

# SMALL BUSINESS Spotlights

by Linda Margison

Photos by Martin Boling

Small businesses and professional practices are the backbone of our community. Unlike big chains, they contribute to the character of our town, helping to make Bloomington the special place it is. Small businesses create good jobs and keep money circulating here rather than having it leave town for corporate headquarters in New York City, Atlanta, or elsewhere. And with small businesses, you know the owner, and they can get to know you. In this special advertorial section, we feature the stories of local businesses with fewer than two dozen employees. Each business is unique and making a contribution to the common good.



Kelly Conaway.

## Drift Intentional Interiors

Kelly Conaway, Owner

Because home organization often involves big transitional life work, Drift Intentional Interiors owner Kelly Conaway believes that helping people deal with the clutter and chaos in their living spaces involves digging deep to navigate emotional barriers. “I really help people try to pare down and curate intentional spaces in their homes,” Conaway says. “I often see clients generally overwhelmed by their home and they don’t know where to start.”

Conaway offers a variety of services based on what a person needs—including compassionate decluttering, room-by-room makeovers, and feng shui design—with her primary focus being to bring more intention into her clients’ homes. “There are some emotional roadblocks with decluttering that may include letting go of the past or going through a loved one’s things or just having the motivation or accountability of hiring someone to help you,” she says.

For Conaway, one of the most satisfying parts of this intentional work is watching how people transform. “I really enjoy seeing my clients’ stress levels lessen as they begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel and dig themselves out,” she says, adding that it’s healthy to occasionally reevaluate one’s space. “It’s important to let your home represent who you are today, not who you were in the past.” Learn more at [drift-home.com](http://drift-home.com).



(l-r) Kelly Jennings and Amanda Hyde.

## MIRTH

Amanda Hyde and Kelly Jennings, Owners

MIRTH owners Amanda Hyde and Kelly Jennings had to be innovative in how they operated their women’s clothing boutique at the onset of the pandemic. That isn’t a new concept for these entrepreneurs, who have seen many transitions in their two years of business—from starting as a pop-up shop to opening their permanent storefront in Fountain Square Mall, and now launching an online store.

Hyde and Jennings are constantly on the search for new ways to bring contemporary European-style designers to their customers, and now is no different. With the store being closed during the pandemic, they were finally able to focus on setting up a website storefront. “As a small business owner, you wear many hats, and when a challenge presents itself, you have to go back to the drawing board, get creative, and dig deep,” says Hyde. “We’ve been adapting this whole time, and this is something we’ve always wanted to do since we started.”

Jennings says they have utilized social media to generate interest in all their new products—including an extensive footwear collection—on the website. The response has been positive, and MIRTH has gained national and international buyers. “For local customers not venturing out, the website offers a way for them to shop the collection,” she adds. Visit [mirthmarket.com](http://mirthmarket.com).



Sharon Schilly.

## Morrow Realtors

Sharon Schilly, Broker/Owner

Sharon Schilly loved driving around unique neighborhoods and keeping track of the houses that sold. This pastime made her realize how she could share her love for homes with others, so she left her career as vice president of a large corporation to follow her real passion: being a Realtor. Schilly went to work with Peggy Robertson, owner of Morrow Realtors, a real estate company that’s more than 40 years old. After Robertson died, Schilly took over the company to continue Robertson’s and founder Bill Morrow’s legacies.

In taking over Morrow Realtors, Schilly brought her expertise in technology to the company and affiliated with Keller Williams Realty (KW), a company of more than 170,000 agents that also offers mortgage financing to its clients. Using KW’s technology, she provides clients with an app they can use to search for listings, keep track of homes for sale in their neighborhoods, and alert Schilly when they want to learn more about a home that interests them.

While the technology is exciting, Schilly says she will continue to provide excellent customer service, paying attention to all the details. “Bloomington-area clients demand self-service tools, so the fit was perfect,” says Schilly, an active member of Realtor networks in both Bloomington and Indianapolis. For information, visit [morrowrealtors.com](http://morrowrealtors.com) or download the app at [bit.ly/MorrowApp](http://bit.ly/MorrowApp).



(l-r) Bridgett and Steph DiVohl.

## Royale Hair Parlor

Bridgett & Steph DiVohl,  
Co-Owners

As small business owners in a pandemic, Bridgett DiVohl and wife, Steph, have spent countless hours working to preserve the uniqueness of Royale Hair Parlor and to ensure its survival—and that has included finding ways to continue offering complete benefits packages, career growth, and mentorship to team members despite more than two months of lost revenue. “A big part of us moving forward is taking it day by day, making sure we’re being really thoughtful with our financials, and creating new inspiration for our team,” says DiVohl.

Being passionate about mentoring and creative with solutions are both areas where the DiVohls thrive. They have spent more than 200 hours converting Royale’s 12-month, in-house education program into comprehensive online training that also can be shared with other stylists and business owners. “This is a thorough education program that offers our team and others knowledge and growth in their first year, second, and beyond,” DiVohl says.

“Though the pandemic has been destructive in so many ways for our business and the entire community, we are trying to shift the way we do business in innovative ways through expanding online training, new ways of booking our guests, and utilizing not only our team skills behind the chair, but also in administrative and leadership tasks,” she adds. Visit [royalehairparlor.com](http://royalehairparlor.com).



Cathi Jackson.

## Mainstream Boutique

Cathi Jackson, Owner

Cathi Jackson sees fashion as a way to empower and strengthen women. Fulfilling her longtime dream to own a women’s clothing store, she opened Mainstream Boutique as a place where women of all generations could shop. “Having a fashion-loving mother, two sisters, and two daughters—22 and 16—I envisioned a store where we all could enjoy shopping together,” Jackson says.

