

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

# JAMIES

AN INSIDE VIEW INTO GEORGIA'S POLITICS, BUSINESS & NEWS

CEO SPOTLIGHT:  
GE'S RUSSELL STOKES PAGE 35

## THE TOP LOBBYISTS ISSUE • 2017

WITH COLUMNS BY  
DOUG CHALMERS  
STEVE DOLINGER  
EARL EHRHART  
PATRICK HICKEY  
THARON JOHNSON  
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PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

# Georgia's Top Lobbyists . . . and more!

➔ **JAMES' RANKINGS OF GEORGIA'S TOP GOVERNMENTAL**

affairs firms and registered lobbyists has become a staple for those in the business. If they have been honored by *James*, it is usually included in their bios and touted via social media— and that in turn honors us.

Lobbyists provide the grease that helps turn the wheels of governance on public policy issues. That's why *James* and our readers annually recognize and rank these hard-working Georgians who provide much-needed research and lobby everyone ranging from top government officials to county commissioners and city council members. Indeed, over 6,000 ballots were cast by readers to rank the Peach State's registered lobbyists. Many even took to Facebook and Twitter to garner votes. (And, we hasten to add, many fine lobbyists didn't make the cut because the votes just weren't there. So better luck next year.)

*James* also features a "Hall of Fame" for longtime professionals who have worked diligently in the government relations area or who have engaged in lobbying under the Capitol Gold Dome. This year's inductees chosen by our staff are veterans Don Bolia, Ed McGill and Monty Veazey. Congratulations to this worthy trio, as well as to those in our "Rising Stars" category that include many new individuals.

By the way, a legislative change was made so that those lobbyists who are state employees lobbying on behalf of their agencies don't have to register with the state along with all the private lobbyists who represent private clients. That's why you don't see the names listed of, say, lobbyists for entities ranging from universities to authorities. We're thinking of adding a new category for them next year.

**SPECIAL NOTES ON THIS ISSUE**

Since this is our annual Lobbyist issue, we appreciate Doug Chalmers for looking into his crystal ball and

writing about upcoming changes regarding lobbying that will be considered by the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission.

We also introduce a new feature: CEO Spotlight. Since Georgia is continually ranked as "the best state in which to do business," it is appropriate to publish a regular profile on a captain of industry who helps drive Georgia's economic engine. Also in this context Cumberland Community Improvement District Executive Director Malaika Rivers writes about the progress by one of Georgia's many successful CIDs. (It was also the first, and remains a model to the many.)

Other articles address issues ranging from education to politics. Matt Towery reflects on the Nathan Deal legacy. Larry Walker's piece poses a probing question: Will his beloved South, as we know it today, remain different and distinctive or is it destined to become like the rest of the country? Staff writer Cosby Woodruff toured one of the nation's top rehabilitation facilities— Atlanta's Shepherd Center— and provides an interesting snapshot of its amazing work and progress. And be sure to check out staff writer Patrick Hickey's feature on a state lawmaker's role in birthing Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

We hope you enjoy this issue and please email us with any comments.

PHIL KENT CEO & PUBLISHER



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# FLOATING BOATS

WHO'S RISING AND SINKING IN GEORGIA BUSINESS AND POLITICS

September 1st marked the first day that **Georgia breweries** could directly sell their product to customers, bypassing the "tour and sample" practice that has hampered them for years. Passage of SB 85 provides an economic and logistical boon to the burgeoning craft beer industry, whose lobbyists worked hard for more lax regulations. A law that gets rid of questionable red tape for consumers has Peach State breweries **RISING**...

Democrat gubernatorial candidate **Stacey Abrams**, who is black, believes the best way to get elected is to cobble together a coalition of minorities and malign white Democrat primary opponent **Stacey Evans**. Abrams refused to condemn the black radicals who insulted Evans, in explicit racial terms, and disrupted her speech at a left-wing Atlanta event. Furthermore, Abrams demands that the nationally-known memorial featuring a huge rock carving on Stone Mountain depicting three Confederate leaders be destroyed. (State law protects the carving.) Abrams's radicalism has her boat **SINKING**...

Atlanta Mayor **Kasim Reed** appears blind to the ongoing federal probe into a city hall bribes-for-contracts scandal that has already led to two guilty pleas by contractors and the firing of his procurement boss. That's why Atlanta City Council President (and mayoral candidate) **Cesar Mitchell** called on Reed and Council colleagues to support a moratorium on approval of contracts that begin services in 2018 so that the next Council and mayor can review them. (Council member and mayoral candidate **Mary Norwood** endorsed this approach, along with other candidates.) Mitchell said Reed seeks to finish contracts that don't expire or won't be enacted until next year. For being cautious during a contracting scandal, the boat of those seeking competitive, transparent bid procedures is **RISING**...

University of Georgia Professor **Richard Watson** sought to teach two business courses that— get this!— would allow students experiencing "stress" to change their grades. The students could have emailed what grade they thought appropriate, and it would have been changed without explanation. Also, Watson only wanted

"positive comments" when doing in-class presentations. Naturally, the courses were axed, and he was roundly condemned for disgracing UGA and the entire concept of a rigorous educational experience. For taking educational insanity to a new low, the boat of this so-called "educator" is **SINKING**...

As part of the U.S. Mint's national park series of special quarters, Georgia's **Cumberland Island** will be featured starting in August of 2018. The coin will feature a snowy egret perched on a branch in front of a salt marsh, a common site on the historic and largely undeveloped island. For Georgia and the crown-jewel of its extensive string of barrier islands, this honor and recognition has the ship **RISING**...

The proposed 2018 budget for Georgia's third most-populous county has many residents worried as its use of one-time monies would drain **Cobb County** reserves. The \$405 million budget is up \$21 million over last year, and the Cobb Commission has already voted down a tax hike proposed by Chairman **Mike Boyce**. More bad news for Cobb officials, for whom fiscal issues in the county have the ship *Drifting*...

The Georgia **Department of Revenue** is embarking on a study to determine whether Georgia drivers will need to put annual vehicle registration stickers on their license plates. A preliminary finding stated that the state could save up to \$2 million a year by doing away with the decals, and possibly more if they limit mail sent to drivers. Others including law enforcement are leery of the idea, saying it provides a visual cue to tell if cars are registered. The report is due to the state legislature on Jan. 1, but from here an idea that saves the state money and drivers' time may be **RISING**...

Gov. **Nathan Deal** was quick to jump to the aid of Texas in its ongoing national emergency due to the impact of Hurricane Harvey, which left thousands homeless and many in danger. The state sent 75 search and rescue crews along with equipment as well as a C-130 H3 cargo aircraft and 15 personnel to deliver emergency rations to the Houston area. The governor's quick response to assist a fellow Southern state has our Ship of State **RISING**...

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# NATHAN DEAL

BY MATT TOWERY

## A Governor Who Means Business

**I**t still seems a bit weird to be driving a car with a Florida license plate and producing my Florida driver's license as an ID. And instead of pine trees I now frequently see palm trees and the boats docked on Tampa Bay. But I still get to visit my place in Atlanta and spend quality time at my Hall Booth Smith office. And the welcome signs remind me when we drive back across the state line that the state is "glad Georgia is on your mind."

When I hung up my columnist, pollster and TV political analyst shoes, I meant it. I now restrict my few opinions to my personal Facebook page and, trust me, those are few and far between. So when Phil Kent asked me if I would write a column for *James* I knew the only thing I would likely be able to write that would be relevant would have to be based primarily on the past.

It's really pretty amazing that seven years of Nathan Deal's time as governor are almost in the books. And how the world changes. We have a new president, a new junior U.S. Senator and many fresh Georgia faces in Congress since he took office.

But as much as things change, history in many ways repeats itself. There are familiar patterns and personages from the past that seem to repeat in the form of new names and issues. This is certainly the case, at least so far, with the Deal administration.

### From Maddox to the Busbee Era

The Deal years could easily be summed up with a 1974 campaign slogan that propelled Georgia into a new and sophisticated world back then. It simply read "A Work Horse, Not a Show Horse."

It was the campaign theme from then-state legislator George Busbee seeking to defeat the nationally-known and highly controversial Gov. Lester Maddox. He had been labeled an ardent segregationist in years prior to being elected in 1966 and continued to be labeled as such despite the significant changes he made to actually move Georgia government towards integration and better treatment for minorities.

But from riding a bicycle backwards to the amusement of onlookers and the press, to posting giant billboards warning motorists to avoid a city with notorious speed traps, to his penchant for recording musical tunes for radio— Lester Maddox was truly a "show horse." What kind of a show was left to the beholder.

When Maddox was ending his four years as lieutenant governor in 1974 (Georgia law prohibited two consecutive terms in those days), it seemed like he was a shoe-in for a return to the governor's office. But the one-time restaurateur, who had spent four years fighting Gov. Jimmy Carter and his reorganization of state government, had lost touch with changes in modern politics which had come to dominate elections. He

failed to grasp the transition Georgia had made, particularly in Atlanta, towards both national and increasingly international business prominence.

