients to create and achieve sustainable goals that help them move forward and live healthier lives.

"Group wellness coaching allows participants to choose the area of wellness they wish to change or improve," Woods says. "They have a stake in deciding what they want to do and how they are going to do it." She adds that making a lasting, healthy lifestyle change can be difficult and overwhelming. People often change their behavior for a few weeks but then slowly backslide. "Being part of a group automatically creates a community of support and accountability, which is a missing ingredient for so many people wanting to make lifestyle changes," Woods says. "We'll work together to create a wellness vision and set small, attainable goals toward that vision."

Woods says wellness in one area often allows people to achieve wellness goals in other areas, and when one part of the system is working better, the whole system benefits. To learn more, visit thewellnesscircle.net or email thewellnesscircle2473@gmail.com.



Susan Woods. Photo by
Laura Von Photography



Dr. Dawn H. Lindeman.
Photo by Martin Boling

Dr. Dawn H. Lindeman

Lindeman & Associates Psychological Services, Owner

Licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Dawn H. Lindeman grew up in a traditional household. When her mother got a job outside the home, Dr. Lindeman learned being a working woman could change the family dynamic. “Women’s interest and participation in the business world enhances the social world and influences social change,” says Dr. Lindeman, a wife and mother whose familial experiences influenced her educational choices and career decisions. “I am excited to be a woman in business and to be a part of quality leadership in our community, as well as model work-family balance for young women and, most importantly, for my sons.”

Dr. Lindeman earned a doctorate in counseling psychology from Indiana University and started her practice because she wanted to enhance people’s lives and help them become the best versions of themselves—cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. She specializes in comprehensive evaluations for all ages, including cognitive, behavioral and emotional, autism, dyslexia, psycho-educational, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, personality, and career assessments.

“Our practice works diligently to meet our clients’ needs and to provide timely services that are research-based,” Dr. Lindeman says. “We continually research effective therapy modalities and look forward to introducing virtual reality therapy and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing.” Lindeman & Associates Psychological Services, 3901 E. Hagan St., also offers individual, family, and couples therapy. For information, call 812-650-1234.

Sadie Clarke

Sweet Grass Modern Southern Kitchen, General Manager

As the new general manager of Sweet Grass Modern Southern Kitchen, Sadie Clarke has made use of the tools she picked up in previous roles, including jobs at a number of other restaurants. Clarke was recruited to become GM when the newest owners of Sweet Grass purchased the restaurant in late 2017. Since then, Clarke has evolved the entire guest experience at the restaurant. A primary focus is customer service, an area about which she is passionate. “To be a good server, you have to practice the three C’s: caring, communication, and consistency,” Clarke says. With assistant manager Mecca Walker’s support, Clarke has evolved the menu back to its low country roots while folding a few Cajun dishes and brunch into the mix. Also, the restaurant’s aesthetics have undergone a facelift, outdoor seating space has expanded, and plans are in the works to create space for private parties.

After the Hawaiian native moved to Bloomington with her family, tragedy struck—Clarke’s brother took his own life when she was just 16. That event inspired Clarke’s latest endeavor—normalizing communication about suicide. She is currently working on a video to help promote conversations about suicide with an emphasis on removing the taboo nature surrounding the subject.

For more information on Sweet Grass, visit sweetgrassbtown.com.



(l-r) Mecca Walker,
assistant manager of
Sweet Grass Modern
Southern Kitchen,
and Sadie Clarke,
general manager.
Photo by Martin Boling



Kathy Pafford.

Photo by Jeff Richardson

Kathy Pafford

Skin Aesthetics Medical Spa, Owner

Kathy Pafford, owner of Skin Aesthetics Medical Spa, says her paramount goal is to provide clients with unmatched, personalized services in a peaceful environment. A licensed medical aesthetician, Pafford has offered state-of-the-art aesthetic treatments in Bloomington for 11 years. She’s been at her 2801 N. Walnut, Suite 8, location since August 2017. Prior to opening her business, Pafford received 10 years of education and training in a facial plastic surgery setting. As an anesthetic injector, she provides Botox, Dysport, and dermal filler injections. She also offers laser hair and vein removal, microdermabrasion treatments, micro-needling, chemical peels, facials, and treatment for acne, scarring, and sun damage.