Mainstream Boutique is part of a small franchise group that carries an exclusive clothing line called Mac and Me, which is a private label created by founder Marie DeNicola in 2014. This multigenerational line is named for DiNicola’s only daughter, Mikayla, who works alongside her creating and designing apparel. “The line is about love, fun, fashion, and celebrating the inseparable bond between mother and daughter, and thereby creating an emotional connection for both the vendor and customer,” Jackson says.

“Even though we are a small franchise group, each boutique is different, because each market is different,” she says, adding that she and her staff love to personally style each customer to create looks that fit their lifestyle, physicality, and body type. “We work with the natural color palette of our customers and find pieces in our store that will illuminate their faces, so they look brighter and more vibrant.” For more information, visit [mainstreamboutique.com](http://mainstreamboutique.com).



Margaret Fette.

## The Tailored Fit

Margaret Fette, Owner

For the 18 years she’s been in business—and even before that—Margaret Fette, owner of The Tailored Fit, estimates she has done 10 to 15 fittings a day, offering customers creative solutions to their clothing problems. “I have an eye and an expertise for alterations after 30 years of doing it,” she says. “I do it all the time. If a piece has an unusual hem, I look at how we can accommodate that, and not just cut it off and lose this pretty trim.”

While tailors are often self taught, Fette was couture trained by a teacher highly skilled in technique. Fette gained experience by working within the tailoring industry in men’s stores, in costuming on Broadway, and through operating her own business. “I learned on a hand-work level and being very detailed, not speedy, but being correct and getting things precise,” she says. “I can do most fittings pretty quickly. Sometimes it takes longer to change clothes than for me to do the actual fitting.”

Fette has assembled a talented staff, large enough to efficiently tackle alteration projects of all sizes, from simply sewing on buttons to altering complex wedding dresses. “We have a very skilled staff of people who really care about what they do,” she says. For more information, visit [thetailoredfit.com](http://thetailoredfit.com).



Dave Debikey.

## Global Gifts

Dave Debikey, Manager

More than a decade ago, Mary Embry, a senior lecturer at Indiana University and fair-trade activist, started a social economic justice project to sell Global Gifts products on the IU campus. After a couple of years working with the Indianapolis store, Embry realized Bloomington needed its own, so she created Fair Trade Bloomington and built community support. “Their work convinced Global Gifts that this was an ideal place to have a store,” says manager Dave Debikey, who helped Embry open the business in 2009.

Supported by a large volunteer network, Global Gifts is a fair-trade, nonprofit organization that works to ensure safe and equitable working conditions for disadvantaged artisans around the world. “Fair trade alleviates poverty by empowering people to be able to support themselves,” Debikey says. “There’s no reason for trade to not function in a way that can support both the producers and purchasers.”

With the COVID-19 economic fallout, Debikey is concerned about producers that source Global Gifts. “It’s hard on businesses here, but it’s much worse for those living in areas already poverty-stricken and without the infrastructure and support we get here,” Debikey explains. “We’re very worried, but fair trade still has a positive impact. Artisans are pivoting and making masks, like the ones we sell in our stores.” For information, visit [globalgiftsft.com](http://globalgiftsft.com).



Sally Walker.

## Argentum Jewelry

Sally Walker, Owner

Growing up, Argentum Jewelry owner Sally Walker would walk the beaches off Connecticut’s Long Island Sound and collect interesting rocks and shells with pearls tucked inside. “I felt a connection to the earth somehow,” she says. “I collected all kinds of little rocks and shells when I lived out there. I had a collection of mica sheets, and I’d categorize the shells and rocks I found.”

Walker’s late husband, Gene Foltzer, opened Argentum Jewelry in Bloomington in 1973. After graduating from Indiana University in 1974, Walker handled the in-store operations. She earned a graduate gemologist degree while raising their three children. “I enjoy seeing new collections at jewelry shows,” Walker says. “There’s always something new to learn in this business.”

Walker has built a unique, contemporary collection featuring gold and silver jewelry from American and European designers, while specializing in custom jewelry. Her daughter, Hayley Foltzer, designs for customers wanting one-of-a-kind creations. “No job is too big or too small for my designers to tackle,” she says. “My customers think of us for our uniqueness and originality in our designs. A friend once told me, ‘Sally, what you are really selling is beauty.’”

Argentum Jewelry—at 205 N. College, Suite 100—also provides full-service repairs, insurance appraisals, and gemstone identification. For more information, visit [argentum-jewelry.com](http://argentum-jewelry.com).



H. Michelle Gregory. Photo by Richardson Studio

## H. Michelle Gregory

Divorce Attorney

After years of providing legal counsel to her clients, attorney H. Michelle Gregory knows that sometimes a person doesn’t need just legal help when contemplating a divorce; sometimes they simply need guidance or someone to listen. “People will come to me thinking they need a lawyer, but when we sit down and talk about it, they really need a therapist or a new way of looking at the situation,” Gregory says, explaining that she helps people find clarity. “They may simply need to know how to move forward to a place where they feel comfortable, without fear and doubt.”

Gregory has launched the Winning at Divorce podcast on her website and added divorce coaching to her practice, which mainly handles divorce, post-divorce, mediation, and prenuptial agreements. “A divorce coach is someone who bridges the gap between strictly legal advice and a therapist who diagnoses,” she says. “The podcast breaks down the process and interviews essential people that you need to be successful and get the best results possible in a divorce.”

Coaching clients everywhere and offering in-state legal advice, Gregory adds, “I don’t want to just be the lawyer that only deals in your legal issues. I want to help remind people of their worth and their value, without judgment.” For more information, visit [hmicheellegregory.com](http://hmicheellegregory.com).