Maddox's gubernatorial campaign was comprised of old-fashioned fliers and yard signs with bold black letters over a white background proclaiming "This is Maddox Country." What Maddox did not see coming was the new-style television ads that could boost Busbee's slogan with greater penetration and a stronger visual impression.

Busbee had a crisp businesslike look and a no-nonsense approach to government. He understood the potential to become not only a home for Fortune 500 companies but the ability to expand the state's reach to the rest of the world.

So it was "the work horse," not the show horse, who prevailed in 1974.

### Characteristics of the Deal Era

That brings me back to Nathan Deal, his seven years in office and how he got there.

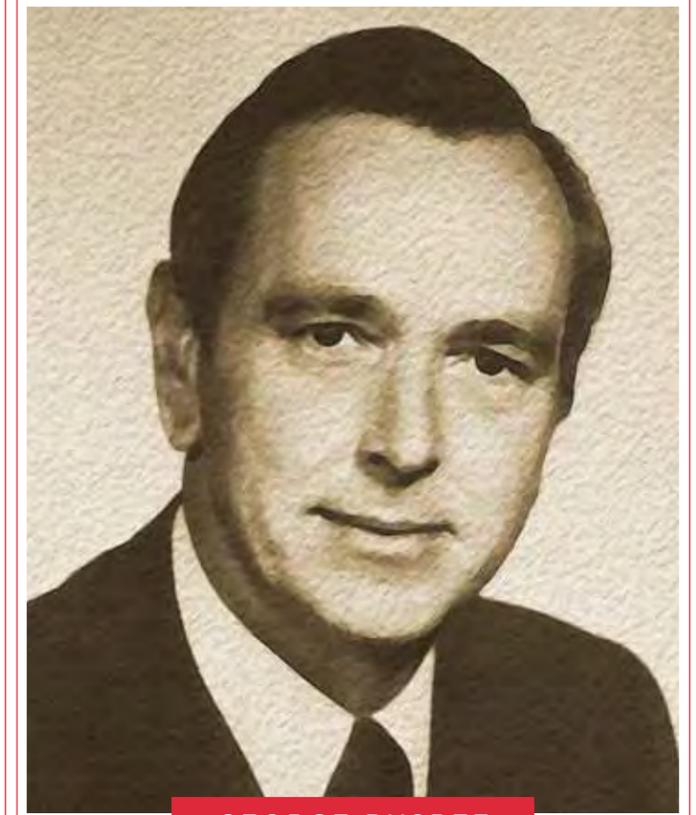
In 2010, Deal faced a host of Republican opponents for the GOP nomination. Chief among them was John Oxendine, a flamboyant insurance commissioner who had battled with the media and had a brash style. He was no Maddox but, compared to Deal, there was plenty of show in the horse.

Deal had resigned from Congress after years of experience in the state legislature and in Washington. He was low-key and, like Busbee, took that approach to his political opponents. After dispatching with Oxendine and Karen Handel for the GOP nomination, Deal had to face former Gov. Roy Barnes.

Democrat Barnes had become politically vulnerable for his firm stand to remove the Confederate battle flag from the state flag. But Barnes had a natural amount of "show horse" in him given his tremendous oratory skills and his natural sense of humor. His decision to employ some of that self-deprecating humor during the then-traditional Cracker Crumble fundraiser put on by the Georgia Press Association included dressing in regal trappings entering the room as "King Roy." That added to his showman reputation.

Barnes is a brilliant politician, lawyer and businessman. Yet by 2002 that meant little. The Marietta attorney lost in an upset to Sonny Perdue and the era of Republican domination began.

Ironically Deal's administration would become a combination of attributes from many former great governors. Like Barnes (who relied on a strong and loyal aide in Bobby Kahn to keep his administration on track), Deal relies on Chief of Staff Chris Riley— treating Riley not as a trusted aide but more as a trusted



GEORGE BUSBEE

"family member" given great leeway to get the job done.

That brings us back to Busbee— known for his reliance on another bright political mind, Tom Perdue. Perdue not only helped implement Busbee's aggressive move to recruit international trade and business to Georgia, but then assured those efforts would continue as he served Busbee's successor Joe Frank Harris.

Since Busbee, governors focused on promoting business and international trade. Zell Miller put a different spin on it by attempting to bolster Georgia's position in the world of higher education by pushing for a state lottery to fund the HOPE Scholarship. It was a gamble that worked as the best and brightest of the state chose to stay home after graduating from high school, pushing up standards of the state's leading universities and colleges to levels of national prominence.

Deal entered office in 2011 with a Republican-dominated General Assembly eager to work with him. A new speaker of the House, David Ralston, provided the governor with mature leadership and a stable style that was what Deal was used to from years past. Lt. Governor Casey Cagle was a seasoned leader as well.

Together they went to work— now seven years into the task.

So what will be the legacy for Nathan Deal's years in office after he departs? He qualifies for the moniker

*continued on page 10*

of “the work horse.” But perhaps the more accurate phrase would be “a governor who meant business.” Literally.

That might appear a bit of a rip-off from Florida Gov. Rick Scott, whose own state welcome signs declared until recently that Florida “means business.” But those signs have been replaced with multimillion dollar 3D monuments of the sun rising over a bridge surrounded by literally hundreds of real palm trees. Certainly impressive, but an unintentional surrender to the accomplishments of its neighbor to the north.

In order to truly make a state a business magnet, there are a lot of bases that must be covered. There has to be an educated workforce. The tax system must avoid being burdensome. There has to be infrastructure and a transportation system that can handle future growth. And the state itself must hustle every single day to promote itself both around the nation and across the world. Under Governor Deal every base has been covered.

For example, after a proposed second “northern arc” around Atlanta northern sections died with the Barnes defeat, the state struggled to find solutions to snarled traffic. Under Deal the talking ended with a series of transportation actions— including new dedicated lanes on major interstates and a parkway to accommodate trucks coming to and leaving Georgia’s growing port system.

A great example of Deal’s hand was his willingness to use tax credits to turn the state into the nation’s “other Hollywood.” While credits were once considered primarily a waste to promote boondoggles, the phenomenal growth of businesses serving Georgia’s entertainment industry and the boost to the economy they have provided is indisputable.

In confronting Georgia’s greatest long-term challenge— education— the governor took major action to preserve the HOPE scholarship and increased the percentage of the state budget devoted to education to the highest level in state history. Deal has plenty of other bragging rights, such as his overhaul of the criminal justice system in the state.

## A Popular Governor & His Legacy

In the end, all of Deal’s efforts lead back to building Georgia into a state known as tops for businesses and for commerce in general. With the highest in bond ratings, Georgia consistently ranks at the top of media listings of “best places for business” in the nation.

Deal has never been a showboat. He won’t be remembered for stem-winding speeches or splashy presentations. Like Busbee, Harris and Barnes he felt comfortable with a top aide to help run the show. And in Miller’s tradition (one that started with the late Governor Carl Sanders in the 1960s) he emphasized the importance of education and, moreover, promoting higher education.

What lies ahead in his final year? Perhaps working with the legislature to create new sources of revenue for the HOPE Scholarship, which cannot expect the lottery to keep pulling rabbits out of its hat indefinitely to fully fund or expand the popular program.

And for Deal personally? Likely maintaining his calm and steady approach to government management. That already translates into popular support for him. In *Morning Consult*’s polling of the approval ratings of governors in all 50 states, Deal ranks an impressive Number 11.

Indeed, it is likely that it will be a Georgian— not a Floridian— who will be remembered best as “a governor who meant business.” That’s my view from under a palm tree.

*Matt Towery is a former legislator, CEO, attorney, national columnist, author and TV political analyst. He is semi-retired, remaining Of Counsel to Hall Booth Smith, serving as managing partner of his family-owned investment partnership, and as chairman of InsiderAdvantage/Internet News which owns James. He resides in Saint Petersburg but maintains a home in Atlanta.*

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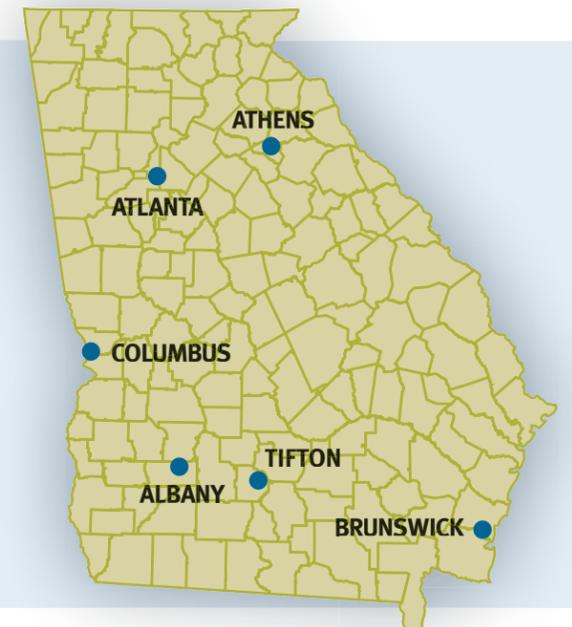
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# HOW ONE LAWMAKER PAVED THE PATH FOR MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM

BY PATRICK HICKEY

For Mark Burkhalter, love for the Falcons came long before he ever attained elected public office. It was high up in the upper deck of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium watching football games with his father that his passion for the team grew, but it would be 40 years of fandom before he left his own indelible mark on the franchise.