Pafford stresses building lasting relationships and offering sound advice. “I want to help clients feel comfortable with the way they’re growing older, the way their skin is changing, and what treatments to use to slow down that process,” she says. “It’s important to go slowly rather than jumping into something drastic. Less is more.” As the sole service provider, Pafford says she “develops a true understanding of clients’ needs and suggested plans of action, and oversees their desired results.”

Pafford has a strong client base in Bloomington and Indianapolis, and others travel from as far as California, Florida, and Colorado for treatments. Free consultations are available. For information, visit skin-aesthetics.net.



Samantha McGranahan. Photo by Martin Boling

Samantha McGranahan

Unveiled Photography, Owner

Unveiled Photography owner Samantha McGranahan says her business didn't happen overnight, but instead is the result of more than a decade of her photography experience, ranging from taking pictures for her high school yearbook to photographing families and weddings to re-creating classic pinup illustrations.

At Unveiled Photography, founded in 2014, McGranahan's primary focus is boudoir and glamour photography. In her first two years, she did all the makeup application, hair styling, photography, post-production, and sales—but now she has a four-person team working in her studio space that has expanded twice since she started.

She says Unveiled was inspired by a pivotal experience in 2010 when she owned The Roxy Studio in Terre Haute. "I had a client who was in her late 50s hire me to photograph her as a gift for her husband for their anniversary," McGranahan says. "At the time, we did so much of this online, and working with her in person was a moment of pause for me. I loved getting to know her through each step of the process, and all these interactions allowed me to photograph her at her very best."

McGranahan and the woman sat side-by-side and watched a slideshow on the computer at her ordering session. "I was a ball of nerves because she was the first client I worked with that I was able to see her reaction to the photos I captured," she says, explaining that she normally delivered images through online galleries. "After the slide show, she started to tear up and I was panicking thinking she hated the photos, but I couldn't have been more wrong. She said, 'I haven't felt this beautiful in a long time,' and she thanked me. Her words have been with me ever since and are my inspiration to help women reconnect with what they truly love about who they are."

While that experience changed how McGranahan wanted to do business, she says the full scope of that moment was realized in 2017 when the woman's husband found her on Facebook and asked if she would photograph his wife again. "Now in her mid-60s, she was my client for a second time, and I was able to tell her in person that she was one of my biggest inspirations for creating Unveiled," McGranahan says.

"There is a common misconception that boudoir photography isn't for everyone, and

I couldn't disagree more," she explains. "I believe that taking a moment to pause and celebrate the current chapter of your life and what you look like is so important. To me, every woman has a unique beauty that deserves to be celebrated and documented no matter their age, what the scale says, or what color their skin may be."

At Unveiled, McGranahan has photographed women ranging in age from 18 to 73 and from size 0 to 4x. "My approach is to help my clients focus on what they love about themselves and to let go of their self-criticisms," she says. "Unfortunately, a photo shoot can't reverse years of negative self-talk that so many women experience, but it certainly does serve as an impactful mindset reboot and confidence boost." She adds that her proof is in the growing list of repeat clients who book on an annual basis. "I couldn't be more thrilled to see that list grow and grow."

McGranahan schedules two sessions a day and makes sure her clients get to see their photos right away. "Clients come in, get styled, do the shoot, and break at lunch," she says. "While they're gone, we're editing and prepping the photos, and when they come back, they see the finished product and place their order. It's all done in one day." For information, visit unveiled-photo.com.



Cathy Teeters.
Photo by Martin Boling

Cathy Teeters

Cathy Teeters Beautiful Weddings, Owner

You might say Cathy Teeters was destined to be a florist. She learned her craft from her father, John Smith, who owned a floral shop. As a second-generation florist, she's been creating beautiful floral designs for 42 years, so it seemed only natural she would start her own business. In 2001, Teeters opened Beautiful Weddings, offering full-service consultations for weddings and florals for special events.