Selling the public on new stadiums that use taxpayer dollars is far from an easy proposition. Just ask Oakland, San Diego or St. Louis— all of which have seen their precious NFL teams leave for greener pastures in recent years after they were unable to come to an agreement over what percentage of the construction cost would come from the pockets of their citizens.

Or ask the Atlanta Braves, whose inability to lock up funding from the city of Atlanta resulted in a bolt north to Cobb County and the eventual ouster of Tim Lee, the Cobb Commission chairman who helped engineer the move.

So how did Burkhalter, in 2010 the future speaker of the House of Representatives and a close ally of then-Gov. Sonny Perdue, manage to pull off a feat of legislation that has perplexed cities nationwide? Well, it wasn't always easy.

"It certainly took a healthy dose of political capital to sell along with the helpful vision of my colleagues," said Burkhalter, now a senior advisor with the Dentons law firm. "But I knew what to do, and I knew how to do it from serving on the oversight committee for the Georgia World Congress Center. I always told my colleagues— you've got to remember that a stadium is a selling point for the city."



Burkhalter



What a selling point it is. The newly-opened Mercedes-Benz Stadium is the crown jewel of Atlanta's burgeoning downtown, serving as home base not only for the hometown Falcons but also as an attractive destination for Super Bowls, Final Fours, concerts, and bowl games galore. Not to mention the newly-formed Atlanta United FC, the Major League Soccer team whose rise to prominence under the careful watch of owner Arthur Blank has mirrored that of its shiny new home.

The key for Burkhalter was to keep the legislative process as transparent as possible. He promised no shady backroom deals, no late additions to unrelated bills, no tacking on funding at the last minute without debate. "I think the Falcons stadium is the most open process that you can imagine," he told *James* for this exclusive interview. "My bill was open to debate— all members of the House and Senate got to look at it and debate it."

His key piece of legislation— House Bill 903— extended an already-existing hotel-motel tax through 2050, with 39.3 percent of that 7 percent tax going toward the construction

and later upkeep of the new stadium. That funding mechanism proved important as a heavily Republican state legislature debated the bill. It raised no new taxes and put the majority of the burden on tourists, many of whom would be coming to the city for the explicit purpose of visiting the stadium or the neighboring Georgia World Congress Center.

Burkhalter also required that the stadium remain downtown if it wanted to get those public funds, an important piece of the puzzle for the native Atlantan. "I wanted the Falcons to stay downtown and so did (Arthur) Blank. It was something I wanted to do for them and for the community, no hiding that."

The bill was extensively debated under the Gold Dome, eventually passing both upper and lower houses and receiving the signature of Governor Perdue.

Still, its journey was not finished. As construction began in 2014 the use of bonds backed by the hotel-motel tax to help fund the stadium was challenged by a group of Atlanta residents. The case went all the way to the Georgia Supreme Court, where a decisive final ruling declared the

funding mechanism to be constitutional.

A key cog in the city's economic engine, Mercedes-Benz, (the Benz?) is about far more than football. "It's all about creating opportunities," said Burkhalter, "If they tore down the Dome and moved to the suburbs what would that area have become?" While some local community leaders have been unhappy with their lack of input, (read: money) Falcons owner Blank has gone out of his way to work with the surrounding neighborhoods to make sure his new stadium helps more than just the corporations taking clients to games in their box seats. He generously compensated nearby churches and other buildings displaced by the construction, and has employed thousands between construction and staffing of the new building. Proposed hotels and other complementary buildings will likely develop around the newly-constructed stadium, so the impact on the community will reach far beyond Mercedes-Benz itself.

With the stadium complete and its inaugural season off and running, Burkhalter reflected on his role in the construction of what is now the world's finest stadium. "I just wrote the recipe that all the other chefs in the kitchen cooked from— the City Council, the mayor, Gov. Nathan Deal, the Falcons organization and the Georgia World Congress Center Authority all played a major role in the process."

"It's a great new day for the city and the state, and I only played a part in it. There were so many people who saw this through."

*Patrick Hickey is a staff writer and circulation director for James.*



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2017

# TOP LOBBYISTS

## RANKINGS

Our rankings are based mainly on the results of an online survey sent to lobbyists and government affairs specialists in Georgia. In addition, some top lawyers, lobbyists and (for the first time) a bipartisan group of state lawmakers were consulted to ensure the rankings are as comprehensive and accurate as possible.

## TOP BUSINESS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

- 1 Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
- 2 Georgia Poultry Federation
- 3 Georgia Hospital Association
- 4 Georgia Bankers Association
- 5 Georgia Chamber of Commerce
- 6 Georgia Credit Union Affiliates
- 7 Georgia Nurses Association
- 8 Georgia Highway Contractors Association
- 9 Georgia Trial Lawyers Association
- 10 Georgia Apartment Association
- 11 Georgia Association of Realtors
- 12 Medical Association of Georgia
- 13 Georgia Studio & Infrastructure Alliance
- 14 Georgia Farm Bureau
- 15 Home Builders Association of Georgia
- 16 American Council of Engineering Companies of Georgia
- 17 Georgia Press Association
- 18 Georgia Academy of Family Physicians
- 19 Independent Doctors of Georgia
- 20 Georgia Alcohol Dealers Association
- 21 Winegrowers Association of Georgia
- 22 Georgia Automobile Dealers Association
- 23 Atlanta Apartment Association
- 24 Georgia Beverage Association
- 25 Georgia EMC
- 26 Georgia Restaurant Association
- 27 Georgia Municipal Association
- 28 Association County Commissioners of Georgia
- 29 Community Bankers Association of Georgia
- 30 Georgia Mining Association

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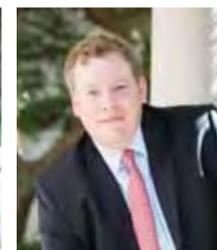
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# TOP REGISTERED MALE LOBBYISTS

- |                   |                   |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Pete Robinson   | 11 Brandon Reese  | 21 Dave Pratt       |
| 2 Trip Martin     | 12 Don Bolia      | 22 Harold Bevis     |
| 3 Dave Williams   | 13 Brad Alexander | 23 Chuck McMullen   |
| 4 Abit Massey     | 14 Robb Willis    | 24 John Bozeman     |
| 5 Marshall Guest  | 15 Jerry Usry     | 25 David Moellering |
| 6 Ed Lindsey      | 16 Ethan James    | 26 Brandon Hembree  |
| 7 John Haliburton | 17 Lewis Massey   | 27 Scott Tanner     |
| 8 Boyd Petitt     | 18 Bryan Fiveash  | 28 Marcus Downs     |
| 9 Haydon Stanley  | 19 Jon Howell     | 29 Allan Hayes      |
| 10 Hunter Towns   | 20 Skin Edge      | 30 Tharon Johnson   |

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# TOP REGISTERED FEMALE LOBBYISTS

- |                      |                            |                           |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Brandi Bazemore    | 11 Lauren Fralick          | 21 April Ruark            |
| 2 Katie Kirkpatrick  | 12 Misty Holcomb           | 22 Sally Clark Kilpatrick |
| 3 Wendi Clifton      | 13 Heather Teilhet         | 23 Caroline Womack        |
| 4 Brandee Bickle     | 14 Callie Michael          | 24 Karen Bremer           |
| 5 Amy Odom           | 15 Kallarin Mackey         | 25 Laura Norton           |
| 6 Abigail Thompson   | 16 Sheila Humberstone      | 26 Cynthia Garst          |
| 7 Ashley Groome      | 17 Chandler Haydon         | 27 Leah Dixon             |
| 8 Sam Hill           | 18 Cindy Phillips Shepherd | 28 Shea Ross              |
| 9 Elizabeth Chandler | 19 Karen Pope              | 29 Elizabeth Harwood      |
| 10 Anna Adams        | 20 Sister Ward             | 30 Robin Rhodes           |

# RISING STARS

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ahmeed Amedu      | Lori Godfrey      |
| Angela Holland    | Mary Ann Langford |
| Brad Mock         | Matthew Ralston   |
| Christine Hayes   | Michael Casto     |
| Christy Tarallo   | Ryan Loke         |
| Danica Key        | Russ Pennington   |
| Elizabeth Harwood | Seth Coker        |
| Elizabeth Newcomb | Stuart Wilkinson  |
| Grant Thomas      | Taylor Schindler  |
| Jenna Saxon       | Ted Burdo         |
| Jennifer Winkler  | Will Bentley      |
| Jeremy Collins    | Zach Johnson      |

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Team members (from left to right):  
Top: Misty Holcomb, Michael Shelnett, Eric Johnson, Danica Key, Josh Albert, Rob Fortson, Ashley Groome.  
Bottom: Russ Pennington, Lauren Greer, Brad Alexander, Murphy Talmadge (not pictured), Zachary Johnson (not pictured).

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Congratulations to our new inductees Don Bolia, Ed McGill and Monty Veazey.