As a wedding planner and coordinator, Teeters enjoys sharing in the excitement of a couple's wedding day. "I think you have to have a passion for this business," she says. "My biggest satisfaction at the end of the day is when our brides, couples, and families are happy."

Teeters' professional studio at Lake Lemon has walk-in coolers for florals and a supply of rentable items for weddings, including glassware, candelabra, gold, silver, iron, arches, arbors, invitations, and more. "I work closely with brides to create the design and the style of the wedding they envision," Teeters says. "I once had a bride and her mother grab me and jump up and down for joy when they first saw their reception venue. We brought their vision to life."

Teeters is a member of The Association of Bridal Consultants and is a designated professional bridal consultant. For more information, visit cathyteetersbeautifulweddings.com.

Becky Gavin

Gavin Design, Owner

After a career in training children how to communicate better, and then teaching graduate students to become speech-language pathologists, Gavin Design owner Becky Gavin changed career directions and opened an interior design business in 2003. She went from being a teacher in speech language pathology to a student in interior design.

Gavin says she worked hard to pass the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications Exam and become a professional member of the American Society of Interior Designers. She is also a registered interior designer with the state of Indiana and teaches Lifelong Learning classes in design at Indiana University. Gavin's teaching continues through her business in the way she guides her clients, providing options and rationale that might work best in each particular situation.

"Design really does change people's lives," she says, adding that she finds it rewarding to see her long-term planning for a project come to fruition, as well as to see her clients' delight and how much they learned through the process. Gavin adds that she loves helping people pull together a look in their homes or small commercial offices and thrives on space planning for new additions and renovations. A sole proprietor, Gavin supports many local contractors and subcontractors in her business. For more information, visit gavindesigns.com or call 812-336-1929.



Becky Gavin.
Photo by
Martin Boling



Trish House.
Photo by
Martin Boling

Trish House

Therapeutic Listener, Owner

While attending nursing school, Trish House was a hospice volunteer. "I got very close to death by being around it for so long and so extensively," House says. That experience led her to discover a guiding principal. "Somewhere along the line, it hit me that deciding there is a purpose in life, or something that you need to chase, is just setting yourself up for failure," she explains. "I just do what I do, and don't try to make something happen. It just happens with or without our influence. Even without a goal, we can be content with life. Even without a goal, you still take action."

With a bachelor's degree in nursing and an associate degree in storytelling, House researched, practiced, and honed her skills for five years before finding her secret to positive mental health and sharing it with the community. Therapeutic Listener offers clients the opportunity to talk about frustrations, sadness, and more. House's practice of what she calls "impact listening" allows clients to verbally express whatever is bothering them without looking for advice. "Most people just need to get something out," House says. "The only advice suited to you is your own advice. You can't always get to it unless you feel heard."

For more information, call 812-803-0599 or email becausetrishsaidso@gmail.com.



(l-r) Ella Heckman, Sam Couch, and Catherine Olmer.
Photo by Martin Boling

WonderLab

Catherine Olmer, CFO;
Sam Couch, Animal Exhibits
Manager; and Ella Heckman,
Gallery Operations Director

Catherine Olmer doesn't have fond memories of science in elementary through high school. In fact, a physics class kept her from graduating with honors. "It was a horrible experience," Olmer says. But many years and a Ph.D. in nuclear physics later, Olmer understood that her problem was with how the science was presented, not the subject.

In 1995, Olmer was approached by Bloomington journalist Deborah Kent, who wanted to open a science museum. Realizing the importance of hands-on science education, Olmer, along with Kent, Karen Jepson-Innes, and several volunteers, began offering science outreach programs at schools, libraries, festivals, and elsewhere. These programs eventually became the WonderLab Museum of Science, Health and Technology, now located at 308 W. 4th St. Two women from that original group remain active in WonderLab operations: Olmer, its chief financial officer (and former executive director), and biologist Jepson-Innes, the current executive director.

Today, WonderLab is the premier regional center for informal, hands-on science education—conceived, implemented, and run by women who successfully navigated the predominantly male-dominated fields of science and business. In 2017,

WonderLab served more than 83,000 visitors and more than 6,000 attendees of outreach programs throughout south-central Indiana. WonderLab also serves as an incubator for science educators and young professionals. It operates the Summer Science Institute for Indiana teachers, and 96 students worked in professional internships, as assistants, and in other roles during 2017.

"One of the special characteristics about WonderLab is the founders are still with WonderLab," Olmer explains. "This provides continuity so the successful fundamental philosophy [informal, hands-on science education] continues year after year. Now we're looking forward to the new generation of leadership and staff."

That includes two relatively new faces: Sam Couch and Ella Heckman. As an IU student, Couch, 23, interned at WonderLab for two years before becoming the animal exhibits manager prior to earning her bachelor's degree in biology in 2017. Couch originally planned to study medicine, but that changed after visiting an aquarium in Georgia. "My life changed when a whale shark seemed to look into my soul," she says. "I started sobbing. That one look changed my life forever."

Heckman, 29, is WonderLab's gallery operations director, overseeing the gallery and maintaining a safe environment for volunteers and guests. She was a summer camp teacher at WonderLab before becoming full-time staff. With a bachelor's degree in biology from Gilford College in North Carolina, Heckman returned home to Bloomington three years after graduation. "I grew up here and grew up going to WonderLab on school field trips—some of the first memories I have of science," she says. Learn more at wonderlab.org.

Pam Green & Teresa Geary

Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping, Owners

In 2012, just as Pam Green and Teresa Geary were looking for a new fitness routine, Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping opened in Columbus, Indiana. They had tried other diet and workout programs, but hadn't gotten results that were sustainable, and realized they needed a lifestyle change, not another diet. That's why they decided to join Farrell's 10-week program of cardio kickboxing, strength training, and nutrition coaching. "Joining Farrell's, we developed good habits around exercise and eating healthy, and those have lasted," Green says.

The two were so pleased with their results that they took Farrell's instructor and coach training and, in 2015, opened their own location at 430 S. Landmark Ave. in Bloomington. In January 2018, they bought the Columbus location where they started their Farrell's journey. "The program works, and we love giving others the opportunity to experience that," Green says. "It is life changing!"

Geary says she struggled with her weight all of her life, and points out that the Farrell's program works for any fitness level and any age. "Don't be afraid of the 'eXtreme' in our name—you bring your version of eXtreme!" she says, noting that "eXtreme" is a reflection of the results obtained through the program. "We are so proud to own a business in Bloomington." For information, call 812-822-2712.



(l-r) Pam Green and Teresa Geary. Photo by Martin Boling



Samantha Eibling.
Photo by Martin Boling

Samantha Eibling Goods for Cooks, Co-Owner; Samantha Eibling Yoga, Owner

Samantha Eibling loves going to work. She co-owns Goods for Cooks, 115 N. College, and teaches yoga through Samantha Eibling Yoga. While those may seem like vastly different ventures, Eibling says each one highlights her desire to help people live, move, and connect with more mindfulness and ease. “Not only do I teach with the intention of helping others live their best lives, but everything we bring into the shop is chosen with intention and purpose as well,” she says.

Eibling bought Goods for Cooks last year with her husband, Doug, and her brother, George Huntington, because they all had a passion for cooking, good food, and gathering with friends and family. Plus, they enjoyed working together. “It has been an adventure,” she says.

When Eibling started practicing yoga 15 years ago, she was stressed out, overworked, and plagued by negative thinking patterns. “I did not feel good in my body, and my mind wasn’t a particularly friendly place,” she says. “Yoga and meditation have taught me I am stronger than I ever knew. They have taught me to take responsibility for my body, my health, my actions, and my mind.” Eibling helps others achieve similar results by teaching yoga, corporate wellness and mindfulness programs, and workshops. For more information, visit goodsforcooks.com or samanthaeiblingyoga.com.

Dr. BreAnna Guan Balanced Natural Health, Owner

Dr. BreAnna Guan began her career the traditional way, but quickly discovered a conventional medical program wasn’t right for her. “I just felt like something was missing,” she says. “I was really interested in health, but wasn’t finding that in the traditional premed route.” Additionally, traditional medicine was failing to address various ailments that both she and her family were encountering at the time.