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Harold Bevis  
**Don Bolia**  
Tom Boller  
Joe Brannen  
Don Cargill  
Bobby Carrell  
Elizabeth Chandler  
Wendi Clifton  
Jake Cullen  
Ric Cobb  
Buddy Darden  
Skin Edge  
Jerry Griffin



BOLIA

Jim Hammock  
Chandler Haydon  
Keith Hatcher  
Terry Hobbs  
Bryce Holcomb  
Louie Hunter  
Stan Jones  
Fred Kitchens  
Roger Lane  
Trip Martin  
Abit Massey  
Terry Mathews  
Scott Maxwell  
**Ed McGill**  
Bo Moore



McGILL

Jay Morgan  
Boyd Pettit  
Pete Robinson  
Earl Rogers  
Rusty Sewell  
Joyce Stevens  
Eric Tanenblatt  
David Tatum  
Jet Toney  
John Thomas  
Mo Thrash  
Jim Tudor  
**Monty Veazey**  
Robb Willis



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# OPEN ISSUES IN GEORGIA LOBBYING LAW

BY DOUGLAS CHALMERS, JR.

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY** in recent years has made various changes to Georgia's lobbying laws. As is always the case, however, whenever government ethics and lobbying laws are drafted there are difficult tensions between competing objectives.

On the one hand, it is necessary to ensure that lobbying laws are not so restrictive that they interfere with the ability of citizens to fully exercise their constitutional rights to petition the government for changes to the laws. On the other hand, there is a valid public interest in ensuring full disclosure of expenditures by those who attempt to influence public officials. Drawing principled and clear laws that satisfy both these objectives is a challenge that has vexed both Congress and state legislatures across the country since the dawn of the republic.

Application of Georgia's laws over the past few years has raised numerous questions which will likely soon be addressed by the Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission (the "Commission").

One such issue focuses on this question: who is a lobbyist's client? When a lobbyist registers, he or she must identify "the person or agency that employs, appoints, or authorizes the applicant to lobby on its behalf." Who is that when the lobbyist is a subcontractor? For example, if Corporation A hires Public Relations Firm B to assist with a project that requires legislation, and Public Relations Firm B retains Lobbying Firm C to assist with that effort, and Lobbying Firm C then retains individual Lobbyist D, who is Lobbyist D's client? The lobbyist may well have a good basis upon which to list only Lobbying Firm C. An argument can be made, however, that full disclosure is better served by listing Corporation A. Importantly, this latter view is the one that the Commission staff apparently takes of the issue. There is currently at least one case pending in which this issue will be addressed.

Another important open issue concerns a question we frequently receive from our clients: may a lobbying firm make an expenditure that would be prohibited if made by an individual lobbyist? When the Act was revised, it included prohibitions on certain expenditures by lobbyists. For example, lobbyists are now prohibited from giving public officials tickets to sporting events. But that prohibition applies only to a registered lobbyist, which means that it only applies to an individual. It would seem that a lobbying firm could provide

Braves tickets to a state legislator, even though an individual lobbyist could not. To date, the Commission has not addressed this issue, but it is only a matter of time.

Another area of ambiguity is the extent to which grassroots lobbying is regulated by the Commission. Georgia's lobbying laws are drafted broadly enough so that, if a person attempts to influence legislation through grassroots lobbying (i.e., influencing legislators by influencing their constituents), that person may have to register, even if that individual has no direct contact with public officials. It's not always clear how far this requirement extends.

Another open issue concerns enforceability of a Commission rule adopted in an attempt to extend lobbying laws to cover payments to family members of public officials. The Commission explained that "[t]he purpose of this new rule is to clarify that the limitations on lobbyist expenditures by lobbyists cannot be evaded by the making of lobbyist expenditures to or for the family members of public officials and employees rather than directly to the public official or employee." The rule is subject to challenge, however, because it requires the reporting of more information on lobbyist disclosure reports than is spelled out in the Act itself. It remains to be seen if the rule will withstand any challenges.

In terms of enforcement trends, the Commission staff has recently indicated that it will focus more heavily on county and local lobbyists. Unbeknownst to many, state lobbying laws cover those who seek to influence county and municipal legislation, to obtain county or local government contracts, or to attempt to change county or local rules or regulations. There may well be a push for more aggressive enforcement in these areas.

A final open issue concerns the significant late fees imposed on lobbyists who file disclosure reports late. An example occurred in a recent case in which a lobbyist incorrectly listed his email address on his registration, and thus did not receive any reminders to file reports. He faced total late fees of \$293,150, which the Commission reduced to \$7,150. This highlights the need for lobbyists to pay close attention to their filing requirements. The Commission also discussed legislation to reduce what the Commission chair has described as "draconian" late fees.

Doug Chalmers is the managing member of Chalmers Pak Burch & Adams.

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# Shepherd Center Steps Up for Wounded in Military

BY COSBY WOODRUFF

**EVERY CLIENT** entering one of the top rehabilitation centers in the nation faces profound challenges, but for wounded military members going into the Shepherd Center's SHARE military initiative the challenges can be beyond daunting. They face the same challenges as other patients, plus most will have PTSD. Many will have been heavily medicated with opioid painkillers.

In fact, by the time they get to this private Atlanta-based acute care facility, the challenges can be close to defeating the veteran. Failed marriages are almost the norm. Separation from the military with few employment prospects damages self-esteem. Mobility issues haunt once-vibrant men and women.

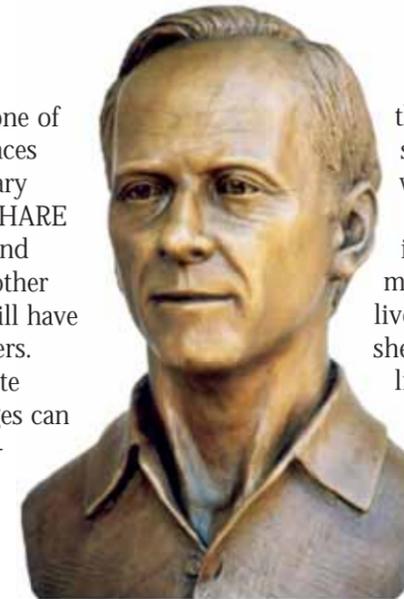
For those who land a spot at SHARE (Shaping Hope and Recovery Excellence) a coordinated treatment plan returns them to a place in life where they function at the top of their abilities. The problem? Shepherd can only treat a tiny fraction of those who need the service.

Shepherd can treat up to 10 people at a time in SHARE. That means maybe 50 people get treatment per year. About that many more receive after-care outside the center. Donations, spearheaded by philanthropist Bernie Marcus, should double those numbers within a year. But that still won't be enough, according to Shepherd officials.

James Shepherd, the center's founder, chairman and chief strategy officer, said this program and pending growth are meaningful to the center. "It is something we are very proud of," he emphasizes.

The immersive care is not cheap, and much of it is not covered by a patient's insurance. Still, the patient does not receive a bill for SHARE services. Indeed, the center must raise about \$1.2 million annually to provide SHARE services. According to Shepherd, it is more than worth it. An average of 22 veterans commit suicide daily in the United States, but none of the more than 300 clients at SHARE has taken his or her own life.

As with many things military, those who have gone before mentor those who come later. Peer support is a major part of all specialized services at Shepherd, but nowhere is



JAMES SHEPHERD

that more pronounced than at SHARE. That support is provided by military volunteers as well as other clients at Shepherd.

In the end, the goal for a SHARE client is largely the same as it is for a client in the main center across Peachtree Road—the client lives the most independent, complete life he or she is capable of living. For some, that includes living in one's own apartment and driving one's own car.

Many adaptive sports are available, including some fairly rough-and-tumble ones like wheelchair rugby. Kristin Boggs, a Shepherd fundraiser, points out during a tour that these teams are more than participatory. Players play to win and give no quarter, she said.

Shepherd clients have become employees and sit on the board of directors. James Shepherd was, in a way, the first client following a surfing accident that left him in a wheelchair. The center was founded because no such place existed to care for him during his recovery. His parents, Harold and Alana, called on everyone from big foundations to small-town garden clubs to educate the donor community on the nature of spinal cord injury and the demand for such a facility in the South. Their project took off due to their tireless efforts and the facility opened its doors on August 19, 1975—just a year after the idea was conceived.

When the center celebrated its 25th birthday in 2000, it had grown from a small spinal cord hospital to an innovator in acute catastrophic care, rehabilitation and research. It was evolving into the largest brain injury rehabilitation program in Georgia and the biggest multiple sclerosis center in the country. And now, with a renewed focus on veterans, its "life beyond injury" mission continues to step up the pace.

James Shepherd says to this day he knows pretty much every Shepherd client by face and name. And his own story of becoming a business leader following his accident makes clients take special notice. *continued on page 26*

“It is instant credibility,” he said. The medical staff treats the injury, but when a client sees someone who has been in a similar situation, the client’s whole life can change. “It is a message to patients here that you can be anything.”

Overall, automobile accidents are the biggest factor in sending new clients to Shepherd. Of those, a little more than a third, on average, were not wearing a seat belt. He

hopes that the advent of self-driving cars, whenever they may arrive, will reduce the number of clients arriving at Shepherd following a car crash. If that happens, the center will simply redirect resources. Still, there must be resources to direct.