Dr. Guan’s path took her to Seattle, Washington, where she studied naturopathic medicine at the nationally accredited medical school Bastyr University. At Bastyr, the focus is on creating better health using natural and preventative medicines. “The body has an innate way to heal itself,” Dr. Guan says. “If you cut a finger, the body knows how to repair it so long as it doesn’t come across an obstacle. Our bodies react the same when too little sleep, too much stress, or a poor diet serve as obstacles.”

An initial appointment with Dr. Guan involves a comprehensive 90-minute discussion that covers everything from family and medical history to diet and lifestyle. “I don’t recommend every diagnosis the same,” says the N.D., or naturopathic doctor. “I first look for underlying causes and then connect the dots to look at the body as a whole.” Learn more at drbreannaguan.com.



Dr. BreAnna Guan.
Photo by Martin Boling



H. Michelle Gregory.
Photo by Jeff Richardson

H. Michelle Gregory Matrimonial Law Attorney

Having grown up in a family that valued getting married and having children more than getting an education, H. Michelle Gregory knew she wanted more opportunities for her own daughter. Unfortunately, as a young mother, she found herself divorced with a baby, and told she was unemployed because her appearance might be distracting to men in the office. Undiscouraged, Gregory worked for minimum wage and tips until earning a full scholarship from Southern Methodist University. That led to multiple degrees, and ultimately to law school and her own legal practice.

Originally from Fort Worth, Texas, Gregory, 54, carries her experience of taking control of her life into her matrimonial law practice. When women enter her office at their lowest points, they find an advocate who has endured abuse, divorce, single parenthood, and discrimination.

“It’s really about supporting each other emotionally and legally and lifting each other up. I want women to leave my office feeling better than when they came in,” Gregory says. “If I can give her a boost to get out of that abusive relationship and mental health problems, then I’ve contributed something to the society of women in helping them reach their goals, and just be better.”

Gregory’s office is located in Fountain Square Mall, 101 W. Kirkwood, Suite 006A. Visit hmichellegregory.com.



(l-r) Grace Thomas and Dr. Kelly Munn.

Photo by Martin Boling

deserves the best product she can deliver, which means much more than just diagnostics. "At SIHS, as well as IU Health, the patient experience is essential," Dr. Munn says. "I strive to treat patients like family and to connect on a human level first and foremost." She adds that communicating with and educating patients, addressing

where they currently stand, and explaining how existing technology can help them access improved hearing helps them achieve better health and wellness.

"I consider myself a nurturer by nature, and I am proud to be a leader in audiology in Bloomington," Dr. Munn says. "Whether it is this practice or the new hospital or patient options in general, people have more choices than ever. I want to help them make the best decision for their situation."

Often, this means helping patients appreciate how technology has improved hearing devices, which are now much smaller and more discreet. Current products have also adapted Bluetooth technology, giving patients the ability to change settings on their devices with the touch of a thumb on a smartphone or similar device. Helping patients understand this new technology often removes much of the stigma associated with hearing loss. Dr. Munn says the fact that we frequently cross paths with someone utilizing ear buds or other similar technology has also helped to reduce the stigma previously associated with hearing devices.

Dr. Munn's knowledge in the audiology field is well-rounded. The Bloomfield native came to Bloomington to attend Indiana University, where she received both her undergraduate and doctoral degrees. She started her audiology career at Riley Hospital for Children, where she served on a cochlear implant team. She then practiced at IU Health for seven years before transitioning to SIHS six years ago.

"I guess I simply fell in love with the journey and magic of sound," Dr. Munn says. "It is so invigorating to see people hear better in profound ways or for the first time. I still get that fuzzy feeling when seeing someone's sense of sound has dramatically improved. You feel like you are making a genuine, meaningful difference in people's lives. That's what it's all about!"

To learn more about Dr. Munn and SIHS services and resources, visit sihshearing.com or call 812-822-2226.

Dr. Kelly Munn

Southern Indiana Hearing Solutions, Audiologist

Dr. Kelly Munn found her calling when she discovered American Sign Language (ASL). Now a physician for Southern Indiana Hearing Solutions (SIHS), Dr. Munn attributes ASL to initially inspiring her career direction.

"American Sign Language requires each of the senses," Dr. Munn says. "You have to bring your personality into it, and you really have to pay attention to catch the message. With our culture now, we are so tuned into our devices that incidental learning doesn't happen like it used to. However, with ASL, everything is intentional, every detail is important. It's a totally different kind of communicating."

Working with cochlear implants further inspired Dr. Munn. "Helping people with profound hearing loss regain their sense of sound through technology really excited me," she says. "It's just amazing when tech can benefit people on such a fundamental level."

As the child of artists who made their living selling custom furniture on the traveling art show circuit, Dr. Munn says her parents' dedication to their business and their craft contributed to who she became as an adult. "I learned a lot from them about hard work, commitment to an enterprise, and dedication to quality," she says. "I always knew I wanted to specialize in something meaningful and essential, like the art of crafting wood. In my early 20s, I decided to make my craft hearing."

Dr. Munn says she considers each patient an important person with a unique set of needs and wants, and says each patient



Katie Whitson.
Photo by Martin Boling

Katie Whitson

Blond Genius, Owner

Blond Genius, owned by Katie Whitson, bridges the gap between high-fashion and functional clothing, as well as between generations. "I wanted a store where moms and daughters could shop together," Whitson says. "Retail therapy is a real thing, and Blond Genius is focused on the shopping experience. Whether you're looking for help building your wardrobe or need some quiet time to shop, Blond Genius is your happy place."

After working nine years in the agricultural industry, Whitson licensed the Iowa boutique and expanded to Bloomington. In December 2015, she opened a pop-up in Fountain Square Mall and soon moved to the current storefront in Renwick Village Center, 1541 S. Piazza Drive. What began as a way to introduce brands such as Vince and Rag & Bone into the local shopping scene soon developed into a niche market. "When you look good, you feel good, and quality clothing is a source of confidence," Whitson says. "That's why we offer style consultations, tailoring, and, hopefully, overall inspiration!"

Blond Genius' denim bar features premium denim in more than 150 styles for women and 50 for men. The shop carries designer tops, jackets, dresses, footwear, accessories, and gifts for women. Since opening her store, Whitson says she's noticed a "true sense of community among small businesses, including women-owned stores, in Bloomington."

Phyllis Schwitzer & Barb Heflin

The Bloomington Thrift Shop, Owner-Members

Owned and operated by members of the Psi Iota Xi philanthropic sorority, The Bloomington Thrift Shop has been raising funds for community service programs for 82 years. "We've been giving to the non-profit community since 1936," says Psi Iota Xi member Phyllis Schwitzer. "We are the original resale store in Bloomington."

The Bloomington Thrift Shop resells upscale merchandise, including men's, women's, and children's clothing and footwear; housewares; and jewelry. An eclectic mix of antiques and vintage finds can also be found in the shop. The Bloomington Thrift Shop comes by its merchandise through donations. While most goods are sold, the sorority also gives items to victims of natural disasters, and to women interviewing for jobs.

"It's recycling at its finest, in my mind," Schwitzer says. "People bring in fine clothing or wearables they are no longer using, and we sell them to raise money for local nonprofits."

The Bloomington Thrift Shop is organized, owned, and run by members of the Psi Iota Xi sorority, all women. Each member must volunteer in the shop a minimum of 24 hours each year. The sorority also offers social and educational get-togethers for its members.

Located at 220 S. Madison St., The Bloomington Thrift Shop is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.



(l-r) Phyllis Schwitzer and Barbara Heflin. Photo by Martin Boling



Michelle Stanger.
Photo by Martin Boling

Michelle Stanger

Millican Realty, Realtor

Michelle Stanger's decision to become a Realtor wasn't difficult. "It's what I've always wanted to do," says Stanger, a Millican Realty agent since earning her real estate license in 2014. The Indianapolis native has lived in Bloomington for 20 years, and is married to James Stanger, owner of James Stanger Excavating Inc. She says she looks forward to serving her clients every day. "I love talking to people. Bloomington is so diverse that you learn about many different kinds of people," she says. "You've got to be confident and able to talk to people to make it in this business."