Some appreciative donors write large checks. But Boggs said a family inspired by a Shepherd success story that sends in, say, a gift of \$50 also matters.

Many of those donations, large and small, are inspired by people made famous by what-

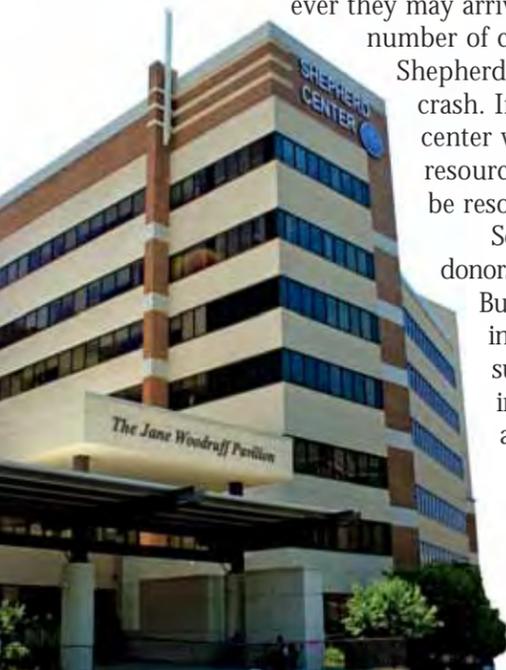
ever sends them to Shepherd. Two years ago, Devon Gales played football in relative anonymity at Southern University. Then, he injured his spinal cord blocking on a kick return against the University of Georgia. Within weeks, he was Shepherd’s celebrity client.

Before him, Aimee Copeland was a recent college graduate having some outdoor fun on a zip line. The line, operated by other young people only wanting to have fun, failed. Copeland didn’t become a typical Shepherd client. She wasn’t paralyzed, but a flesh-eating bacteria took parts of her limbs. That left her facing many of the same challenges as those with spinal injuries, and the Shepherd Center took her in.

Gales and Copeland have rebuilt their lives and, in the process, became examples to those who follow them at Shepherd. And the publicity surrounding them meant badly-needed donations flowed into Shepherd’s coffers.

Boggs notes that these high-profile individuals— along with the vets and everyone else treated or who are currently patients— are forever connected to this amazing institution. Not because of the donations raised on their behalf or the publicity their injuries brought. It is because once patients come through the center’s doors, as James, Harold and Alana Shepherd often say, they are considered “a permanent part of the Shepherd family.”

*Cosby Woodruff is a staff writer for James.*



# A Bold CID Idea

## THAT TRANSFORMED A COMMUNITY

by Malaika Rivers

**I WAS AT SUNTRUST PARK RECENTLY** enjoying a ball game on a beautiful summer night when a colleague spotted me. He asked me to meet his family which I was delighted to do. After brief introductions, including a simple explanation of my professional affiliation, his older daughter inquired whether or not my organization had anything to do with the amazing ballpark we were all enjoying.

“No,” my colleague immediately replied, “Her group just builds trails.” Hmmm.

To be fair, my colleague was correct in that we do build trails. But my organization is the Cumberland Community Improvement District (CID)— probably the state’s best example of how a strategic public-private partnership can not only construct a trail, but transform a community.

More than 30 years ago a small group of Cobb’s business and elected leaders took a trip to northern Virginia and learned how a commercial district could prepare for growth as well as accelerate it. Those leaders were Johnny Isakson, Roy Barnes, John Williams and Earl Smith— visionaries who understood if you want progress, you must take action.

They saw an opportunity to nurture a budding office and retail district in Cobb County— a

district that had the bones to compete with other commercial markets around metro Atlanta. If they were successful with this bold new idea, they could attract corporate tenants, jobs, and residents. Quite simply, they could attract economic investment that would benefit both the businesses and governments alike.

That bold idea was formation of the Cumberland Community Improvement District. It would allow the owners of commercial properties, specifically office, hotel, and retail properties, to self-tax in order to raise seed funding for transportation improvements. Why transportation? Because those leaders understood that in real estate, access is just as important as location. And by investing in access, they were essentially investing in themselves.

But it wasn’t a one-way street that would only benefit the commercial real estate interests. It was a way for Cobb County to advance governmental services such as roads, bridges, and other transportation projects it sorely needed. Through strategic public-private partnerships, the CID would pay for much of a project’s pre-construction

Fans in The Battery await the beginning of an Atlanta Braves game.

*continued on page 28*



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activities while the county would shepherd the project through the regulatory pipeline. Because there was a private funding source involved on the front end, it made it that much easier for public partners— be they county, state or federal— to put in their money on the back end. The mutually-beneficial relationships were strong. We even had a saying encapsulating the tone at the time: “The DOT, like the Lord, helps those who help themselves.” And boy did it.

Back in the 1970s and '80s the best way to access Cumberland was through two highway exits: Cobb Parkway off of I-285 and Windy Hill Road off of I-75. Once you got to Cumberland, though, there were few local roads to connect you. It also was difficult to maneuver between the crossroads of I-75 and I-285 which divided Cumberland into quadrants. Commercial owners needed better access and Cobb County needed the economic investment.

Through the engagement of extremely talented people such as Tad Leithead at the Cumberland CID, Jim Croy at the Cobb Department of Transportation and Tom Moreland at the Georgia Department of Transportation, an audacious effort was launched to build the infrastructure that the area needed.

Over the years scores of infrastructure projects were constructed, providing some of the best access to any metro Atlanta submarket. This includes the highway interchanges at Cumberland Boulevard and Paces Ferry, a new 5-mile loop road (Cumberland Boulevard), the widening of Cobb Parkway and Windy Hill as well as corridors to points east and west of the district. All this transformed Cumberland from a bedroom community that is 10 miles north of downtown Atlanta into a thriving economic hub.

But it was about more than just building roads.

The CID properties, after all, are commercial real estate owners and investors. Accessing the market by vehicle was important but so was the ability to move safely around the community on two feet— or even two wheels. Sidewalks were stitched together along with an urban and greenway trail network. With 840 acres of natural greenspace provided by the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, the CID and its partners have built 38 miles of trails and have 22 miles more to go. The CID also will launch a Bikeshare in late 2017, adding a popular amenity to the CID's portfolio of improvements.

The CID hasn't stopped there. Recognizing that the market's image was impacted by how well it was main-

tained, the CID set out to beautify the community. Trees were planted, decorative pavers were installed and banners were hung along more prominent corridors. Interchange exits were planted with displays of flowering plants, foliage and decorative arches inviting people into the area.

Combined, all these community improvements and investments have a big impact on public coffers. About 30 years ago, there was \$19.4 million square-feet in commercial and multi-family property. Now, Cumberland is closing in on \$50 million square-feet. Yes, that includes the Atlanta Braves, which cited access as one of the drivers of its decision to relocate. Commercial and residential property values have risen to \$5.5 billion, triple the amount back in the late '80s. Those developments amount to an economic impact of 5.4 percent of the state's economy and 33 percent of Cobb's.

There is a lot more on the horizon. By 2024, the CID's \$180 million investment will have helped leverage \$2.5 billion in public infrastructure alone— just a small role in transforming the community.



Malaika Rivers is the executive director of the Cumberland Community Improvement District.