Stanger handles residential and commercial sales and home rentals, and was named top agent in sales volume by Millican Realty last year. "I'm here to help clients," she says. "It's not just about making money. I'm building long-term relationships." Stanger works with both first-time buyers and people searching for forever homes, and always stresses the importance of curb appeal. She likes gardening and making home improvements, and enjoys helping clients spruce up their own homes.

Previously in the restaurant and banking industries, Stanger is active with the Monroe County Fair Board and Northern Neighbors Extension Club, and serves as a county education and outreach coordinator for Indiana Farm Bureau.

Heather Barkley

ProGenics Medi Spa, Owner

Heather Barkley started her adult life in the school of hard knocks, rising from a single mother living on welfare to being married, becoming a nurse for 24 years, taking in two foster boys, and graduating with a bachelor's degree. Now she helps clients fight the aging process with a focus on body contouring, skin care, Botox, and chemical peels. She prepared for her career transition by earning certificates in procedures like Skin Pen 2 and Harmony Elite laser treatments, and learning business basics like creating website content and marketing campaigns.

"Our thoughts determine our success, and I always try to aim higher than what I think I'm capable of doing," says Barkley, 51. She says she practices that daily with her two additional adopted children and elsewhere in life, adding that even with asthma, she's finished both a marathon and a triathlon. "It's a mindset," she says. "No one is holding us back. We are holding ourselves back. We are all capable if we're willing to put in the time."

Barkley says her goal is to make clients feel more confident and to restore their natural youthful beauty. ProGenics Medi Spa is located at 1455 W. 2nd St. Contact Barkley at heather@progenicsmedispa.com or 812-219-3186. For more information, visit progenicsmedispa.com.



Heather Barkley.
Photo by Martin Boling



Laura Chaiken.
Photo by Martin Boling

Laura Chaiken

Bloomington Salt Cave, Owner

As owner and operator of Bloomington Salt Cave, Laura Chaiken is building relationships, sharing information, and offering an aesthetic atmosphere that promotes overall feelings of well-being. She's doing this through halotherapy, which reproduces the conditions of European salt mines by dispersing microscopic salt particles into the air that improve respiratory function and encourage deep relaxation in a negative ion-rich environment.

Since opening in 2017 with four tons of Pink Himalayan Salt and the construction talents of her husband, Chris Martin, Chaiken has grown the business at 115 N. Madison St. to include partnerships with certified and experienced practitioners who offer guided meditation, gong baths, restorative yoga, crystal singing bowls, and foot reflexology. "I love to collaborate with different practitioners," she says. "They help me create the kind of venue I want Salt Cave to be."

Chaiken says that women entrepreneurs can have difficulty breaking into the business world, so she is offering something different. "I've let intuition guide me because it was a risk opening a business like this," she explains. "What has been interesting is that people come in and share what's going on in their lives and what interests them, and I get to talk about what's interesting me. It's part of helping each other and building relationships." For more information, visit bloomingtonsaltcave.com.

Hilary Key

The Toy Chest, Owner

Although Hilary Key enjoyed doing research in her neuroscience doctoral program, she knew going into the field wasn't her dream. So, after much soul searching, Key chose toys over brains. She went to work at The Toy Chest in Nashville, Indiana, hoping to learn all she could about the toy industry. Now she owns the store.

Key says she feels lucky to be in a field where her primary customer base is female, as are many industry leaders. "This provides a lot of available mentors and overall camaraderie that you don't find in a lot of industries," she says. "The more women we get in positions of power, the more we'll be able to help each other and ourselves."

However, Key says identifying as a woman in business can be complicated. "There are many times when I'd simply like to be acknowledged as a business person, regardless of gender, and be treated the same way my husband or another man would be treated in a conversation or situation," Key says. "On the other hand, it is a point of pride because there are a lot of extra elements put onto us as women in business, and it says a lot about all of the women who are navigating it." For more information, visit browncountytoychest.com.



Hilary Key.
Photo by Martin Boling