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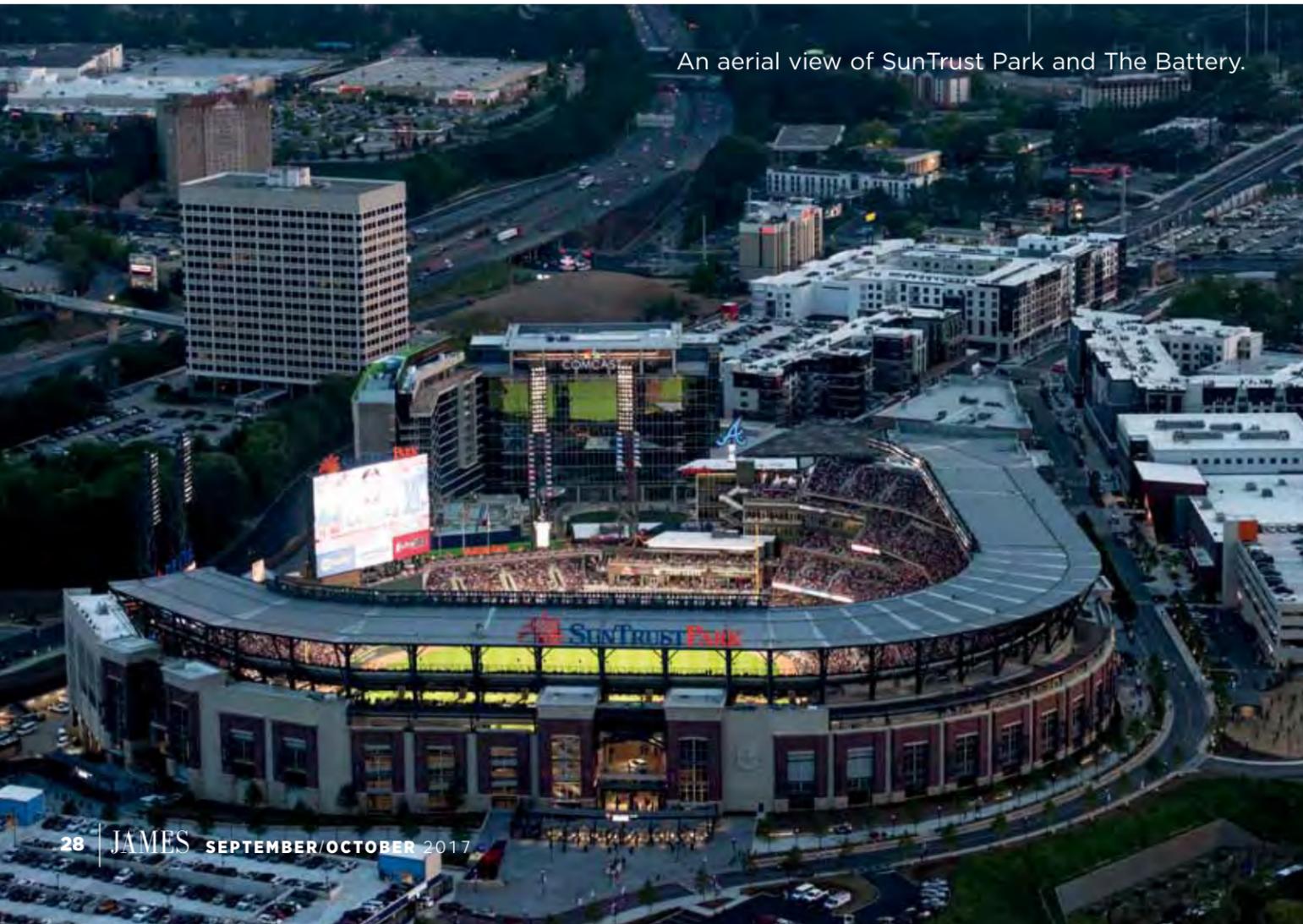
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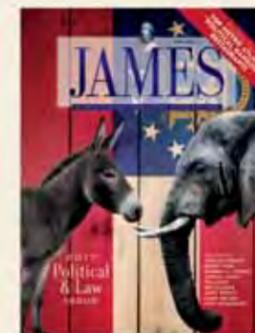
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An aerial view of SunTrust Park and The Battery.



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# CHANGES NEEDED TO GEORGIA'S PLAN FOR EDUCATION

BY DR. STEVE DOLINGER

Like every state, Georgia must send its plan for improving and overseeing schools to the federal government very soon. Our state's plan needs to be strengthened so that it will help more children get the education they deserve.

As the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education reviewed our state's first draft plan under the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), we were pleased overall. But we also had two main areas of concern. The first was the lack of ambition for required annual student growth in achievement, and relatedly, the lack of data to be made available for individual groups of students on the overall state accountability system—College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)—calculations. The second was the lack of focus on early learning and the importance of early literacy.

As we preview the second draft of the plan, there are still aspects we support, but neither of our concerns has been alleviated.

## WHAT WE SUPPORT ABOUT THE PLAN

We believe the state's proposed ESSA plan achieves the goal of outlining how schools should be evaluated and what young people should be expected to know at the end of high school. We fully support the emphasis on the whole child—including many support services that today's students need—and how the state is stressing both overall achievement levels and students' progress or growth.

## CHANGES NEEDED: DATA PERFORMANCE

Georgia has set the expectation that all children will graduate high school ready for college and career. The



long-term academic achievement goals set in this plan are not ambitious enough for all children to achieve that goal. Having high expectations for all children is the first step to getting to that outcome. We encourage more ambitious state and federal goals to ensure high expectations for all children.

Unfortunately, too many of our children still don't have access to the high-quality education they need. This is particularly true for low-income students and students of color. On the most recent 3rd grade Georgia Milestones tests, students of color scored more than 20 percentage-points lower than white students in English/language arts and math. For this reason, it's urgent that we work to close our achievement gaps and provide greater equality of opportunity. To support this goal, Georgia should include the disaggregated performance of each student subgroup on each indicator in the

*continued on page 32*



final rating given to schools so that gaps for particular student groups are not masked by schoolwide averages.

In the current proposed plan, the only indicator that includes disaggregated scores is in “closing gaps.” However, this indicator only measures whether schools are improving proficiency rates for all children. This means that schools would not be held responsible for the disaggregated performance of individual student subgroups on other areas of the accountability system. To ensure all students succeed, there must be a focus on all subgroups, and that begins with schools being held accountable for educating all students well.

### CHANGES NEEDED: FOCUS ON EARLY LEARNING & LITERACY

Improving children’s early literacy and helping more students read at grade level has been a priority in Georgia for many years. The details of that priority aren’t reflected in the current plan. There are few— if any— references to young children, support for early learning teachers, or alignment of early childhood education system with K-12. We believe this plan misses an important opportunity to support early childhood and kindergarten through 2nd grade.

The new accountability system should reveal how young children are included in long-term goals for the state education system. It should also support children’s readiness for school, including screenings in early childhood (birth to pre-K) and the elementary grades. Finally, the new accountability system should evaluate how early childhood investments support lowest performing schools.

With the early childhood education system and grades K-12 not represented in detail in the current proposed accountability system, the public won’t be able to see how schools are serving these children and how districts are identifying schools needing additional supports. By focusing only on grades 3-5 in elementary schools, districts may not prioritize resources in the early grades, which can enrich learning in the upper grades.

Georgia’s future relies on all our young people receiving a high-quality education. The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education is hopeful the state’s final ESSA plan will outline a vision of continued school improvement so that our children’s future and our state’s economic prospects will be bright.

*Dr. Steve Dolinger is president of the nonprofit Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education and is a former superintendent of the Fulton County schools.*



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**CEO SPOTLIGHT**

# RUSSELL STOKES

JAMES IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE A NEW, REGULAR FEATURE. FOR THIS ISSUE WE INTERVIEW ATLANTAN RUSSELL STOKES, NAMED IN JULY BY THE BOSTON-BASED GENERAL ELECTRIC CO. AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF GE POWER. A 20-YEAR GE VETERAN, THE 46-YEAR-OLD STOKES IS A GRADUATE OF CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY WITH A DEGREE IN FINANCE. HE STARTED HIS CAREER IN SALES FOR A PC MANUFACTURER BEFORE JOINING GE AND WORKING UP THE COMPANY RANKS.



**JAMES** In October 2015, you became president and CEO of Atlanta-based GE Energy Connections. Just 20 months later you assumed a new role leading the integration of the legacy GE Power and Energy Connections businesses into one, power-focused unit called GE Power. What are your new company challenges?

**Russell Stokes** The energy industry is undergoing an incredible rate of change. Customers all around the globe are dealing with the changes in energy mix options, a lot of which are renewable based. In addition, they are working through the challenges that come from integrating intermittent fuel sources into the grid, which was built for stability and one way flows. Our customers are also dealing with a new energy business model, where consumers are wanting more control and, in some cases, are behaving as both a producer of electricity and a consumer, or prosumer.

In GE we talk about the concept of an emergent era, where you know things won't be the same as they were in the past, but you are unsure of what the future looks like. While the future comes with great uncertainty, I personally find it invigorating. It is during these times of uncertainty that we must work to increase optionality, while remaining agile to move and pivot quickly.

The great thing about uniting the legacy GE Power and Energy Connections businesses is that we have already been working together for years. We share a united

mission— Powering Everyone— including the 1.2 billion people in the world that are currently without access to electricity. As a combined business, we operated across 150 countries, getting us closer to our mission.

**JAMES** The new, combined GE Power business should translate into better customer focus and fewer redundancies. Can you provide specifics that are already occurring and how does this translate into better value for customers?

**RS** For the last several years we have been working across all the GE businesses that touch electricity in GE and created something we call the Electricity Value Network (EVN). This was created out of the recognition that while assets will remain critically important, there are increasing challenges that our customers are trying to solve which are system based.

With the EVN, we focus on three big themes that are transforming the way electricity moves. These themes include decentralization, decarbonization and the digitization of our industries. I have a blog post on LinkedIn that covers in more detail these themes.

By combining the GE Power and Energy Connections business we are now able to simplify the interaction with our customers and provide a more

CEO SPOTLIGHT

seamless set of offerings that go from generation all the way to the point of consumption. We believe that the combination also provides increased operating efficiency and synergies that we think will be beneficial to both GE customers and shareholders.

**JAMES** With over 3,000 employees in Atlanta, across GE Power, GE Transportation and GE Digital, what are your thoughts on GE's role in Atlanta and Georgia?

**RS** GE has had a strong presence in Atlanta for nearly two decades. It has served as a key location for our Power business and last year we established one of GE Digital's main technology hubs in Buckhead.

GE and our employees have always believed in making a difference in the communities where we live and work. Atlanta is no different. And my belief as a business leader is that I have a personal responsibility to get involved. This is what led me to join the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

We're proud to have made a strong commitment to the City of Atlanta, the Atlanta Police Department and the Atlanta Police Foundation (APF) and support them in their pursuit to train the best police force in the country. As part of our united efforts, GE opened a learning

lab at the APF's At-Promise Youth Center in hopes of helping divert kids to choices that ensure they have a bright future.

We've thoroughly enjoyed our partnership with the city but also with one of our customers, Georgia Power. Since I moved to Atlanta in 2015, we've been fortunate to have collaborated with Georgia Power on a series of joint events that benefit the youth of Atlanta. We look forward to continuing to collaborate on efforts that benefit the greater Atlanta area.

**JAMES** Since moving to Atlanta, you personally have become very active in community affairs. You mentioned the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, and you are slated to be its chairman in 2018. Tell us a bit more about that.

**RS** Yes, I want to continue the great work that has already been done through the Metro Atlanta Chamber, which has been attracting so many companies to the city. I'm also looking forward to working with my peers across the board to continue to make Atlanta the location of choice for both companies and families alike.

...



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# Reflections

## On Southern People, Places and Times

BY LARRY WALKER

### *A Southern Album*

*Recollections of some people and places and times gone by*

Edited by Irwin Glusker and narrative by Willie Morris

**I**t's a beautiful book and it has been on our coffee table since we received it from retired newspaper editor Jim Minter in August of 2016. Actually, it didn't "lay there" when we first got it, because I picked it up and read it. I believe that it was the second time, as I had read a paperback of it some-time earlier.

A few days ago, I read it again— every word of it and every picture looked at and studied. Articles by James Agee, Paul W. Bryant, Truman Capote, Hodding Carter, James Dickey, William Faulkner, Paul Hemphill, Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., Harper Lee, Jim Minter, William Styron, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, Thomas Wolfe and many others. And wonderful photographs of Willie Morris and his son, David, near Yazoo City, MS (1967). William Faulkner in Lafayette County, MS (1962), Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, VA (1974), Lyndon Johnson and other elementary school teachers, Cotulla, TX (1928), River baptism near Richmond (1986), Clarence Darrow at Scopes Trial, Wagon Wheels, Madison, Georgia (1974), Ty Cobb stealing third base, the

first Coca-Cola truck in Knoxville, TN, Ku Klux Klan, MS (1964), Tenant farmers, Eutaw AL (1937) and many others.

Why pick it up and look at it and read it, again? Indeed, why? Frankly, I'm worried about my beloved Southland. I'm worried about the whole country, but I'm particularly worried about Georgia, Mississippi, Virginia, South Carolina—the whole Southland.

I don't know what should be done. What will it take to bring lasting peace? Is there enough give-and-take and compromise in our people— all of them, black, white and others— to bring to our place and our people peace and tranquility? We cannot afford to fight the Civil War again.

I was in the legislature, serving as majority leader in the House of Representatives, when we changed the state flag. It was the right thing to do and I made a speech that Gov. Roy Barnes said "changed votes and enabled us to pass the bill." Here's a copy of a portion of the speech that I made on January 24, 2001 for your consideration.

*... there was and is a slave market in Louisville, GA. I hope it won't be torn down. It should stand, as a reminder, of what man can and will do his fellow man if his better nature does not control. Some went to that place in Louisville, years ago, as families only to see their husbands or wives and children for the last time ...*

*In 1961, our predecessors had to vote on whether or not the schools in our state would be closed. Had I been a member of this body, I hope that I would have had the courage to vote to keep our schools open during racial integration. In 1984, a vote was taken to honor with a holiday the birth of Martin Luther King. With increasing pride, I can say that I cast a vote in the affirmative.*

*My five grandchildren call me Grandbuddy. I like the name. They tell me it is the same name I gave to my Grandfather Gray when I was four or five years old. I wish my Grandbuddy was here, today. He*

*continued on page 40*



Iconic MLK Center image



Statue of Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson

*was a Methodist but more importantly, he was a Christian. He was a Republican— a delegate to the Republican National Convention and in 1948, probably the only openly Republican mayor in the state as mayor of Perry. But, more importantly, he was tolerant. He was fair. He was a friend to black people when being their friend was not necessarily the thing to be. He would be proud of me, today. He would applaud my vote to change our flag. He would tell me not to forget my heritage, but to reach out and reach across and try to heal and try to love and to try to persuade you, my friends, to do the same. I want my Grandbuddy to be proud of me, and I want my five grandchildren to be proud of their Grandbuddy. I want them to be able to say, 40 years after my death, that Grandbuddy was fair and tolerant and he did the right thing. For after all, isn't this much more important than whether we might be allowed to return to this place?"*

Then, with the help of Gov. Sonny Perdue, we got a new flag— a better flag than the one I helped pass. In my heart I know that Georgia is now much better off with the flag we have today as opposed to the one I helped change in 2001.

Now, there are other and new issues that divide our people, not only in the South, our South, my South, but particularly in Dixie!

And I look at my book that Jim Minter sent. And I know it will never, again, be the way it was then. And then I think, will it continue to be the way it is now? Is the South as we know it today going to remain different and distinctive or is it destined to become like all the rest of our country? If so, is that a good thing?

Another book, the Good Book, tells us that the road is long and narrow and from someone in small-town Middle Georgia, it has always been that way down here.

*Larry Walker is a practicing attorney in Perry. He served 32 years in the Georgia General Assembly and serves on the University System Board of Regents.*

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# MORE SECURE, EFFICIENT, LESS COSTLY VOTER REGISTRATION

By State Rep. Earl Ehrhart

**I** think everyone knows that our voter registration system has been inefficient, resulting in confusion and long lines on Election Day. This isn't just a concern in Georgia. It is a national problem. Having an inefficient voter registration system means that our data is out of date and eligible citizens have a hard time participating.



citizens automatically register all eligible citizens to vote. Individuals are always able to decline registration.

Information needed to confirm eligibility to vote— things like name, date of birth, and citizenship status— is transmitted whenever citizens interact with appointed public agencies, such as the local Department of Drivers Services.

DDS will include the eligible voter's information from its database to election officials, who receive the records. Those officials confirm the eligibility of each individual and that they are not already registered.

*continued on page 42*

As a state, we need to strike the important balance between protecting the security of voter registration while also encouraging citizens to vote. Secretary of State, Brian Kemp, has done just that.

Last fall Kemp's office, along with the Attorney General's office, coordinated with the Department of Driver Services (DDS) to improve voter registration applications by streamlining the questions so that more eligible citizens can be efficiently added to the rolls when using certain services. This also ensures compliance with the National Voter Registration Act, while making registrations more accurate here in Georgia.

As a result of these improvements, election offices across Georgia have seen an increase in the number of voter registration application from eligible voters.

Improving registration at government agencies and making government work more efficiently will increase the accuracy and the security of the voter rolls and will reduce taxpayer expense.

Technology has dramatically changed the way we live and work. The use of a secure database to register more eligible voters will deliver greater accuracy and efficiency for Georgia's elections. Streamlining Georgia's registration process make our voter rolls more secure and will eliminate the human error that comes with paper forms. In fact, this process will verify eligibility twice: first by DDS and then by the election official, providing an extra layer of authentication.

Here how the "opt in" registration it works.

Modernizing voter registration means using information the government already has on file to let eligible

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Election officials then notify all eligible unregistered voters that they will be added to the voter rolls. Again, any individual can always decline being registered at any time.

As U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) said, “. . . (modernized voter registration) supports the worthwhile goal of encouraging participation in our political system. At the same time that it makes registering more convenient, it also improves the registration system and reduces opportunities for voter fraud. That’s a winning combination that I fully support.”

The new system already seems to be working in Georgia. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of voter registration applications this year. According to the Atlanta Journal Constitution (May 1, 2017), there have been 559,179 applications statewide through DDS since January 1.

I applaud Secretary of State Kemp’s leadership and courage on this issue that impacts our democracy. He is helping to make our elections and voter registrations more secure, more efficient and less costly.

*State Rep. Earl Ehrhart, R-Powder Springs, represents a northwest Cobb County district.*

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# PREPARING HEIRS TO INHERIT YOUR ESTATE

BY MAC MCGREW



**M**oney may talk, but talking about money is difficult. Forty-four percent of Americans claim that personal finance is the hardest topic to discuss, beating out politics and even death.

With younger generations of Americans set to inherit some \$30 trillion during the next several decades from baby boomer parents and grandparents, now is the time to bite the bullet and have a discussion. The rewards of having an open conversation will surely outweigh any perceived difficulty.

Although the focus here is on preparing your children and other heirs to responsibly receive an inheritance, you will likely gain insight if you are on the receiving end too. Here are tips to help the transfer of wealth go more smoothly and successfully.

### Talk Early and Often

Having conversations about money with your children not only serves as an empowering first step to forming a healthy relationship with wealth, but also helps them avoid mistakes in the future. Talk about what money means to you, and why and how you worked hard to achieve success. Wealth brings responsibilities and challenges. Be open about that and some of the pitfalls you’ve faced, mistakes you’ve made and solutions you’ve found. Most importantly, talk with your heirs about the privilege of an inheritance and what you want them to do with it.

### Share Your Values

Teach your heirs about your family’s history, values and culture. Talk about the importance of a good education, hard work, integrity and loyalty, particularly in business. As we become a more transient nation, it’s important that children and grandchildren know what core values they come from and what your family stands for. It’s never too early to understand the importance of creating a wealth plan that takes family members’ values and needs into account.

### Provide Financial Education

Education is key to passing down money most effectively. Make sure those who inherit are set up to succeed at managing the money before they receive it. This begins

at home. Personal finance is generally not required in high school or college, but it is a necessary life skill. Be sure to emulate the financial responsibility that you teach— being philanthropic, frugal with spending, saving and investing— and remember that actions speak louder than words. The reality is that 70 percent of wealthy families lose their wealth by the second generation, so having clear goals and plans will help your family avoid this fate.

### Ensure That Heirs Have Their Own Opportunities for Success

A concern among wealthy families is that, by educating children about their inheritance, their ambition to succeed on their own merits will be destroyed. For example, while everyone may not attend college, the next generations that inherit could use the money in other ways to still pursue their passions.

### Unveil Your Estate Plan

Share your estate plans with each heir in an appropriate setting. There should be no reason to keep anyone in suspense, or in the dark about your financial planning. In the end, all the information will be shared transparently and, unfortunately, hiding it can cause unnecessary tension, resentment and other challenges. Proper communication now can help ensure that everyone has appropriate expectations.

### Introduce Your Advisors

Engage your heirs with your circle of advisors (lawyer, financial advisor, accountant, etc.). Objective professionals can often help get these tough conversations started. Wealth is about much more than money alone, and the right advisors can guide conversations and uncover what matters most to you and your family. As life shifts and changes, so should the conversations you have with your family about money. Trusted advisors can help you navigate.

*Mac McGrew is a wealth advisor with The Harrison McGrew Group at Morgan Stanley in Atlanta. He can be reached at [mac.mcgrew@ms.com](mailto:mac.mcgrew@ms.com).*

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# Reflections on the New King Statue

BY THARON JOHNSON

**O**n August 28 Gov. Nathan Deal, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, Chairman Emeritus of the House Democratic Caucus Calvin Smyre, House of Representatives Speaker David Ralston, the Rev. Bernice King, members of the King family and the public came together to unveil a statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the grounds of the Georgia State Capitol building.

For years there have been statues depicting Confederate generals, white supremacists and people who fought against civil rights. Now, finally, there is a statue of a man who represents the best of what this country has to offer— courage, wisdom and the drive to make this country a better place for all who live within its borders regardless of race, class, or creed.

The fact that the statue was unveiled on the 54th anniversary of King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech should not go unnoticed either. It has become clear, now more than ever, that the world King envisioned is not yet a reality and may not be for a long time to come. Recent political developments have unearthed beliefs by some people that many thought were relics of a darker time in our country's past. The public resurgence of these beliefs has the

potential to set back racial discourse in the country by decades if left unchecked.

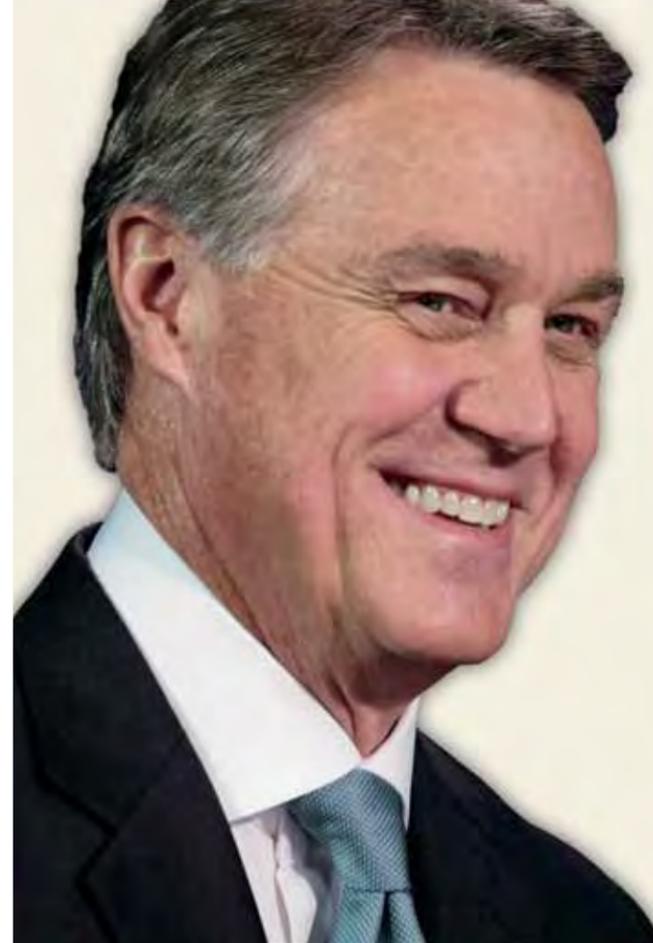
What we need now is for our leaders— political, moral, religious, academic— to come out and say "this will not stand. These people do not represent our community, our state, or our country. Their beliefs are despicable, disgusting, and wrong."

I truly hope that Dr. King's newfound presence at the Capitol will serve to remind the leaders of our state who walk those halls that hate has no place in Georgia. The statue's very existence is a step in the right direction, but it remains a solitary step. It is time to back up that symbolic gesture with real action by denouncing vile views and guaranteeing equal civil rights for all citizens of Georgia in the workplace and at the ballot box.

To do any less would disrespect Dr. King's memory mere steps from where he is now memorialized.

This statue must not be viewed as an end goal in the fight for equal rights and representation. This must be a new beginning.

*Tharon Johnson is a consultant with Paramount Consulting Group and a Democrat strategist.*



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# PERDUE BILL

## CUTS LEGAL IMMIGRATION; REQUIRES SKILLS, ENGLISH

BY PHIL KENT



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U.S. Sen. David Perdue, R-Ga.— the prime sponsor of the RAISE Act that was unveiled this summer at the White House— "should be applauded for recognizing the current dysfunction of our outdated immigration policies that, unlike the rest of the nation, have been stuck in a time warp for the last 50 years," says the Federation for American Immigration Reform.

Passage by the Congress would trim the country's generous legal immigration admissions in half, prompting U.S. Labor Secretary Alex Acosta to underscore: "The RAISE Act rolls back regulations that put American workers and businesses at a disadvantage. It puts America first."

What exactly does this legislation by Georgia's junior senator do? Key components of his "Reforming American Immigration for Strong Employment" bill include:

**Establishing a point-based system that would help select immigrants who have the most to offer this nation and have the skill set needed to achieve once they arrive, while reducing the immigrant flow to traditional levels. (Applicants earn points, by the way, on their ability to speak English well.)**

**Ensuring that immediate families— the primary immigrant, spouse, and minor children— remain intact during the immigration process.**

**Eliminating a needless and fraud-ridden visa "diversity" lottery that doesn't take into account any skills or education.**

**Placing a responsible, firm limit on refugee admissions at 50,000 per year.**

The English component is especially necessary, says the Washington, D.C.-based ProEnglish organization. It notes that the Clinton-era Executive Order 13166 (which has never been repealed) requires all federal funds recipients including hospitals, doctor's offices and school districts to provide interpreters or translations for non-English speaking persons— and pay for it themselves. If they don't they face civil rights violations, fines and even jail time.

Over a decade ago the General Accounting Office estimated the cost of that executive order was in the billions of dollars annually. "So it's only common sense that if

*continued on page 46*

we're going to be forced to bear the cost of immigrants who can't speak English, we should require them to speak it before they get a visa and can come into our country," ProEnglish says.

"The RAISE Act will do more than any other action to fulfill President Trump's promises as a candidate to create an immigration system that puts the interests of American workers first," says Numbers USA President Roy Beck. "Our recent polling confirms that American voters overwhelmingly want far less immigration because they know mass immigration creates unfair competition for American workers. Seeing the president standing with the bill's sponsors at the White House gives hope to the tens of millions of struggling Americans in stagnant jobs or outside the labor market altogether."

Groups that cater to foreign workers, of course, oppose the RAISE Act. "Slashing legal immigration in half would only hinder growth and result in fewer jobs for Americans," claims John Feinblatt, president of the liberal-leaning New American Economy organization. "It absolutely makes sense to fix a broken system, but Congress should focus on stopping illegal immigration— not on restricting the legal immigra-

tion that grows our economy."

What will the Congress do? Which side of the partisan divide will it lean to? It's hard to say with its packed year-end calendar. But if there is to be some legal immigration system reform, and it is badly needed, Georgia's junior senator is in the arena offering pro-worker, pro-growth reforms. Perdue simply asks a basic question: "What's wrong with reorienting the system toward high-skilled workers, which is just what our economy needs"?

Indeed, it makes no sense to stick with 50-year-old immigration laws. It's past time they be properly adjusted to enter the 21st century.

In this context, the RAISE act can be a valuable bargaining chip since the Trump administration has rescinded the "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA) program. The Trump action rightfully places in Congress' hands the mission of what to do about DACA, an entry-exit visa overhaul and immigration reform in general during the next six months. The Perdue bill comes at a welcomed time to figure into any sort of compromise.

*Phil Kent is the CEO and publisher of InsiderAdvantage Georgia and James Magazine.*

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